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A textbook for foreign students

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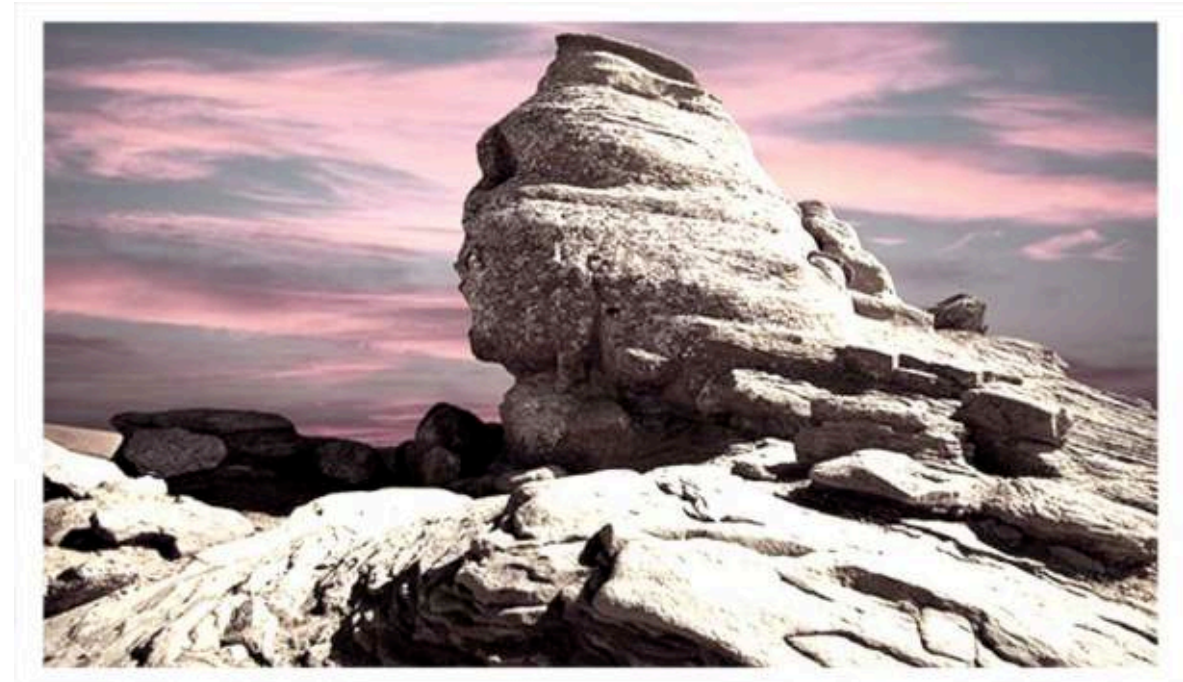
LUCIAN VASILE BÂGIU

The final chapter (Romanian language today) presents the Romanian language in synchrony. It explores essential issues, such as: the double state of Romanian (Romance and Balkan), the individuality of Romanian within Romance context and Balkan language area, and an etymological analysis of Romanian vocabulary. The comments take into account particularly the vocabulary. Not only because it is highly illustrative in itself, but also as it is the easiest to comprehend by first-level foreign students learning the Romanian language. Each chapter comprises a theoretical explanation, amply exemplified with adequate samples and is followed by a practical section – individual tasks, compulsory or optional, with structural and self-evaluating object.

Associate Professor Constantin-Ioan Mladin

The content of the course is a timely and requisite report for a foreign student who does not speak Romanian and is not aware of the various circumstances and contexts for the expression of Romanian language. It is more than welcome the tackling of a several fundamental matters of Romanian language in an interdisciplinary approach, explaining the function of Romanian culture and civilization in shaping the Romanian language. (...) The author maps out certain tasks for the student aiming at the summing up of the main theoretical knowledge exposed in the course, interpolated with practical tasks where the students are requested to solve translation and composition exercises, making use of customary words.

Professor Felix Nicolau



INTRODUCTION IN THE STUDY OF ROMANIAN LANGUAGE

A TEXTBOOK FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

ISBN 978-606-613-151-3

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2018

LUCIAN VASILE BÂGIU

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Str. Gabriel Bethlen, nr. 5
RO 510009 Alba Iulia
Tel: 004-0258-811412
Fax: 004-0258-812630
E-mail: editura_aeternitas@yahoo.com
www.editura-aeternitas.ro

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To David Jonsson

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The course is intended for the optional subject *Introduction in the Study of Romanian Language* of the specialization *Romanian language as a foreign language – preparatory year*. It is a two hours' course every two weeks in the first semester, meant for foreign students (mostly Arabs) with no previous knowledge of Romanian language, culture and civilization, with little (if any) former linguistic or foreign language training and with no future professional interest in the subject, as most are concerned with Medical Studies (or, to a lesser extent, Engineering, Law, Accountancy, etc.). The course was written keeping all of these in mind and also with a view to the compulsory subjects of the *Preparatory Year: Romanian culture and civilization; Phonetics, vocabulary and grammatical structures; Written and oral communication; Comprehension of written and oral text; Writing and composition*. Every of the seven chapters of the course aims at introducing the students to the basics of Romanian language in the larger context of the Romanian culture and civilization development, with the ultimate purpose of settling both a few essential theoretical knowledge and some practical communication skills for the foreign students as inhabitants of Romania. The compulsory tasks at the end of each chapter act as a summing up of the main knowledge of the course and as application for probable written and oral events of daily life. In the end, the course is planned as a helping tool, balanced in between the academic linguistic rigor and the day-to-day necessities of language and culture.

ORIGINS

Romanian language ought to be considered a descendent of Latin language, as the Roman Empire ruled part of the territory of nowadays Romania from 106 to 275 AD, after having defeated and incorporated the core of the ancient Dacian kingdom. However, the Latinity of Romanian language was challenged more than once, for historical, political and linguistic reasons.

Mention should be made that a good number of the foreigners encountering the Romanians in the Middle Ages noted the similarity between Latin and Romanian languages which they have reasoned through the plausible Roman descent of Romanians¹. The same logic was followed by the neighboring people of Romanians, i.e. the Hungarians and the Poles². Once the idea was firmly established by various Catholic instances, it was reiterated by the Protestants all the same. Johannes Honterus from Brasov (Transylvania) stated that the origin of the Romanians is to be found in the “Getae who had once ruled Dacia and the Romans commanded by Flacus”; Sebastian Münster: “Some people write that in certain places of Valachia, the Roman language has remained unchanged”³.

Foreigners have designated the Romanians with the name *Vlahi/Vlasi/Valahi* (“Wallachians”), a term of Old Germanic origin, later adopted by the Slavs. The word *român* is first ever recorded in Romanian in the book *Palia de la Orăștie* (The First Two Books of the Old Testament, 1581). The term *român/ rumân* had the meaning “Romanian/ serf” and shared a close relationship with the term *roman* (meaning “Roman”) in several

¹ Among them: Pope Innocent III, the Catholic Archbishop John of Sultaneyeh, Poggio Bracciolini, Flavio Biondo, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Andrea Brenta.

² Such as: the anonymous chronicler of the Hungarian King Bella IV, the chronicler Simon de Keza, humanists at the court of Hungary’s King Mathias Corvinus (Alessandro Cortesi and Antonio Bonfini), as well as Filippo Buonaccorsi Callimaco, adviser to the Polish king.

³ *Apud* Alexandru Niculescu, *Outline history of Romanian language*, p. 14.

Romanian books from the Middle Ages⁴. Dimitrie Cantemir stated in his *Chronicle of the Roman-Moldo-Wallachians* in 1710: “the Romanians in Dacia, who are nowadays Moldavians, Wallachians and Transylvanians, are in their origin genuine Romans from Italy brought to these places by Trajan the Emperor”⁵. This was partly due to the need of Middle Ages Romanians to distinguish themselves from the neighboring invading people. And this difference was to be marked through an old(er) and most “noble” origin: the Roman Empire, the conqueror which everybody was very much aware of, unlike the defeated (and lesser known) Dacians.

Thus the Latin origin of Romanian language became the landmark of any linguistic conceptualization, most famous being the assertion of Alexandru Rosetti when characterizing the genealogy of Romanian language with the definition: “the Latin language spoken without interruption in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, including the Romanized Danubian provinces (Dacia, South Panonia, Dardania, Moesia Superior and Inferior), from the moment of penetration of Latin into these provinces down to our days”⁶. This point of view aimed at emphasizing that none of the contacts with any other languages had any significant influence on the system of Romanian as a Latin based language. It rules out first of all the Slavic languages, but also Greek, Hungarian and Turkish; and, of course, the unknown Dacian ancestry. “Those who have conveyed the Latin language, handing it down from father to son, in these Danubian regions, have always been aware of speaking the same language (Latin)”⁷.

However one should keep in mind that Romanian is not, of course, identical with Latin, but a very distinct language, along with other Romance languages: French, Italian, Sardinian, Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, Provençal, Rhaeto-Romanic and the lost Dalmatian. Unlike all the others, Romanian presents itself as a peculiar case: it is the only Romance language developed in the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

In Dacia the agents of Romanization must have been the merchants, the Roman army, the veterans, administrative officials, farmers. They

⁴ Written (or published) by Deacon Coresi, Mihail Moxa, Grigore Ureche, Dimitrie Cantemir, Samuel Micu Clain.

⁵ Dimitrie Cantemir, *Hronicul vechimei a romano-moldo-vlahilor*, I, p. 69.

⁶ Al. Rosetti, *Istoria limbii române*, p. 77.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

originated not from Rome itself, the majority is likely not to have been even from Italic peninsula either, but *ex toto orbe romano*, from all over the empire. Thus the Latin these not very educated “Romans” must have spoken in Dacia is likely to have belonged to the inferior, marginal socio-cultural phenomenon of Roman world: “vulgar” Latin, the common speech. The theory is that the native Thraco-Dacian population abandoned its mother tongue and in no more than 160 years gradually adopted this Vulgar Latin spoken by the new-comers, thus not only giving birth to a new language, Romanian, but to a new people as well: Romanians. As I. I. Rusu puts it “the ‘barbarian’ idiom was eliminated (after the intermediate phase of bilingualism) by official Romance-Latin whose prestige was infinitely superior”⁸.

Little – if anything at all – is known about the Dacian language. Even if the elite of the Dacians (the priests, the administration, the nobles) was writing indeed, the records it may have kept must have been thoroughly destroyed in the aftermath of the Roman conquest. The Roman army in Dacia, as elsewhere, proved extremely efficient in burning, demolishing, destroying all material traces of the defeated and conquered civilization. The temples and the citadels of the Dacians were meticulously leveled to the ground. And so, any hypothetical archives – vanished.

Various linguists have attempted to identify any traces of the Dacian language that may have survived in the Romanian language. In the absence of written records, the main methodological approach was to compare Romanian words with similar words in Latin, in Slavic languages, or in any other language that might have influenced the native population and thus the Romanian language. If similarities were found the consensus was that Romanians adopted those words from Latin, Slavic and so on. If no similarities were found, than there was no other option but to assume they may have been Dacian. Thus the unknown (and presumably abandoned) Dacian language was granted the favor of having passed to Romanian language about 160 words. Of lesser prestige, by all means. They are:

Abur(e) “steam”, *argea* “weaving loom”, *baci* “head shepherd”, *balaur* “dragon”, *balegă* “cow dung”, *baltă* “swamp”, *barză* “stork”, *bască* “shorn” – about wool, *brad* “fir-tree”, *brânză* “cheese”, *brâu* “man’s broad

⁸ I. I. Rusu, *Elemente autohtone în limba română*, p. 111-112.

belt”, *brustur(e)* “burr”, *buc* “tow”, *bucur(-a)* “to rejoice”, *bucurie* “joy”, *bunget* “thicket”, *buză* “lip”, *căciulă* “fur-cap”, *călbează* or *gălbează* “sheep pox”, *căpușă* “sheep tick”, *căpută* “shoe-sole”, *cătun* “hamlet”, *ceafă* “nap of one’s neck”, *cioară* “crow”, *cioc* “beak or bill”, *ciucă* “peak, head”, *ciuf* “tuft”, *ciump* “stump”, *ciupi* “to pinch”, *ciut* or *șut* “hornless”, *copac* “tree”, *copil* “child”, *curpen* or *curpăn* “tendrill”, *cursă* “trap”, “pit-fall”, *daș* “lamb”, *droaie* “crowd”, “host”, *druete* “phantom”, *fărâcă* “bit”, “crumb”, *fluier* “whistle”, “shepherd’s pipe”, *gard* “hedge” or “fence”, *gata* “ready”, *ghimpe* “torn”, *ghionoai* “wood-pecker”, *ghiuj* “old man”, *gogă* “scarecrow”, *grapă* “harrow”, *gresie* “whetstone”, “grit stone”, *groapă* “pit”, *grumaz* “neck”, *grunz* “lump”, “clot”, *gușă* “goiter”, “fowl’s crop”, *hameș* “greedy”, *jumătate* “half”, *mal* “river’s bank”, *mazăre* “pea”, *măgură* “knoll”, *mărar* “dill”, *mânz* “colt”, *moș* “old man”, *mugur* “bud”, *murg* “dark” – about horses, *mușcoi* or *mășcoi* “small donkey”, *năpârcă* “adder”, *noian* “heap”, *pârâu* “brook”, *pupăză* “hoopoe”, *rânză* “gizzard”, *searbăd* “vapid”, *scăpăra* “to sparkle”, *scrum* “ashes”, *sâmbure* “kernel”, “stone” or “pip of a fruit”, *spânz* “hellebore”, *spuză* “hot ashes”, *sterp* “barren”, *strepede* “cheese maggot”, *strung* “sheep-pen” or “wicket”, *șale* “loins”, “back of the body”, *șopârlă* “lizard”, *șap* “billy-goat”, *șarc* “fold” or “pen”, *șeapă* “stake”, *urdă* “whey cheese”, *vatră* “hearth”, *viezure* “badger”, *zară* or *zăr* “whey”, *zgardă* “dog-collar”⁹. Also, possibly: *a curma* “to curb” or “to stop”, *a dărâma* “to demolish”, *mătură* “broom”, *păstăie* “pod”¹⁰.

These ancient elements are present in all Romanian dialectal areas and the words belong mainly to the concrete life, dealing with man’s body and life, the flora, the fauna, pasturing, geomorphism (forms of relief) and a few verbs. It is impossible to figure out any grammatical tools or the grammatical structure of the Dacian language (pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, verbal endings). The mainstream theory is that the language simply disappeared, due to the “prestige” of Latin.

