

**Chapter I**  
**The development and history of the theory of Dacian-Roman-  
Rumanian continuity**

Let us clarify for the reader - who may not necessarily be an expert on the subject - that first, we will only be discussing viewpoints pertaining to Rumanians who inhabit the former Roman province of Dacia (present day Oltenia and part of Transylvania). There is nothing unusual about the continuity and survival of Latin speaking ethnic groups from the region/era of Imperium Romanum. On the other hand, if the Rumanian language is heir to the language spoken by the inhabitants of the province of Dacia, then this language was spoken not only here but on most of the Balkan Peninsula; Rumanians inhabiting Romania today are not the only ones using this neo-Latin language. We know that Rumanians also reside beyond the borders of Romania. The 1977 Rumanian census counted 19,003,511 Rumanians within Rumania; 2,525,687 in Moldavia and also smaller entities in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Hungary. An estimated 1,200,000 Rumanians lived in the diaspora prior to World War II - mostly in the Americas and in Australia. By now this census data is no longer accurate, of course. It is less well known that, in addition to Rumanians who live outside Romania, national entities can be found in several areas of the Balkan Peninsula which speak a

language or languages similar to Rumanian. Most significant among them are the Arumuns who live in Greece, Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria.

Their estimated number varies between 300,000 and 600,000. The majority reside in Greece, in Thessaly and Epirus (the area of the Pindus Mountain), where an estimated 150 - 200,000 live. These peoples are frequently called Macedo-Rumanians but call themselves Ar(u)mân<sup>u</sup>, Rumân<sup>u</sup> or Râmân, while Greeks know them as Kutsovlach (lame or limping Vlachs). Their Albanian name is Rëmër or Çoban originating, respectively, from the Latin *romanus* and the Turkish word for shepherd. In Bulgaria, they are known as Belivlachs i.e. White Vlachs (while Rumanians in Romania are called Karavlasî, or Black Vlachs). The Serbs know them as Cincars which is a nickname, making fun of the frequent "c" (ts) sound in the Arumun language. The majority of the population are shepherds practicing transhumance, a form of herding characteristic of this population. Some have also become skilled merchants and craftsmen. Other than Rumanians living in Romania, only the Arumun have a written language among the Rumanian speaking nationalities in the Balkans. Their oldest linguistic relic is an Icon - inscription, dating from 1731, which was found in Albania.

The Arumun also had notable scholars, such as George Murnu who was exploring the history of his people. Also, Pericle Papahagi and Tache Papahagi; they compiled a collection of Arumun literature. Another nearly extinct group of Rumanians of the Balkan Peninsula are the Meglenoruman(ian)s. This name derives from the Moglena region of Macedonia, where this group of people lived along the right

bank of the river Vardar. They call themselves Vla<sup>o</sup>i: the only Rumanian ethnic group in whose language we do not find "*romanus*" (in Meglenoruman[ian], this word could be "*Rumon*"). We have no exact data of their number. Various estimates range from 14,000 to 26,000. They became Mohammedans and a significant number of them resettled in Asia Minor after W.W.I.

The Istrorumanians are the smallest group of Rumanians, living on the Istrian Peninsula. Statistics from 1846 claim their number to be 6000; there were only 1200 -1500 by 1971. They call themselves Vla<sup>o</sup> or Vlas. Earlier they also used the name Rumeri or Rumãri, another version of Romanus. To the north the Žejanians call themselves "cici" and the Croatians and Italians call the Istrorumanians: "ciribiri". Both are names of derision, based on certain characteristics of these respective languages. That they themselves were willing to use these names suggests the extent of their assimilation. Without exception, they speak Croatian; sooner or later this bi-lingualism will make their assimilation complete.

There have been disputes pertaining to the origin and interrelationship of these four Rumanian groups, and they continue to this day. It should be noted that these languages have a common pre-history based on similarities of syntax, vocabulary, inflection and like absorption of new-word segments; they cannot be separated from each other. There was a perpetual relationship up to the 11th century: *Common Rumanian*. Of the four Rumanian groups of common origin only the Arumuns and the contemporary (northern) Rumanians appear in early literature of Byzantine and western writers. Of the two, the Arumuns appear first; partly in the writings of

Byzantine authors and partly in western accounts of the Crusades. The first unmistakable reference to Northern Rumanians in the Carpathian Basin is to be found at the beginning of the 13th century; among the armies sent by Joachim - the overlord of Nagyszeben (Sibiu) - to liberate Vidin, Rumanians (Olaci) are noted along with Saxons, Szeklers and Petchenegs. This event occurred between 1208 - 13; probably in 1208. Only much later do references appear pertaining to the origin of Northern Rumanians inhabiting the territory of the former Dacia.

Poggio Bracciolini, Florentine humanist (1380 - 1459) makes first mention of this topic in a work he wrote in 1451. According to him, in the western part of Eastern Europe (*apud superiores Sarmatas*) live the descendants of Emperor Trajan's settlers, who retained a great deal of the original Latin language. Among others, they used the Latin words *oculus* (Rum. *ochi* 'eye'), *digitus* (Rum. *deget* 'finger'), *manus* (Rum. *mînă* 'hand'), *panis* (Rum. *pîine* 'bread'). Poggio Bracciolini bases these observations on hearsay. While we know nothing about his sources, we can take it for granted that he is writing about Moldavian Rumanians; in those days Sarmatians were mentioned only in relation to areas east of the Carpathians and of the Vistula river. In all likelihood, it was a mercantile center along the Black Sea, which spread word about a language - similar to Italian - being spoken by Moldavian Rumanians. When this news reached Italy, local scholars well-versed in the history of Rome inferred a connection with the Dacian conquest of Trajan and specifically with the Romans who were resettled North of the Danube. Nevertheless, our author makes no mention of Dacia. From the end of the 14th

century on, Moldavia lay east of Dacia during the reign of Rome, within the area east of the Carpathians, up to the river Dneestr and south to the Black Sea. Thus, the first statement as regards the similarity of Rumanians to Romans - as in the case of Rumanians in the Balkans - did not refer to those Rumanians who live in the area, which was once a province of Trajan.

