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**РУМЪНСКАТА ДИАСПОРА НА БАЛКАНИТЕ В КНИЖНИНАТА НА
РУМЪНСКИ ХРОНИСТИ И ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛИ НА ПРОСВЕЩЕНИЕТО**

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**THE BALKAN ROMANITY IN THE WRITINGS OF ROMANIAN
CHRONICLERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT**

The representatives of the Balkan Romanity alluded to in the title, the Aromanians – *Ar(u)mân, Rum(ă)ân, Rămân*, as they call themselves, or *Vlasis, Rëmëri, Çobani, Kutzovlachs, Tzintzars*, as the peoples from the Balkan Peninsula, among whom they live, designate them, and the Megleno-Romanians (*Vlasi*, as they call themselves, *Vlasi* and *Megliti* respectively, as the neighboring peoples call them), constitute the southern offshoot of the Eastern Romanity, which used to extend from the northern boundary of Trajan’s Dacia (until the arrival of migratory peoples), to the mountains of North Greece, and from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. Its unity, the result of the Thracians’ Romanization, starting from the 2nd century BC, was broken by the Slavs’ settlement south of the Danube in the 7th century. As a result, north of the Balkans, there emerged the Romanian people, with a northern component (the Daco-Romanians), and a southern one (the Aromanians and the Megleno-Romanians), who were gradually pushed deeper south into the Balkan Peninsula, where they may have met, south of the Jireček line, some Romanized islands (the Istro-Romanians/*Istrian Vlachs*) are also descendents of Daco-Romanians. The Dacoromanians’ idiom continuously developed and enriched, and became the basis for literary Romanian in the 19th century, whereas, the Aromanian idiom, inheritor of the Eastern Romanity remained a dialect only.

Starting with the 17th century, chroniclers and Romanian humanists in Wallachia and Moldavia began to include among the roots of the Romanians the peoples in the Balkan Peninsula. Later, Romanian representatives of the Enlightenment in Transylvania, the so-called *Transylvanian School*, integrated the history of Balkan Romanity into the Romanian one aware as they were of the ethno-linguistic community between the Dacoromanians and the Aromanians, and of the Eastern Romanity as a whole. At the same time, Aromanian intellectuals wrote scientific works that benefited the influence of Transylvanian Enlightenment.

The representatives of the Balkan Romanity alluded to in the title, the Aromanians (Caragiu Marioțeanu 1996: 71-76, 84-86) – *Ar(u)mân, Rum(ă)ân, Rămân*, as they call themselves –, or *Vlasis, Rëmëri, Çobani, Kutzovlachs, Tzintzars*, as the peoples from the Balkan Peninsula, among whom they live, designate them, and the Megleno-Romanians

(*Vlasi*, as they call themselves, *Vlasi* and *Megliti* respectively, as the neighboring peoples call them) (Carageani 1999: 17-20; Bara 2005: 153-154), constitute the southern offshoot of the Eastern Romanity, which used to extend from the northern boundary of Trajan's Dacia (until the arrival of migratory peoples), to the mountains of North Greece, and from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. The Aromanians "are the followers of the Romanized South-East European populations (Macedonians/Greeks/Thracians/Illyrians) or colonized by the Romans (anyway, there was nothing S l a v i c at that time): Latin assimilated a part of these autochthonous languages. This process was unfolded on a large and compact territory which was lying between the Northern Carpathians and stretching to the South of Balkans. It is on this territory that the old Romanian people was born, which was unitary in the beginning (up to the 7th – 9th centuries), chiefly from the point of view of language" (Caragiui Marioțeanu 1996: 72). Its unity, the result of the Thracians' Romanization, starting from the 2nd century BC, was broken the Slavs' settlement south of the Danube in the 7th century. As a result, north of the Balkans, there emerged the Romanian people, with a northern component (the Daco-Romanians), and a southern one (the Aromanians and the Megleno-Romanians), who were gradually pushed deeper south into the Balkan Peninsula, where they may have met, south of the Jireček line, some Romanized islands (the Istro-Romanians/*Istrian Vlachs*/ are also descendents of Daco-Romanians) (Zbucea 1999: 14-20; Lascu 2005: 29-32). The Dacoromanians' idiom continuously developed and enriched, and became the basis for literary Romanian in the 19th century, whereas, the Aromanian idiom, inheritor of the Eastern Romanity remained a dialect only.

