BRIDGING KNOWLEDGE IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION. MACEDONIAN-ROMANIAN CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCES AND THEIR ROLE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ROMANIAN IN NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract
Our article deals with the interference between Macedonian and Romanian cultures and languages and its importance in teaching and learning Romanian as a second language in North Macedonia. Many aspects are discussed, such as: cultural context of second language acquisition; lexical, semantic and grammatical corpus creation for this acquisition.

Keywords: *culture, language, interference, teaching, learning*

Rezumat
În articol, supunem cercetării interferențele dintre culturile și limbile macedoniană și română, interferențe de care se cere a ține cont în predarea și învățarea românei ca limba a doua de comunicare în nordul Macedoniei. Sunt analizate o serie de probleme: contextul cultural al studierii limbii a doua, crearea corpusului lexical, semantic și gramatical, necesar studierii în cauză etc.

Cuvinte-cheie: *cultură, limbă, interferență, predare, învățare*

1. Framing Cultural Context of Second Language Acquisition. The Case of Romanian in North Macedonia

New cultural perspectives on second language acquisition have been created and the plethora of studies regarding the role of the language as a social practice or learning a language through its culture occurred in the field in the last century. Moving slowly from considering language as structured of multiple three dimensions (object, referent, word) to *ethnographies of communication* (Heyms, 1964, p. 2), philosophical and functional-cognitive approaches (Heidegger, 1982; Halliday, 2014) that linked the language to mind reflections, the theoretical frame of second language acquisition has gradually added new dimensions to the practical components of learning and teaching. Continuing an academic endeavor to delve in the field of Romanian as a second language as a cultural and linguistic construct taught to foreigners (Stanciu 2011, 2015, 2017, 2020, 2021), this article attempts to identify new possibilities for teaching Romanian as a second language in the North-Macedonian context by using a gradual strategy of discovering cultural and linguistic interferences in a comparative perspective, to comment

on the difficulties encountered by students while learning Romanian and to offer some didactic solutions to the problems of comprehension and language transfer (code-switching).

Both cultures (Macedonian and Romanian) belong to an unbounded space (the Balkans) with blurred and changeable borders or rather frontiers. Even at the linguistic level the variety of the terms belonging to different language families and groups puzzle the educated philologist/reader of the context. Apparently, a place with no name before the 19th century, the realm of the Balkans has become by the time a controversial space that fed the imagination (Todorova, 1997) and imaginary (Jezernik et al., 2007) of *reinvention and intervention* (Goldsworthy, 2004, p. 25) generating a plethora of academic disputes mainly focused on centrality or marginality, fragmentation and unity, cultural and linguistic convergences and divergences. Although the initial sets in studying the Balkans were mostly ethnographic (Cantemir, 1973) and later on they became quite linguistic (Sanfled, 1930; Rosetti, 1986; Friedman, 1980, 2002; Joseph, 1999), since the end of the 20th century they have switched to cross-cultural approaches including history, folklore, literature, as well as linguistic anthropology, namely the role of language in building ethnicities and expressing mentalities (Friedman, 1986, 1994, 2001, 2003a; Olteanu, 2004).

2. Setting the Terms: Preliminary Research Hypotheses, Concepts and Methods as Tools for Analysis and Interpretation

Arts, folklore, history, literature, culture have become modalities of conveying meaning through cognitive frames encoded in images, processes, words and phrases meant to mirror human realities groupable in different lexical and semantic fields depicting life scenes as *modalities to shadowing the real* (Crapanzano, 1999, 2006). Thinking of language as *cultural practice* (Duranti, 1997, p. 23), modern anthropology redefined culture as communication and reframed the focus on second language acquisition as communicative and *symbolic competence* (Heyms, 1972, 1980; Kramsch, 2006), namely *the capacity to acquire language through culture* (Duranti, 1997, p. 36). Some interesting openings might be noticed in the process of analyzing languages from discursive and pragmatic perspectives, on the one hand, by gradual reveal of the meaning, on the other hand, through deepening the interpretation by decoding *conceptual metaphors* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 18). A cultural approach to second language acquisition implies: comprehending language as an instrument of communication, tracing etyma to their languages of origins, interpreting meaning in a gradual manner (basic, secondary, abstract, pragmatic and metaphorical), assessing the role of languages in building cultural identity.