If not Dacia itself, but Dacians are recognized by Flavio Biondo, noted secretary and scholar of the Clerical State (1392 - 1463). After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 he writes about Dacians or Valachs (*Ripenses Daci sive Valachi*) who are of Roman descent. In some of his letters he writes about "*Ulachos* of Roman Blood" but he identifies them not with Dacians, but with the Moes-es of antiquity, who lived along the banks of the Danube. (For good measure, he also includes Serbs and Bulgarians.) It is noteworthy that Flavio Biondo uses the designation *Ulach* for the Rumanians (Vlachs), whose sound pattern resembles their Hungarian name (*oláh*). Even though Biondo knows of the Rumanian descent of János Hunyadi, he is familiar primarily with Rumanians South of the Danube and in Wallachia.

Northern Rumanians - as remnants of Trajan's Dacian settlers - first appear in concrete form in the writings of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (1405 - 1464) who will become known as Pope Pius II (1458 -1464). This noted author of many scholarly works has a clear view of Rumanians north of the Danube who are supposedly descendants of Roman soldiers, sent to fight against the Dacians. The Roman legions were to have been commanded by a military leader named Flaccus (Pomponius Flaccus in Latin), Governor of

Moesia. Rumanians were to have been named after him: *Flaccus* becoming *Valachus*. According to Aeneas Sylvius, Rumanians speak a notably flawed Latin - Italians can barely understand it. This intellectual exercise - along with Ovidius' story about Chief Flaccus - took on a life of its own in the historiography of the origin of the Rumanians.

Subsequent to such prolegomena Antonio Bonfini attributes a level of scientific study to his essay pertaining to Rumanians' descent from Roman settlers in Dacia, i.e. from the legionnaires of Trajan. Bonfini (1427? - 1502) lived in Hungary from 1486 on; he had, in contrast to his compatriot Italian Humanists, local knowledge. He was familiar not only with Italian literature on the subject, but also with Latin inscriptions and ruins from Roman times in Hungary. Yet, the only - albeit incessantly repeated - proof of Rumanians' Roman origin is their language and, incidentally and implicitly, their habitation in the place where Dacians and Getas once lived. He has various explanations as to why these Roman - Rumanians are called Valachs. Bonfini disputes Aeneas Sylvius' theory that they were named after Flaccus. He links the origin of their name to their skill in archery (Greek *ballo* means 'to throw, to shoot') but it is also possible that their name is a flawed version (due to the poor pronunciation of Dalmatians) of Valeria, a province named after Diocletian's daughter. These are the explanations of a scholar of his times (and also that of subsequent historians of the 18th century.) The contemporary reader wonders whether Bonfini has ever seen anything of Dacia. It is here that this former Roman province became linked to the Rumanians, and in his text one may also find the seeds of the theory of Dacian-

Rumanian continuity. Bonfini also showed interest in the genealogy of Mathias Hunyadi (King of Hungary 1458 - 90); he explored the background of the Corvin lineage: the Roman patrician Corvina-family, the ancestors of the Hunyadis. The Rumanian origin of King Mathias played a significant part in the interest generated in the Roman roots of Rumanians. This was already evident in the case of his father, János (John) Hunyadi (seen in the writings of Pietro Ransano, among others). Descriptions of the Rumanians' Roman origin and of Trajan's settlements by Ransano and in the popular works of Aeneas Sylvius became their scholastic legacy; future historians of the 16th and 17th centuries used this data as their major source, whether they were Hungarians, Transylvanian Saxons or other Europeans. As time goes by the Chieftain Flaccus is omitted as the source of the name: Vlach for Rumanians, but for a long time the view is prevalent that Rumanians are in reality Italians. In part, the reason for this view has to do with Italian scholars' belief that Rumanian is a "half-Italian" or "flawed Italian" language. Another reason: Poles used a similar name for Italians and Rumanians. The first reference to this factor can be found in the writings of G. Pomponio Leto (1425-1498). He was traveling in Eastern Europe, including Poland, around 1480. Leto states: "Dacia is a province extending in both directions beyond the Hister (Danube) which, in our day, was called Volochia and their inhabitants, Volochs. Volochia is Italy, since the Dacians (Rumanians) speak Italian."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Marcu: Riflessi di storia rumena in opere italiane dei secoli XIV. e XV. *Ephemeris Dacoromana* I (1923), p. 381.

In the Polish language Italians were called Wloch, Rumanians were called Woloch. The latter is a word of Russian derivation. The combination of these two designations creates the image that Rumanians are of Italian origin and that they speak some kind of Italian. We can read in the biography of Zbigniew Ole<sup>o</sup>nicki, Bishop of Crakow (Written by Filippo Buonaccorsi Callimaco (1438-1496) who lived in the court of the Jagellos) that Poles considered Rumanians to be Italians (Italos) and called them by the same name (*Italiae indigenas*).

The views of humanist scholars about the origin of the Rumanians were conclusions based on the science of the Age of Humanism. The facts were: 1) An ethnic group resides in the Lower Danubian and East-Carpathian region whose language resembles Latin and Italian. 2) In the region this population is known by the same name as the Italians. 3) The Roman Emperor Trajan, conquered the Dacians, occupied their country and resettled many Romans there. 4) The Dacians' land, Dacia, was in the same area where the Vlachs lived, who spoke a language resembling Latin.

It is a natural consequence of these facts that the Vlachs (Rumanians) are the descendants of the Roman settlers, sent there by Trajan. The logic of this reasoning leads to the same conclusion and was used not only by Humanist scholars of the 15th and 16th Centuries, but by our contemporaries as well. Possibly, another circumstance also added weight to this conclusion. The name by which the Rumanians call themselves - Rumîn - is similar to Romanus: Roman (this is its derivation), as well as Italian *romano* etc. An Italian, or speaker of Latin, discovers easily this similarity.