The most productive parallelism is with the case of the Celtic language spoken by the natives in Gaul. It disappeared when facing the language of the same conquerors, the Romans. French language preserved a small number of Celtic elements, 180 words, concrete nouns naming plants,

⁹ Al. Rosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 271-283; I. I. Rusu, *op. cit.*, p. 131-216.

¹⁰ Cf. I. I. Rusu, *op. cit.*, p. 131-216.

birds, trees, fruits, farming implements and household tools. The parallelism can be extended to Iberian and Celto-Iberian elements preserved in Spanish.

Both in Gaul and in Iberia the Roman control lasted for around 600 years¹¹.

Compulsory tasks:

1. Mention to what language was Romanian related by foreigners encountering Romanian language and Romanian people in the Middle Ages.
2. Mention by what name had the foreigners designated the Romanians in the Middle Ages.
3. Mention in what Romanian book and in what year was the word “român” first ever recorded.
4. Mention the definition of Romanian language given by Alexandru Rosetti.
5. Give a reasonable explanation for the Roman descent of the Romanian people.
6. Mention the other Romance languages.
7. Advance an explanation for the lack of the written records for Dacian language.
8. Translate in your mother tongue the following words (of likely Dacian origin):
Brânză “cheese”, *bucur(-a)* “to rejoice”, *buză* “lip”, *căciulă* “fur-cap”, *ceafă* “nap of one’s neck”, *cioară* “crow”, *copac* “tree”, *copil* “child”, *fluier* “whistle”, “shepherd’s pipe”, *gard* “hedge” or “fence”, *gata* “ready”, *gresie* “whetstone”, “grit stone”, *groapă* “pit”, *jumătate* “half”, *mal* “river’s bank”, *mazăre* “pea”, *mărar* “dill”, *moș* “old man”, *pârâu* “brook”, *scrum* “ashes”, *sâmbure* “kernel”, “stone or pip of a fruit”, *șopârlă* “lizard”, *a dărâma* “to demolish”, *mătură* “broom”.
9. Choose ten words from the previous exercise and make up short sentences (in Romanian).

¹¹ One should keep in mind that the prestige of Latin was not at all successful in replacing native languages in other areas of the Roman Empire, such as Britain or Judea.

10. Mention what happened to the Dacian language and give a reasonable explanation for that.

Optional task (for B1 level)

Attempt a translation of the following Romanian text into English, with the help of a Romanian-English dictionary.

Diurpan

Ai lepădat lespedeza peste groapă și scrum. Ai aruncat către cetate privire precum genunea unde cădeau dărâmate zidurile de gresie. Noian de flăcări era vatra de pe măgură, scăpărând aprig în amurg. Nu ai răbdat. Ai urcat cu murgul buiestru pe malul pâraului înspre un grui de bunget. Tare ți-ai încurcat urma în codrul mare. Dar la o bortă (mistreț, șopârlă ori bălaur?) murgul s-a dezbarat. Lângă un gorun pe o munună te-ai descățat de grumazul său, te-ai vătămat la șale de o butură și ai leșinat. Pruncul bălan și creț de la brâu și-a îngurzit obrazul și a stârmit din rânză droaie de strigăt printre brândușe, brusturi, curpeni, spânzi și zârne. A sculat o cioară, o pupăză, un culbec și un viezure. Peste baltă a ridicat și un mosoc năsarâmb ce s-a desghinat din zgardă și a zgâriat cu ghearele la un bordei într-un cătun.

Te-ai uitat în jur. Ai văzut o mătură, o argea și un morman de lână în caier. O undrea însăilată în pânză lângă o traistă cu păstaie aninată pe un cârlig. Un ghiob cu brânză și un urcior fără dop plin cu ravac. În țarină o grapă și o cață lângă o șiră. Încurcat de un țaruș, un măgar amețit de o căpușă se băliga peste o baltă de zară. În țarc la strungă se gudurau la un grunz un țap șut și un vătui cu gălbează. Pe lângă gard zburda un cârlan descurcat din cursă. Un baci ortoman cu țurcă și țundră mișca un fluier între buze și stârnea din gușă o doină ca o boare. S-a curmat. „Te-ai întremat nițel, stăpâne?”. Moșul a mai desghinat un butuc din maldac, a acățat de baier oala cu zăr și mălai și a ridicat-o de pe cujbă. „Alacul e gata mămăligă, stăpâne. Om băga în burtă șoric și străghiață fără strepede, urdă cu mărar, mazăre cu rață necum sarbădă și om bucura beregata cu struguri gordin, deh, ca la stână, dar de nu ne-om sugușa”. Aprig și-a aruncat căciula pe capută. „Copilul nu e vătămat, jumătatea me’ l-a dereticat de urdoare, l-a descurcat de iele și de iazmă și l-a mädărit în leagăn. E stearpă, stăpâne, iar eu coala

ghiuj, barza nu ne-o mai anina vreo traistă pe burlanul cu steregie. Băiatul e sâmbure, e fărâma, dar va fi mânz și zimbru zburdând peste sâmcea. E mugure fără tului acum, dar va fi mire mare, moțat și mușat. Stăpâne, de nu te vei cruța și ți-oi fi singur găde, îl vom păstra, ne va fi reazem în viscolul ce va să vie”.

Ți-ai lepădat zestrea în vatra din bunget. Ți-ai sugrumat un ghes și ai răbdat un ghimpe. Ți-ai înghiontit murgul buiestru și ai urcat pe malul jielțului printre copaci. Adia un abur ca o boare. Pe o lespede s-a urcat o năpârcă și nu s-a mișcat un melc. În codru a ciocănit o ghionoaie. Dintre măceși s-a ridicat o ciocârlie. Ai descățat de la brâu o custură și ai scăpărat-o pe gresie. Te-ai întremat de un brad și te-ai dezbărat de tine. Te vei fi bucurând pururea întru mierul genune.

Lucian Bâgiu,
iunie 2012,
Sarmizegetusa Regia

Optional task

Watch the movie *Dacii* (1967), directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu, with Amza Pelea, Emil Botta, Mircea Albulescu.

LATINITY

As said before, the Roman Empire conquered the heart of the Dacian kingdom in 106 AD. By that time Latin material and spiritual culture was at its peak, its prestige was astonishing, mesmerizing for all “barbarians” already occupied, for those soon to be conquered, even for those most unwilling to be so. All people wanted to speak Latin and nothing else. Another argument in explaining the rapid and thorough Romanization of the entire Dacian population (even of the un-conquered tribes, living outside the newly established Roman frontiers) is that the influence of Roman civilization over the Dacians was much older. Some scattered coins and broken pottery with fragments of Latin inscriptions, some Roman military units on defensive position along the Danube river, some merchants speaking Latin (and Greek, for that matter) traveling inside Dacia should make one accept that Latin started to be adopted voluntarily by the Dacians long before they fought several brutal wars against the Roman invaders...

Be that as it may, from 106 to 271, when part of Dacian territory was under the administration of the Roman Empire, Latin had its biggest opportunity. Colonists from all Roman provinces (Moesia, Thracia, Panonia, Dalmatia, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Gaul, Rhaetia, Africa), none of them from Rome by ancestry (or birth), very few (if any at all) from Italy, each with a different mother tongue, but all speaking *Latina vulgaris*, settled in Dacia and interacted with the locals using Latin. Which the locals had no other option but to adopt as their mother tongue, when conversing with the new comers about farming, nature, family, life and all sorts of other novelties.

If that is not enough for a good argument, military steps in. There were two Roman legions stationed in the newly conquered Dacian province: one at Apulum (Alba Iulia), another at Potaissa (Turda). For good reason: in 160 years of Roman occupation, they had to fight continuously tens of wars and rebellions led by the Dacian tribes over and over again, with no signs of fatigue, until the Emperor Aurelian had to admit officially in 271 AD an

irreversible fact: the Empire had lost the province at the hands of the refractory barbarians. One hundred years later, the Dacians from liberated Dacia were still attacking the Empire, fighting the irreconcilable enemy. The theory is that the Roman legions, in the intervals of the never-ending wars with the locals, played an educational role in their turn, teaching the opponents Latin, for mutual understanding. Mostly the retired soldiers, *veterani*, putting arms aside settled in Dacia, married with local Dacian women, taught them Latin and thus their offspring learned Latin as their mother tongue.

Urbanization is supposed to have played another major role in Romanizing Dacia. There were ten Roman cities in Dacia, built for the army, administration and colonists. To what extent Dacians (a rural culture by definition) decided to move into these cities (or to follow their lifestyle) is easy to figure out. After Roman retreat the cities collapsed into oblivion (or were, at most, reduced to scarcely inhabited ruins).

There were no Roman schools in Dacia (such as those existing in Gaul or Iberia)...

Following the traces it has left in Romanian language, the sort of Latin spoken in Dacia was not at all urban, abstract, educated, as it proves to have been in Western Europe. It was archaic, non-abstract, and inferior. It must have included Greek and Illyric elements (and Thracian, for that matter) from the Balkan Peninsula, considering that a good number of the “Roman” colonists brought to Dacia originated from the Balkan provinces of the Empire (which were par excellence the native ancestral land of the Thracians...). There are Latin words present in all Romance languages, but not in Romanian: *amor* “love”, *gadium* “jubilation”, *laborare* “to work”, *mater* “mother”, *pater* “father”, etc.¹². They are elevated, abstract, literary words. Considering the socio-cultural feature of the Roman Dacia, these words were probably never known/ used by the local population. Latin spoken in Dacia was not in direct contact with Rome. What is even more significant, there are no clear evidence that there was any written Latin culture in Dacia. The Roman civilization in Dacia left traces of constructions and art objects, but no compelling evidence of written records.

¹² Ion Coteanu, Gh. Bolojan, Matilda Caragiu-Marioțeanu, *Istoria limbii române*, II, p. 122-128.

The theory is that *Latina vulgaris* brought by the Roman Empire in Dacia, different from the very beginning when comparing it to “classical” Latin, developed into a different idiom, which may be called Carpatho-Danubian Latin, from which Romanian emerged. No written records exist to support this theory; everything is constructed by means of deduction. Since there was no contact between this “Carpatho-Danubian Latin” and the Medieval Latin of the Western Europe, the only connection that could have existed in the early Middle Ages was with Byzantium Latin. But no written records exist to support this theory either. Thus Romanian presents itself nothing short of a miracle.

A miracle cannot be explained rationally. This may be why when scientists tried to find the exact area where Romanian emerged they were at loss. A. Philippide noticed “the great unity of Romanian, established thanks to a minimum dialectal differences and to a close connection existing between the remotest dialectal groupings”¹³. He added: “In order to reach such a result, there was a need for the closest possible common life – geographically and politically – which would only happen in the Balkan Peninsula”¹⁴. Thus some believe Romanian language emerged south of the Danube, where the Roman administration lasted for a longer time. Others object to this. Sextil Pușcariu makes mention of the lack of cohesion around cities in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, when comparing it to the West. Life simply did not centered on cities. Urbanization could not have played a significant role in the birth of Romanian language...

Since cohesion was not the main feature of the eastern Roman Empire, another theory emerges: no common life, no geographical or political unity is needed for the birth of a language. Not for Romanian, anyway. The Romanians are “survivors of those south-east European Romans who did not perish in the wars against the invading barbarians and were not de-nationalized, melting into the mass of young peoples settling hereabouts. Their primitive homeland (...) must be sought on either bank of the Danube and of its tributaries, between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, where the Latin population formed a denser or sparser network in various epochs. Those who seek the Romanian people’s «cradle» or «hearts» in

¹³ A. Philippide, „*Originea românilor*”, II. *Ce spun limbile română și albaneză*, p. 383-384.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 385.

some small regions proceed (...) from a wrong opinion on the linguistic unity of the early Romanians”¹⁵. Thus the territory where Romanian was formed is large – and vague. “Romanian used to be spoken over a vast territory, North and South of the Danube, which in its Southern part included the western reaches of the river Drina, South of Skopje, the South-West Bulgaria, the region along the Danube towards the Black Sea, Banat, Transylvania, Oltenia and Moldavia, or, in other words, the former provinces of Moesia Superior and Inferior, Dacia and Panonia Inferior”¹⁶. The explanation to make this believable is the great mobility of the Romanized population, the immigration from an area to another. The idea is that once the Roman Empire abandoned Dacia, the population of the former province was in direct and uninterrupted contact with the provinces south of the Danube, crossing the big river back and forth, crossing Balkan and Carpathian Mountains, travelling thousands of kilometers, usually to accompany sheep looking for greener pastures, thus developing the (new) language and people: Romanian.

And all of these happened on the former territory of the Dacians and Thracians.

Complete the following tasks:

1. Name the place of origin for the colonists brought by the Roman Empire in Dacia.
2. Name the language these colonists were speaking.
3. Name the two cities where Roman legions were stationed in Dacia.
4. Characterize the kind of Latin that may have left traces in Romanian language.
5. Mention if the Roman culture in Dacia was written.
6. Mention the period of the Roman occupation of Dacia.
7. Name the place of origin for Romanian language, according to A. Philippide.
8. Name the place of origin for Romanian language, according to Sextil Pușcariu and A. Rosetti.

¹⁵ Sextil Pușcariu, *Limba română*, vol. I, *Privire generală*, p. 252.

¹⁶ Al. Rosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

9. Name the explanation advanced for the developing of Romanian language over a vast territory.

Optional task

Watch the movie *Columna* (1968), directed by Mircea Drăgan, with Iarion Ciobanu, Ștefan Ciubotărașu, Emil Botta, Florin Piersic, Gheorghe Dinică.

CONTINUITY

The bitterest dispute concerning the Romanians was the issue of their continuity in Dacia. For political reasons, their continuity was questioned by several Austrian, German or Hungarian historians¹⁷. But even the issue of continuity had several significant approaches: continuity of Dacians, continuity of Romans or continuity of Daco-Romans.

The assertion which started the entire dispute belongs to the Latin historian Eutropius. He wrote that no Dacians remained in Dacia after the Roman conquest (*Dacia enim diuturno bello Decibali viris fuerat exhausta*¹⁸). This astonishing allegation suited first of all to foreign parties interested in denying the continuity of Romanians north of the Danube River during the Middle Ages. According to a few foreign historians, Romanians are late comers in Transylvania, from south of the Danube, late in the Middle Ages, after the Hungarian invasion. Paradoxically, Eutropius' statement suited to some Romanian parties as well, representatives of the so called Transylvanian School, puristic Latinizers (of Catholic education quite often). According to these extremists Romanians are exclusively Romans: "acești rumâni nu sunt vreun Națion strein, ci chiar romanii cei vechi, cari din părțile Romiei în Dația, la anii de la Hs. 106 ca biruitori și vitezi au venit" (These Romanians are no foreign nation but those very Romans of ancient times who came from Rome to Dacia in 106 Anno Domini as conquerors and gallants)¹⁹.