The following concepts and methods will be used within this article:
- *Fusing (*Hatim, 2006, p. 13*) contrastive analysis, discourse analysis and translations* (Johanson, 2008) meant to bridge different levels spanning from phonetics, grammar (morphology and syntax), colloca-

tions, phraseology, word formation in order to give a continuum to interpretation and integration in the holistic system of language;

- Compatibility of *genetic relationships*, *convergent development* (Weinrich, 1958, pp. 378-379) and *contact induced changes by mutual reinforcement* (Lindstedt, 2014, p. 168);
- *Etymological confluences* (Poruciuc, 1988) and *lexical interferences* to justify the circulation and the evolution of the words in a comparative perspective keeping the matrix of phonetic body changes following laws and meaning deviation through mechanisms of metonymy, and metaphorization;
- *Comprehension* as a deep understanding at all levels, links and structures of *language architecture* (Coşeriu, 1998);
- Relevance of *language awareness* and *motivation* in challenging the learners of L2, L3 (Stanciu, 2014, 2020).

Lexical, Semantic and Grammatical Corpus Creation and Description as Basis of Knowledge Bridging

Working in classes of Romanian language and literature as well as in two workshops of lexicography and translations allowed our teams made of teachers and students to collect cultural and linguistic samples or words-concepts consisting of lexical, semantic and grammatical information. During the last two years we succeeded to collect and insert over 30 000 headwords in two dictionaries (Macedonian-Romanian, Albanian-Romanian) with their meaning stratified in basic, secondary and metaphorical. Each entry in our dictionaries is exemplified by collocations, phrases and sentences meant to differentiate the meaning in the context and the entire lexicographic stock has resulted from this team endeavor and it has been used in the classes of Romanian language and civilization, Romanian literature and Romanian contemporary language. In this context in which languages with different origins were in 'contact situation' (Sala, 1997, pp. 43-44; Steinke, &Vraciu, 1999, pp. 36-44; Weinreich 1968, pp. 88-99), multiple fluxes and layers can be noticed in different directions spanning from bilingualism to cultural exchanges, exerting reciprocal influences and resulting in overlapping strata. Three important steps in the process were possible: co-inhabitation, bilingualism and later the assimilation either of Romanian elements in some areas (Moravia, Ukraine) or Slavic ones in others (Walachia).

In organizing the information within this article, I will be using etymological explanations as layers and interferences to separate the loanwords origins and circulation and to underline the differences of the etyma in both Macedonian and Romanian languages. A specific attention has been paid to the links between standard languages and diasporic non-standard vernaculars which reciprocally influence each other. The comparison and contrastive analysis of three languages supposed to have been in contact over the cen-

tury and affected by the main languages imposed by different empires can explain the existence and the evolution of numerous lexical items and syntactic structures identical or very similar in meaning and phonetical body.

Different modalities of bridging the target languages have been taken into consideration during the last two academic years together with a constant reflection on teaching strategies based on comprehension and self-confident use of language.