Starting with the 17th century, chroniclers and Romanian humanists in Wallachia and Moldavia began to include among the roots of the Romanians the peoples in the Balkan Peninsula (Lascu 1995: 6). Later, Romanian representatives of the Enlightenment in Transylvania, the so-called *Transylvanian School*, integrated the history of Balkan Romanity into the Romanian one – aware as they were of the ethno-linguistic community between the Daco-Romanians and the Aromanians, and of the Eastern Romanity as a whole (Lascu 1996-1997: 75-99). At the same time, Aromanian intellectuals wrote scientific works that benefited the influence of Transylvanian Enlightenment: "the historians of the *Transylvanian School* were the first to respond to German and Hungarian works by defending the idea of the Romanity of the South-Danubian Vlachs and by questioning the socio-professional interpretation that was starting to be given, in certain scholarly circles, to the word. Thus these historians adopted an intellectual stance that would be constantly defended in Romanian historical writing, in a continuing debate with foreign historians, the echoes of which can still be heard today" (Tanașoca 2001: 101).

Until the latter half of the 17th century, Romanian historical sources show no knowledge of the existence of people with a common origin in the Balkan Peninsula. Only when Romanian medieval culture revived through the contribution of humanists connected to the advanced ideas of the time, can we find the earliest reference to the south-Danube Romanians (Lascu 2005: 33-36). "Since its humanist beginnings, Romanian historical writing and historiography have reserved an appropriate place for Balkan Romanity among their areas of interest in forms and means suitable for each distinct period" (Lazarou 1986: 83; Tanașoca 2001: 100). It is in the works of the Moldavian

chronicler Miron Costin (1633 – 1691) that the idea of the unity of the Romanian people from all their historical provinces, the south-danubian branch included the Balkan Romanians (Aromanians), appears for the first time in our historiography. Costin is the first Romanian scholar who is aware of the existence of kinfolk in the Balkan Peninsula. In his *Chronicle of Moldavia and Wallachia* of 1677 (written in Polish) he writes: “In Macedonia there is a Roman colony of people, who speak a language similar to ours, yet closer to Italian than ours. The Greek call them *Kutzovlachs*” (Costin 1958: 208; Peyfuss 1994: 31). He reiterates the idea in his *On the People of Moldavia* of 1684.

In Wallachia, similar ideas are expressed in *The History of Wallachia*, written by Stolnicul / “the High Steward”/ Constantine Cantacuzino (1640 – 1684). The author, a high dignitary, an erudite of his time, acknowledged by foreigners too, is rather a humanist than a chronicler (Câdea 1971: 110). It is beyond doubt that Cantacuzino had direct contacts with some Aromanians, who had settled in Wallachia. While studying in Padua, he may have met Ioan Kottunios, a Hellenized Aromanian from the region of Veria. Consequently, his information about the “*Kutzovlachs*” is substantial. The most salient idea of this work regards the common origin of the Aromanians, whom he locates in the Epirus region and in south Albania, and the Romanians living north of the Danube (Cantacuzino 1984: 42-44; Peyfuss 1994: 30).