There are many arguments against the ridiculous theory of Dacians' extermination. The Roman historian (of Greek origin) Dio Cassius makes mention of some Dacian tribes submitting to the Romans. Much later a Roman general, named Regalianus (death in 268), rebelled and was proclaimed Roman Emperor by his troops. He claimed to have been a direct

¹⁷ J. F. Sulzer, I. C. Engel, J. K. Eder, R. Roesler.

¹⁸ *Breviarium at urbe condita*, VIII, 6, retrieved on March, 10th, 2018 from http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0115/_PV.HTM

¹⁹ *Apud D. Prodan, Încă un Supplex libellus românesc: 1804*, p. 41.

descendant (great-grandson) of the last Dacian king Decebalus. There were several Roman Emperors of Dacian descent. Galerius Maximianus (250-311) was not only extremely proud of his Dacian ancestry, but wanted to change the name of the Roman Empire into Dacian Empire. There are attested several Dacian auxiliary troops recruited from Dacia. According to epigraphic sources Dacian names were Romanized particularly after 212 when *peregrini* Dacians became *cives daci* under Caracalla's edict. Place names (including new Roman settlements) and river names were to a large extent transmitted by the native population to the Roman conquerors. Logic itself is even more compelling for an argument: Romans would not have been interested in the extermination of the native Dacian population, for they needed labour force. Dacia was a very rich realm (likely the main reason for Romans' will to conquer it) and the new comers needed to exploit the skilled native workers for collecting the riches. Where else in the Empire did the Romans ever exterminate the numerous people they have conquered? On top of these, in the vicinity of the new Roman Dacia there were larger unconquered territories inhabited by free Dacians, most famous the Carpaes and Costoboci in Moldavia and Bukovina, but also other tribes in Crişana, Maramureş and Slovakia as well. Some of them settled within the borders of the Roman Empire, others kept on living a free life on their own terms, attacking the Empire over and over again. In 570 the language of the Bessi (a Thracian tribe) was still spoken in a monastery from Mount Sinai²⁰. In 1078 the Byzantine historian Cecaumenos described in his *Strategikon* the Vlachs (= Aromanians) as descendant of the Dacians and Bessi coming from the Danube area seeking revenge for the defeat inflicted to their ancestors by Roman Emperor Trajan during the Dacian wars. One may safely infer that Dacia never became voided of Dacians.

The second controversy of continuity in Dacia refers to the continuity of the Romans. In 271 Emperor Aurelian accepted officially what may already have been a matter of fact for some time: the Roman Empire had lost the province. He ordered the abandonment, the withdrawal, the evacuation. The dispute is over what exactly was withdrawn officially. The power of the Empire was represented by the army and the administration. A historical fact is that the two Roman legions in Dacia were relocated south

²⁰ According to Antoninus Placentius.

of the Danube, along with a new administrative division: the 13th Gemina from Apulum (Alba-Iulia) to Ratiaria (28 km from Vidin, Bulgaria) thus being founded a new province, Dacia Ripensis; the 5th Macedonia from Potaissa (Turda) to Oescus (close to Pleven, Bulgaria), another new province being established: Dacia Mediterranea. Thus the Empire wanted to preserve appearances by the new denominations, slicing the older provinces of Moesia south of the Danube into smaller Dacias... It is reasonable to accept that along with the army and the administration the upper social strata of the Roman society in Dacia emigrated south of the Danube just the same: the wealthy Romans, the notables, the merchants.

The question is what happened to the majority of the Roman population, the ordinary Roman citizens. Here lies a great confusion, since the historical records are vague. Eutropius relates about “Romans” being relocated (*abductesque Romanos ex urbibus et agris daciae in media Moesia collocavit*, IX, 8, 2), all the same Rufius Festus (*translatis extinde Romanis*, Breviarium rerum gestarum populi romani, VIII), just a little bit more explicit being the biographer of Aurelian (probably Flavius Vopiscus), who speaks about the army and “provincial people” (*sublato exercito et provincialibus*, Historia Augusta, chap. 39: Vita Aureliani). There is a single historian making mention of the *Roman legions* withdrawal from Dacia (and nothing or nobody else): the Christian Bishop Jordanes, A Romanized Gothic historian born in Moesia, presumably very well informed about the happenings in neighbouring Dacia (*evocatis extinde legionibus in Mysia conlocavit*, Romana et Getica, 217). Since all of these records are vague, one should keep in mind that all of them relate events which happened long before (a century at least), therefore they could not have been quite clear. Even more significant, there are no records or traces at all about any sizeable population displacement or transferring south of the Danube. Therefore the official theory is that most of the Roman population remained in the former Roman province of Dacia even after the political withdrawal of the Empire, and continued an ordinary life, having no need for the Roman army and administration for that. These abandoned Roman citizens, together with the Romanized Dacians and the free Dacians somehow managed, against all odds and endless adversities, to forge and preserve a new people and a new language: Romanian.

Archaeological discoveries from 4th to 6th century prove that a Romanized population continued to live modestly, particularly in Transylvania: Daco-Roman settlements, Daco-Roman graveyards (Bratei, Biertan in Sibiu County), Christian objects (a chandelier with the inscription *Zenovius votum posui*), a silver fibula with the inscription *Quartine vivas*, Roman-Byzantine coins, ceramics in provincial Roman tradition etc.

Linguistically there are several arguments proving the Daco-Roman continuity.

When the Slavs immigrated into the Dacian territory, they did not give new names to places, but they adopted the Daco-Roman names of places, something they could only have done so if there was a Daco-Roman population to tell them those names: Alutus > Olt, Maryssus > Mureș, Samus > Someș, Ordessos > Argeș, Pyretos-Porata > Prut. In the Danube plain there are places called Vlașca, Vlășia/ Codrii Vlășiei (“the Vlășia forest”), names given by the Slavs to places where Romanians were living. It was mainly in the forests where the Romanians took shelter from the invaders.

Christianity stands for another linguistic argument of Daco-Roman continuity. It is not certain when did the Daco-Romans (and the Goths) from Dacia (or North or the Danube) become Christians; it may have been in the 3rd and 4th centuries. No matter, the idea is that missionaries could have preached Christianity in Latin only to people who understood Latin (though it is a historical fact that the Gothic bishop Ulfilas or Wulfila, 318-383, had to translate the Bible into Gothic when preaching to Goths in Dacia). This may be the explanation why Romanian language has quite a number of Christian words of Latin origin (Vulgar Latin): R. *biserică* < L. *basilica* “church”, R. *cruce* < L. *crux-crucis* “cross”, R. *Dumnezeu* < L. *Domine Deus* “God”, R. *a boteza* < L. *baptizare* “to baptise”, R. *înger* < L. *angelus* “angel”, etc. Semantic changes in Christian Latin are found in Romanian all the same: L. *lex* > R. *lege* “law”, L. *paganus* > R. *Păgân* “pagan”, L. *peccatum* > R. *păcat* “sin”. Sextil Pușcariu noted that the Romanian Christian terminology is of a rural nature, it does not have the words for the organization and hierarchy of Christian church: “We had no developed

church organization in towns or monastic life in the early centuries of the Middle Ages, but only village priests”²¹.

Romanian farming terminology seems to be of Latin origin in its turn: *câmp* “field”, *a ara* “to plough”, *a săpa* “to delve”, “to hoe”, *a semăna* “to sow”, *a culege* “to harvest”, *a secera* “to reap”, *a treiera* “to thresh”, *arie* “threshing floor”, *a vântura* “to winnow”, *grâu* “wheat”, L. *granum*, *mei* “millet”, L. *milium*, *orz* “barley”, L. *hordeum*, *secară* “rye”, L. *secalis*, *paie* “straw”, L. *palea*, *spic* “cornear”, L. *spicum*, *ceapă* “onion”, L. *caepa*, *pepene* “melon”, L. *pepo*, *peponis*, *trifoi* “trefoil”, L. *trifolium*, etc. Bakery terms resemble to Latin words as well: *moară* “mill”, *a măcina* “to grind”, *a coace* “to bake”, *făină* “flour”, *pâne* or *pâine* “bread”. The main occupation of the Daco-Romans must have been farming and preparing food.

Romanian words designating pasturing and cattle-breeding are similar with Latin words: *pastor* or *păcurariu* “shepherd”, *oaie* “sheep”, *miel* “lamb”, *turmă* “herd” or “flock”, *noaten* “spotted” – applied to sheep, L. *annotinus*, *a ierna* “to hibernate”, L. *hibernare*, *munte* “mountain”, *șes* “plain”, L. *sesum*, *bou* “ox”, *taur* “bull”, *vacă* “cow”, *vițel* “calf”, *capră* “she-goat”, *pășune* “pasture”, *a adăpa* “to water”, *a paște* “to graze”, *staul* “stable”, *fân* “hay”, *furcă* “fork”, *jug* “yoke”, *rumega* “to chew”, “to ruminate”, L. *rumigare*, etc. Other domestic animals are named with words of seemingly Latin origin: *câ(i)ne* “dog”, *cățea* “bitch”, *cal* “horse”, *iapă* “mare”, *armăsar* “stallion”, *asin* “asine”, *porc* “pig” or “hog”, *scroafă* “sow”.

“The high number of Latin terms in agriculture, animal husbandry and the shepherds’ life prove that, besides the shepherds who drove their flocks throughout Romania’s territories, contributing by their movement to standardizing the language, there were also sedentary Romanians employed in farming and stock breeding”²². Grazing seemed to have pushed the Daco-Romans towards a great mobility, in the summer going up in the Alpine regions, in the winter descending to Danube swamps and Black Sea shores. This does not mean they did not have a sedentary life at the same time. They had permanent settlements, where their families were living and where

²¹ Sextil Pușcariu, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 352.

agriculture, fruit-tree growing, wine-growing and domestic crafts were daily habits.

Sextil Pușcariu noticed that a number of Latin words were preserved exclusively in the Daco-Romanian spoken in Western Transylvania, the Apuseni mountains, which might make one believe that was one of the “central areas” of the Daco-Roman population: *ai* “garlic”, *păcurar* “shepherd”, *nea* “snow”, *june* “youth”, *pedestru* “pedestrian”²³.

The theory is that the Daco-Roman population in the abandoned Roman province of Dacia preserved its Romance language, of Vulgar Latin origin, which is Romanian, not only on its own effort, but also through constant contact with the Roman provinces south of the Danube. The Roman Byzantine authority may have extended North of Danube from time to time. It is a historical fact that the Emperor Constantine the Great built a bridge over the Danube at Sucidava (Corabia, Olt County) in 328 and reconstructed the highway along the Olt river up to Romula (Reșca, Olt County). Emperor Justinian founded an archbishopric in 535 which included localities from Dacia. These prove a constant interest of the Roman (Byzantine) Empire into the territory North of Danube, therefore a possible linguistic influence on the local Daco-Romans as well.

Complete the following tasks:

1. Name the fate of the Dacians after the Roman conquest, according to Eutropius.
2. Name at least three arguments for the continuity of the Dacians after the Roman conquest.
3. Name which representatives of the Roman Empire withdrew from Dacia in 271.
4. Name what happened with the majority of the ordinary Roman citizens in Dacia after the province was abandoned by the Roman Empire.
5. Translate in your mother tongue the following Romanian words (of Latin origin): R. *biserică* < L. *basilica* “church”, R. *cruce* < L. *crux-crucis* “cross”, R. *Dumnezeu* < L. *Domine Deus* “God”, R. *a boteza*

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 339.

< L. baptizare “to baptise”, R. *înger* < L. angelus “angel”, *câmp* “field”, *a ara* “to plough”, *a săpa* “to delve”, “to hoe”, *grâu* “wheat”, L. granum, *ceapă* “onion”, L. caepa, *pepene* “melon”, L. pepo, peponis, *a coace* “to bake”, *făină* “flour”, *pâne* or *pâine* “bread”, *oaie* “sheep”, *miel* “lamb”, *munte* “mountain”, *bou* “ox”, *taur* “bull”, *vacă* “cow”, *vițel* “calf”, *capră* “she-goat”, *câ(i)ne* “dog”, *cățea* “bitch”, *cal* “horse”, *iapă* “mare”, *porc* “pig” or “hog”, *scroafă* “sow”, *nea* “snow”.

6. Chose ten words from the above exercise and make up short sentences (in Romanian).

7. Name the main occupations of the Daco-Romans.

8. Mention if the Daco-Romans from former Roman province of Dacia remained isolated from the Roman provinces south of the Danube.

Optional task

Watch the movie *Plecarea Vlașinilor* (1982), directed by Mircea Drăgan, with Emanoil Petruț, Silviu Stănculescu, Ioana Drăgan, Cezara Dafinescu, Eugenia Bosînceanu.

ROMANIAN AND *THE OTHERS*

When comparing Romanian language to the other Romance languages one easily notices peculiarities. The official explanation is that Romanian language looks different due to specific social and cultural elements. Several scholars proposed justifications. I. A. Candrea speaks about an inferior cultural state in its beginnings, “a rudimentary type of culture”²⁴.

O. Densusianu emphasizes the pastoral and farming characteristics of Romanian civilization²⁵. Sextil Pușcariu noted some semantic evolutions from Latin to Romanian proving a rural civilization, a loss of words related to material culture (*villa* “town”; *forum* “market”; town square; *strata* “paved road”; *platea* “street”; “courtyard”; *via* “road”). Latin spoken by the Romanians simply lost a good number of words designating urban civilization: “many words were forgotten, because the ordinary peasant and the shepherd operate with a much smaller number of notions”²⁶. Romanian language drifted away from the Latin spoken in the western part of the Roman Empire.

Though it is impossible (and even incorrect) to try to mark the limits in the evolution of Romanian language, as there are no written records whatsoever (and any language is in a continuous evolution and change anyway), the beginnings might have been during reign of Gratianus (375-378) when the provinces south of the Danube were ceased/ ascribed to the Eastern Roman Empire, thus having a separate administrative, political and linguistic affiliation and development; and the consensus is that by the 7th-8th centuries Romanian was a language of its own. Thus Romanian may have taken shape quite fast, earlier than any of the other Romance languages in the West. The explanation advanced for this peculiarity is the lack of

²⁴ I. A. Candrea, *Straturi de cultură și straturi de limbă la popoarele romanice*, 1913, apud Florica Dimitrescu, *I. A. Candrea. Lingvist și filolog*, p. 75.

²⁵ O. Densusianu, *Păstoritul la popoarele romanice*, 1913.

²⁶ Sextil Pușcariu, *Cercetări și studii*, p. 465.

written Latin. While in the West written Latin was preserved in culture and thus acted as a sort of impediment in the evolution of various languages, in the East there were no educated structures, no written culture in Latin, just the unhindered evolution of spoken Vulgar Latin rapidly transformed into Romanian.