For such an individual, nothing could be more natural than to identify *Rumîn* with *Romani* (the Romans). As logical as this supposition appears to be, the first mentioning in a written source of the fact that the Rumanians use a name for themselves, which would suggest Roman extraction appeared very late. The first two references to this circumstance derive from the same time-period and the same environment. Both Tranquillo Andronico (Dalmatian 1490-1571) and Francesco della Valle (from Padua, who died after 1545) belonged to the entourage of Alois Gritti, a governor under Hungarian King János Szapolyai. Tranquillo Andronico writes in a letter, dated Dec.16,1534, that the Rumanians (*Valachi*) now called themselves Romans (*Romani*): (*nunc se Romanos vocant*). In 1532 Francesco della Valle accompanies Governor Gritti to Transylvania, Valachia and Moldavia. At this time he notes that they preserved the name of the Romans (*Romani*).

From this time on we frequently come across mention of Roman for Rumanian in Latin texts; variations from this pattern start to occur from the 17th century on. Orichovius (Stanislaw Orzechowski, 1513-1566) notes as early as 1554 that in their own language, Rumanians are called Romîn (after the Romans) and Walachs in Polish (after the Italians), (*qui eorum lingua Romini a Romanis, nostra Walachi, ab Italis appellantur*). This version of the name recurs in this short sentence by Francesco della Valle: *Sti Rominest? (âti române<sup>o</sup>te?)* In the 17th century *Rumîn* appears as Rumun (Johann Tröster), Rumuny (Paul Kovács de Lisznyai), *Rumuin* (Laurentius Toppeltinus), and *Rumen* (Johannes Lucius and Martin Szentiványi).

Undoubtedly, all of them refer to names by which Rumanians refer to themselves. Nonetheless, we believe all this could not have effected the unfolding of the history of the origin of the Rumanians by the Humanist scholars. The first available reference regarding this name is made about a hundred years after we hear of the idea that they descended from Trajan's colonists. There may be several reasons why their name (as Rumîns) played no role originally in the perceived process entailing descent from Trajan's colonizing settlers. There may be several reasons why, as a designation (for Rumanians) Rumîn played no role in the picture, which suggested that the Rumanians derive from Dacian Romans. First and foremost Rumîn in the Middle Ages meant "serf". This may have been why in Rumanian texts and in the language a conversion took place, as a result of which the name evolved into Romîn. This is the usage we find in a 1582 foreword of a partial translation of the Bible (the name appears once as Rumîni and twice as *limba rumînească*). On the other hand, we assume Rumîn was not a frequently used term. Because in their small sheep-herding communities the names they used were frequently an altered form of the name of their leaders (*cneaz*): Iacobeni, Bogdane<sup>o</sup>ti; and regarding larger areas, we find names which derive from geographical entities: Moldoveni, Ungureni.

The perceived descent of Rumanians from Roman Dacians, which Humanists propagated on the basis of information available to them, found its way into Rumanian scholastic thinking. Once again, it is Francesco della Valle in whose writings we find the first such reference. He was supposedly told by monks at the monastery of Dealu near Tîrgovi<sup>o</sup>te that Rumanians were supposed to be

descendants of colonists whom Trajan resettled. The Greek monks at the monastery in Dealu must have heard this from the Franciscan monastery of Tîrgovi<sup>o</sup>te where many of the friars were Italians.

It is of interest that, originally, Rumanian sources held different descent-theories. The following legend came down to us from the annals of the Russian church in Voskresen; it was written in Old Church Slavonic, but its Rumanian origin is certain. The chronicle was written around 1504 by an anonymous author. The quotes contain relevant passages. "In 6867 (1359 A.D.) two Christian brothers, Roman and Vlahata are fleeing persecution by heretics and leaving Venice, they come to a place called Old Rome. Here (they) built a castle and named it Roman, after (them)selves. They lived in it up 'til the time when Pope Formosus left the true, Pravoslav (i.e. Byzantine) church for Rome.

Following a division of the laws of Christ, the Latins built themselves a new castle and called it New Rome. They asked the Rumanians (Romanovci) to join them in the Latin church but (the latter) preferred to start a war, rather than forsake the Christian faith.... At the time of King Vladislav the Tartar (Mongolian)s came from the region of the rivers Prut and Moldva. With their Chieftain, Nejmet, they advanced against the Hungarians. King Vladislav got word of the Tartar (Mongolian)s' attack and turned to the Pope and the Emperor in Rome for help. He also sent emissaries to the Old-Romans and Rumanians (Romanovci). Thereupon, we (Romanovci) united with the Old-Romans and went to Hungary to help King Vladislav (László in Hungarian). Soon a decisive battle took place between King László - (Vladislav) and Nejmet, Tartar (Mongolian)

Chieftain, along the banks of the river Tisza. The Old-Romans were at the forefront of the battle.... And they defeated the Tartar (Mongolian)s: first the Old-Romans, then the Hungarians and Rumanians (Romanovci); of the Old-Romans not many fell in battle.

László, the Hungarian King, was glad of God's help and highly appreciative of the Old-Romans, whom he rewarded for their fighting spirit..... and he urged them to join his forces and not to return to Old-Rome, because the New-Romans will do them harm... they did not believe the King and asked permission to send some men to their homeland who were to find out whether their women and their children were left alive in Old-Rome. The emissaries left and soon returned to report: our castle, Old-Rome, is in ruins and the New-Romans induced our women and children to adopt their faith. Then they asked King László not to force them into the Latin church and that they should be permitted to keep their Christian faith according to Greek rites. They also asked the King to give them a place to stay. The King was very pleased and gave them land in Mármaros, [at the time part of Hungary; became part of Rumania after W.W.I; translators remark] between the Rivers Tisza (Theiss) and Mores at the place called Krizs. That is where the Old-Romans settled. They started to marry Hungarian women and led them to their own Christian religion. Up to this day they have been living like this...<sup>1</sup> ".

This confusing and historically quite inaccurate story does not crop up anywhere else, but in the 17th century, *logofăt* Istratie, *dascâl* Simion and *câlugâr* Misail also connect the settlement of

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<sup>1</sup> I. Bogdan: Vechile cronici moldovene<sup>o</sup>ti pânã la Ureche. Bucharest 1891, p. 185-187. (Hungarian translation by G. Lükõ: On the Legend about the Founding of Moldavia. *Ethnographia* 47 (1936).

Rumanians in that area with king László the Saint (King Ladislav). According to this version King László asked Rome for help against the Tartar (Mongolian)s, who sent him felons released from prison: these were to have been the ancestors of Rumanians in Máramaros and Moldavia.