Substratum and its Reverberations in Macedonian and Romanian

Maybe the most productive field of analyses and inspiration has been represented this time by the Balkan Studies rather cultural than linguistic, which allows a stratigraphy in etymology chronologically organized as historical continuity motivated by subsequent language domination and imposing, but it also explains the inferential meaning resulted from possible confluences and motivated by transitional areas of lexical items circulation. The interest for Balkan studies comprises cultural and linguistic problems belonging to ancient substratum of Thracian and Illyrian dialects, which left some minimal traces in both Macedonian and Romanian languages. The pressure of *substratum in the Balkans, defined as* central Paleo-Balkan group that included languages existing on the Balkan Peninsula (Thracian, Dacian, Illyrian and Macedonian) all *unsettled dialects* (West, 2007, p. 157) which have been feeding contemporary ethnic and national cultural and linguistic mythologies. Thracian and its related dialects used north of Danube Getae and Dacian were probably spoken from the time of Homer to the Middle Ages. The ethnic composition of people living that time in this cross-border area has continuously changed and the existence of a pidging language which could be used over the territory is hardly tenable. In these circumstances of possible language contact and interference there is no special argument in the favor of language adoption, displacement or improvement. There were plenty of opportunities for the adoption of loan-words but how they have been moved and replaced to express new concepts, objects and techniques is again hardly demonstrable. An important theory as an elite domination was created on the basis of archaeology related to Thracian Kings' Valley in Bulgaria, fortresses in Romania but due to the scanty written sources excepting for Herodotus' narratives and some twenty words found in inscriptions, nobody was able to prove the existence of such an impressive civilization and the vanishing of a numerous population. Some Balkan relics (Kazluzhaya, 2001; Poruciuc, 2008; Alexe, 2021) have been discussed over the time as belonging to this thin layer despite of semantic divergences registered in Albanian, Macedonian and Romanian. Among them the most important seem to be Albanian *kodēr*, Macedonian and Romanian *kodru, codru* 'forest' and Albanian + Mak. *stopan*, Romanian *stăpân* 'master, owner, landlord' which are still keeping a similar phonetical body and quite similar meaning in all three Balkan languages. Many of those approximately 100 words belonging to

substratum and interpreted like this by different scholars (Russu, 1959, 1981; Brâncuş, 2002) have remained controversial and were reinterpreted by recent scholars in a quite polarized vision (Alexe, 2021; Paliga, 2004; Ungureanu, 2016) either like originating in Latin or in the Balkan stock of words with unclear origins.

Latin and its Survivals in the Balkans

Romance (Speaking) Balkans is a second etymological track approched by two groups of researchers at a distance of less than 15 years rather from a contemporary cultural perspective than a strict linguistic one. The Romance Balkans have benefited from an International Commission on Balkan Linguistics of the International Committee of Slavists and Romanists dealing with various aspects of the Romance languages, which reunited scholars in the field of humanities from Balkan- -related area (cultural studies, anthropology, history), an area animated by an effort to help the linguists move towards an interdisciplinary approach as a sine qua non in Balkan Studies. A rich collection of papers having in the collocation Romance Balkans has been published in English, French and German gathering studies in this field of cultural and linguistic interference of substratum, Latin and so-called Slavic Balkan. What is considered to belong to Balkan Romance languages, as a part of Balkan League (Friedman, 2000) from the current synchronic aspect, include (Daco-) Romanian as spoken in Romania and Moldova and south Danube Romance oases like the Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian of the Central and Western Balkans together with almost vanishing Istro-Romanian and Bayash dialects spoken by some hundreds of people in Croatia.

As a non-clearly defined linguistic space with rather open cultural and linguistic frontiers than with clear boundaries has been extended by contemporary contacts between Balkan and non-Balkan Romance languages. From the diachronic perspective the succession and interference of faiths in the space of the Balkans might explain an overview of Balkan Romance at the cross-road of cultures, languages and religions. However, the first Christianity which overlayed with what was called folk/popular Christianity, the second Orthodoxy found in interference with the Catholicism, Islam and Judaism are all present and represented in the Balkans. I considered as a good reason to explain the etymological and lexical-semantic interference in the Balkans the theory of "mutual reinforcement of change" (Lindstedt, 2000). What is known as convergence model is corroborated by the fact that the *Balkan Sprachbund* properties are most numerous in those parts of the Balkans where the greatest number of languages are co-territorial. The epicentre of Balkan etymological and lexical stock of words seems to be in the area around the southern parts of the lakes of Ohrid and Prespa, where Greek, Albanian, Macedonian and Aromanian intersect.

In the attempt of defining a context of analysis merely subjective and still questionable I will begin by establishing some limits and formulate some assumptions as main questions meant to receive by the end some possible answers.

The hypothesis and questions as well are the following:

1. How we can define Romance (Speaking) Balkans in the wider field of Balkan Studies?
2. Is there a clear line of separation between Latinity and Romance (Romance languages and cultures)?
3. Can we speak about Romance Balkans only from a linguistic point of view or it is a complex cultural construct?
4. What are the best or at least the most convenient for interpretation methods of different aspects of this *more imaginary than real space* (Todorova, 1997, p. 323)?