More than any other Romance language Romanian language has non-Latin elements, mainly in the vocabulary. The first non-Latin element belongs to the substratum, the Thraco-Dacian. The idea is that there was an initial phase of bilingualism, where Latin speakers were adopting words from the Dacians and the Dacians were preserving Dacian words in the Latin they were learning. As argued before, the actual influence of the substratum is a matter of speculation, its real extent – yet to be discovered.

After the Roman official retreat from Dacia in 271-275 various migratory people lived for short periods in an area or another traditionally belonging to Dacians or, as they are to be called from now onwards by consensus, Daco-Romans. None of these migratory populations seem to have left any linguistic traces in the language the natives were speaking, which is remarkable, since the language was a “work in progress”. The idea is that the Daco-Romans did not interact too much (or at all) with any of the passer-by and, what is even more, that the local Daco-Romans had a strong conscience of belonging to the land the others were simply using as a highway.

The foreign peoples, tribes or populations followed one after another: the Goths (considered a Germanic people), namely the Visigoths ruled over Moldavia, Eastern Transylvania, Eastern Muntenia (thus, the areas not under the Roman administration, but inhabited by free Dacians, such as Carpaes, with whom they formed alliances against the Roman Empire quite often). After their appearance in Dacia in 235, the Visigoths were driven south of the Danube, within the Roman Empire, in 376. The Huns (a population of Mongolian horsemen) ruled over former Dacia shortly, between 376 and 454, living on predatory expeditions started from Pannonia's plains, disappearing after being defeated. The Vandals and the Gepids (other Germanic populations) ruled over the plain of the river Tisa (Theiss) in the fifth century, the Gepids being rulers over Crişana and western Banat and overrunning Dacia until their defeat in 567 and subsequent disappearance.

The Avars (an Asiatic people of possible Turkish affiliation) were the successors of the Gepids in overrunning the former Dacia for a longer while, until 800 possibly. They also disappeared after becoming Christians and being defeated.

The theory is that none of these migratory and ephemeral people ruled directly over the core of the territory of Daco-Roman population, where the Romanization is supposed to have been most intense: East of Banat, South-West of Transylvania, Oltenia and West of Muntenia. And, definitely, the foreign passer-by did not settle in the mountains, the hillsides, the deep forests, places where the native Daco-Romans must have taken shelter and refuge, living a humble life of farmers, shepherds, in hiding, not interacting, not mingling with any short-lived invading party, not using any of the languages the aliens were speaking. Not adopting any foreign words in the language that was about to become Romanian. Though with great weariness, one may advance a few Romanian words of possible Gothic origin: *ciuf* or *ciof* “tuft”, *cutropi* “to invade”, *nasture* “button”, *rapăn* “scab”, “filth”, *targă* “stretcher” and, perhaps, *Moldova* from the Gothic *Mulda*.²⁷

The first people to have left significant traces in Romanian language were the Slavs, the Sclavini branch. In the 7th century they occupied many areas of the former Dacia, mainly in Eastern Dacia (Moldavia) and North Danubian plain (Muntenia, Ialomița river being some sort of heart land). They were not migratory passer-by. They were a sedentary people; there were many Slavic villages where the new comers were farming, fishing, raising animals. They were not fighting and exploiting the local Daco-Romans. The Slavs had close relations of cohabitation for a very long time with the older local Romanized population, both North and South of the Danube. They mingled and influenced each other to a large extent. The result in the long run was that a good portion of the local Romanized population became Slavic, mostly south of the Danube. The Romanized population survived either North of the Danube, becoming Romanians, or in small pockets south of the Danube, in the mountain area of Balkan and Pindus, becoming Macedo-Romanians (A-Romanians). This second group was called Vlachs by the Byzantine Empire.

²⁷ Cf. Al. Rosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 245-246.

The Daco-Romans were not the only ones to become Slavic south of the Danube. The Bulgars, a Turkish nomadic warrior tribe, settled in 679 south of the Danube (nowadays Bulgaria) as rulers of the Slavs. However in a short while they became Slavs, especially after adopting Christianity in 864. This new Slavic people, the Bulgars became an important political power south of the Danube and spread their dominance over North of the Danube as well in the 10th century, the territory where Romanians were living. Their Slavonic organization and ritual of the church was adopted by the Romanians, including in Transylvania. Thus, this was the second wave of Slavic influence on Romanian language.

Slavic

The Slavic influence over the Romanian language is obvious and it must have its early beginnings in the 7th century. That is more or less the moment when Romanian language is supposed to have become a language of its own. Thus there is debate whether Romanian language already existed as such before the Slavs appeared in the area or whether the Slavs did a play a certain role in the shaping of Romanian language in the final moments of its development. Scholars such as I. A. Candrea or Sextil Pușcariu share the first view: “The influence of the [Slavic] superstratum (...) started at a time when the main phonological laws had already taken shape in Romanian and when the main features of that language had already been organized and crystalized”²⁸. Other scholars²⁹ believe that Balkan and Slavic influence in the formation of Romanian language as a different Romance language is beyond doubt.

Among the most obvious influence are several words related to love. Romanian is the only Romance language to have abandoned the Latin words *amor* “love”, *carus* “dear”, “beloved”, *amare* “to love”, *sponsa* “bride”, etc. Instead it has words of seemingly Slavic origin: *dragoste* “love”, *drag* “dear”, “beloved”, “lover”, *a iubi* “to love”, *nevastă* “soție”, *logodnă* “betrothal”, *a logodi* “to betroth”. Some morphological features of Romanian language may have a Slavic origin: the formation of compound

²⁸ Sextil Pușcariu, *Limba română*, I, p. 284.

²⁹ Such as: O. Densusianu, I. Bogdan, A. Rosetti, Iorgu Iordan.

numeral following a Slavic model (*unsprezece* “eleven”, *douăzeci* “twenty”); the replacement of Latin *centum* by *sută* “hundred”; the development of reflexive verbs.

In the vocabulary the influence of Slavic was great. Various statistics point out that between 13% and 21% of the Romanian “basic word stock” may be of Slavic origin. Among the oldest words of Slavic origin are those present both in Daco-Romanian (north of the Danube) and in Macedo-Romanian (south of the Danube): *babă* “old woman”, *clopot* “bell”, *coajă* “crust”, “shell”, *coș* “basket”, *duh* “spirit”, “ghost”; “soul”; “wit”, *gol* “empty”; “naked”, “bare”, *grădină* “garden”, *a hrăni* “to feed”, *a înveli* “to cover”, *învârti* “to turn”, “to twist”, *izvor* “spring”, “source”, *lene* “sloth”, *livadă* “orchard”, *lopată* “shovel”, *nevastă* “wife”, *nevoie* “need”, *plăti* “to pay”, *pungă* “purse”, *rană* “wound”, *slab* “lean”; “weak”, *sută* “hundred”, *a topi* “to melt”, *trup* “body”, *zmeu* “dragon”; “evil giant”³⁰.

The words of Slavic origin which are present solely in Daco-Romanian (north of the Danube) may be considered as having penetrated at a later time, with the beginning of the 10th century, after the Slavs became Christians (thus, the Bulgarian influence on Romanian). They denominate: *boier* “nobleman”, “boyar”, *grădinar* “gardener”, *răscoală* “revolt”, *stăpân* “master”, “landlord”, *drag* “dear”, *groază* “terror”, *grozav* “terrible”, *lacom* “greedy”, *gât* “neck”, *gleznă* “ankle”, *obraz* “cheek”, *cojoc* “sheepskin vest or coat”, *izmană* “pants”, *târg* “market”, “town”; “bargain”, *ciocan* “hammer”, *coșciug* “coffin”, *coteț* “chicken coop” or “dog kennel”, *grajd* “stable”, *perie* “brush”, *pernă* “pillow”, *pivniță* “cellar”, “basement”, *prag* “threshold”, *sanie* “sledge”, *sfoară* “string”, *sticlă* “bottle”; “glass”, *țevă* “pipă”, *topor* “axe”, *zăvor* “lock”, *drojdie* “yeast”, *oțet* “vinegar”, *pită* “bread”, “loaf”, *poftă* “appetite”, *smântână* “cream”, *ulei* “edible oil”, *corabie* “ship”, *bivol* “buffalo”, *cocoș* “cock”, *gâscă* “goose”, *păstrăv* “trout”, *rață* “duck”, *veveriță* “squirrel”, *vrabie* “sparrow”, *zimbru* “aurochs”, *gulie* “kohlrabi”, *hrean* “horse radish”, *măslin* “olive tree”, *morcov* “carrot”. The Christian terminology referring to worship and religious organization: *colindă* “carol”, *colivă* “funeral wheat porridge”, *Isus Hristos* “Jesus Christ”, *icoană* “icon”, *popă* “priest”, “parson”, *post* “fast”,

³⁰ Cf. Al. Rosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 316-317.

sfânt “saint”, *taină* “mystery”, *troiță* “trinity”, *rai* “eden”, *iad* “hell”, *diavol* “devil”, *a citi* “to read”³¹.

Also of Slavic origin is the adverb *da* “yes” and many place names (such as *Bălgrad/ Alba Iulia*, *Craiova*, *Brașov*, *Ialomița*, *Dâmbovița*, *Bistrița*, *Ilfov*, *Predeal*, *Snagov*, *Zlatna*).

The Other Romanians

A large group of Romanians probably moved from former Roman province of Moesia Superior (roughly nowadays Serbia) towards the south of the Balkan Peninsula with the beginning of 9th century: towards Pindus Mountains (northern Greece) and Thessaly (central Greece). In the 10th century they are reported, by the Byzantine chronicler Kedrenos in Northern Greece (in 976) and they continued to be mentioned by the Byzantine chroniclers in the 11th and 12th centuries under the name of *Vlahi*. Kimenos notes the recruitment of a large number of Vlachs from the Black Sea region “thought to be colonists from sometime Italy”³². These are the Macedo-Romanians or A-Romanians (Rom. *Aromâni*, *armâni*), whom the Greeks are calling *kutsovlahi*, the Serbians – *tsintsari* (literally: mosquitoes). In Romanian they are named *macedo-români*.

For the origin of Macedo-Romanians there are two opinions: some believe them to be the descendants of the Romanized population in the Balkan Peninsula exclusively, having no common origin with the Daco-Romanians north of the Danube³³. Others, beginning with the Byzantine chronicler Kekaumenos, believe they share a common origin with the Daco-Romanians, the original homeland of the Macedo-Romanians being a region close to the Danube and the river Sava, later occupied by Serbians. Thus the Macedo-Romanians were displaced and migrated south towards Greece³⁴.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 320-324.

³² Apud Alexandru Niculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

³³ Among these are the scholars: N. Iorga, D. Onciul, A. D. Xenopol, Tache Papahagi, M. Caragiu-Marioțeanu.

³⁴ Among those supporting the theory are the Romanian linguists: O. Densusianu, S. Pușcariu, A. Philippide, A. Rosetti, B. P. Hașdeu, T. Capidan. Foreign historians endorsed this idea as early as 1774 (J. Thunmann making mention of the Thracians as well...) and 1814 / 1835 (William Martin-Leake), the only nuances referring to what side of the Danube river the Macedo-Romanians have originated from, south or north.

The most compelling argument to support the theory of a common origin of Macedo-Romanians and Daco-Romanians is the language itself: it is the same. All characteristics which make Romanian language specific (when comparing it to the other Romance languages) are to be found in Daco-Romanian and Macedo-Romanian alike. “Every feature characteristic of Romanian, whatever distinguishes Romanian from Latin on the one hand, and from the other Romance languages on the other, is present in all four dialects”³⁵. The Macedo-Romanians must have split from the Daco-Romanians after the Romanian language was formed (after 8th century), but before the Hungarian invasion on the territories inhabited by the Daco-Romanians (10th century), because there are no Hungarian elements in Macedo-Romanians.

South of the Danube there are other Romanian dialects. Megleno-Romanian (R. *megleno-română*), spoken by around 20,000 people in the Meglen region of Greece and Macedonia. Istro-Romanian (R. *istro-română*) is spoken by 1,500 people at most, in the northern part of the Istria peninsula, Croatia. Both ethnic groups call themselves *vlași* or *vlasii*, proving their Romanian origin. Megleno-Romanians seem to have been a branch of Macedo-Romanians. Istro-Romanians seem to have a common origin with the Daco-Romanians. Their original homeland may have been the right bank of the Danube, where they lived alongside the Serbians. The Istro-Romanian dialect has similarities with Western Daco-Romanian (Banat region) and it must have separated before the Hungarian invasion in the 10th century.

There are many Romanian place names in the Balkan Peninsula. The mountains of Serbia must have been inhabited by Romanian shepherds. *Vlah* originally meant Romanian, but then its meaning changed to shepherd. Though Romanian language was spoken over such a vast territory, north and south of the Danube, though it had to face the pressure of many other people and languages, not only that it has survived, but it is miraculously (and conspicuously) homogenous. The official explanation for this is precisely the great mobility of Romanian shepherds. Moving from a place to another they carried the language with them and kept it intact.

³⁵ Sextil Pușcariu, *Limba română*, I, p. 232.

Compulsory tasks

1. Characterize the Romanian culture and civilization in its beginnings.
2. By what centuries is considered that Romanian language was already a language of its own.
3. Name the role played by the lack of Latin written culture in the rapid evolution of Romanian language.
4. Name four migratory people that lived briefly on the territory of the former Dacia in early Middle Ages.
5. Explain why none of the above migratory people left any traces in Romanian language.
6. Characterize the relation settled between the Slavs and the Daco-Romans, North and South of the Danube.
7. Translate in your mother tongue the following words (of Slavic origin): *dragoste* “love”, *drag* “dear”, “beloved”, “lover”, *a iubi* “to love”, *coajă* “crust”, “shell”, *coș* “basket”, *gol* “empty”; “naked”, “bare”, *grădină* “garden”, *a înveli* “to cover”, *învârti* “to turn”, “to twist”, *lene* “sloth”, *nevoie* “need”, *a plăti* “to pay”, *pungă* “purse”, *rană* “wound”, *slab* “lean”; “weak”, *sută* “hundred”, *trup* “body”, *gât* “neck”, *gleznă* “ankle”, *obraz* “cheek”, *pernă* “pillow”, *sticlă* “bottle”; “glass”, *drojdie* “yeast”, *oțet* “vinegar”, *pită* “bread”, “loaf”, *poftă* “appetite”, *smântână* “cream”, *ulei* “edible oil”, *cocoș* “cock”, *gâscă* “goose”, *păstrăv* “trout”, *rață* “duck”, *vrabie* “sparrow”, *gulie* “kohlrabi”, *hrean* “horse radish”, *măslin* “olive tree”, *morcov* “carrot”, *colindă* “carol”, *Isus Hristos* “Jesus Christ”, *icoană* “icon”, *popă* “priest”, “parson”, *post* “fast”, *sfânt* “saint”, *rai* “eden”, *iad* “hell”, *diavol* “devil”, *a citi* “to read”.
8. Choose ten words from the above exercise and make short sentences (in Romanian).
9. Name the three Romanian dialects south of the Danube.