It would be difficult to identify the sources of this "Chronicle Anonymous". As suggested by Gábor Lükő, the source could have been the Legend of St. László (Ladislav), which was well known in the age of the Anjous. In all likelihood the views of the Humanists during the reign of King Mathias in Hungary may also have given impetus to the legend. Reference to "New-Rome" in connection with the origin of the Rumanians can only be found with Pietro Ransano; he talks about Roma Nova, as well as Romanea. According to his narrative, Constantin the Great was to have brought people from Rome (and Italy) to settle (in Roma Nova) but they went instead to Thrace, Greece and adjoining areas; later Flaccus dux led settlers into Dacia. Ransano does not mention Trajan and his legionnaires, nor does the Anonymous Chronicle. However, he calls New Rome "Romanea", while in the Anonymous Chronicle Old Rome appears as Roman (which, by the way, is a well-known town in Moldavia: roughly translated as Roman Fair). Undoubtedly, the Anonymous Chronicle used Hungarian sources, as well and so did the Istiatie logofăt version! To be sure, these are "scholastic" theories and do not reflect the existence of an established "Roman identity" among Rumanians. On the other hand, there could have been historical basis for land in Máramaros being given to Rumanians by the Hungarian King "between the Rivers Mores and Tisza in a place called Krizs". The

Rumanians might have had some reminiscence of such settlement. Geographical data accompanying this notation may be inaccurate (but no more than customary for the period) but we can deduce that Moldavian Rumanians had an awareness that they were newcomers, late settlers along in the territory framed by the Rivers Maros, Tisza and Kőrös-es. In the 15th century and about 1500 some memory must still have existed of settlements being founded in the 13th - 14th centuries. Let us remember: the narrative in the Anonymous Chronicle is typical of legends depicting the origin of nations (in this case the settlement in Moldavia) with sibling-ancestors and hunts, where one animal leads the people to a new land. These legends always contain a kernel of truth.

The Anonymous Chronicle left no traces in the writings about Rumanian history. The first significant Rumanian diarist, Grigore Ureche (1590 - approx. 1647) was a boyar of great learning and culture. When he writes about the origin of the Rumanians, he speaks only of descent from Rome (de la Rîm) and of Flaccus - as per Aeneas Sylvius - name-giver to the Vlachs, describing him (i.e. Flaccus) as "hetman rîmlenesc", i.e. Roman leader. He doesn't even mention Trajan or Dacia and Flaccus is said to have fought the Scythians, although the person whom Ureche used as a resource, Joachim Bielske, (*Kronika Polska*, 1597) knows about Trajan's wars. He quotes the Latin equivalent of Rumanian words (occasionally incorrectly: *părinte* = *pater*) but he is aware that the Rumanian language contains a melange of words.

Miron Costin, Chancellor of Moldavia (1633 -1691) is an even more important personage than Ureche in the annals of literature. Of

this Moldavian boyar, who is a writer and poet (and writes in Polish as well) P. P. Panaitescu states: "he worked not as a compiler, but as a historian".<sup>1</sup> In the various works of Miron Costin the "historian's" opinion undergoes a number of changes. In his work dated 1673, Flaccus (Fliah) is the one who is leading the ancestors of Rumanians out of Italy, but by 1675 only Trajan is mentioned. Writing about the Moldavians in his old age, he specifically denies the validity of the legend of Flaccus and his role in naming the Rumanians. Naturally, he reflects the then prevailing Polish expression (Wloch=Italian and Woloch=Rumanian) in pinpointing Italy as the place of origin for Rumanians. He is the first who writes about the Roman Dacians moving to the mountains to escape Tartar (Mongolian)s during the Mongol invasion. He writes about the "second founding" of Moldavia and Muntenia (the first attaches to the name of Trajan and to the Voivode Negru of legend). The Rumanian word for embankments (troian), which is of Southern Slav etymology, recalls Trajan and he is right in stating that rumîn is the equivalent of romanus. M. Costin presents a well- developed, almost modern, theory of the origin of Rumanians; his views have been given weight up to this date. In this history the Dacians have no role as ancestors of Rumanians. Costin was familiar with Laurentius Toppeltinus, who published "Origines et occasus Transsylvanorum" (The Rise and Fall of Transylvanians) in 1667, wherein he attributes Dacian ancestry to the Transylvanian Saxons and Costin says that the Dacians are old time Saxons (*dachii, a sa<sup>o</sup>ilor mo<sup>o</sup>ii*). This continuity theory also has its antecedents. Miron

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<sup>1</sup> P.P. Panaitescu: Miron Costin, Contribuții la istoria culturii românești, București, 1871, p. 555.

Costin was aware of the fact that the Rumanians who live in three different countries - Moldavia, Valachia, and Hungary - are the same people; his remarks also have a political edge.

Miron Costin - whose study was copied by his son, Nicolae, in 1712 - has a contemporary in Wallachia, the Greek Constantin Cantacusino (1640 -1716). He is a political figure of stature and a well-informed scholar, as well. He is impressed by the might of the Dacians. It is not accidental that he is among those who attribute to the Dacians a role in the origin of the Rumanians. In his arguments with István Szamosközy, [Hungarian historian (transl.)], he disputes that Dacia was completely evacuated under Emperor Gallienus, but allows that some Roman soldiers could have settled South of the Danube. The Arumun (*copovlahi*) are to have been their descendants. Cantacusino also writes about the Huns - and about Hungarians, as the Huns' descendants. Accordingly, Rumanians descend from Romans in Dacia and Hungarians from the Huns who devastated the Roman Empire; this is how the Age of Antiquity overlaps the New Age and brings change to what seems unchangeable.

