Grammatical Aspects of the 19-th Century Romanian Literary Language, Reflected in the Transylvanian Press of the Time

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Leading men of letters and scholars who published in the press of the time were interested in the unity and unification of the language. They were coming with concrete ways of accomplishing this ideal, by pointing out the commonality of language throughout the Romanian territory, by reconsidering its Latin origin, spearheading the scientific leadership in the field, and attempting at accomplishing indeed the unity of language from a grammatical viewpoint.

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Being a matrix in embryo – a.k.a. Matrice in nuce - of a language's essence, the grammatical structure represents the element the most stable and most subjected to norms. In its position as a scientific norm book to the purpose of implementing the correct use of a language, grammar is directly accountable for a dialect's substance. In its absence, language would be a mere sum of sounds and amorphous words, incapable of expressing thought. The unitary character of a language is assured mainly by grammatical norms, shaped and promoted by the most salient minds of the nation who brought their industrious contribution to giving them shape. Whether they were linguists or not, most Romanian scholars of the time grappled with the issues of regulating the language. These preoccupations stem from the desire to prove our language's Latin origin, and from the ideal of cultivating and unifying the Romanian literary language.

The necessity of achieving the unity of language at a grammar level was stated at the same time by journalists and associate writers of periodicals in Transylvania. As such, Ioan Maiorescu was saying in 1838 that „we need therefore an even more accomplished Romanian grammar, to lean on its principles" .Unlike other areas of language, grammar represents a linguistic aspect that is much more unitary and stable. „The categories that emerge out of the evolution of language and are embedded in the process of communication are in themselves elements of unity" .

Among the first contributors in this collective effort was the scholar Constantin Diaconovici Loga. As a young student, he attended Law School in Pest, Hungary, and served as a teacher at the „Preparandia" = the pedagogical school of Arad, in Western Transylvania, where he taught grammar, among others. In 1830 he was appointed manager of the National

Schools in Border Regions from Caransebeș.Here, he consolidated the foundations of pedagogical education, as it had been initiated by Dean Ioan Tomiciu. To the purpose of offering enlightenment to his people, he wrote several books, among which Orthography and Good Writing…, Romanian Grammar, Romanian Letter-Book, The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ and many more.

Worthy of consideration are the words he addressed to his readers: „These books were carried through Transylvania, Valachia and Moldova, and with great joy the people received them as a thing to give light to all Romanians, wherever they might be under the Sun".

C. D. Loga, together with Țichindeal and Iorgovici, make the triumvirate of leading thinkers of the Banat region (south-west Romania). There were others as well, who in their time strove to produce writings with attempt at applying a set of rules. One of them is Grigore Montan „a pedagogical teacher" in Pest, who wrote verses to honor a merchant Anastasie Pulievici, or another teacher from Lipova, Moise Bota, who wrote eulogies in verse dedicated to Bishop Nestor Ioanovici, or Ioan D. Țincovici who was translating church worship songs, and finally Ioan Teodorovici Nica, who wrote verses in honor of Emperor Franz 1st. Yet, their works are so insignificant from a literary point of view, so childish-looking, that I considered it sufficient to only roster their names.

After finishing his studies, Constantin Diaconovici Loga was appointed teacher at the Romanian school and church singer at the Orthodox Church of Pesta. By his very adamant intervention, Loga managed to obtain the replacement of the Greek worship with the Romanian one.

What welcomed Loga into the history of Romanian literature is the Romanian Grammar for the Correction of Young People (1822), in which they are trying to formulate new grammatical terms; however, this did not have the desired impact upon the younger generations.

In the chapters of his book, the scholar was suggesting the following changes:

1. Orthoepy („the right speaking") uses 37 letters, divided into "sounding" and "non-sounding" (vocalsand consonants). The sounding – or sonorous – letters are "simple": a, e, i, o, u and „nose-sounding": ă and â. The „non-sounding" ones are „lip-uttered": b,v, m, p, f, „teeth-uttered": s, z j, ț, c, ș, st, x, ps, „tongue-uttered": d, t, l, n, and „throat-uttered": g, ch, h. He calls diphthongs „the plaited ones" and divides them into „shown": ai, ei, ii, oi, oa, ăuand „hidden": ea, in, ia.

The parenthesis is called „the embracing one"; the quotation marks: „the forth-bringers"; the hyphen is the: „restful"; the exclamation mark: „the caller" or „the wonderer".

2. Orthography asks for the replacement of archaisms.

3. Etymology or the transformation of words identifies only two genders: masculine and feminine. The cases are called the namer, the birther, the giver, the gossiper, the caller and the taker.