The grammatical structures of the languages and dialects spoken in this area were actually very perspicuously similar to each other (Mišeska Tomic, 2004). The Romance Balkans field of studies has been developing, different conferences and projects were designed and organized by research teams from the Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade. This international linguistic conference focused on the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of Romance languages in the Balkans, the historical influence of Latin and the Romance languages on other Balkan languages. Comparative linguistics, etymology, onomastics, geographical linguistics, linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics, theoretical and methodological issues came into focus while addressing various questions and phenomena linked to the presence of Romance languages and culture in the Balkans. Many were described and elucidated from different scientific standpoints. The variety of topics and approaches suggests that both Romance and Balkan studies should be broadened and adapted to meet the exigencies of ethnic studies. The beginning of the 21st century in Balkan Studies saw growing interest in the vernaculars of small ethnic groups in the Balkans like Aromanian, Istro-Romanian and Megleno-Romanian. As in modern linguistics, current research is interested in non-standard varieties, especially from the point of view of a combination of functional and typological approaches: each non-standard variety is a self-contained system. The fundamental postulate of linguists working in Balkan dialectology today is that any dialect is as good and systemically complete as any other, whether standard or non-standard. A key difference is that a standard is the object of conscious intervention, whereas a non-standard is not. There is a long and rich tradition of Balkan linguistics, but it has by and large focused on historical issues and mainly dealt with phonology and morphology. Traditionally, far less attention has been directed toward the syntax of the Balkan languages (Rivero & Ralli, 2001). The situation

can be compared to that of Slavic linguistics which has deep roots in its philological origins. While the study of linguistic systems has diverged considerably from theories of literature in recent decades, Slavic linguistics remains firmly committed to the pursuit of synchronic and diachronic knowledge that often simply cannot be captured by formalist approaches. In fact, Slavic linguists continue to engage in diachronic studies whereas many linguistics departments do not. These anthropological and socio-linguistic articles endeavour to avoid the traps of inventing new ethnic myths in the construction of small ethnic groups, or the myth of Roma "nomadism" in opposition to the myth of "territory" among sedentary peoples. The stress on the "Romance", apart from traditional Balkan linguistic fields and a diachronic approach (etymology, onomastics, etymology points to current research in Balkan linguistics, whether mutually coordinated or not.

My interest(s) in reflecting on and researching the Balkans goes back to 2010 when I participated in a conference on the topic held at the University of Washington, Seattle, organized by the Association of Balkan Studies, settled in Ohio, the USA. The title of the conference "18th Biennial Conference on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics, Literature, and Folklore'' clearly spoke about the multitude of fields, topics and perspectives on a cultural land with not very clearly defined boundaries but rather an open space with changeable frontiers, including not only the Balkan Peninsula, but also today Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, conquered, controlled and dominated by different ethnic communities and state organizations like dutchies, empires and kingdoms (Ancient Celts, Illyrian and Thracian, Roman, Byzantine, Bulgarian-Vlach, Cumans, Petchenegs and Tatars, Ottomans) (Curta, 2016, 2020).

Traced back to the 18th century when the first "Romanian anthropologist and ethnologist'', Dimitrie Cantemir, formulated some ideas about the Balkans, this domain of cultural studies has been fed by German Slovenian linguists (Kopitar, 1829; Schleiher, 1852; Hahn, 1954; Miklosich, 1861; Meyer 1891), who discovered connections between Albanian, South Slavic languages and Romanian or underlined the role of the others, the ancient people living in the Balkans (Tomashek, 1893 about Thracian) or the Aromanians and Meglenits (Weigand, 1895).

