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The Profession as a Surname in a Franco-Provençal Valley in the 14th Century

“L’indicatore di mestiere si presenta piuttosto tardi come possibile componente della catena onomastica e diventa particolarmente insistente a partire dalla seconda metà del sec. XII”. Moreover, it is not a nickname made of an individual characteristic but of the role effectively played by the individual in medieval society (a society which encouraged the inheritance of trades).

In an ancient document, it is not always easy or possible to distinguish the real professional determination from the byname which in the future will be extended to the whole family and become the surname; sometimes the context allows disambiguation, for example, through another professional or surname determination.

Usually the byname is made up of a noun + the suffix -arius (in Piedmont more often -erius) or the goods produced or traded without the addition of a suffix (for metonymy). In general, in Piedmont, the first professions which became part of the onomastic chain are barberius and ferrarius and this is not surprising:

1 The trade indicator appears rather late as a possible component of the onomastic chain and it becomes particularly present from the second half of the 12th century (Rossebastiano, 2009b, p. 59; all translations from Italian are by the author).

2 The first mention of the profession as an anthroponym in Piedmont concerns a Novarese notary and dates back to the 8th century (cf. Rossebastiano, 2009a, p. 3).

3 Cf. Rossebastiano (2009a, p. 6).
The professions that are placed first within the formula are the most popular, while those of the upper social ranks, and especially those of the “intellectual” type, show greater difficulty in taking root. The reasons are probably to be found both in the character of greater distinctiveness present in the “higher-class” professions than in the popular ones and in the unusual inheritance of the “intellectual” professions (Rossebastiano, 2009a, p. 11).

Furthermore, the perspective of the name of the profession can be extended to the whole family, considering that the diffusion of bynames linked to a specific activity is closely related to the life and work of the communities. In the valley considered in this study, the Valley of Lanzo5, the most represented professions6 that enter into anthroponymic determination are those related to agricultural and pastoral life: boverio7, becario/becherio8, mulaterio9, margarot10. Considering also

4 Original text: “Le professioni che per prime si collocano all’interno della formula sono quelle più popolari, mentre quelle proprie dei ranghi sociali superiori, e soprattutto quelle di tipo «intellettuale», mostrano maggiore difficoltà a radicarsi. Le ragioni di tutto ciò sono probabilmente da ricercarsi sia nel carattere di maggiore distintività presente nelle professioni «superiori» rispetto a quelle popolari, sia nella non abituale ereditarietà delle professioni «intellettuali»”.

5 The reference corpus of this research is a collection of 14th-century administrative accounts (rolls) related to the Franco-Provençal Valley of Lanzo (North-West of Italy) stored in the State Archives of Turin (ASTO, Sezioni Riunite, Camera dei Conti, Piemonte, Articolo 41—Lanzo, §1 Conti. Then quoted as ASTO, Art. 41).

6 In general, with respect to the corpus, most of the second names are, p. lexical-nicknames (45%), topographic (30%) or can be made up of a personal name (25%). The proportion of the various lexico-nickname component is, p. professional (29%), generic vocabulary (20%), moral (18%), physical (15%), the 18% left are zoonyms, phytodes, charges, and familiar names. The high percentage of professional attestations of our corpus depends also on the type of source; the document of tax nature, in fact, is closely linked to economic transactions and consequently should provide a privileged space for trade and transactions deriving from the exercise of professions.

7 Samples, p. “Recepit a oliveto boverij pro rembus [sic] emptis a reynaudo de castro precio […]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 32 (1364–1365), p. VI); “Recept a johanneta conyeri pro rebus emptis a johanneta et jaquemeta de boveriis precio […]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 32 (1364–1365), p. VII).


9 “Recepit a Bertino selvo pro verbo iniurioso dicto Bastardo mulaterio et quia […]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 15 (1343–1345), p. XVII); “Recept ab uxore Jacobi de bonavia pro rebus emptis a peroneta uxore Johannis mulaterij precio […]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 32 (1364–1365), p. VIII).

10 “Recepit a bertodo len pro laude rerum permutatarum cum martino de margarot et jaquemetto mineto extimatis […]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 24 (1358–1359), p. V). From the preromance *margarius could be the base for the Piedmontese expression marghé “farmer” but also that of a professional who sells milk and butter directly to the customer (Cf. DSA, s.v. Marghè) with the addition of the diminutive suffix in -ot< -ottus (Rohlfs, 1966–1969, §1143). The marghé is housed in the margaria i.e. the farmhouse (cf. Levi, 1927, v. Marghè; REG 5264a); it is a synonym of shepherd with attestations widespread in south-western Piedmont and western Liguria together with
that the Valley of Lanzo is a Franco-Provençal alpine valley bordering France, some determinations are linguistically rich with Franco-Provençal, Occitan and Piedmontese echoes such as *bergi“mountain dweller” or *cebrore.