4. Syntax. A sentence is called a „knitting" and has three parts: subject, object and predicate.

5. Prosodia reveals the raising and maintaining a tone for certain syllables, words and phrases.

Of course, the very words used to dub a terminology have their humor for us today. However, had the trend of adopting neologisms in science not been in effect, today we would be using Loga's terminology in a very natural way. His efforts in the field of grammar are laudable because they represent an original attempt, showing that the author possessed a level of cultivation superior to his contemporaries, who were mostly coining or translating very badly.

In support of grammatical stability, I. Trăilă defines grammar as „the protocol of scholars, who must be in permanent vigil of the current status of a tongue, and record from time to time the results of its evolution, and whether this has caught up or not at the entire population, or at least the majority. The language is not static, therefore neither is its grammar…" .

The emphasis put on a grammar that sets certain unique and general norms, results from an effort of intellectuals to achieve the grammatical unity of the Romanian language. This is how Nicolae Maniu summarizes the unanimous desire: „a thing that is to be used and received by the whole nation, like a grammar of our language" . With an acute sense of realism, he reveals its unifying function: „In this way we would have an Orthography and a Grammar of the people and we would know what to hold on to" .

Timotei Cipariu published the largest number of articles pertaining to grammatical structure and its destiny in a cycle of articles appeared in a magazine called Enlightening Paper, that contained chapters of his book Principles of Language and Writing. Here, the scholar in turn approaches the flexion of the parts of speech, dealing with historical and rational arguments and from a diachronic perspective with issues such as the nominal class, the status of declinations and causal behaviors, by permanently referring and comparing to Latin in explaining the forms appeared in the evolution of language and their rationale, also dealing with types of articles, their pronominal status, their position, historically explained as well, the verbal flexion, by laying out the evolution of its forms for the different tenses and modes, recommending correct forms and condemning some writers' 'aberrations' .

In a polemic article, Cipariu the philologist from Blaj revisits the affirmations of a certain Tincu Velia.

The scholar speaks against replacing ei by îi and modifying the plural forms of reflexive pronouns, by use of arguments such as: „So we should change all of these, just to have them all alike? My opinion is no; because what the spirit of symmetry has dictated in language, we must respect, and this regulation should suffice" .

Cipariu considers that theapostrophe must be only used for „shedding elementary letters, and not the euphonic or supporting ones" and explains this guiding principle: „it seems to me that we must write until we come to write with letters, everywhere just like we speak, and only stay away from other new twists, that only prove our ignorance of our ow language and our imitation of foreign ones, mostly German and Hungarian, which are heavily doused with sh's" .The Transylvanian scholar declares himself in favor of a balanced use of the letter ș /sh/ in forming words.

Cipariu highlights the forgotten or rarely used grammatical forms. He notices the existence of the ending –minte in the feminine singular and plural, in words like calciaminte (footwear), imbracaminte (clothing)and tackles the issue of conjugation again from an historical perspective. If for the plural form, their ancestors had used using sântem = we are, sânteți= you are, in his time scholars were using forms like sem, seți.In the case of auxiliaryvoiu (particle of future tense),in the past the form veri was used in 2-nd person, instead of vei, where the original r was not melted. Similarly, the old forms vrem = we will/want, vreți= you will/want instead of vom, veți were being used in constructing the future tense.

Another philologist from Iasi (north-east of Romania), G. Seulescu, a well-known opponent and critic of Heliade Rădulescu, was suggesting in 1839 a consecration ofvarious norms for the endings of nouns in Romanian, and the role of final letters in their structure. Seulescu emphasizes the importance of distinguishing these finals, „which in all languages ease understanding by giving characteristic notes, which we will amalgamate continuously" .In fixing terminations, he considered that it is preferable to imitate „our sister language Italian, which ends its words in (o)and(a) and(i)and open(e)spoken with a full tone" .He was pleading at the same time for the elimination of final (u) and (i), after the model of „Scythian languages", that end in consonants.