THE EMERGENCE OF ROMANIAN STATES

Once the Romanian language must have been firmly established it came into contact with languages of yet other migratory people.

The Hungarians (Magyars), a people of Fino-Ugric descent, travelled from the Urals, along Volga, Don, and Dnieper and settled in the Pannonic plain (where they met several other people, including Romanians, removing or assimilating them). As early as the 10th century they became interested in Transylvania, but met with the resistance of the local population. According to Hungarian sources, they had to fight (and defeat) several local rulers in Crişana, Banat and Transylvania; among these Gelu, “duke of the Vlachs and Slavs”. Several “Romanian lands” in Transylvania are noted in Hungarian historical sources, such as *Terra Blachorum*. By 13th century the Hungarians were ruling Transylvania, sometimes having benefitted from the collaboration of the local Romanian *voievodes* (rulers) and *cneaz* (dukes).

The oldest traces of Hungarian words in Romanian language date back to 11th and 12th centuries: *oraş* “town”, *gând* “thought”, *gazdă* “host”, *viteaz* “gallant”, *ban* “small coin”, *a cheltui* “to spend”, *meşter* “craftsman”, *vamă* “customs-house”, *neam* “relative”; “family”; “race”; “nation”, *puşcă* “musket”, “gun”, *chin* “pain”, “torture”, *fel* “sort”; “dish”, *talpă* “shoe-sole”, *chip* “face; manner”, *ciupercă* “mushroom”. Some words of Hungarian origin were borrowed not from Hungarians, but from Bulgarians or Serbo-Croatians: *a alcătui* “to make up”, *a bănu* “to suspect”, *a bântui* “to haunt”³⁶, etc. Considering that Romanians from Transylvania were under the rule of Hungarians, one way or another, for an extremely long period of time (until the 1st December 1918) and that during this time they were not allowed to speak Romanian in any official matters (though being the majority population, they were not recognized as a nation) it is remarkable how very few Hungarian words penetrated the Romanian vocabulary. An

³⁶ Cf. Alexandru Niculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

ultimate prove for the resistance of an occupied nation is the preservation of its language...

Other migratory people settled at the same time, for a short while, in the other areas where Romanians must have been living. The Pechenegs (or Patzinaks), a Turkic semi-nomadic people from Altai overran the Wallachian plains, and then crossed the Danube into Byzantine Empire where they were annihilated in 1091 after a series of brutal battles. They left a few place names, such as *Peceneaga*. They were followed by a related Turkic semi-nomadic people, the Cumans (Polovtsi). They settled in and ruled over Moldavia and Wallachia in the second half of the 11th century. They became sedentary, took to agriculture and building permanent settlements, stratified their society and their leader (at least) even adopted Catholicism and had a Cuman Catholic bishopric settled on the river Milcov (south of Moldavia) in 1227. At the time Moldova and Muntenia were named Cumania by foreigners. However their rule was completely destroyed by the Mongolian invasion of 1241 and the surviving Cumans ran away and were finally assimilated by various people (including Romanians). Thanks to a 1303 Latin-Persian-Cumanian glossary compiled by Italian and German missionaries³⁷ we can trace a few Romanian words of Cumanian origin: *hambar* “barn”, *catâr* “mule”, *habar* “knowledge”, *maidan* “vacant ground”, *murdar* “dirty”, *taman* “just”. Perhaps *beci* “cellar” and *scrum* “cold ashes” as well³⁸. Some place names have Cumanian origin: *Teleorman*, *Caracal*, *Caraiman*.

Under such difficult circumstances Romanians managed to set up their first medieval states. During the 10th, 11th, 12th centuries Romanians had only small political forms of organization, local or regional at best, called *voievodate* (“voievodeships”, “duchies”) and *țări* (“lands”, “principalities”) mainly in Transylvania and around the Carpathians. Most of them disappeared, were assimilated, little by little, by the Hungarian taking over and organization of Transylvania. It is precisely the Hungarian ever growing pressure and will of expansion even beyond the borders of Transylvania that finally triggered the strong and decisive reaction of the Romanians. Mention should be made of a brave local leader, Litovoi, ruler

³⁷ Cf. Geza Kuun, *Codex cumanicus*.

³⁸ Cf. O. Densusianu, *Histoire de la langue roumaine*, I, *Les origines*.

of a “land” of Romanians in Wallachia (between the rivers Jiu and Olt). In 1272-1273 he tried, unsuccessfully, to fight against and escape from the suzerainty of the Hungarian king. He was not, by far, the only one to do so. The popular legend preserved the memory of a Voievode called Radu Negru (Black Radu) under whose leadership a large group of Romanians abandoned their “land” from Făgăraș (south Transylvania) and crossed over the Carpathian Mountains into Wallachia, around 1290. Thus the area south of Carpathians, Wallachia, became, at the end of the 13th century, the main resistance place of Romanians, as a political entity.

Among such turbulent circumstances and fragmented local Romanian “lands” emerged the figure of the first Romanian ruler to have made a successful historical achievement. His name is Basarab. First, he was acknowledged as a supreme leader and ruler, a high voievode, by the other Romanian smaller and local leaders. Then he expanded his political influence and geographical extension of his country in south-east of Banat, taking over a Hungarian ruled citadel (Severin). He took part in battles between the Bulgars and Byzantines (1323); he acted as a negotiator to make a stand against the Tartar overrun around the Danube Delta. All in all, he became much too important so that the Hungarians decided to annihilate his ever growing power (and country). Much too confident, arrogant, ill-advised, the Hungarian king himself, Charles Robert, invaded Wallachia, at the head of an impressive army of mounted knights. Though the Romanian voievode Basarab tried to avoid fighting and blood shed, offering concessions, he was ignored by the Hungarians. Subsequently there were battles around the capital Curtea de Argeș. What made the difference happened during the Hungarian retreat from Wallachia. In a place difficult to identify precisely, called *posadă*, a mountain pass, Basarab’s peasant army totally destroyed the Hungarian royal army, in a bloodshed turned into a several days massacre (9-12 November 1330). The Hungarian thorough military disaster ensured the Romanian political decisive victory: Wallachia became independent and recognized as a sovereign state in South-East Europe.

The same pattern was followed, more or less, by Romanians in Moldavia. There must have been several local small political or administrative entities, such as that ruled by a duke Olaha mentioned in

1247 in the “Diploma of the Ioanites”. He and other local rulers must have been under Tartar control. In 1300 a “Romanians’ Land” (*Wlachenland*), mastered by a voivode and having a capital at *Civitas Moldaviae* (probably Baia, near Fălticeni) is recorded. Hungarians wanted to control this region, for commercial, military and political reasons. Hungarian expeditions were conducted in Moldavia, with the support of Romanian voievodes Dragoș and Bogdan from Maramureș (North of Transylvania). After having resisted for as long as he could to the Hungarian ever growing pressure, the Romanian voievode Bogdan from Maramureș decided to abandon his homeland and together with his court crossed the Carpathian Mountains into Moldavia where was acknowledged as a voievode (ruler) by the locals. The subsequent Hungarian expeditions to punish the Romanians and (re)gain control over Moldavia ended in failure and in 1364-1365 Moldavia became an independent state.

In Dobrudja (Rom. Dobrogea) there were two local leaders recorded, proving some sort of local autonomy. In 1346 Balica interfered in struggles within Byzantine Empire. In 1366 Dobrotici (called “despot” by Byzantines) conquered the Danube fortress of Chilia thus overrunning the strategic region of Lower Danube. He involved in the internal struggles of Byzantine Empire. His son, the “despot” Ivanco continued in fighting for independence/ autonomy of his territory, but met a match in the Turks. He got defeated and died. In 1388 the Wallachian ruler Mircea cel Bătrân (Mircea the Old) incorporated Dobrogea.

Very soon after the two Romanian countries emerged and became independent, they had to face the great menace of the Turks. The Ottomans managed to conquer Balkan Peninsula, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. Thus, after 1389, the only country left to face them directly was Wallachia. For a while, the small and young Romanian entity benefited from the wisdom of a great leader, Mircea the Old, which managed to stop the advance of the Turks and to secure the independence of Wallachia, through negotiations, alliances and battles, until his death, in 1418. Much the same happened in Moldavia a little later, after Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, fell in 1453. The voievode Ștefan cel Mare (Stephen the Great) fought against the Turks in several brutal battles, sometimes winning against all odds (1475, 1476), thus securing Moldova’s independence for a while.

Even so, both Wallachia and Moldavia had to pay tribute to the Turks (in 1418 and 1487 respectively). The last Romanian voievodes acting independently were Radu de la Afumați in Wallachia (1525-1529) and Petru Rareș in Moldavia (1527-1538). After them the two Romanian countries retained autonomy, but accepted being subject to the Ottoman Empire.

Because the two Romanian countries were under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire for an extremely long period of time (officially until 1878), there were quite a number of Turkish words that have penetrated into the Romanian vocabulary. It is also true that nowadays most of them are not used any longer, and those still in use have a derogatory meaning often, for Romanians, as Christians and speakers of a Romance language, always had an adversity towards the Turks.

The earliest Turkish words to have entered the Romanian vocabulary date from the 16th century. Among them: *catifea* “velvet”, *cearceaf* “bed sheet”, *ibric* “small coffee- or tea-kettle”, *maramă* “head kerchief”. In the 17th century there were many more: *alai* “retinue”; “procession”, *bacșiș* “tip, baksheesh”, *belea* “trouble”, *buluc* “throng; rush”, *cafea* “coffee”, *capac* “lid”, *cașcaval* “processed cheese”, *chef* “drinking bout”; “disposition”, *chirie* “rent”, *cioban* “shepherd”, *cișmea* “water pump”, *ciubuc* “chibouk”; “bribe”, *conac* “manor”, *cusur* “defect”, *dușman* “enemy”, *han* “inn”; “khan”, *herghelie* “horse stud”, *iureș* “assault”; “rush”, *leafă* “wages”, *liliac* “bat”, *mahala* “suburb”; “slum”, *mahmur* “with a hangover”, *mușama* “oil-cloth”, *nai* “panpipe”, *odaie* “room”, *perdea* “curtain”, *raft* “shelf”, *saltea* “mattress”, *samsar* “speculator”, “agent”, *schelă* “harbour”, *soi* “sort”, *șiret* “sly”, “keen”, *taraf* “music band”, *tiptil* “on tiptoe”, *tutun* “tobacco”, *ursuz* “morose”, *zor* “hurry”³⁹, etc.

From 1711 until 1821 both Romanian principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia, lost the right of having Romanian rulers (because it happened many times that the Romanian rulers were not loyal subjects of the Ottoman Empire, but trying to fight against it). This period came to be known as the Phanariot period as the rulers of the Romanian principalities were appointed by the Turks from among the Greeks living in a district of Istanbul called Phanar. This was the time when the highest number of Turkish words entered the Romanian vocabulary. A few examples: *balamale* “hinges”,

³⁹ Cf. Alexandru Niculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 76-77.

dușumea “plank floor”, *geam* “window”, *lighean* “wash basin”, *tavan* “ceiling”, *chilipir* “profitable bargain”, *cântar* “scales”, *geaba* “gratis”, “free”, *peșin* “ready”, “cash” – about money, *teanc* “pile”, “heap”, *teighea* “counter”, “sill”, *amanet* “pawn”, “pawning”, *acadea* “lollipop”, *chiftea* “minced meat ball”, *ciorbă* “sour soup”, *ciulama* “white sauce stew”, *ghiveci* “hotch potch”, *iahnie* “stew of beans”, *iaurt* “yoghurt”, *magiun* “plum jam”, *musaca* “minced meat dish with potatoes or egg-plant”, *pilaf* “rice”, “pilaugh”, *rachiu* “brandy”, *rahat* “Turkish delight”, “rahat lakoum”, *sarma* “force meat in cabbage or vine leafroll”, *ceaun* “iron pot”, *farfurie* “plate”, *tavă* “tray”, *telemea* “cottage cheese with coriander seeds”, *basma* “head kerchief”, *fes* “fez cap”, *ciorap* “stocking”, “sock”, *papuc* “slipper or shoe”, *chihlimbar* “amber”, *fildeș* “ivory”, *talaz* “breaker”, “billow”, *bidinea* “house painter’s whitewashing brush”, *cazma* “spade”, *dulgher* “carpenter”, *moloz* “debris”, *tinichea* “tin”; “sheet iron”, *calcan* “turbot”, “plaice”, *arpagic* “first year onion”, *bostan* “ground”, “pumpkin”, *cais* “apricot-tree”, *dovleac* “pumpkin”, “gourd”, *lalea* “tulip”, *nufăr* “water lily”, *berechet* “plenty”, *huzur* “leisure”, “life of ease”, *moft* “trifle”; “whim”, *naz* “caprice”, *tabiet* “habit”; “hobby”,⁴⁰.

The last language to have influenced significantly the vocabulary of Romanian language was Greek. The oldest traces of Greek words in Romanian go back to the time of the Roman Empire, when the Romanized population on the Danube seem to have adopted *ciumă* “wen”, “pest”, *frică* “fear”, *spân* “beardless”, *sterp* “barren”, *trufă* “truffle”⁴¹. Other old Byzantine Greek words entered Romanian language through Slavic up to 9th century: *busuioc* “basil”, *colibă* “cabin”, “hut”, *comoară* “treasure”, *corabie* “ship”, *crin* “lily”, *dafin* “bay leaf”, “daphne”, *desagă* “knapsack”; “wallet”, *drum* “road”, and after 10th century, when Slavs adopted Christianity: *amin* “amen”, *liturghie* “mass”, “liturgy”, *parastas* “service or prayer for the dead”; “memorial service”, *aghiasmă* “holy water”, *colivă* “funeral wheat porridge”, *icoană* “icon”, *mănăstire* “monastery”, *călugăr* “monk”, *episcop* “bishop”, *patriarh* “patriarch”, *evreu* “Hebrew”, *iudeu* “Judean”, “Jew”, *migdal* “almond tree”, *mirt* “myrtle”, *ianuarie* “January”, *februarie*, *martie*,

⁴⁰ Cf. Al. Rosetti, B. Cazacu, Liviu Onu, *Istoria limbii române literare*, I, p. 413-414.