However, the most representative humanist of the Romanian Middle Ages, whose name was well-known to the scientific circles of the time, was Dimitrie Cantemir (1673 – 1723) (Panaitescu 1958: 148). His historical ideas focus on the unity of the Romanian people, and their Latin origin. Unlike his predecessors, with the likely exception of Constantin Cantacuzino, Cantemir insists on the Roman continuity in Dacia. By claiming that the Romanian people descend from the Romans, Cantemir anticipates one of the fundamental ideas of Romanian Enlightenment in Transylvania, at the end of the 18th century. In his first truly scientific work, *Descriptio Moldaviae*, written, in 1715-16, during his refuge in Russia, at the request of the Berlin Academy, whose member he was, in the chapter *On the Language of Moldavians* the prince refers to the language of the Aromanians in the following terms: “The Kutzo-Vlachs, who live in Rumelia, at the border with Macedonia, speak a «broken» idiom. They combine in a strange manner their own dialect with Greek and Albanian. Yet, they keep the Moldavian ending for names and verbs” (Cantemir 1986: 168). The Moldavian scholar (he also briefly ruled the country from 1710 to 1711) is aware of the derogatory appellative the Greeks used with reference to the Aromanians, e.g., Kutzo-Vlachs, meaning the «wobbling Vlachs». From the clear manner in which he distinguishes the characteristic features of their language, and its relationships with Greek and Albanian, it is very likely that Cantemir might have met and talked to them. In this work, whose purpose was to introduce to foreigners only one of the territories inhabited by the Romanians, Dimitrie Cantemir did not enlarge on his digression about the different branches of his people.

He would do this in another work, also written in Latin, *De antiquis et hodiernis Moldaviae nominibus* (On the ancient and contemporary Names of Moldavia), where, among other things, he refers to the presence of the south-Danube Romanians: “from the mouths of the Danube to its «rapids» (which are not far from Poștile de Fier/The Iron Gates), and as far as the Balkan Mountains and the Rodopi Mountains, in the past, and

today (that is after the invasions of the Serbians and Bulgarians), along the banks of the Danube, every village, burg and town is full of Romanian population. But these Romanians from Moesia are neither colonists nor refugees, following the foundation of Moldavia and Wallachia by Dragoș and Radu Negru respectively, because, nowhere, either with our historians, or with foreign ones, have we found any mention of this. Therefore, this Wallachia, that prides itself in Moesia, is a part of Greater Wallachia, that is of Dacia from the old, and its inhabitants are the descendants of those Romans whom Emperor Aurelianus, as we have already mentioned, moved into Moesia. Nobody has been able to deny the fact that from those Romans descend the Romanians, who live nowadays in Epirus and around Ianina, since their language testifies to it, because they speak Romanian, but speak the Latin language so badly spoiled not by Slavonic or Hungarian, as Romanian has been, but by Greek and Albanian, that we can hardly understand them; that is why the Greeks call them «Kutzovlachs», that is the «wobbling Vlachs» because in performing their rituals and speaking their language they seem to wobble. They are virtuous men and hardworking, and although they have been living for centuries among Greeks and Albanians, they have preserved their own attire, the old Roman one, which is ours too” (Cantemir 1983: 113) In another work, also written at the request of the Berlin Academy, in 1717, *Historia moldo-vlachica*, which can be considered the earliest synthesis of Romanians’ history for the usage of foreigners, D. Cantemir makes numerous references to the south-Danubian Vlachs, to the role played by the Asen dynasty, and the historical evolution of the state founded by them at the end of the 12th century: “He was the first Romanian scholar to have identified a direct link between the political activities of Balkan Romanians, led by the two brothers, Peter and John Asen, and the establishment of the Romanian medieval states of Moldavia and Wallachia, relying on a very personal and not exact error-free interpretation of the main Byzantine sources related to the Asenid uprising and the restoration of the Bulgarian Czardom at the end of the Twelfth Century” (Tanașoca 2001: 100). Cantemir is certain about the unity of the Romanian people, among which he places the Balkan Vlachs too: “Thus, today, Moldavians, Wallachians, Transalpine Vlachs, Mysiens, Bessarabians and Epirots, all call themselves Romanians not Vlachs, and their language Romanian. If a Moldavian, a Wallachian, a Mysian a.s.o. asked a foreigner or a stranger if he could speak their language, they would ask him in these words: «Scis romanice?», that is «Can you speak Romanian?»” (Cantemir 1983: 247). Moreover, among the Romanian territories, D. Cantemir includes also the regions in the Balkan Peninsula where he knew the Aromanians lived: “Experience teaches us that the Romano-Vlachs are now scattered over six regions: Moldavia, Wallachia, Bessarabia, Transylvania, Myssia, and Epirus in Greece”. He also specifies that in Epirus, around Ianina, near the Pindus Mountains “they live scattered in villages and burgs together with the Greeks” (Cantemir 1983: 421, 423). Interesting too is information about aspects of social life of the Balkan Vlachs, as the author is acquainted with their traditions: “They strictly preserve their wedding ceremonies and do not marry their daughters to men of other peoples, nor do they accept foreign wives for their sons; they carefully preserve old Romanian customs, and other traditions. About 30,000 men pay the Sultan a levy every year, which they call «haraci», except for those outlaws in the mountains who seldom rob Turkish travelers” (Cantemir 1983: 427). Owing to Dimitrie Cantemir, information