In mountain areas the guardianship of pigs was essential: so, the byname *porchariis.

The indication of the craft exercised also allows to highlight the link between the individual and the territory, thus defining the characteristics of the latter. If we find, for example, that people were recognized through the reference to a vineyard, we must conclude that the cultivation of the vine was developed in a certain place in a significant way (Rossebastiano, 2009b, p. 54).

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11 “Recepit a *petro de bergi pro re empta a petro de bernardo” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 1 (1306–1307), p. IV); “Recepit a *petro bergi de canturia quia verba Jniuriosa dixit Johanni girardi et uxore Jaquemeti furni” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 24 (1358–1359), p. XXI). From the Latin base *vĕrvēcarius o *bĕrbēcarius (REW 9267) o *ver(ve)garius (Serra, 1954–1965, p. 165), bergerius is a shepherd. Among the oldest forms, birbicarius appears during the 7th century in Lex Romana Burgundiorum II and it is attested very soon in Occitan bèrdzi (FEW 17, 336 and GPSR, II, p. berger) and then widespread to a very large area between France and Piedmont. We report some statements, p. Mosella bèrji, Brusson bèrdži (FEW 17, 334), Provençal bergier (REW 9267) and Piedmontese bergé (DSA, s.v. Bergè). About *bergi ALLy stresses that this a form of wide extension derived du nom de l’animal dont s’occupe ce domestique, ou bien ils sont les termes qui désignent le domestique en général (ALLy, 5, p. 226). AIS (map 1073 pecoraio “goat keeper”) offers berge, barge, brge as North-Western forms with a single occurrence lu bèrdzi in Saint Marcel (point 122).

12 “Recepit a Taurino de burghiglono russo et stephano vitono pro terra et prato emptis precio […]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 15 (1343–1345), p. XIII); “[…] receptus apud chamberiaci per guiffredum bethone de chamberiaci clericum domini” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 24 (1358–1359), p. XX). From old German *with “creature” transformed in the alpine area into *witto, -onis with a negative meaning relating to the miserable condition of the mountain dwellers. The female form has also a double meaning between “mountain dweller” and simply “woman” and the feminine adjective vitona in Piedmont is related to the cows, p. the vitona cow indicates the mountain cow (cf. Rossebastiano, 2006, pp. 75–79).

13 “Recepit a Jacobo balva pro ficio empto a *peroneto cebrore precio […]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 15 (1343–1345), p. XV). From Latin capra(m) “goat” in the Franco-Provençal form cevra (cf. Levi, 1918, p. 58) with palatalization of the initial consonant and spirantization of the occlusive with the suffix -oris for “goatherd, keeper of goats”. Forms like *cebrore with vocal -o- and sonorization of the occlusive, rather than the Italian caprarius>capraro, could be influenced by the Provençal form attested in Southern France kabro (REW 1647) a sort of normalized hybrid. It could also be related (even if not so probable) to the Piedmontese form subber “basket” so being connected to the person who makes baskets (cf. AIS, map 1523, points 135, 144, 147, 148, 153 and REP, s.v. sëbb, from the old German zwihar or zubar; REW 9631).

14 “Recepit a *pauleto de porcharijs pro arboribus emptis a Martino sartore precio […]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 15 (1343–1345), p. XVI). This byname is also attested as a nickname in some 15th-century Piedmontese consignments of Forno Canavese (cf. Papa, 2010, p. 104, porcarius).

15 Original text: “L’indicazione del mestiere esercitato consente di evidenziare anche il legame dell’individuo con il territorio, definendo di conseguenza le caratteristiche di quest’ultimo. Se tro-
The reference to the family group appears in the form de + plural ablative (e.g.: johanneta et jaquemeta de boveriis and in pauleto de porcharijs). A crystallized reference may also appear in a form related to the father, e.g.: jacopo bergi or petro de bergi.