Sanfeld's book (1930) opened the perspective of linguistic approaches to a cultural realm, which over the centuries has intermingled folklore, history and mentalities and was mirrored in the national literatures of the new republics/states of the Balkans. There are Numerous perspectives on union *linguistique balkanique*, *Sprachbund* or *language league* (Friedman, 1986; Joseph 1999) going to details about definiteness (Mladenova, 2007; Di Sciullio, 2013; Miseska Tomic, 2009), clitic doubling (Kalluli & Tasmowski, 2008) or to linguistic morpho-syntax (Rivero & Ralli, 2001), language and cultural typolo-

gy (Coseriu, 1972; Joseph, 2002; Joseph & Friedman, 2012; Saramandru, 1986; Asenova, 2002; Dragomirescu & Geană, 2021).

Beginning mostly from the "travel literature'' an entire field of Balkan anthropology either linguistic or social has sprang up since the 19th century through the writings of Martin-Leake, 1930, 1935; Ross, 1841; Curtius, 1852, which evolved and splinted into different directions like political and ethnic studies (Bjelic & Savic, 2002; Kaplan, 2005; Austin, 2017), folklore and literature (Beissinger, 1998; Muthu, 2002, 2004), ethnology and mentalities (Olteanu, 2004; Mesnil & Popova, 2007) and a plethora of linguistic studies. Todorova's book (1997) designed new visions on the imagining and imaginary Balkans (among others Jezernik, 1998; Jezernik et al., 2007).

Rich *lexical inventory* stratified in *etymological layers* (ancient Balkan languages: Thracian and Illyrian; Balkan Latinity, Balkan Byzantium, Slavic influence, Balkan Turkic: Cumans, Pethchenegs, Tatar, Ottoman Turkish). An attempt to give a continuity to the words evolutions was marked by the integration of multiple terms labeled as Romance, Slavic or Turkic into a wider Indo-European and non-Indo-European cultural frame).

Thinking about separation as a dissection of parts from a living organism (in a continuous evolution, marked as humans by changes, struggles and worries), I would prefer using some main concepts and methods for tracing back lexical items to Balkan Latinity and interpreting them in the light of:

1. *cross-cultural frames/scenes* as modalities to evoke, link, represent and organize realities that have been defined and used in cognitive linguistic and cultural anthropology by different scholars (Hymes, 1972; Haliday, 2014 [1984]; Lave, 1988; Crapanzano, 1998, 2004; Chomsky, 2009) mostly pointing out the connections between language and mind and underlining the pragmatic, social and ethnic dimensions of languages;
2. *etymological confluences* (Poruciuc, 1998) as a modality to explain the process of cultural interferences as a result of *contact induced changes made by mutual reinforcement* (Lindstedt, 1998, 2002, 2014);
3. *analysis and comparison of discourse* and *metaphorical meaning* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Fairclough, 2006 [1992]) as a modality to interpret significations of the words in a continuum.

Since the 19th century some terms like Balkan and/or Danube Latinity (Fischer, 1985), Balkan Romance (Sikimic & Asic, 2008; Geană & Nevaci, 2016; Dragomirescu, 2020) and Roman-Speaking Balkans (Sorescu-Marinković et al., 2021) have been used interchangeably for defining a field of cultural and rarely linguistics studies which combine two ditinctive layers: Vulgar Latin as a language connected to the Balkans surviving until the 6th century when the Slavs where supposed to plundering into the peninsula divided Latinity and separated the common or Proto-Romanian (a language including south Danube dialects) into Daco-Romanian spoken north