about traditions and mentality, which helped the Balkan Romanians safeguard their ethnic individuality in history from other nations and religious denominations, received wide currency.

Precious information about south Danubian Romanians can also be identified in the writings of the *Transylvanian School* representatives – a valuable intellectual movement of Romanians from Transylvania, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century (xxx *Istoria românilor* 2002: 867-871). Their earliest significant work, *Elementa linguae daco-romanae sive valachicae*, “composed” by Samuil Micu and “added” by Gheorghe Șincai (Vienna, 1780) proves to be a real program for what was to become the Transylvanian School in the modern history of the Romanians (Tanașoca 2003: 45). Its preface clearly expresses these Romanian patriots’ creed, the work was meant to prove the Latin origin of the Romanians, and through it, the antiquity of the Romanian people, the unity of this Romance language and of its speakers scattered over wide areas: “if someone engaged in trade with Daco-Romanians, or made a trip to Wallachia, Moldova, Transylvania, Hungary beyond the Tisa river, Sylvania, Kutzo-Vlachia/*Kuzo-Valachium* (our emphasis), Bessarabia, even Crimea, he would need the Daco-Romanian language, firstly, because one would never hear another language more frequently spoken than that this one in the above-mentioned regions” (Micu, Șincai 1980: 9) As regards the inhabitants of Kutzo-Vlachia, the representatives of the Romanian Enlightenment in Transylvania used information drawn on Byzantine chronicles, especially Nicetas Choniates (Tanașoca 2003: 134-136), although they were in direct contact with many Aromanians settled in Vienna, Buda, Pesta, and other regions of the Habsburg Empire, various Transylvanian localities included. In a work written from 1792 to 1790, conventionally called *A Short Account of Romanians’ History* (full printed version in 1963), Samuil Micu mentions among the regions inhabited by his kinsfolk those from the Balkans too: “Moglen, after Romanians settled there, was called Great Wallachia, that is Great Romania. Their language, their race, and their traditions are not dissimilar to the Romanians living in Dacia. We, the Romanians from Dacia, call these «Tzintzari», because instead of *ci* they say *tz*, so instead of *cinceprezece* they say *tzintzispzece*. Yet, their tongue is somewhat different from ours because we have borrowed many Slavonic words, while they borrowed Greek ones; because of these, there are some differences between our languages” (Micu 1983: 234). This detailed information is the earliest in Romanian modern historical literature, which proves that the North Danubian Romanians referred to their south Danubian brothers as “Tzintzari”. (*Nota bene*, there is no connection to the well-known insect, i.e., mosquito, Rom. „tzantzar”, as sometimes confusion is made, accompanied by a credible explanation of the appellative.)

In his writings, another remarkable representative of the Romanian Enlightenment from Transylvania, the historian Gheorghe Șincai (1754 – 1816), also uses information drawn on Byzantine chronicles when he refers to the situation of the south-Danube Vlachs. Concluding laborious and thorough scientific research, *The Chronicle of the Romanians and Other Peoples*, is the first modern historical account of the Romanians, and the earliest great scientific synthesis in our historiography. The Transylvanian erudite (Tanașoca 2003: 139-164) claims that the descendants of the Eastern Romanity from the