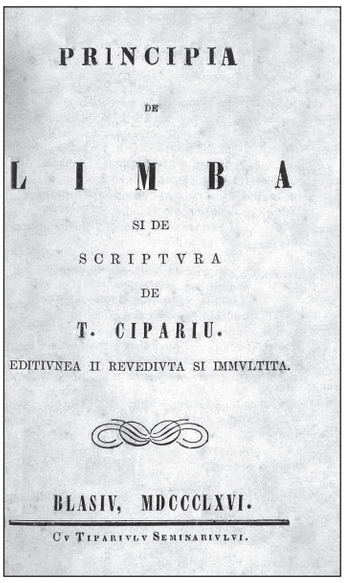
Belonging mostly to the Unitarian Church, the group of erudite intellectuals belonging to the Școala Ardeleana movement (most important were S. Micu-Klein, G. Șincai, P. Maior, Ion Budai-Deleanu) professed ideological convictions of Enlightenment-reformist nature, residing in an unbridled faith in the virtues of culture and education as factors of progress, in the national militantism, anti-Balcanism and anti-Slavonism. Following in the footsteps of 17-th century chroniclers, and especially those of Cantemir, the Transylvanian scholars, that had perfected their studies in the West (Rome, Vienna, Budapest) and knew Latin very well, along with other modern languages, and who were writing in Latin and Romanian, rarely in German or Hungarian, turned the idea of the "noble" Roman origin of their people into a landmark concept and a guiding light for their militant activity, embodied in the writing and publication of history books, manuals of all kinds, grammar books, dictionaries, translations of works of philosophy, logic, theology, also books of popularization, etc. This generation's scholars realize the urgency of the necessity to modernize the written language, as a prerequisite to the cultural emancipation of the Romanian nation. The national expectation was enormous, on this generation's shoulder was resting a burden, assumed with enthusiasm and a spirit of sacrifice, of striving to act by legal means, on a cultural and educational realm, to the purpose of getting the Romanian people out of its state of political and social inferiority, in which it had been pigeonholed as a "tolerated people" in Transylvania for hundreds of years already. The declared political purpose of the militant scholars of Scoala Ardeleana was to obtain for their people a legal status of "constituting nation" in Transylvania, together with the other three nations, Hungarian, Saxon and Szekler. By promoting the idea of Latinism and the principle of "Westernalization" as a basis for the language's modernization, almost unanimously accepted by the generations to follow, the representatives of the Scoala Ardeleana played an historic, not only cultural but also political role of utmost importance.

Obsessively clamored, often with nuances and interpretations sheer unacceptable for the modern historical and historical-linguistic science, this thesis of Latinity of the Romanian language, as spoken by the "posteri Romanorum" in Dacia after Trajan's occupation (S. Micu, Gh. Șincai, Elementa lingua dacoromanae) is however regarded as inherent. Also as an axiom is the idea of Romanian's localness in ancient Dacia and of their unabated continuity in the spaces they at present inhabit, even more so that in the same period, out of political reasons, this continuity of Romanians in Transylvania had begun to be contended by some German authors such as Franz J. Sulzer (m. 1791), Joseph Carl Eder (1760-1881) and Johann Christian von Engel (1770-1814). Hence, the polemic tone was to become a constant dimension of the Transylvanian scholars' historical discourse, inherently breeding exaggerated theoretical options in matters of literary language, like excessive purism or etymologism.

Relinquishing the ethno-denominator of "Valachian", particularly used by foreign scholars when referring to Romanians, the Transylvanian men of letters replaced it with the exclusively used term 'Romanians",

that they often used with half-deliberate ambiguity, to dub not only Romanians, but also Romans! The "Roman idea" became accepted unanimously by the next generations of Romanians, not only from Transylvania, but also from Moldova and Vallachia – southern Romania – becoming a central component of the political discourse of the time, dominated by ideals of the bourgeois and national revolution in 1848, and also the ideal of reunification, with ample reverberations transmitted into the later official discourse of the fast modernization period of the last 19-th century decades. A few decades later, especially in Moldova and Muntenia/Vallachia, this idea often took phantasmagoric and grotesque shapes, soon stirring criticism against it. Essentially sharing the idea of Romanity, the Moldovan historian and commendable spirit of polity Mihail Kogălniceanu admits being aware of the dangers of Latinist exacerbation and is not hesitant in using the term "Romano-mania" to dub the pathological forms (inherently toxic!) of „patriotic pride" manifested by his contemporaries. In his French writing Histoire de la Valachie, Berlin, 1927, Kogălniceanu always spells the ethnic denominator as 'Romanian", in phrases like la langue romăne, les mots româns etc.,just the same as in his study written in German and published in Berlin in 1837, as well in the title (und Walachei. Romänischeoder wallachische Sprache und Literatur - […and Vallachia, Romanian or Vallachian Language and Literature]), as in the content text, wherehe uses the word's etymological spelling with o. Neither the French language, nor German have preserved this etymological form, but a spelling with cu u (roumain, respectively rumänisch).

One of the explicit objectives of his research, according to Gh. Șincai, is that of highlighting at any cost the fact that the Romanian language is a result of derivation by alteration from Latin. The most elaborate conception on the process of transformation of Latin into Romance languages, implicitly into Romanian, can be found in Petru Maior, the only one who succeeded in publishing their most important works during his lifetime. Tenacious and methodical, the author of History of the Beginnings of Romanians in Dacia, printed in Buda in 1812, formulates a genuine theory of the origins of the Romanian language, whose central ideas are the continuity in post – Trajanus Dacia, the purely Latin character of the Romanian language, our language's origin in the classical Latin imported into Dacia by the Roman colonists brought here in large numbers after Trajan's defeating the Dacian resistance. The first of the two „dissertations" published in the History's annex, called In Support of the Beginnings of the Romanian Language begins with a programmatic phrase: „Since Romanian is a Latin language, one who may attempt to study the beginnings of the Romanian language will need first of all to know the events of the


PRINCIPIA

DE

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SI DE

SCRIPTVRA

DE

T. CIPARIU.

EDITIVNEA II REVEDIVTA SI IMMVLTITA.