Cantacusino is among the first who, albeit indefinitely, seeks the ancestors of Rumanians among the Dacians. While he is a writer who has fallen into neglect, he must be acknowledged as the precursor of the Dacian-Roman theorists. The learned Moldavian Sovereign, Dimitrie Cantemir (1673 - 1723) had no doubt that the ancestors of the Rumanians were Trajan's colonists and settlers: they were citizens of Rome and soldiers who - without mixing with the population - constituted the ancestry of Rumanians. Cantemir's views



were not unique. The theory of pure descent from the Romans is shared by every member of the so-called "Transylvanian School" (*°coala ardeleană*). Nevertheless, Cantemir was the first who claimed the Rumanian language contained Dacian words; these he attributed to the Dacian servants or wives of Romans. The following were considered to be Dacian words: *stezar* = oak (*stejar* -Bulgarian origin), *padure* (*pădure* = forest from the Latin *palus, paludem*) *halesteu* (*hele<sup>o</sup>teu* = fishpond - from Hungarian:"*halastó*"); *carare* (*cărare* = path -(Latin: = *carraria*); *graesk* (*grăiesc* =I speak - of Serbian origin); *privesk* (*privesc* = I look at - Slav word); *nemeresk* (I get to - Serb word). The errors noted above should not surprise us, as they date from the beginning of the 18th century. However, Cantemir is also comparing Rumanian words with their Latin and Italian equivalents in order to prove that his language has a greater resemblance to Latin than to Italian. Early Rumanian studies of their history present the prevailing view that Rumanians' origins can be traced to Italy - not a surprising conclusion, given available sources.

The history of research into the origin of the Rumanians reflects the different theories which are being considered up to this day: the late arrival of the Rumanians to the Carpathian Basin (in the earliest Anonymous Chronicle and in the Hungarian Annals, a source used by many scholars - *Letopisebul unguresc*); descent from Trajan's soldiers (Miron Costin, Dimitrie Cantemir); the Dacians' participant-role in Rumanian ethnogenesis (Constantin Cantacusino).

The latter could be viewed as an early formulation of the theory of Dacian-Roman continuity. As a precursor of this theory we find Andronico Tranquillo writing in 1534 that the soldiers from the legions

of Flaccus married the "provincials" and became one nation (*unam gentem ex duabus faceret*). Therefore, there is nothing Roman about them (*nihil Romani habent*), except their mixture of a language. It is most interesting that Andronico Tranquillo's companion, Francesco della Valle (who was also Gritti's secretary) knows nothing about this - or perhaps he doesn't want to know anything about this theory. He is only considering colonization by Trajan. Should we assume that there were differences of opinion about the origin of the Rumanians (in the environment of Gritti) even in those days? Whichever way it was - and we can only make assumptions on the basis of the data at our disposal - we must note that the Rumanian annalists and the authors of chronicles were all humanists from the 17th century. What they were familiar with were the first attempts in writing European history from a modern perspective but based on a classical (humanist) tradition. After all, Miron Costin quotes Toppeltinus (a.k.a. Lorenz Töppel), the same Toppeltinus who claims that Transylvanian Saxons descended from the Getae and Dacians. The same claim was made by David Herman and Johann Tröster who died in 1682 and 1670, respectively. From the mid-18th century on, an increasing number of references can be found pertaining to Rumanians - the Arumun - who reside in Greece, in the Southern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Naturally, Contacusino and Cantemir mention them, too (the latter attributes Dacian origin to the Arumun). In addition to some earlier sources, it is the knowledge of the Southern Rumanians, the Arumun, which enables us to explore the origin of the Rumanians meticulously and in great detail. - Toppeltinus is already familiar with the *Vita Aureliani*, the biography of the Roman Emperor, Aurelian. It

contains information about the withdrawal of the army from Dacia and of those who were left behind in the Province but (with minor changes in the text) the Rumanians continue to be viewed as Trajan's colonists. Different conclusions are reached in relation to the Rumanians of the Southern Balkan Peninsula. We have not previously referred to early data pertaining to them, as that would belong to the history of the Rumanians, rather than Rumanian ethnogeny.

Awareness of the Arumun has intruded early on upon the legend of Northern Rumanians' descent from Trajan. A good example can be found in the writings of Laonikos Chalkokondylés, Byzantine historian (1432 - 1490):...the same language is being spoken by the Valachs (the Arumun), living in the Pindos Mountain-region, as by the Dacians (Northern Rumanians)..... The Dacian language resembles Italian, but it is flawed and so different that Italians have difficulty understanding it.... I was unable to find out from anyone how they could have made it to the areas where they currently live, given their language and customs....<sup>1</sup>

In the Byzantine manner Chalkokondylés uses archaic names (Hungarians are Pannons, Serbs are Triballs), calling Northern Rumanians Dacians. He is quite vague regarding their origin. Ioannes Lucius, who is the first doing in-depth research on this theme, questions the theory of Trajan's colonization in a 1666 work, which pertains to Dalmatia and Croatia. Lucius doubts that the residents of the Roman province, headed by Trajan, would have remained in the

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<sup>1</sup> Laonici Chalcocondylae *Historiarum demonstrationes*. Scriptores Byzantini II., Ed. V. Grecu, Bucure<sup>o</sup>ti, 1958, p. 190.

territory in which many different populations appeared. Furthermore, scholars of the classical period make no mention of Romans. He thinks the Rumanians were settled North of the Danube by the Bulgarians, when they also occupied this area (i.e. Dacia). Here Rumanians from the Balkan Peninsula mixed with Romans, who stayed on beyond the Aurelian era.

There is hardly any difference between Lucius and the level of knowledge possessed by 18th century historians. In 1774 J. Thunmann declares that the Vlachs of the Balkans do not originate from Dacia. He believes them to be descendants of Tracians. He considers the Northern Rumanians to be Romanized descendants of Getae and Dacians who were to have adopted the Roman name under Caracalla (in 212 the Emperor extended Roman citizenship-rights to all people who lived in the Empire and who fled to the hills from the hordes of the Great Migrations). There, they became nomads and this latter concept emerges already in the writings of M. Costin. In his work on the history of the Rumanians, Thunmann makes reference to Anonymus, Scribe of the Hungarian King Béla, who is to have confirmed the presence of Rumanians at the time of the Hungarian Conquest of the region (cc. 986). (Anonymus appears as one of the major references in Schwandtnar's much-used collection of sources, which he published in 1746).