Balkan Peninsula are a branch of the same Roman trunk to which the north-Danube Romanians also belong to: “My intention is to write the annals of a whole nation, therefore the annals of the Kutzovlachs or Tzintzars (as they are known), starting from Trajan, or better, from the first war of Decebalus against the Romans, and until 1660” (Șincai 1978: XXII). This fundamental historiographical work puts forward Șincai’s historical program and pan-Romanian conception. Whenever the character of his work permitted, he would reiterate them. Thus, in the *Preface* to the 1805 edition of *The History*, he shows, more completely and clearly than in the 1780 edition, that “Romanians are scattered over new Dacia or Aurelianus’s Dacia, which included Lower Moesia, present day Bulgaria, Upper Moesia, Serbia, Sardinia and Albania. After the building up of the Vlachs’ and the Bulgarians’ Empire, they expanded over the whole of Bulgaria, the Haemus Mountains and Pindus Mountains, over Moglena, a province in Thessaly, Macedonia, Thrace, Crimea, Podolia, Poçuția, they settled in Pesta, Agria, Miskoltzium and other burgs beyond the Tisa river, in Vienna, Austria, in Venice, and in many other European towns, even in Asia, where Romanian merchants were so numerous that they have raised richly-adorned public churches”; listing the various appellatives of the branches of the Romanian people, Șincai makes the following comment: “finally, those who live in regions located beyond the Danube (from Old Dacia) are called Tzintzars, by the Greek or Koutzovlachs, wobbling Vlachs (*Claudi Valachi appelanntur*)” (Șincai 1983: 598). While unfolding the thread of Romanian history, Gheorghe Șincai points out, on every occasion, the ethnic unity of the Romanians on the either side of the Danube. When he narrates the events of Peter and Assen’s rebellion of 1186, which led to the creation of the Romanian-Bulgarian state, the Transylvanian historiographer emphasizes that they were not of Bulgarian origin, as George the Acroplite, the Byzantine Chronicler wrote, who “does not differentiates Romanians form Bulgarians” (Șincai 1967: 343).

The south-Danube Vlachs are accurately described in the works of Petru Maior (1761–1821), another representative of the *Transylvanian School* (Tanașoca 2003: 169–179). While the earlier had aimed at developing a global vision and produce an exhaustive description of their people, Maior inaugurates, the series of thematic works in Romanian historiography, with a topic rigorously delineated, viz., the beginnings of Romanians, their Roman origin and their continuity in Dacia and south of the Danube.

Istoria despre începutul românilor în Dacia (The History of the Romanians’ Beginnings in Dacia), published in Pesta, in 1812, is a systematic approach of a specific historical theme, of which the past of the Balkan Vlachs is an integrative part. Tracing the evolution of the Balkan Romanity in a synthetic manner, Petru Maior argues that several Roman emperors were of Romanian origin, or originated in the Romanized population in the Balkan Peninsula, although he sometimes forces artificial analogies. He too criticizes the derogatory appellative which the Byzantines gave the Balkans off shot of the Romanian people, and feels bound to make corrections: ”Here, as in other battles, which the North-Danube Romanians carried against the Greeks (the Byzantines respectively, in the times of Asen), one could see that these Romanians were not Kutzo-Vlachs, that is «wobbling Romanians», as the Greeks mock them, for they had strong legs and robust arms, they were not «tzantzars» (mosquitoes) either, but lions. They are neither barbarians, as the Greek Nicetas Choniates calls them in his history, but true Romanians, through their

name, blood, and their prowess. The Greek deserve to be called like this, because they have stolen their name from the Romans, they are not indeed Romans but Greek, and because in all the battles fought against the North Danube Romanians, they «wobbled» back to their homes. They fled from the Romanians like mosquitoes, hence they should be called «Tzantzars» rather than the Romanians” (Maior 1970: 18). Petru Maior also criticizes the assertions of those contemporary Austrian historians, who gave a partisan interpretation to a text of Anna Comnena with reference to the so-called nomadism of the Romanians. Petru Maior had direct relations with Aromanians living in Buda, Hungary’s capital, and their idiom. Like another representative of the Transylvanian School, he used linguistic evidence to demonstrate the Latin origin, as well as unitary character of his people. Maior is aware of the regional varieties of Romanian, and calls them dialects, yet he does not clearly perceive the specificity of the Balkan idioms. Knowing that there are “many Latin words, which have completely fallen into oblivions North of the Danube” in the language of the Balkan Vlachs, Petru Maior uses these words to enrich the vocabulary of literary Romanian, in his effort to create a unitary national language, purged of any Slavonic terms. The frequent use of elements of every day communication and the numerous illustrations that Maior inserted in his *Ortographia romana sive latino-valachica*, testify to serious knowledge of the Aromanians’ language and history.

