LOANS IN (OR FROM) THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE
by Alessandro Demontis

The Romanian language is currently classified as *'Indo-European /
Neo-Latin'*, thus indicating its origin from Indo-European or
European-Balkan stock, but having a Dacian substrate on which
Latin has then acted as cover defining those rules and those
phonemes / lexemes that currently make up the language.
The Dacian substrate is evident, according to the scholars,
especially in some place names, hydronyms and proper nouns, as
well as perhaps in terms which etymology is not identified in
Romanian (e.g.: branza = cheese). The most complete research in
merit has been made by 4 linguists and philologists compilers:
Bogdan Hasdeu, Ion Russu, Grigore Brancus, and Ariton Vraciu.

They have contributed to compile a list of about 300 Dacian words.

However, it is now admitted that the modern Romanian language
contains terms of Balkan and Slavic matrix, and that is now
believed to have become part of Romanian language (or of the
Dacian one) because of invasions, cultural exchanges or mixing of
languages due to unions between people of different regions. But
the problem remains in establishing when these 'Loans' occurred.

In my opinion instead, when considering the history of Gheto-
Dacia, one should start to account the probability that the
"direction" of this loan can be the inverse: namely, that some of
the terms believed to have been 'lent' from other close
neighboring lands, were in reality Proto-Romanian if not Dacian or
Gheti.

In particular, should we compare several "essential" verbal
expressions (meaning that their use must have been constant and
frequent in each phase of development of civilization and/or of
the language) currently present in Romanian, with their
counterparts in other languages such as Polish, Serbian,
Hungarian, Slovenian and Slovak (and in case of a smaller number
of terms also in Bulgarian, Ukrainian Belarusian, Russian), it is
difficult to believe in a "movement" from these 5 regions (or from
the dominant one among them) to the Dacian language and even more
difficult to imagine a passage in comparatively modern times from
them to the Romanian language.

I support this mainly for two reasons:

- among these 6 populations (Gheto-Dacian, Slovak, Slovenian,
Polish, Serbian and Hungarian), the oldest and more structured
one seems to be the one that will give birth, centuries later, to
the Romanian nation. Moreover, currently, the Tartaria tablets

show that the first form of structured writing comparable to the pictographic Proto-Sumerian came just from the current southern Romania (bordering with east of Serbia). Having been the Tartaria tablets deciphered using Sumerian language, it can be assumed that, at the times in which those 'Exchanges' happened between the two regions, the people of Transylvania had already developed a complete and complex linguistic system (though we do not have written proofs yet).

The pictographic style used for the Tartaria boards indicates a period that goes from V to IV millennium BC, whilst signs of commercial / cultural exchanges have not been certified for the same period, nor have signs of organized civilization / linguistic in regions of the current Slovenia, Slovakia, Serbia, Poland, Hungary.

-   apart from the Dacian language, the oldest language between these 5 is Hungarian, defined generally as 'Uralian' but of which there are no reliable evidences before 1000 BC, a period in which, on the contrary, Dacian had already been spoken for at least 1000 years. Unfortunately, the absence of Dacian elaborate inscriptions does not allow us to exit from the field of mere hypothesis.

My belief, however, is that these similarities show a common origin or at least a close relationship particularly between two languages: Serbian and Romanian, spoken in these two zones, now separated, that ages ago constituted (at least in part) the "basin" where the culture known as Turdas-Vinca developed and from which the Tartaria tablets come.

And it is, incidentally, the geographic part that in II and I millennium BC hosted the Thracian culture, from which that Dacian drift.

The terms that I would like to compare first are the following:

- the verb: **DUTY – HAVE NEED / NEED**
- the verb: **DECIDE – DETERMINE – DEFINE**
- the adjective: **WEAK** (in all its meanings)
- the name / appellative: **SLUT** (Deriving from the name of female pig)
- the nouns: **CELLAR, ROAD** and **FEAST,** the last of which is a special case because is the term that has more matches in absolute.

For which we have the following series of correspondences:

<u>MUST - TO HAVE TO - TO HAVE NEEDS OR TO NEED:</u>

Romanian: *verb:* a trebui - trebuie
Polish: *verb:* potrzebowac - trzeba (I must.) - potrzebujesz? (What you need?)
Serbian: treba me (I need) - potrebno (it would be needed..) - potreba (necessity)
Slovak: potrebno (required / necessary)
Slovenian: potrebno - treba
Bulgarian: tryabva me (I need)

<u>TO DECIDE - TO DETERMINE:</u>
Romanian: hotari
Serbian: utrvditi
Hungarian: hatarozni (to define)

<u>WEAK - WEAKENED:</u>
Romanian: slab (Weak)
Polish: slaby (Weak)
Serbian: slobost (Weakness) - slab (Weak)
Slovak: slabo (Weak)
Slovenian: slabo
Bulgarian: slab