⁴¹ Cf. H. Mihăescu, *Influența grecească asupra limbii române: până în secolul al XV-lea*, p. 63.

aprilie, mai, iunie, iulie, august, septembrie, octombrie, decembrie. Later Greek influences include: *hârtie* “paper”, *cărămidă* “brick”, *ieftin* “cheap”, *orez* “rice”, *tigaie* “frying pan”, *săpun* “soap”, *pat* “bed”, *pită* “bread”, *temelie* “foundation”, *a vopsi* “to paint”, “to dye”, *mirodenie* “spice”, *mătase* “silk”, *folos* “usefulness”, *mânie* “wrath”, *căpitan* “captain”, *cântar* “scales”, *cămară* “pantry”, “cellar”, *buzunar* “pocket”, *plapumă* “quilt”, “eiderdown”, *zahăr* “sugar”⁴². This Slavo-Byzantine influence manifested itself mostly in the upper layers of Romanian feudal society.

Compulsory tasks

1. Translate in your mother tongue the following words (of Hungarian origin): *oraş* “town”, *gând* “thought”, *gazdă* “host”, *viteaz* “gallant”, *ban* “small coin”, *a cheltui* “to spend”, *vamă* “customs-house”, *neam* “relative”; “family”; “race”; “nation”, *chin* “pain”, “torture”, *fel* “sort”; “dish”, *talpă* “shoe-sole”, *chip* “face”; “manner”, *ciupercă* “mushroom”, *a alcătui* “to make up”, *a bănuî* “to suspect”.
2. Choose ten words from the above exercise and make short sentences (in Romanian).
3. Name the Romanian ruler who managed to secure the independence of Wallachia, the year when this happened and the circumstances.
4. Name the Romanian ruler who managed to secure the independence of Moldavia, the year when this happened and the circumstances.
5. Translate in your mother tongue the following words (of early Turkish origin): *catifea* “velvet”, *cearceaf* “bed sheet”, *ibric* “small coffee- or tea-kettle”, *alai* “retinue”; “procession”, *bacşiş* “tip”, “baksheesh”, *belea* “trouble”, *cafea* “coffee”, *capac* “lid”, *caşcaval* “processed cheese”, *chef* “drinking bout”; “disposition” *chirie* “rent”, *cişmea* “water pump”, *ciubuc* “chibouk”; “bribe”, *duşman* “enemy”, *han* “inn”; “khan”, *leafă* “wages”, *mahala* “suburb”; “slum”, *mahmur* “with a hangover”, *muşama* “oil-cloth”, *odaie* “room”, *perdea* “curtain”, *raft* “shelf”, *saltea* “mattress”, *soi* “sort”, *taraf* “music band”, *tiptil* “on tiptoe”, *tutun* “tobacco”.

⁴² Cf. Alexandru Niculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 80-82.

6. Choose ten words from the above exercise and make short sentences (in Romanian).

7. Translate in your mother tongue the following words (of Turkish origin from the Phanariot period of Romanian principalities): *duşumea* “plank floor”, *geam* “window”, *lighean* “wash basin”, *tavan* “ceiling”, *chilipir* “profitable bargain”, *cântar* “scales”, *geaba* “gratis”, “free”, *peşin* “ready”, “cash” – about money, *teanc* “pile”, “heap”, *tejpghea* “counter”, “sill”, *amanet* “pawn”, “pawning”, *acadea* “lollipop”, *chiftea* “minced meat ball”, *ciorbă* “sour soup”, *ciulama* “white sauce stew”, *ghiveci* “hotch potch”, *iahnie* “stew of beans”, *iaurt* “yoghurt”, *magiun* “plum jam”, *musaca* “minced meat dish with potatoes or eggplant”, *pilaf* “rice”, “pilaugh”, *rachiu* “brandy”, *rahat* “Turkish delight”, “rahat lakoum”, *sarma* “force meat in cabbage or vine leaf roll”, *ceaun* “iron pot”, *farfurie* “plate”, *tavă* “tray”, *telemea* “cottage cheese with coriander seeds”, *basma* “head kerchief”, *fes* “fez cap”, *ciorap* “stocking”, “sock”, *papuc* “slipper” or “shoe”, *bostan* “ground”, “pumpkin”, *cais* “apricot-tree”, *dovleac* “pumpkin”, “gourd”, *lalea* “tulip”, *berechet* “plenty”, *moft* “trifle”; “whim”, *tabiet* “habit”; “hobby”.

8. Choose ten words from the above exercise and make short sentences (in Romanian).

9. Translate in your mother tongue the following words (of Greek origin): *frică* “fear”, *busuioc* “basil”, *comoară* “treasure”, *crin* “lily”, *dafin* “bay leaf”, “daphne”, *drum* “road”, *amin* “amen”, *liturghie* “mass”, “liturgy”, *icoană* “icon”, *mănăstire* “monastery”, *evreu* “Hebrew”, *migdal* “almond tree”, *ianuarie* “January”, *februarie*, *martie*, *aprilie*, *mai*, *iunie*, *iulie*, *august*, *septembrie*, *octombrie*, *decembrie*, *hârtie* “paper”, *ieftin* “cheap”, *orez* “rice”, *tigaie* “frying pan”, *săpun* “soap”, *pat* “bed”, *pită* “bread”, *a vopsi* “to paint”, “to dye”, *mirodenie* “spice”, *mătase* “silk”, *folos* “usefulness”, *mânie* “wrath”, *cântar* “scales”, *cămară* “pantry”, “cellar”, *buzunar* “pocket”, *plapumă* “quilt”, “eiderdown”, *zahăr* “sugar”.

10. Choose ten words from the above exercise and make short sentences (in Romanian).

WRITTEN ROMANIAN

There are no written documents in Romanian language to have been preserved until 16th century. The main explanation for this awkward situation lies in the fact that the language of the culture for Romanians was not Romanian, but Old Church Slavonic. Romanians followed the Orthodoxy of the Byzantine Empire through a Bulgarian or Serbian intermediary. Thus the language of the divine service in church was Old Church Slavonic. All the religious books were written in Old Church Slavonic, even if it came down to the embarrassing fact that the Romanian believers did not comprehend most of their content (sometimes not even the priests understood what they were reading or saying). Due to the prestige of the Orthodoxy and of the church any other official documents (such as princely letters or correspondence, administrative or judicial acts, chronicles), were written in Old Church Slavonic as well. This acted as a major obstacle for the recording of Romanian language in writing for a long time.

If there is to be a starting point for any such recordings one has to make mention of the year 587, when two Byzantine chroniclers, Theophylactos Simokkates and Theophanes, narrating about the events of an expedition in the eastern Balkans, said that a soldier of the Byzantine Empire uttered the phrase *torna, torna fratre* “turn, turn brother” (Theophylactos, *Hist.* II, 15: *retorna*). Some scholars believe this was in the Vulgar Latin spoken at that time in Balkan Byzantium⁴³. Others are convinced this was a first evidence of the bases of Old Romanian Language⁴⁴.

Otherwise one has to turn to Slavonic and Hungarian documents from 11th to 15th centuries to trace any Romanian words used there by chance. They are mainly proper names and place names: *Kokora* (1052,

⁴³ O. Densusianu, *Histoire de la langue roumaine*, I, *Les origines*, p. 390.

⁴⁴ A. Philippide, *Originea românilor*, I, *Ce spun izvoarele istorice*, p. 179-188; Al. Rosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 657-658.

cocor “crane”), *Bunu, Singuru* (1222-1228, *bun* “good”, *singur* “alone”), *Tunata* (1251, *tunet* “thunder”), *Bucur* (1292, *a se bucura* “to rejoice”)⁴⁵. Sometimes one can find even syntagms with inflected forms: *Peraole Szaszilor (Păraele Saşilor* “the Saxon’s Brooks”, 1392), *Ungiul cu freszeni (Unghiul cu frasini* “The Corner with Ash-Trees”, 1392), *Riulu alb (Râul alb* “The White River”, 1398), *Vale saca (Valea seacă* “The Dry Valley”, 1453), *Din gura vali (Din gura văii* “From the Mouth of the Valley”, 1474), *Kukului (cucului* “of the Cuckoo”, 1474), *Gura vaii albinilor (gura văii albinilor* “The Mouth of the Bees’ Valley”, 1486)⁴⁶, etc.

A Romanian scholar, George Mihăilă, has attempted a statistics. He undertook a minute research of Slavo-Romanian, Latin or Hungarian texts from late 10th century to early 16th century and found 628 Romanian words recorded there. Out of these 207 are of Latin origin: *bun* “good” (1222-1228), *singur* “alone” (1222-1228), *urs* “bear” (1318), *vară* “summer” (1318), *fecior* “lad” (1348), *surd* “deaf” (1348), *dos* “back” (1519); 24 words are of Thracian-Dacian stock: *baci* “shepherd” (1293-1302), *copil* “child” (1318), *groapă* “pit” (1520); 59 words are of old or popular Slavonic origin: *bălan* “white”; “fair” (1348), *muşat* “beautiful” (1361-1370), *vîrh (vârf)* “peak”; “end” (1517), *iaz* “pond” (1519); 26 words are of Hungarian origin: *ban* “ban”, “ruler”; nowadays “small coi” (1408), *oraş* “town” (1424, 1431), *ham* “harness” (1512, 1521); 11 words of Turkish origin: *turc* “Turk” (1436); six words are of Greek origin⁴⁷.

All of these prove that Romanian language was not only existing and spoken, but sometimes inadvertently made its way through in documents written in other languages. The earliest recordings of such Romanian words are of Thracian-Dacian, Latin or Slavonic origin, the later recordings of such Romanian words are of Magyar, Greek or Turkish origin.

It is very likely that there were some texts written in Romanian language properly, however they were lost. An oath of allegiance sworn in Latin by the Romanian ruler Stephen the Great in homage to king Casimir of Poland in 1485 must have had a Romanian original version: *haec inscriptio ex Valachico in Latinum versa est* (“this inscription from

⁴⁵ Cf. O. Densusianu, *Histoire de la langue roumaine*, I, *Les origines*, p. 394-398.

⁴⁶ Cf. Alexandru Niculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁴⁷ George Mihăilă, *Dicţionar al limbii române vechi: sfîrşitul sec. X – începutul sec. XVI.*

Wallachian into Latin is turned”). In 1482-1492 a Romanian nobleman, Dragomir Udriște, began writing a letter to the notabilities in Braşov, Transylvania, using the Romanian words *bunilor i cestitem* (bunilor și cinștiilor “my good and honest”...), suggesting he was accustomed to write letters in Romanian. In 1495 recordings show that a Romanian priest was paid by the municipality of Sibiu, Transylvania for writing a letter in Romanian. These and likely many other documents written in Romanian that we are unaware of benefited from the (un) fortunate circumstance of the disappearance of both Bulgarian and Serbian Medieval kingdoms in the 15th century, at the hand of the Turks. Thus the prestige and the influence of Old Church Slavonic and Slavic languages decreased.

The most important 16th century Romanian texts were religious texts, such as: *Codicele Voroneţean* (“The Miscellanea of Voroneţ Monastery”), *Psaltirea Voroneţeană* (“The Voroneţ Psalm-Book”), *Psaltirea şcheiană* (“The psalm-Book printed in the Schei district of Braşov”), *Psaltirea Hurmuzachi* (“Hurmuzaki’s Psalm Book”). They are translation made either at the end of 15th century or at the beginning of the 16th century, somewhere in the North of Transylvania. There was *Catehismul* (“The Catechism”) of 1544; even though no copy was found, it is for sure it existed, as in the recordings of the city of Sibiu it is written that two florins had been paid to *magister Phillipus* (Philip the Moldavian or Filip Maler) for printing the Wallachian Catechism. Also a Saxon priest from Bistriţa (Transylvania) wrote to a fellow clergyman from Wroclav (Breslau) about the printing of this book. The same Filip printed *Evangheliarul slavo-român* (“The Slavo-Romanian Gospels”) in Sibiu in 1551-1553. Beginning with 1559-1560 in the city of Braşov (Transylvania) Deacon Coresi, a skilled printer coming from Târgovişte, the princely court of Wallachia, issued a dozen church books in Romanian language. In another Transylvania city, Orăştie was published *Palia de la Orăştie* (“The Old Book of Orăştie”), in 1582. It is a Romanian translation from a Hungarian original of the first two books of the *Old Testament* (*Genesis* and *Exodus*). The translators were from Banat (Efrem Zacan and Ştefan Herce from Caransebeş and Moise Peştişel from Lugoj) and the printers were Şerban Coresi and Deacon Marian. In 1570-1573 *Carte de cântece* (“Hymn-Book”) was printed in Romanian (in Latin characters and with Hungarian spelling) in Cluj, eight pages having been

preserved. No religious book translated into Romanian either in Moldavia or in Walachia from the 16th century has been preserved (though several may have existed).

Non-religious early Romanian texts to have survived the centuries are not so many. However the first ever written document in Romanian that can even be dated reliably, June 29th-30th, 1521, is an espionage letter. *Scrisoarea boierului Neacșu din Câmpulung* (“The Letter Written by Boyar Neacșu of Câmpulung”), addressed to Hans Benkner, magistrate of Brașov, warning him about the imminent attack of the Ottoman Empire on Transylvania.

Neacșu Lupu was a 16th-century Wallachian boyar from Câmpulung, the son of Neacșu Mircea. He was mentioned for the first time during the reign of Vlad cel Tânăr (1510–1512), in documents connected to a trial concerning debts between himself and merchants of Brașov. It is likely that he was himself a merchant engaged in the trade of Turkish goods that he was purchasing south of the Danube and selling in Transylvania. This could explain his connection with the mayor of Brașov. A good disguise for a spy anyhow.

The text of the letter was written in the Cyrillic script⁴⁸, and it consists of three parts. The introduction is in Old Bulgarian language, and translated it says: “To the most wise and noble and venerable and by God endowed master Hanas Begner of Brașov, all the best, from Neacșu of Câmpulung”.

Subsequent to the Bulgarian introduction, the essence of the letter is written in the old Romanian language. As contrasted with the first documents of other languages, which are overall older, the Romanian language used in this letter is very much alike the language spoken in the present day. The Romanian linguist Aurel Nicolescu asserted that no less than 175 words of the 190 found in the letter have Latin origins, apart from the reiterated words and the names. A few inaccurate forms of different words occur caused by the difficulty of illustrating some Romanian sounds like *ă* and *î*, while using the Cyrillic alphabet.

⁴⁸ Romanians wrote Romanian language using Cyrillic script for centuries. It was officially replaced by the Latin script in 1862.