BLASIV, MDCCCLXVI.

Cv Tiparivl v Seminarivlvi.

Latin language".

The pro-West orientation and the obsession of Latinity (subsequently also the pro-Catholic orientation of the most Transylvanian scholars) have led to a global depreciation of the Slavonic cultural tradition of Romanians.S. Micu and G. Șincai, for example, refer to DimitrieCantemir, of whom they take the term „barbarisms" to qualify the state in which Romanians might have fallen, once the „Slavs' written language" (literalemslavinorumlingua) was imposed, at the Council in Firenze, with the express purpose of „closing to our people any path towards the holy unification with the Roman Church" („hoc modo praecludere nostris omnem aditum ad s. unionem cum Eccl. Romana").

The elaboration and publication of grammar books was considered by the members of the Enlightenment generation as a sacred patriotic duty and a central component of social and national pedagogy, to whom they had dedicated their endeavour. Only transiently enunciated by S. Micu and G. Șincai („maternam nostram linguam perficiamus"), this idea is explicitly formulatedby Ienăchiță Văcărescu, to whom the thoughts of „love for your country, foryour neighbour and for other Romanians who speak this language" are powerful reasons to work for a grammar book, good for„the welfare, honour and good use of our compatriots and of the Nation". Budai-Deleanu warns his readers that his was not the intention, through the implicit normative options and recommendations that he included in his lexicon, to determine speakers to change their natural way of speaking, which is in itself legitimate, but rather to offer criteria of selection for the common literary language („the community language in teachings"), that must be cleansed, regulated and modernized. Two of the Transylvanian periodicals that have included in their pages information on the

activity of the Romanian Academic Society concerning the elaboration of a grammar book, deemed essential in the achievement of unity of language and its cultivation, are The Family and Archive of Philology and History.

In Arhivul, Cipariu publishes the content of the analytical part (2-nd section) of the Romanian Academic Society's program concerning the structure of the envisioned grammar book and exposes his review after examination of the writings participating in the competition. In Cipariu's opinion, the study Si consuetudo vincerit, vetus lex sermonis abolebitur was meeting all conditions required by the academic fore. The manuscript's author explains in detail the etymological orthographic principle adopted by the Romanian Academic Society, he develops and confirms it with the help of most solid arguments.

In his speech held on the occasion of the 25-th anniversary of the Romanian Academy, D. A. Sturdza summarizes and praises this fore's activity in the field of grammar. He reminds that in 1868, „The Society has awarded prize to the manuscript of the Romanian grammar book forwarded by Cipariu. This work (…) is undoubtedly to this day the most significant monument of our language's grammar" ,and, eight years later, „in 1876, the 2-nd part, Sintetica [The Syntax],brought by the same author in the competition, was awarded with a prize".

In matters regarding the national linguistic policy, no major dissensions deriving from denominational issues occurred among the Romanian scholars. Beyond almost incessant frictions and animosities between the Greek – Catholic Church in Transylvania and the Orthodox Churches in Moldova and Muntenia, when it came to major decisions in matters pertaining to the Romanian language, expression of a unitary and unique culture, fortunately always tacit consensus could be reached.

Note:

1. I. Maiorescu, *On Romanian Orthography*, in the publication Chronicle for the Mind, Heart and Literature, I, 1838, nr. 23, p. 184.
2 .Victor V .Grecu, *Language and Nation*, Timișoara, Editura Facla, 1988, p. 43.
3. I. Trăilă, *Orthographic Issues, in Transilvania*, XXVIII, 1898, nr. 1, p. 17.
4. N. Maniu, *Dear Chief Editor, in Chronicle for the Mind*, Heart and Literature, I, 1838, nr. 14, p. 108-109.
5. Ibidem.
6. T. Cipariu, *Principles of Laguage and Writing XVII*, in Journal for Enlightening, I, 1847, nr. 15-18.
7. T. Cipariu, *Philological Notes On Things in Issue 27 of the article Dear Chief Editor!*, in Chronicle for the Mind, Heart and Literature, VII, 1844, nr. 31, pp. 241-245.
8. *Ibidem*.
9. *Ibidem*.
10. G. Seulescu, *Grammatical Observations on the Romanian Laguage*, în Chronicle for the Mind, Heart and Literature, II, 1839, nr. 37.
11. *Ibidem*.
12. *Ibidem*.
13. A complex of cultural efforts to affirm and promote the Romanian language and culture in a Transylvania under Austrian-Hungarian occupation
14. D. A. Sturdza, *The Romanian Academy*, in The Family, XXVII, 1891, nr. 26, p. 308.

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