<u>SLUT - WHORE:</u>
Romanian: curva
Serbian: kurva
Slovenian: kurba
Hungarian: kurva
Polish: kurva

<u>CELLAR:</u>
Romanian: pivnita
Polish: piwnica
Slovak: pivnica

where the graphics similarity becomes even sound equality, being the *Romanian T* (in Romanian correctly written **"Ţ"**) pronounced *TS*, exactly as the *Polish and Slovak C*. Curiously, in Serbian the Pivnica (always with C pronounced TS) is the <u>tavern.</u>

<u>ROAD:</u>
Romanian: Ulita
Serbian: Ulica
Polish: Ulica
Russian: Uliqa (With *q* = ц pronounced TS)

<u>PARTY:</u>
Romanian: Parte (more common "Petrecere")
Polish: Parthia

Serbian: Partija
Lithuanian: Partijos
Hungarian: Part
Croatian: Partija
Turkish: Parti
Bulgarian: Partiya
Russian: Partiya
Macedonian: Partija
Azerbaijani: Partiya

Plus the already known matches in English, German (Party) and Danish (Part).

In addition to these 7 terms I also want to point out the correspondence between the Polish and the Romanian for the concept of 'Powerful':

POWERFUL:
Romanian: puternic
Polish: potezny

and the common root (with a variance in vowels) for the words *'to think - thought'* between Romanian and Hungarian:

THOUGHT - THINK:
Romanian: verb: to gandi - noun: gand
Hungarian: verb: gondolom - noun: gondolta

Other terms of various kind to consider:

GUILT:
Romanian: Vina
Bulgarian: Vina
Polish: Wina
Czech: Vina
Latvian: Vaina
Macedonian: Vina
Ukrainian: Vyna
Russian: Vina
Belarus: Vina

or the hortatory

LET'S GO :
Romanian: Haide
Serbian / Bosnian / Croatian: Hajde
Macedonian: Ajde
Bulgarian: Khaide

From the term "*Guilt*" derives the concept of *'Not guilty'* that is:

Romanian: Nevinovat
Russian: Nevinoven
Polish: Niewinny
Serbian: Nevin
Belarus: Nievinavaty
Bulgarian: Nevinen
Latvian: Nevainigs

Other matches, not perfect in meaning, but related to a similar concept, are found with numerous other terms among which I'd like to highlight the following:

Romanian: Pahar (Glass) = **Polish:** Puchar (Cup) = **Serbian:** Pehar (Cup) = **Slovenian:** Pokal (Cup)

To be noted that the Romanian word *'Glass'* corresponds to *'Cup'* in all these languages, and that these same languages have for *'Glass'* a word corresponding to the Romanian word used for *'Bottle'*; therefore all terms related to the "*contain liquids*" action:

Romanian: Sticla (Bottle) = **Slovenian:** Steklo (Glass) = **Serbian:** Staklo (Glass) = **Polish:** Szklo (Glass - with the typical polish *L barred* – Ł - pronounced 'U')

The link between these terms seems to arise from the words GLASS and this is evident especially in polish where the term Szklo indicates also the glasses and the glass in general.

Romanian: Ceas (Watch) = **Polish:** Czasa (Time, hour) = **Russian:** Seychas (Hour)

That of *TIME* is a very interesting concept that shows several curiosity: the <u>Romanian</u> has two terms to differentiate the Time (*Timp*) measured with a watch (*Ceas*) from the atmospheric time or climate indicated with *Vreme*. In the <u>Serbian</u> language *Vreme* means 'Time' in general and doesn't have a particular meaning exactly as in Italian. In <u>Russian</u>, instead, *Vremya* indicates Time measured by a watch, while the atmospheric Time is *Pogoda*, and the same happens in <u>Polish</u>.
There is therefore a sort of 'Subversion' of meanings: the Romanian atmospheric 'Time' (Vreme) is the "linear time" in Russian (Vremya), while the Serbian does not make a distinction.

Also the verb READ has its root in all the languages examined and in other East-European language, appearing among the first places in absolute for number of matches:

Romanian: A citi
Serbian: Citati
Polish: Czytac
Czech: Cist
Ukrainian: Chytaty
Russian: Chitat
Bulgarian: Cheta
Belarus: Cytac

I'd like to close this analysis with the concept of '*Mistake*' and the verb '*To Make Mistakes*', another of those 'essential' terms in every language that shows the same root both in Rumanian and in Serbian:

MISTAKE / TO MAKE MISTAKES:
Romanian: Greseala / a Gresi
Serbian: Greska / gresiti

I personally believe that a thorough investigation among the oldest written documents available in the involved languages, could throw a new light on the origin of the East-Europe languages, possibly leading to better identify the linguistic flows and their directions during the first centuries of their appearance and especially in the early centuries of their coexistence.

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