The letter of Neacșu Lupu included a secret of extraordinary significance. He was informing Johannes Benkner of Brașov about Turkish arrangements for an attack through Transylvania and Wallachia. There are several Slavonic expressions present all through the content of the letter, such as “I pak”, which in Bulgarian means “and again” and has a corresponding significance to the Latin “idem”; it is also used to mark the start of a new sentence, because no punctuation marks are present in the letter. Another Bulgarian word is “za”, meaning “about”. The letter concludes with another sentence written in Bulgarian, which means: “And may God bring happiness upon you. Amen.”

Transcript after the current Romanian spelling rules:

„Mudromu I plemenitomu, I cistitomu I bogom darovanomu jupan Hanăș Bengner ot Brașov mnogo zdravie ot Nécșu ot Dlăgopole.
(= Preaînțeleptului și cinstitului, și de Dumnezeu dăruitului jupân Hanăș Bengner din Brașov multă sănătate din partea lui Neacșu din Câmpulung, n. n.).

I pak (= și iarăși) dau știre domnie tale za (= despre) lucrul turcilor, cum am auzit eu că împăratul au eșit den Sofiia, și aimintrea nu e, și se-au dus în sus pre Dunăre.

I pak să știi domniia ta că au venit un om de la Nicopole de miie me-au spus că au văzut cu ochii lor că au trecut ciale corăbii ce știi și domniia ta pre Dunăre în sus.

I pak să știi că bagă den toate orașele câte 50 de omin să fie de ajutor în corăbii.

I pak să știi cumu se-au prins nește meșter(i) den Țarigrad cum vor treace ceale corăbii la locul cela strimtul ce știi și domniia ta.

I pak spui domniie tale de lucrul lui Mahamet beg, cum am auzit de boiari ce sunt megiiăș(i) și de generemiiu Negre, cum i-au dat împăratul

sloboziie lui Mahamet beg, pe io-i va fi voia, pren Țeara Rumânească, iară el să treacă.

I pak să știi domniia ta că are frică mare și Băsărab de acel lotru de Mahamet beg, mai vârtos de domniile voastre.

I pak spui domniietale ca mai marele miu, de ce am înțeleș și eu. Eu spui domniietale iară domniata ești înțelept și aceste cuvinte să ții domniata la tine, să nu știe umin mulți, și domniile vostre să vă păziți cum știți mai bine.

I bog te veselit. Amin.”(= Și Dumnezeu să te bucure. Amin)
(*Apud Hurmuzachi – Iorga. Documente, XI, 843*)⁴⁹

English translation:

“Mudromu I plemenitomu, I cistitomu I bogom darovanomu jupan Hanas Benger ot Brașov mnogo zdravie ot Neacșu ot Dlăgopole (= *To the most wise and venerable and by God endowed master Hanas Benger of Brașov, much health to thee wisheth Neacșu of Câmpulung*).

I pak (= *and again*) I let thy highness know za (= *of*) the deed of the Turks, as I heard that the Emperor hath left Sofia and hath sailed up the Danube, and the truth is no other, but this.

I pak (= *and again*) thy highness shouldst know that a man from Nicopole came to me and told me he hath seen with his own eyes how those ships that thy highness knowest as well hath sailed up the Danube.

I pak thou shouldst know that they take fifty men from each town to help on those ships.

⁴⁹ <http://www.cimec.ro/Istorie/neacsu/rom/scrisoare.htm>

I pak thou shouldst know how few sailor(s) from Tzarigrad (= Constantinople) bound themselves to steer those ships through that narrow place, that thou knowest as well.

I pak I tell thy highness of the work of Mahamet beg as I heard from the boyars that art nighbour(s) and from my son-in-law Negre, how the Emperor hath allowed Mahamet beg cross Wallachia wherever he wouldth want to.

I pak thy highness shouldst know that Basarab is greatly fearful of that thief Mahamet beg, more than thy highness art.

I pak I tell thy highness as thou art my Lord of what had I also understood. I tell thy highness these and thy highness art wise and these words thou shouldst keep for thyself and not let many people know them and thy highness bewarest as thou best knowest.

I bog te veselit. Amin”(= *And may God giveth thee grace. Amen*)
(*Apud Hurmuzachi – Iorga. Documente, XI, 843*)⁵⁰

“Clear, concise, fluent, the expressiveness of the Romanian language in the letter of Neacșu is due to the Latin elements. The Latin words, the linguists concerned with statistics say, represents 92, 31%, with an absolute frequency of 89,47%. Out of the 112 units of the text, 67 Latin originated words can also be found in other 7 new-Latin languages. The conclusion is that the Romanian language, by the time it appeared in its written form, was fully and for a long time taking part in the European pan-Romanism”⁵¹.

⁵⁰ <http://www.cimec.ro/Istorie/neacsu/eng/letter.htm>

⁵¹ Ion Rotaru, *Literatura română veche*, p. 62-65.

Compulsory tasks

1. Name the language of the culture for Romanians up to 16th century at least.
2. Name the sentence registered by Byzantine chroniclers in 587 that may be the earliest recording of Old Romanian.
3. Translate in your mother tongue the following Romanian words or collocations (recorded in Slavonic and Hungarian documents from 11th to 15th centuries): *cocor* “crane”, *bun* “good”, *singur* “alone”, *tunet* “thunder”, *a se bucura* “to rejoice”, *Păraele Sașilor* “The Saxon’s Brooks”, *Unghiul cu frasini* “The Corner with Ash-Trees”, *Râul alb* “The White River”, *Valea seacă* “The Dry Valley”, *Din gura văii* “From the Mouth of the Valley”, *cucului* “of the Cuckoo”, *gura văii albinilor* “The Mouth of the Bees’ Valley”.
4. Choose five of the above words (or collocations) and make up short sentences (in Romanian).
5. Translate in your mother tongue the following Romanian words (recorded in Slavo-Romanian, Latin or Hungarian texts from late 10th century to early 16th century): *bun* “good”, *singur* “alone”, *urs* “bear”, *vară* “summer”, *fecior* “lad”, *surd* “deaf”, *dos* “back”, *baci* “shepherd”, *copil* “child”, *groapă* “pit”, *bălan* “white”; “fair”, *vârf* “peak”; “end”, *iaz* “pond”, *ban* “ban”, “ruler”; nowadays “small coin”, *oraș* “town”, *ham* “harness”, *turc* “Turk”.
6. Choose ten of the above words and make up short sentences (in Romanian).
7. Name four cities from Transylvania where various religious books were translated and/ or printed in Romanian in the 16th century.
8. Name the date when *Scrisoarea boierului Neacșu din Câmpulung* (“The Letter Written by Boyar Neacșu of Câmpulung”), addressed to Hans Benkner, magistrate of Brașov, was likely written.
9. Tell, briefly, what is the above mentioned letter about.
10. Choose ten words from the above mentioned letter and make up short sentences (in Romanian).

ROMANIAN LANGUAGE TODAY⁵²

Romanian (or *limba română* in the language itself) is considered a Latin-derived language related closely to languages such as Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese. Unlike any of the others it is the only Romance language still spoken in Eastern Europe. It has official status in Romania, Moldova, and parts of Serbia and Greece; it is also recognized in Hungary as a minority language and spoken in Ukraine, Albania, and Macedonia. Even if it has approximately 24 million speakers, Romanian is generally not present in Romance language degree programs which prefer the more renowned French and Spanish.

In contrast to its linguistic relatives Romanian has evolved in an area in southeastern Europe where Slavic languages prevail. The European-language families with most speakers are the Romance, Slavic, and Germanic families – and they all belong to the much larger Indo-European language family. The mainstream theory is that Romanian is unique as a result of the influence of the Slavic languages, mostly Bulgarian and Serbian. All the same Romanian is also a member of the *Balkan Sprachbund* (“Balkan language area”) - a group of mutually influential languages, seemingly unrelated: Slavic, Greek, Romance, and Albanian. It is mostly their grammars that have very extensive similitudes, such as: similar case and verb conjugation systems; have all become more analytic, although to differing degrees. The Balkan region was the ancestral homeland of the Thracians and as their language was not preserved in written records speculations can be raised about the real significance of the substratum. Romanian has been influenced (though to a much smaller extent), for historical reasons, by Turkish, Greek and Hungarian (a Uralic language). Due to the dissimilarity from the other members of its Romance language family in the early stages of research in comparative Romance, Friedrich

⁵² Adjustment of Clara Miller-Broomfield, *Romanian: The forgotten Romance language*, retrieved from <https://unravellingmag.com/articles/romanian-the-forgotten-romance-language/> on March, 8th, 2018.

Diez stated in 1836 that Romanian was “only a semi-Romance language”⁵³. This is considered wrong by most modern linguists, but Romanian has indeed quite a number of qualities that make it look different from any other Latin-derived language.

In order to exemplify this matter one can compare the verb “to speak” in Romanian to five Romance languages of Western Europe:

Romanian – *a vorbi*

Spanish – *hablar*

French – *parler*

Italian – *parlare*

Portuguese – *falar*

Catalan – *parlar*

In this instance, both *hablar* and *falar* come from the Latin *fabulare* – meaning ‘to talk’ or ‘to speak’. The initial “f” became an “h” in Spanish, as is common in that language, but the origin of both words remains the same. On the other hand, *parler*, *parlare*, and *parlar* all come from another Latin verb, *parabolare*, which carries basically the same meaning. The English words “parable” and “fable” were derived from these same two Latin forms. Nevertheless the Romanian *a vorbi* has rather uncertain origins; it has been suggested to have come from the Slavic word *dvorība* – meaning “court”, as in “court of law”. However many of the Slavic etymons were challenged recently, with compelling arguments for the possible Thracian-Dacian substratum⁵⁴. It is true that the vocabulary of Romanian is one of the difficult aspects for the learners who are already used to the vocabularies and lexicons of other Romance languages.

⁵³ Frédéric Diez, *Grammaire de Langues Romanes*, retrieved from <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k113235s/f2.item> on March, 11th, 2018.

⁵⁴ Cf. Mihai Vinereanu, *Dicționar etimologic al limbii române pe baza cercetărilor de indo-europenistică*, p. 901.

A few more examples:

Words for “without”:

Romanian – *fără*

Spanish – *sin*

French – *sans*

Italian – *senza*

Portuguese – *sem*

Catalan – *sense*

Latin – *sine*

Words for “man”:

Romanian – *bărbat*

Spanish – *hombre*

French – *homme*

Italian – *uomo*

Portuguese – *homem*

Catalan – *home*

Latin – *homo*

Words for “friend”

Romanian – *prieten*

Spanish – *amigo*

French – *ami*

Italian – *amico*

Portuguese – *amigo*

Catalan – *amic*

Latin – *amicus*

Apart from the differences in basic vocabulary, Romanian differs from other Romance languages with regard to grammar as well. Perhaps the most striking particular are the Romanian definite articles: they are placed after nouns (this structure would read as “book the”, contrarily to “the book” in English). Officially, this is due to the influence of languages such as Macedonian, Bulgarian, Albanian, and Serbian that are spoken in

neighboring countries (the Balkan language area issue). Another notable particular of Romanian: it has maintained a partial version of the case system used in Latin; this feature disappeared in all other Romance languages. In a grammatical case system, endings or forms of words are changed in order to reflect their role in a sentence as a subject, direct object, indirect object, etc. In the Latin sentence *Puella puerum amat* meaning “The girl loves the boy” for example, the word *puella* is in the nominative (subject) case, whereas the word *puerum* is in the accusative (direct object) case. In the sentence *Puer puellam amat* meaning “The boy loves the girl” however the roles are reversed and the meaning is changed completely. Romanian has also maintained use of a third gender – neuter – for its nouns, as in Latin; all of Romanian’s modern relatives have only the masculine and feminine genders for nouns.

All of these lexical and grammar characteristics (phonetic peculiarities can be easily added) make Romanian a strange language for speakers used to any of the other Romance languages. It may be considered a challenge for some or appealing for others.

Even if Romanian has many unique aspects, it still indicates a Romance linguistic affiliation at its core. Despite the fact that loanwords from seemingly Slavic languages are relatively ordinary in its lexicon (for example, the Romanian word *da* meaning “yes”, the verb *a iubi* meaning “to love”, the noun *dragoste* meaning “love”, and the noun *nevastă* meaning “wife”), the majority of its vocabulary is still Latin-derived. Most of the basic vocabulary items and phrases such as *bine* (“well”), *bun* (“good”), *cu plăcere* (“you’re welcome” – literally, “with pleasure”), *nu* (“no”), *încântat* (“pleased to meet you” – literally, “enchanted”, as in the Spanish *encantado* and the French *enchanté*), and *pardon* (“excuse me”) correspond to their duplicates in the other Romance languages.

Marius Sala⁵⁵ considers 2581 words which make up the illustrative vocabulary of Romanian language.

⁵⁵ Marius Sala (coord), Mihaela Bîrlădeanu, Maria Iliescu, Liliana Macarie, Ioana Nichita, Mariana Ploae-Hanganu, Maria Theban, Ioana Vintilă-Rădulescu, *Vocabularul reprezentativ al limbilor romanice*.

71, 66 % have a Romance etymon (30, 33% inherited from Latin, 22, 12% taken from French, 15, 26% scholarly Latin and 3, 95% Italian loanwords).

14, 17 have a Slavic origin (9, 18 Old Slavonic, 2, 6 % Bulgarian, 1, 12% Russian, etc.).

2, 47 % are adopted from German.

1, 7% have a Neo-Greek origin.

1, 43 % are adopted from Hungarian.

Barely 0, 96% are inherited from the Thracian-Dacian substratum (to which one may add 2, 71 % of uncertain origin).

A statistical analysis sorting Romanian words by etymological source carried out by Dimitrie Macrea in 1961⁵⁶ based on the DLRM⁵⁷ (49,649 words) showed the following makeup⁵⁸:

43% recent Romance loans (mainly French: 38.42%, Latin: 2.39%, Italian: 1.72%)

20% inherited Latin

11,5% Slavic (Old Church Slavonic: 7.98%, Bulgarian: 1.78%, Bulgarian-Serbian: 1.51%)

3,62% Turkish

2,40% Modern Greek

2,17% Hungarian

1,77% German

8,31% Unknown origin

2,24% Onomatopoeic

If the analysis is restricted to a core vocabulary of 2,500 frequent, semantically rich and productive words, then the Latin inheritance comes first, followed by Romance and classical Latin neologisms, whereas the Slavic borrowings come third. The Romanian lexicon is similar by 77% with Italian, 75% with French, 74% with Sardinian, 73% with Catalan, 72 % with Portuguese and Rheto-Romance, 71% with Spanish⁵⁹. Pronouns,

⁵⁶ Dimitrie Macrea, „Originea și structura limbii române”, *Probleme de lingvistică română*, p. 32.

⁵⁷ Academia Română, *Dicționarul limbii române moderne*, editat de Dimitrie Macrea.