Another specific anthroponymic component is connected to the blacksmith’s activity, typical of the Lanzo Valley, where there were many furnaces, mines and professionals for the baking of metals (iron and silver) and others working with clay (tiles, terracotta pots, etc.) or other peculiar activities such as a metal polisher (brunerio). The other forms, showing the variety of different activities, are: ferrero, ferrando, fornerio, fornerio, fornello, fabro, charbonelli, chiatierio, furbico, caudellerio.

viiamo, ad esempio, persone riconosciute attraverso il richiamo alla vigna, dobbiamo concludere che la coltivazione della vite era sviluppata in un determinato luogo in maniera significativa”.

16 “Recepit a Jacometo brunerio qui incessit de boscho peroti de masso” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 15 (1343–1345), p. XIX).
17 “Recepit a petro ferrerij de brachello pro tutela liberorum martinij ferrerij condam” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 32 (1364–1365), p. II).
19 “Recepit a Johanne filio Nicolini cruytalla pro verbo iniurioso dicto leoneto fornaxerio” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 15 (1343–1345), p. X). From Latin fornarius synonym of fornicus “qui in fornace coquit, tegularius” (Du Cange, 1883–1887, s.v. fornarius, fornicus) is related to people making bricks but also dishes and cups.
20 “Recepit a marabesio pro eo quod ipso evaginavit cutellum contra Stephanum fornerium” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 19 (1350–1351), p. VIII).
21 “[...] pro donatione facta per henricum fornelli que non fuit [...]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 19 (1350–1351), p. X). From Latin furnus with suffix -ellus, in ancient French fornel (FEW 3, 903), for metonymy it became a professional nickname.
23 “Recepit ab eodem pro pecia una prati empta ab Anthonia filia condam Martini charbonelli precio [...]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 15 (1343–1345), p. XV). From Latin carbone(m) with suffix -ellus (cf. Rohlfs, 1966–1969, §1082) has been a proper name in France since 14th century (cf. Godefroy, 1881–1898, p. II, s.v. charbonel).
24 “Recepit a martino furbico pro verbo iniurioso dicto giroldo chiatierio” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 24 (1358–1359), p. VIII). From Latin clavus, Italian chiodo, French clou, Provençal and Catalan clau (REW 1984); the base form could be claterius>chiatierius, as the French cloutière (REW 1984).
25 “Recepit a martino furbico pro verbo iniurioso dicto girolado chiatierio” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 24 (1358–1359), p. VIII).
26 “Recepit a Jorcino caudellerio pro rixa habita cum ferrerio de lanceo” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 32 (1364–1365), p. IX). From Latin caldaria with velarization in -au before -ld-, typical of Piedmont and Liguria like French (cf. Rohlfs, 1966–1969, §17) we got caudera (DSA, s.v. Caudera). This form supposes a caudella (+ -erio) not far from the French caudelier, caudèrli “chaudronnier ambulant” (FEW 21, 77), while Italian has been influenced by the medieval Latin caldaria(r)ius “calderai/o” (DEI, s.v. calderai/o).
Typical of the Piedmontese territory is *ferrando* where the use of the suffix *-andus* gains the meaning of a present participle as *nomina agentis*. In our corpus other professional determinations of the same kind are: *charranderio*, *clavanderio*, *persanda*.

Moreover, the form in *-ando* can achieve further suffixation, e.g. a diminutive form *-andus* + *ottus*: es.: *marchiandoto* or *belandoto*.

There were also traders on horseback between Italy and France, in addition to the mentioned *marchiandoto*: the French *marchant*, *mercerius* and specialized merchants as *pollerius* (also in the form coming from beyond the Alps *polterius*).

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28 “Recepit a *mataxino fornacio* quod de pugno percuxit petrum boneti in capite” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 24 (1358–1359), p. X). From Latin *furnus* from whom we have *fornacem*, *fornacius* (with the suffix *-ius* of adjectives) “qui in fornace coquit, tegularius” (Du Cange, 1883–1887, s.v. *fornacius*).

29 “Idem reddit computum quod recepit ab *anthonio de perrer* pro firma alpis de droseto [...]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 19 (1350–1351), p. IV). From Latin *pĕtra(m)*, the reference of *perrer* goes to the Piedmontese *pera* “stone” (DSA, s.v. *Pera*). It is worth observing the fall of the final desinence *-er*-<em>-erius</em> already neo-Latin.


31 “Recepit ab *anthonio charranderio de canturia* quia non consignavit tempore debito” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 24 (1358–1359), p. XIII).

32 “Recepit ab aymoneto filio stephanj drol de canturia pro rebus emptis ab *anthonio clavanderio* precio [...]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 32 (1364–1365), p. VI).