While Thunmann does not go beyond the theories propagated by Lucius, Franz Joseph Sulzer does (*Geschichte des transalpinischen Daciens*. - Vienna, 1781-82) in his *History of Trans-Alpine Dacians*. He maintains that, given the Slav infusion of words in the Rumanian language, they cannot possibly be descendants of Emperor Trajan's

Dacian Romans. He believes it is inconceivable that a nation would resist barbarian invasion for 700 years without adopting some of the invader's words. They must have lived as aliens in Dacia, lacking (equal) rights and of the Orthodox faith. On the other hand, if they had been present on Hungarian land St. Stephen (Hungarian King 1001 - 1038) would have converted them to Roman Catholicism. Therefore, alleges Sulzer, they must have come from Great Valachia (Arumun land) around the end of the 12th century and later in the aftermath of the Tartar (Mongolian) invasion (1241). Sulzer is the first to bring to light specific data pertaining to Rumanians from the Balkans during the Middle Ages. However, he is mistaken in assuming that they could not have been indigenous to the area because they lacked equal human rights - today we know that such analogies are incorrect. Let us remember that the era under discussion is already one in which Transylvanian Rumanians strive for equality. A milestone in this development was 1697 - the Union of the Orthodox Rumanians of Transylvania with Rome. By this time the Rumanians are, indeed, the most significant population in Transylvania but political rights adhere to the three dominant nations (Hungarians, Saxons and Seklers). Advocating for political rights, Bishop Inochentie Micu-Klein asserts in 1735: "We are the oldest residents of Transylvania, (we) date back to the era of Emperor Trajan".<sup>1</sup> The "Rumanian Appeal" (*Supplex libellus Valachorum*) made in 1791 with, clearly, a political intent, also refers to Rumanian ancestry from the colonists of Emperor Trajan. Political interests will

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<sup>1</sup> See *Erdély története* (History of Transylvania), Editor in Chief: Köpeczi B. II., Budapest, 1986, p. 1016.

thereafter determine for a long time (much too long, it seems) how individuals relate to Dacian-Roman continuity; it is difficult to find studies which are exempt from political considerations. To us it seems that this historical argument - between Rumanians, Hungarians and Germans - has been useful. Although burdened by passion, it clarified many aspects of the origin and history of the Rumanians. Be that as it may, we find no Hungarian study validating Rumanian descent from Dacians, following the publication of *Supplex libellus Valachorum* (excepting that of Balázs Orbán and a few insignificant authors). However, we cannot find any Rumanian studies, in which the theory of Dacian origin is disputed, albeit the Rumanian authors, who disagree, are not insignificant. German studies reflect divergent opinions, frequent among them the theory - attributed to Thunmann - that Rumanians are Romanized Getae and Dacians. Following the publication of Sulzer's work, rejection of the concept of Dacian continuity became the rule.

On the history of "continuity" the three members of the *acoala ardeleană* had great impact. Also known as the "Transylvanian Triad", they were Samuil Micu-Klein (1745 - 1806 - he was the grandson of Bishop Inochentie Micu-Klein), Gheorghe <sup>a</sup>incai (1753 - 1816) and Petru Maior (1754 - 1823). All three were Greek Catholic, educated in Vienna and Rome. Both <sup>a</sup>incai and Maior edit Rumanian language material for the University Press at Buda (Hungary), both are familiar with Hungarian historical studies. Micu-Klein wrote: *Elementa linguae Daco-Romanae sive Valachicae* (1780) and *Historia Daco-Romanorum*. In his belief- system Daco-Romania does not denote the concept of such continuity; the "Transylvanian Triad"

propagated information about survival of Romans in Dacia. According to Gh. Țincai (*Hronica Românilor*, Iași 1853 -1854) Rumanians descended from colonists who came to Dacia from all areas of the Empire, but primarily from Rome and Italy; most of them remained in their places also after the evacuation process begun by Aurelian. - P. Maior (*Istoria pentru începutul Românilor în Dacia*, [i.e. History of the Dacian Origin of Rumanians] Buda, 1812) also considers Rumanians to be descendants of Dacian colonists and emphasizes that Roman settlers did not intermingle with Dacians. In the days of Emperor Gallienus some of them settled on the right bank of the Danube; these are the ancestors of Balkan Rumanians. According to Maior's view the Comans (who had a close relationship with Rumanians) were descendants of Romans from Cumae but he also allows that they received their name from Coman, a Roman prince.

Moldavian and Vallachian historians of Greek descent were inclined to believe that the Rumanians descended from a Romanized population in Dacia (D. Philippide 1816, Dionysios Photinos 1818); the influence of the teaching of the "Transylvanian School" can be felt here, as well (M. Cogălniceanu 1837, A. Trebonius Laurianus 1840). In 1860, the Transylvanian Orthodox Bishop, A. Țaguna states without any hesitation that Rumanians are the descendants of Trajan's soldiers and settlers - from the River Tisza (Theiss) to the Black Sea. In literature originating from others than Rumanians, B. Kopitar (1780 - 1844) constitutes a rare exception. A Viennese Slavacist of Slovenian origin, he notices elements in the Rumanian language that are shared with Bulgarian and Albanian and sees a link

between Rumanian and the languages spoken by the Illyrians and Thracians who spoke the Latin used by the indigenous population of the Balkan Peninsula.

Robert Roesler's work (*Romänische Studien*, i.e. Rumanian Studies), published in 1871, was a pivotal research study on the subject of the origin of Rumanians, due to the wealth and depth of its thesis, the factual basis for his arguments and, finally, because of the vehement arguments it generated. Those who dispute Dacian continuity can count on being called "Roeslerians" which had turned into a pejorative adjective. Nevertheless, two prominent scientists of the 19th century became "Roeslerians": F. Mikolosich, a Slavist and W. Tomaschek, a philologist. Based on Roesler's work, they relinquished their previously held views on the subject and adopted Roesler's thesis.