⁵⁸ Gabriela Pană Dindelegan, ed., *The Grammar of Romanian*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Cf. <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/ron>

numbers, verb tenses, and verb conjugations are also very clearly Latin-derived.

Out of these statistics it becomes obvious that Romanian vocabulary is very much alike the vocabularies of the other Romance languages only partially due to the Latin inheritance and mostly because of recent Romance loan words, French neologisms and Latin scholarly neologisms being the main sources.

Towards the end of the 18th century the so called Transylvanian school (represented by Samuel Micu, Gheorghe Șincai, Petru Maior, Paul Iorgovici among many others) undertook a tremendous work and responsibility in trying to introduce in Romanian language a great amount of words of Latin origin, otherwise inexistent up to that moment. Remarkably a great deal of this attempt was a success and this is how nowadays we can find the following Romanian words (and many more): *agent* “agent”, *atac* “attack”, *atentat* “criminal attempt”, *cauză* “cause”, *condiție* “condition”, *conferință* “public lecture”, *columnă* “column”, *consilier* “councilor”, “adviser”, *constituție* “constitution”, *a corecta* “to correct”, *director* “director”, *elemente* “elements”, *exemplar* “exemplary”, “copy of a book”, *gen* “gender”, “type”, “genre”, *inscripție* “inscription”, *inspector* “inspector”, *literă* “letter”, *mistere* “mysteries”, *memorie* “memory”, *modă* “fashion”, *natură* “nature”, *națiuni* “nations”, *ocazie* “occasion”, “opportunity”, *pedagog* “pedagogue”, “instructor”, *a pronunța* “to pronounce”, *proprietate* “property”, *a recomanda* “to recommend”, *a replica* “to reply”, “to retort”, *regulă* “rule”, *securitate* “security”, *sistem* “system”, *societate* “society”, “company”, *civilizație* “civilization”, *urban* “urban”, *articol* “article”, *caz* “case”, *compoziție* “composition”, *conjuncție* “conjunction”, *dialect* “dialect”, *derivat* “derivative”, “derived”, *instinct* “instinct”, *interjecție* “interjection”, *mod* “mode”, “mood”, “manner”, *pronume* “pronoun”, *experiență* “experience”, *termen* “term”, *verb* “verb”⁶⁰.

Perhaps the culminating work of the Transylvanian school was the first *Dicționar românesc-lătinesc-unguresc-nemțesc* (“Romanian-Latin-Hungarian-German Dictionary) published in 1825 in Buda. Here is a list with some of the words the dictionary was proposing: *bal* “party”, “ball”, *bancă* “bank”, *climă* “climate”, *convenție* “convention”, *chirurgie* “surgery”,

⁶⁰ Cf. Ștefan Munteanu, Vasile Țăra, *Istoria limbii române literare*, p. 127.

contagios “contagious”, “infectious”, *generos* “generous”, *familie* “family”, *medicină* “medicine”, *medic* “physician”, *epilog* “epilogue”, *magie* “magic”, *moral* “moral”, *notă* “note”, *plan* “plan”, *pretext* “pretext”, *pur* “pure”, *teatru* “theatre”⁶¹, etc. Many of these words became ordinary in Romanian language.

With the beginning of 1840 French language, culture and civilization became the reference for Romanian intellectuals from Moldavia and Wallachia, as many have recently returned from their studies in Paris. French language and culture became more than fashionable among the Romanian nobility and intelligentsia. It was something of a fascination sometimes taken to the extreme. As a fortunate consequence there was a tremendous amount of French words penetrating into Romanian language. To make up a list or another will always be incomplete and unjust. However here is an interesting statistics of loanwords from French as used in the works of the authors of that time: *a copia* “to copy”, *original* “original”, *naiv* “naïve”, *amabil* “amiable”, “pleasing”, “agreeable” (Nicolae Bălcescu); *blond* “fair haired”, “blonde”, *brun* “dark brown”, “dark-haired”, “dark-skinned”, *etern* “eternal”, *lașitate* “cowardice”, *matinal* “early morning”, *misterios* “mysterious”, *a saluta* “to greet”, “to welcome”, *terasă* “terrace” (Dimitrie Bolintineanu); *brav* “brave”, *grav* “solemn”, “serious”, “stern”, *ierarhie* “hierarchy”, *iluzie* “illusion”, *indiscret* “indiscreet”, *peisaj* “landscape”, *a prefera* “to prefer”, *rezonabil* “reasonable”, *suflu* “breathe” (Costache Negruzzi); *argument* “argument”, *contradicție* “contradiction”, *elementar* “elementary”, *fantastic* “fantastic”, *formulă* “formula”, “means”, *rezervă* “reserve”, *soluție* “solution”, *voiaj* “travel” (Alecu Russo); *abuz* “abuse”, *a consulta* “to consult”, *a legaliza* “to legalize”, “to attest”, *a maltrata* “to ill-treat”, *personal* “personal”, “private”, “personnel”, “staff”, *simptom* “symptom”, *vagabond* “vagrant”, “tramp”, *armonios* “harmonious”, *conversație* “conversation”, *fatal* “fatal”, *idealism* “idealism”, *palid* “pale”, *a profita* “to profit”, *provizie* “provisions”, *prizonier* “prisoner”, *sistem* “system”, *a vizita* “to visit” (Vasile Alecsandri)⁶².

⁶¹ Cf. Alexandru Niculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁶² Cf. P. V. Haneș, *Dezvoltarea limbii literare române în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX - lea*, p. 220-250. For a thorough review of the matter, see Constantin-Ioan Mladin,

Thus, Romanian may look and sound very different at first from its western European linguistic relatives, but a careful analysis proves that most of its structure, grammar, and lexicon have a Latin counterpart. It is very much a Romance language, though a seriously influenced one.

Many say Romanian is not a practical language to learn, as it has a relatively small number of speakers. However “Romanian is considered a ‘critical language’ by the United States government, meaning that while there is significant demand for Romanian speakers and those who are knowledgeable about the language, they come in short supply. The term is also used to designate a language that has been deemed important to American diplomacy, with the reasoning that knowledge of certain languages and cultures can be beneficial to fostering relationships with the countries to which they are spoken. In addition, Romania is a beautiful country and one that is worth visiting in order to experience its welcoming people, pristine landscapes, and rich cultural and historical heritage”⁶³. Transylvania “is a splendid realm, and there is a longstanding tradition among the Brits at least to be fascinated by ‘the land beyond the forests’ (the literal translation of Transylvania’s Latin name). I might name, randomly, Charles, Prince of Wales, Bram Stoker or Laurence Austine Waddell (all of whom traced their origins back to Transylvania, fictitiously or otherwise...). It is a land that has everything: mountains with virgin forests and brown bears, lynxes, wolves, endless rivers, green hills with old villages, farms with cows and horses, rich, diverse, old, alive and functional intercultural traditions, a complicated history, astonishing architecture, tasty natural cuisine and yet all the modern ‘amenities’ the ‘civilized’ citizen needs, at sometimes higher standards than offered elsewhere (one may land in at least six airports to begin with, ski in several resorts and even drive on two highways...). (...) All of you are very much welcome, some of you will not want to go back home afterwards, some already have not. Charles has bought an endless number of houses in several villages and seems very

Considérations sur la modernisation et la redéfinition de la physionomie néolatine du roumain. Deux siècles d’influence française.

⁶³ Clara Miller-Broomfield, *Romanian: The forgotten Romance language*, retrieved from <https://unravellingmag.com/articles/romanian-the-forgotten-romance-language/> on March, 8th, 2018.

much at peace every time he comes around – and that is suspiciously often.’⁶⁴

From a purely linguistic outlook, Romanian is a fascinating language; a good knowledge of Romanian makes learning Spanish, French, Italian and any other Romance languages far easier. It may be conceived as a useful foundation...

Consequently there are various reasons to concentrate on learning Romanian. It is likely that in the future this charming and misinterpreted language will stand preeminently among its younger correlatives.

Compulsory tasks

1. How many people speak Romanian nowadays and in what countries?
2. Describe briefly the *Balkan Sprachbund* (“Balkan language area”).
3. Exemplify the uniqueness of Romanian when compared to the other Romance languages, using any of the words: *a vorbi* “to speak”, *bărbat* “man”, *fără* “without”, *prieten* “friend”.
4. Illustrate the difference from the other Romance languages in terms of Romanian grammar: speak about the definite article, grammatical case system or gender.
5. According to Marius Sala’s analyses of 2581 words which make up the illustrative vocabulary of Romanian language, what percentage have a Romance etymon and what percentage a seemingly Slavic origin?
6. Name to what languages Romanian resembles mostly, when considering the similarity in vocabulary.
7. Translate in your mother tongue the following words (scholarly Latin neologisms introduced by the Transylvanian school at the end of the 18th century): *agent* “agent”, *atac* “attack”, *atentat* “criminal attempt”, *cauză* “cause”, *condiție* “condition”, *conferință* “public

⁶⁴ Corina Selejan, “An Interview with Lucian Bâgiu, Author of *Bestiary: Oriental Salad with Peacock/ Imaginary Academics*”, p. 140, retrieved from <https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/abcsj.2016.26.issue-1/abcsj-2016-0009/abcsj-2016-0009.pdf> on March, 15th, 2018.

lecture”, *constituție* “constitution”, *a corecta* “to correct”, *director* “director”, *elemente* “elements”, *exemplar* “exemplary”, “copy of a book”, *gen* “gender”, “type”, “genre”, *literă* “letter”, *mistere* “mysteries”, *memorie* “memory”, *modă* “fashion”, *natură* “nature”, *națiuni* “nations”, *ocazie* “occasion”, “opportunity”, *a pronunța* “to pronounce”, *proprietate* “property”, *a recomanda* “to recommend”, *a replica* “to reply”, “to retort”, *regulă* “rule”, *securitate* “security”, *sistem* “system”, *societate* “society”, “company”, *civilizație* “civilization”, *urban* “urban”, *articol* “article”, *caz* “case”, *compoziție* “composition”, *instinct* “instinct”, *mod* “mode”, “mood”, “manner”, *pronume* “pronoun”, *experiență* “experience”, *termen* “term”, *verb* “verb”.

8. Choose ten words from the above exercise and make short sentences (in Romanian).

9. Translate in your mother tongue the following words (scholarly Latin neologisms from *Dicționar românesc-lătesc-unguresc-nemțesc* “Romanian-Latin-Hungarian-German Dictionary” published in 1825 in Buda): *bal* “party”, “ball”, *bancă* “bank”, *climă* “climate”, *convenție* “convention”, *chirurgie* “surgery”, *contagios* “contagious”, “infectious”, *generos* “generous”, *familie* “family”, *medicină* “medicine”, *medic* “physician”, *epilog* “epilogue”, *magie* “magic”, *moral* “moral”, *notă* “note”, *plan* “plan”, *pretext* “pretext”, *pur* “pure”, *teatru* “theatre”.

10. Choose five words from the above exercise and make short sentences (in Romanian).

11. Translate in your mother tongue the following words (loanwords from French as used in the works of the authors from middle 19th century): *a copia* “to copy”, *original* “original”, *naiv* “naïve”, *amabil* “amiable”, “pleasing”, “agreeable” (Nicolae Bălcescu); *blond* “fair haired”, “blonde”, *brun* “dark brown”, “dark-haired”, “dark-skinned”, *etern* “eternal”, *lașitate* “cowardice”, *misterios* “mysterious”, *a saluta* “to greet”, “to welcome”, *terasă* “terrace” (Dimitrie Bolintineanu); *grav* “solemn”, “serious”, “stern”, *ierarhie* “hierarchy”, *iluzie* “illusion”, *indiscret* “indiscreet”, *peisaj* “landscape”, *a prefera* “to prefer” (Costache Negruzzi); *argument*

“argument”, *contradicție* “contradiction”, *elementar* “elementary”, *fantastic* “fantastic”, *rezervă* “reserve”, *soluție* “solution”, *voiaj* “travel” (Alec Russo); *abuz* “abuse”, *a consulta* “to consult”, *a legaliza* “to legalize”, “to attest”, *a maltrata* “to ill-treat”, *personal* “personal”, “private”, “personnel”, “staff”, *simptom* “symptom”, *conversație* “conversation”, *fatal* “fatal”, *palid* “pale”, *a profita* “to profit”, *provizie* “provisions”, *prizonier* “prisoner”, *sistem* “system”, *a vizita* “to visit” (Vasile Alecsandri).

12. Choose three words from each author of the above exercise and make short sentences (in Romanian).

13. Translate in your mother tongue the following words from the Romanian fundamental stock:

– parts of human body: *cap, ochi, gură, picior, braț* etc.;

– food: *apă, lapte, pâine, brânză, carne* etc.;

– indispensable objects and frequent actions: *casă, masă, scaun, cuțit, a mânca, a merge, a face, a respira, a sta, a locui* etc.

– birds and animals (mostly domestic): *pui, găină, câine, pisică, porc, vacă, oaie, cal* etc.;

– trees and fruits: *castan, plop, stejar, măr, păr - pere, nuc - nucă, cais - caisă* etc.;

– kinship: *mamă, tată, fiu, fiică, bunic, soră, frate* etc.;

– days of the week: *luni, joi, duminică* etc.;

– moments of days, seasons, months: *dimineață, amiază, seară, noapte, primăvară, vară, toamnă, iarnă, ianuarie, iunie, decembrie* etc.;

– frequently used colours and features: *alb, negru, roșu, verde, înalt, gras, frumos, rotund* etc.;

– conjunctions, prepositions, articles, numerals, adverbs: *dar, și, peste, niște, un, eu, voi, toți, celălalt, niciunul, trei, mie, amândoi, unul, sfert, primul, o dată, dublu, bine* etc.

14. Choose ten words from the above exercise (one from each category) and make short sentences (in Romanian).

15. Identify one word from the fundamental vocabulary which does not have a Romance etymon.

16. Argue what makes Romanian important.

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BIO NOTE

Lucian Vasile BĂGIU was born on November, 23rd, 1979 in Cluj-Napoca. PhD in Philology *magna cum laude*, 2006, “Babes-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca. Member of Romanian Writers’ Union from the same year. Lecturer of Romanian language at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim (2008-2011), Charles University in Prague (2012-2013), Lund University (2014-2017). Journal manager of *Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies*, Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University (as of October 2016). Tenured assistant lecturer at “1 Decembrie 1918” University from Alba Iulia, ever since 2003. Author of several books on literary criticism and fiction. Among these:

– *Despre Sebastian, Sorescu, Dosoftei, Derrida și limba română / On Sebastian, Sorescu, Dosoftei, Derrida and Romanian language* (TipoMoldova, 2016, award for monograph *ex aequo*, Romanian Writers’ Union, Alba-Hunedoara branch)

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