Among the books that made up his personal collection, or which he may have consulted, there were works by Aromanian scientists published in the latter half of the 19th century, during the so-called first “Aromanian Renaissance” (Papahagi 1909: 17; Peyfuss 1996: 134-136). Under the influence of European Enlightenment, these authors published lexicons (T.A. Cavalioti in 1770, Daniil Moscopoleanu in 1794, re-printed in 1804 where, for the first time words from the Aromanian language are printed), also primers (Constantin Ucuta in 1797), with the aim to educate the Aromanian youth in their own language (Bardu 2004: *passim*; Peyfuss 1994: 24-25 Kahl 2006: 28-38; Țircomnicu 2006: 14-15).

Two works by Aromanian intellectuals define Romanian Enlightenment by means of its Aromanian element. The former, *Untersuchungen*, printed in Pesta, in 1808, and translated into Romanian at Craiova in 1867, under the title *Researches about the Romanians beyond the Danube* was written by the Aromanian doctor Gheorghe Constantin Roja (1784 – 1847). Its author (a polyglot who spoke 14 languages) writes about the origin and the history of his ancestors, and pleads for a system of writing with Latin, not Greek letters, unlike his predecessors. From the book, the importance of the Aromanians among the other nations of Europe clearly emerges, “a great nation, distinguished since old times, as trustworthy historians claim. Romanians occupy half of Thrace, two-quarters of Macedonia (the author was born in Bitolia – n.n.) and a large part of Albania, where most cities are peopled by them. In Hungary Germany, and Poland they are numerous” (Roja 1867: 3). The author gives precious information about the cultural conditions of his kinsmen in recent times, about the history of Moscopole, “a town inhabited by Romanians only, where many books have been printed (using the Greek alphabet)” (Roja 1867: 58), about the Balkan Vlachs, who achieved prosperity and fame as merchants, doctors, philosophers, theologians, in various European countries (Kahl 2006: 38-40). Through another work, Gh. C. Roja shows himself to be one of those Romanian

intellectuals not only influenced the Transylvanian School, but who was also creative and original, thus opening new horizons to the historical and linguistic understanding of the Romanian phenomenon. A booklet of 56 pages, *Măestria ghiovăsirii / citirii / românești* (*The Craft of Reading in Romanian*) (Buda, 1809), with a parallel text in Greek and Romanian, is one of the most important contributions to the early history of Romanian linguistics. Specialists acknowledge his pioneering work and modern approach (Saramandu 2004: 228-236). Roja sets forth new ideas with a view of creating a unitary literary Romanian language for both the north- and south-Danube Romanians. Practically, he tried to unify the Aromanian idiom with the Dacoromanian one, still a topical idea, with valences of protochronism, anticipating some linguistic ideas of Petru Maior. Roja distinguishes two Romanian dialects, a north-Danube one, and a south-Danube one, divided into regional dialects.