According to Roesler, Dacian Romanism differs from the Romanism to be found in other provinces of the Empire. In the latter, the indigenous population changes its national character but Dacians remain free of contact with Romanism. After Rome relinquishes the Province, it is occupied by Goths and the Roman provincial culture (107 - 272) completely disappears. The Rumanians came into being in Thessalia, Macedonia, Illyricum, Moesia and Scythia (a province of Rome, near the estuary of the Danube). They will be moving North from these regions at the end of the 12th century, at the time of Assenid rule of the Bulgarian-Vlach-Cumanian state. Rumanians did not constitute the provincial population of Dacia, who stayed in the region, as evidenced by the absence of mention of Rumanians at the time of the Avar-Byzantine wars during the era of the Great Migration;



the "*argumentum ex silentio*" is already known to Lucius. Other arguments: The Slavic elements of the Rumanian language are from Old Church Slavonic, i.e., Bulgarian, while the Slavic place names are Ruthenian, (i.e. Eastern -Slavic, definitely not Bulgarian) and the use of the Bulgarian language by Rumanians in the language of church and government, up to the 17th century.

Although I. I. Russu, the latest critique of Roesler, maintained that Roesler and his followers created merely the "appearance of scientific work", we must declare that his prominent and controversial book was the first piece of research based on scientific principles, which dealt with the origin of Rumanians - its errors notwithstanding. Let us also examine the changes in the thinking of Miklosich and Tomaschek, who became "Roeslerians". In 1862 - before Roesler - they write about the Rumanians as the descendants of Trajan's colonists, who intermarried in Dacia and Moesia with the native Geta population and who are dispersed upon the Slavs' intrusion into the Balkan region, becoming Arumuns, Istrorumanians and Northern Rumanians. Following the publication of the Roesler book in 1879, he assumes that the origin of the Rumanians is a much -discussed but unresolved question. In his opinion the ancient home of the Rumanians was south of the Danube; this is the only way which he can imagine the Rumanians of the Istrian Peninsula, the Istrorumanians. By 1882 he believes Rumanians are Romanized Illyrians, that is a population in the western part of the Balkans (again influenced by the existence of the Istrorumanians).

In 1868 W. Tomaschek still believes that the Rumanians are Romanized Dacians and Getae, who never left Dacia. He explains

the absence of their mention in existing records by positing that those contain records of dominant populations only ; not "passive" Rumanian shepherds and mountain dwellers. (This line of reasoning was already used by D. Philippide who claimed that only those are given notice who bear arms and not those who carry a shepherd's staff or plow the land.) Tomaschek is not immediately convinced by Roesler's thesis. In an 1872 critique he is still supporting the theory of continuity and it is rather odd that he should be reversing his earlier opinion in the course of challenging Roesler. In 1877 he states publicly for the first time - in a critique of J. Jung, a supporter of the theory of continuity - that Rumanians are Romanized Bessi, a Thracian Balkan hill-people, who migrated to the Pintos mountain area (Arumun) and settled on the left bank of the Danube during the 9th and 10th Centuries. He writes more on the subject in 1881 and presumes that Rumanians are descendants of the Bessi and the Illyrians, provincial residents of the Balkans, whose original home was to have been West - Dardania (the area of today's Skopje). He believes they migrated north from the right bank of the Danube between 1074 - 1144; the period coincides with the appearance of the Petchenegs (Patzinaks) and the Cumanians along both banks of the Danube. It is Tomaschek who first provides extensive linguistic data. He argues that the Romans who would have remained in Dacia would have preserved the Roman language spoken at the time of Trajan and Gallienus, while the Rumanian language continues the Latin spoken *within* the Roman Empire between 400 - 600 (this cannot be disregarded by serious linguists even in our day). Rumanian words, which have to do with Christianity also suggest that their forebears

must have lived within the borders of the Roman Empire in the 4th Cent., while there are no place-names of Roman origin in Dacia. In 1893 Tomaschek published a comparative study about Thracians. Not one Dacian god or family name from Dacia is known to us, he writes; the only possible explanation for that is Trajan's extinction of Dacians for the most part. Those who remained were absorbed by the Romans. In the rest of this work he repeats what he said earlier about the origins of the Rumanians.

If not Roesler's book, then Tomaschek is - possessing reliable scientific credentials - could have brought to an end the recurring controversy pertaining to this issue. This did not happen. For one, the Rumanian scientific community disregarded him; after all, he wrote about the Balkan Peninsula and Thracians. Furthermore, the argument continued to be impacted by emotionally charged political considerations. A.D. Xenopol and D. Onciul reviewed Roesler's work in detail and presented almost the same rationale in opposition which - up to this day - proponents of "Continuity" have been using to prove that the Rumanians can trace their origin to Dacians. Xenopol, whose beliefs reflect the Humanist thinking of his day, assumed Dacian colonists all came from Italy and that only the rich moved out when Dacia was evacuated. He also thought that Rumanians practice the Slav (Orthodox) rites because Bulgarian control extended to Moldavia, Valachia and Transylvania. He states their presence (preceding the coming of the Hungarians into the region) was noted by Anonymous, Nestor (chronicler from Kiev), the Niebelungen song from the time of Attila, King of the Huns, and Simon Kézai

[chronicler in the court of Hungarian King László IV, 2nd half of 13th century - transl.].

Of these the only plausible proposition pertains to Rumanian Orthodoxy and its Bulgarian connection. It was 870 when Bulgarians completely accepted the Eastern church. This means that they had some 25 years in which to convert Rumanians before the Hungarians took possession of the area (895 - 896) (and the Rumanians held on to the faith even after Bulgarian influence and the church disappeared; what's more, they recognized the jurisdiction of the Ohrida Bishopry, which was founded in 1020 by Greek Emperor, Basileios III!)

The disputed arguments belong to the same category as those of Onciul, who thought that the circumstance that the Rumanian chronicles know about the descent from Trajan but make no mention of re-migration to Dacia, was based on popular tradition. We saw earlier that the idea of the origin from Trajan entered into Rumanian scholasticism from the thinking of the Humanists. But written legacy of national lore - what little there exists - (The Anonymous Chronicle, the *Letopiseþul unguresc*) gives an account of migration. We must, however, credit Onciul that, 14 years later (1899) he attributes less significance to Dacian Romanism and grants a much more significant role to migration from the south. Actually, it is about this time that the Rumanian research takes two different lines of inquiry into the matter of origin.