33 “Recepit a *Johannete de persanda* pro rebus emptis a peroneta uxor ditti long precio [...]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 32 (1364–1365), p. VI). We cannot exclude the possibility of a non-specific toponymic reference like *cava persanda*.

34 “Recepit a *martino marchiandoto* quia carnaliter cognovit quamdam mulierem” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 24 (1358–1359), p. IX).


36 “Et *bruneti marchiant* qui recolgingunt ad medium fenum [...]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 19 (1350–1351), p. II). It could correspond to the ancient French *marchand*, *marchant* (FEW 6, 8) or *marcheant* and in ancient Provençal *merchan* (FEW 6, 8).

37 “Recepit a *Johanne mercerio desancto Juliano* pro garda per annum usque ad decem annos [...]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 15 (1343–1345), p. XVI).

38 “Recepit a Jacometa vuillelma pro rebus emptis a *filio conradj de pollerio* [...]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 32 (1364–1365), p. VIII).

39 “Recepit ab heredibus Johannis desancto mauricio et *Raynaldi de polterio* pro firma alpis [...]” (ASTO, Art. 41, r. 15 (1343–1345), p. X). Our hypothesis is a a form *pullus* + *-ettus* + *-erius* for *pull(let)terius* > *pullerius* > *polterius*. We observe that in Central France it is attested *pouletière* “femme qui soigne les poules” (FEW 9, 539 from *pŭllus*); *pouletier* is ancient attested from the 12th century (cf. FEW 9, 544).
The activities related to a precious food resource of the past generated anthroponyms: the chestnut, a core food resource of Piedmont, produced *castagnerio*\(^{40}\) and *maronero*\(^{41}\). We should also consider that in Piedmont the name of the fruit tree can be expressed by the suffix -*arius*\(^{42}\) so *castagnerio* can be synonym of *castanetum*\(^{43}\) and the anthroponym can consequently come from a profession or a toponym.

The honorary titles or military roles are often designated to professions or charges, and at other times they are simply nicknames destined to become hereditary. They are several in our *corpus* but they deserve a separate treatment.

In conclusion, a small Valley on the border between Italy and France offers some very stimulating suggestions about the medieval professions which became Italian (sometimes French) surnames and the different neo-Latin languages of the region offer a wider language perspective.

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**


ASTO, Art. 41 – State Archives of Turin (ASTO, Sezioni Riunite, *Camera dei Conti, Piemonte, Articolo 41 – Lanzo, §1 Conti*)


\(^{41}\) “Recepit a *johanne maronero* pro re empta a petro franchi precio […]” (ASTO, *Art. 41*, r. 24 (1358–1359), p. V). We have to mention the fact that the *maronero* in those areas was also the alpine guide.


\(^{43}\) Cf. Du Cange 1883–1887, s.v. *Castagnerium*. It can indicate a generic toponym; this is related to forms of the Alps like the ancient French *chasteigniere* “lieu planté de chataigniers”, provenzal *castagnaredo*, ecc. (cf. FEW 21, 465). The added name can, therefore, have both the toponymic (generic from a phytonym) and the professional name.
REFERENCES


**ABSTRACT**

Professional determinations represent a classic naming strategy. Even today many surnames recall those that were medieval professions such as the *caligarius*. Moreover, this anthroponym is a nickname with special *status*; in fact, it indicates the role actually played by the individual within his community, rather than being a sort of individual characteristic appellation such as baldness or stature, until it becomes hereditary. The study aims to investigate the type of professional bynames related to the rural location, the type of source taken into consideration (a tax source) and the linguistic features involved.

*Keywords*: anthroponym, nickname, byname

**ABSTRAKT**

Określenia zawodowe reprezentują klasyczną strategię nazewniczą. Nawet dzisiaj wiele nazwisk przypomina nazwy, które określały średniowieczne zawody, np. *kaligarius*. Co więcej, ten antroponim jest przydomkiem o szczególnym *statusie*; w rzeczywistości wskazuje on raczej na rolę odgrywaną rzeczywiście przez osobę w obrębie jej wspólnoty, a nie jest rodzajem indywidualnej, charakterystycznej apelacji, takiej jak łysina czy postawa, aż do momentu, gdy stanie się ona dziedziczna. Celem badania jest określenie typów nazw zawodowych (przezwisk) związanych z obszarami wiejskimi, z wykorzystaniem jednego rodzaju źródła (źródło podatkowe) oraz cech językowych.

*Słowa kluczowe*: antroponim, przezwisko, przydomek

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