The first Aromanian scientist to use a Latin alphabet is Professor Mihail G. Boiagi (c. 1780 – c. 1842). His *Romanian or Macedo-Vlach Grammar* printed in Vienna, in 1813 (where he was a teacher of Greek at the Greek school), is the first scientific grammar of the Aromanian dialect (Peyfuss 1994: 26-27; Kahl: 43-47). Written in Greek and German, with exemplifications and fragments in Aromanian (in the final part of the work), the book addresses the Aromanians from the Balkans and from other parts of Europe. “The dialogues which compose a large part of the book are supposed to take place between a visiting Pole and a resident Vlach in Vienna, almost as if Vlach had become a kind of *lingua franca* in Central Europe. The Romanians, still labouring with a Slavonic script, a Greek nobility and the fact that some of their people were under the rule of Austria, some of Russia and some of Turkey, began to take an interest in their Vlach cousins” (Winnifrith 1987: 140). It was written under the influence of the national and patriotic message of the Transylvanian School, Petru Maior in particular, who was on friendly relations with Boiagi, and its documentary, literary and scientific value, is clearly pointed out in the preface dated *Wien der 1 September 1813*. It is a true programmatic act, of historical significance for the national-cultural movement of the Aromanians in the modern age, which adds to the previous work of Gh.C. Roja. It grafted the idea of the existence of south-Danube Romanians, the Aromanians, with their distinct individuality, with their own spiritual voice among the peoples from the Balkans, upon the scientific consciousness and general opinion of Europe. Unlike Roja, who pleads for a Romanian literary language, which both the Dacoromanian and Aromanian dialects should share, Mihail G. Boiagi, militates for an Aromanian literary language (Carageani 1999: 57-58; Țircomnicu 2006: 15-16). At the same time, he highlights its Latin character, as well as the unity of the two idioms (Saramandu 2003: 105-110). To him, the cultivation of one’s maternal tongue is an axiom, no matter how insurmountable political and practical obstacles one may face, at a time when Hellenic nationalism was growing more and more menacing and exclusivist: “even if Romanians were Hottentots, they would have the right and duty to cultivate their own language as a means of perfecting themselves. Aromanian, however, as we have shown, is one of those modern languages that sounds better than all languages. It is a language spoken by 4 million people, a number not to be despised, at least by a Greek, whose co-nationals hardly outnumber Aromanians” (Boiagi 1988: II/11).

Under the beneficial influence of the *Transylvanian School*, the unity and Latin origin of Romanism would be asserted by a young Aromanian advocate from Banat, Eftimie Murgu (1805 – 1870), in a critique of Sava Tokoly's *Dissertation*, published in 1830. With remarkable philological and historical accuracy, which hardly betrays that its author was a lawyer by profession, not a historian, the future leader of the 1848 Revolution, demolishes the biased assertions of his Hungarian counterpart, arguing, even more explicitly than the representatives of the Romanian Enlightenment from Transylvania, for the national identity of north and south-Danube Romanians (Peyfuss 1994: 31-32; Lascu 2000-2001: 78-83). With reference to the latter, he says that “these Vlachs, except for the educated ones, do not know that they are called «Vlassi» by Slavs, while they call themselves «români». They talk a Roman language, and in some regions, it is purer than the tongue spoken by Romanians in this area. Moreover, he continues, their customs and rituals are not different from those Romanians living in Dacia; they are one and the same people with the other Romanians. Therefore, they may be regarded as making up the Romanian nation” (Murgu 1969: 315). The historical and philological evidence which E. Murgu provides in the spirit of the Transylvanian School (Petru Maior, is quoted in the work), signals the existence of the Balkan Romanians, as belonging to the same people, descendants of the Eastern Romanity: “If Romanians south of the Danube are unknown to Mr. Thunmann and to the dissertation defender, than I have much more knowledge about them, so as to signal them as one and the same people” (Murgu 1969: 320).

For the impact it had, and the manner in which the condition of Balkan Romanism was perceived at the beginning of the modern age in the Danubian Principalities (Lascu 1996: 58-66), the appeal, which the Aromanian Emanuil Gojdu launched in 1829 “to the illustrious boyars of Wallachia and Moldavia” for the cultivation of the national language, sounds emblematic. A Vlach from the Balkans, an outstanding representative of the Aromanian community in the Hungarian capital, Gojdu pleads for upholding and nurturing national sentiments, of pure Romanian essence: “Our nation shall thrive it will achieve a position among other prosperous and civilized peoples. There is no greater consolation, truer satisfaction, than the happiness and greatness of our people” (Lupaş 1940: 716).

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