E. Hurmuzaki follows Roesler's reasoning; he states that Vlachs derive from the indigenous Moesian population, residents of the towns built along the banks of the Danube and those who were

resettled from Dacia. He assumes (1878) that they moved to the region North of the Danube in the 9th (the time of Bulgarian hegemony) and 10th Centuries. As a result of the development of comparative Neo-Latin linguistics, O. Densusianu looks first to Balkan Romanism in analyzing the origin of the Rumanian language(s). With the occupation of Dacia this would cover an immense territory, from the Adriatic to the Black Sea and from the Northern Carpathians to the Pindus mountain range where Latin was to have been spoken. According to him, the Macedo-Rumanians (Arumuns) evolved through Illyrian-Latin cohabitation. He gives more weight to the Illyrian element in the Rumanian language than to Thracian; undoubtedly, because of the linguistic connection between Rumanian and Albanian. The latter were considered to be heirs of the Illyrians. We hold that O. Densusianu attributes much too great a significance in the history of the Rumanians to the shepherd way of life. What's more, he mentions sheep herding groups migrating between the Pyreneese and the Carpathians.

In Rumanian linguistics Al. Philippide (1859 - 1933) was an outstanding scholar. His writing is contained in two large volumes; up to this time it can be considered the book of reference on the subject, in spite of some errors which, by now, we can detect. (*Originea Romînilor*, 1925, 1927). According to Philippide, the Rumanian language is a legacy of Balkan-Romanism. As proof he cites its derivation from the Late-Latin of the 3rd and 4th Centuries. The connections of the Rumanian language with Albanian force us to put the area in which Rumanian developed to the region south of the Danube. Dalmatian and Rumanian are late vestiges of Balkan-

Romanism. Dalmatian developed from an Illyrian-Pannonian base (it became extinct by the end of the last century) and Rumanian came from a varied substrata, with a common Thracian base. Philippide does not exclude the permeation of Dacian Romanism but claims it is impossible to know ("*nu se poate sti*") whether they ("*populabie romanã*") retained their language or were assimilated to the migrating, invading peoples. Nor do we know whether the Romans - who stayed on the left bank of the Danube - retained their language up to the in-migration of the Rumanians, or if they gave it up for one of the Barbarian languages. Philippide asserts that if Rumanians are Romanized Dacians, they would call themselves Dacian (Daci). They, instead retained Romanus as their name because they came from different provinces and used it as a differentiation from Slavs. This is also how the Dalmatians held on to Romanus. Philippide believes Rumanians migrated north of the Danube early on during the second half of the 6th century (given the data at our disposal, this thesis is unimaginable). He believed that the Illyrians descended from the Pannonians; a unique version of the Illyrian descent of Albanians - one of Philippide's hypotheses which later research (by others) did not reinforce. I.I. Russu deems it a "question to be re-examined" (*chestiunea va fi reluatã*)<sup>1</sup> in another context, but mindful of the linkage to the Albanians (who are not an indigenous population at their present place of habitation).

Philippide's work became a milestone in Rumanian linguistics, but not in Rumania. A prominent linguist, A. Rosetti, challenges him by

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<sup>1</sup> I.I. Russu: *Etnogeneza românilor*. București, 1981, p. 172/10.

saying: "this theory does not correspond to currently known facts".<sup>1</sup> His remark alludes to the implausibility of Rumanians' northward migration in the 6th century because separation of various Rumanian dialects took place only between the 10th and 12th centuries. Northern Rumanians could have reached the region North of the Danube only at that time.

Among post-Philippide Rumanian linguists only I. Iordan and E. Petrovici gave serious consideration to the Balkan Peninsula, as the place of origin of Rumanian development. However, both maintain the possibility of the theory of continuity. From the start of the century none of the Rumanian scholars expressed any doubt about the development of the Rumanian language - and people - in Dacia Traiana and in neighboring areas. This thesis was given credence especially after the very influential work done by I. Iorga, an outstanding writer and historian. An assertive critic of his, C.C. Giurescu, also believed that Rumanians descended from Romanized Dacians. He thought that they had a continuous presence on their erstwhile land and they had continuity in maintaining some kind - or different kinds - of statehood. As we have seen in a different context and in different periods, historians had a greater impact on public opinion than did linguists. After all, the work of linguists is hard to read: one must speak several languages to be able to follow them and their strange abbreviations and technical jargon are difficult to understand. Linguists who were following research principles lost out to I. Iorga's version of history, of whom Al. Philippide stated that what

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<sup>1</sup> A. Rosetti: Les origines de la langue roumaine, in: *Mélanges linguistiques*. București, 1977, p. 105.

lorga wrote was not true history but a deliberately falsified pseudo-history!).

20th century research no longer belongs to the development and conditioning of the Dacian-Roman-Rumanian, Daco-Roman continuity theory. Scholars of Latin (popular late and neo-Latin) cannot conceive of the development of the Rumanian language anywhere but on the Balkan-Peninsula, South of the Danube (E. Gamillscheg is an exception). Yet, lately a certain reticence could be noted which expressed itself through the neglect of the issue. Joseph Herman explains: "...the hypothesis of the Dacian population's survival as a national entity and their exceptionally fast Romanisation constitutes one of the elements of the theory of continuity. A calm and open discourse of this question is hardly possible in view of the emotionally and politically charged aspects of the case."<sup>1</sup>

I would like to call attention to a recently published work. It is a detailed study of Dacian-Roman-Rumanian continuity. The author used a pen-name, André Du Nay, the work (*The Early History of the Rumanian Language*, 1977) has many printing errors and, at times, its conclusions seem to be based on inadequate information. Its style and structure suggest that it originates from Rumania. The author considers all the arguments for Dacian continuity put forward in recent times but he concludes that there was no such continuity. A. Du Nay is a linguist, thus he gives primary consideration to linguistic evidence. However, he does also pay attention to archeological data

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<sup>1</sup> J. Herman: *Új eredmények, új kérdések a román nyelvek kialakulási folyamatának vizsgálatában* (New Results, New Questions in the Study of the Development of the Romance languages), Budapest , 1985. p.43



and to the historical arguments in favor of continuity. Perhaps, there is a reason why, lately, we have been hearing in professional literature mostly from those who deny the theory of continuity - they have no difficulty with the facts. Du Nay's book resolved the dispute for a long time to come. The emotional aspects of the dispute must be challenged by facts.