of Danube and Romanian south dialects (Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian and Istro-Romanian) which survived as oases of Latinity in the Balkan and Istria Peninsula. Romance languages seen as springs-off of Latin interactionally and in a symbiosis developed specific lexis, etymologies and morphosyntactic patterns. Being quite difficult to establish the fluxes of loans and the languages through/via which the words were borrowed, I would prefer to use the concept of linguistic relicts/vestigial elements to denominate the lexical units (headwords) found among languages and circulating across the dialects and languages of the Balkans. The main methods used for analysing are comparative and dissociative, because numerous terms labelled by the time as Slavic are properly Indo-European roots preserved in the Illyrian-Thracian substratum before they were borrowed in Romanian and Slavic languages. To separate such words first roots belonging to the layer of Slavic inherited vocabulary were eliminated from the inventory, whose relicts can be found in anthroponomy and toponymy as well. Some terms with Latin origins arrived in Romanian as a result of assimilation by both ethnic groups in the period of co-inhabitation. Moreover, for a lot of terms, the etymological history implies analysing the role of layers and steps before entering the Romanian language or their evolution on the Romanian terrain because Old Slavic terms can have Greek, Iranian and Latin origins and sometimes the Old Slavic and later Old Slavonic served as carriers of Byzantine (Greek) or Turkic words (Evseev, 2009, p. 24; Stanciu, 2015, pp. 5-9; Stanciu, 2021) into Romanian and belonging to what is generally named 'Slavic elements with Balkan character' (Capidan, 1943, pp. 230-231; Graur. 1954, pp. 42-47; Pătruţ, 1971, pp. 241-246). Additionally, the existence of some terms with Slavic origins common for Hungarian, Slovak, Slovene and Ukrainian opened the hypothesis of long-term cultural contacts in the Carpathian Mountains and Pannonia plain (Bogdan, 1894, p. 36; Miklosich, 1861, p. 24). Different words and roots followed a complicated way being Slavic loans in Romanian through a Hungarian intermediary. The inexistence of a written Greek and Latin culture until the 15th century gave to oral and folklore literature a special value and generated the polarized opinions in exagerating the number of Slavic terms in Romanian (Evseev, 2009) or connecting and re-evaluating them in relations with their Indo-European roots, which led to sorting the South Slavic words as a part of Balkan linguistic union.

Etymologies and Lexis: Identical Meaning and Phonetical Body, Semantic Convergences and Divergences

Commencing writing a Macedonian-Romanian dictionary together with some scholars and students from the Faculty of Philology "Blaze Koneski'' in Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje, I have paid attention to two main dimensions of language adaptation/internationalization (common terms and terminologies borrowed in the last three decades of independence

and separation from Former Yugoslavia) and standardization (defining the norms of Macedonian contemporary and literary language) as well but within this presentation I will be paying attention to some ancient words discovered in my recent reads and translations, considered to belong to Balkan Latinity and being shared by Macedonian and Romanian language.

As a basis of comparison, I chose Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian etymological dictionaries and other papers related to the dialects written and published in both countries (Capidan, 1941; Papahagi, 1974; *Dicționarul Limbii Române*, vol. I-XIX, 2010; DEX, 2016; Atanasov, 1978; Ilievski, 1988; Naster, 1988; Stankova, 2009; Ugrinova-Skalovska, 2010; Bastova, 1993; Aleksoska–Chatroska, 2005; Atanasov, 2012; Atanasov, 2022). Thinking of a continuum between North-Danube dialect generally called Daco-Romanian and the South Danube Romance enclaves like North Greece and Macedonian Aromanians and Meglens, as well as other oases of Latinity in Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia some scholars (Rosetti, 1986; Friedman, 1986, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2007, 2010) formulated the hypothesis of a linguistic league/union which implies a common stock of words and morpho-syntactic patterns to be found in all Balkan languages either Indo-European (Albanian, Greek, Romance and Slavic or non-Indo-European (Turkic). Some recent articles (Joseph, 1998; Friedman, 2002) and books (Joseph & Friedman, 2012; Alexe, 2015, 2021) brought into sight new notes on the lexis circulation and morpho-syntax of Balkan typology that might be shared by all the languages in the peninsula.

On the other hand, we have not to forget that Latin terms have remained the main tool of lexis internationalization and some fields of science like medicine but also agriculture, war (military) household, religion have spread around numerous other language families like German, English, Romance and others.

These resemblances can be noticed in the numerous vocabulary items shared with Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Serbian and Turkish, and morpho-syntactic features common to the 'linguistic Balkan community' (Sandfeld, 1930, p. 36; Russu, 1981, pp. 79-102; Friedman, 2000) mostly understood as 'a convergence area' (Joseph, 1999, pp. 220-221). The differences are obvious in its unique heterogeneity lacking fixed contours and demonstrating a previous usage of a Latin idiom prevailing over the Slavic one and superposing various strata.

In the process of writing a Macedonian-Romanian Dictionary as well as in the teaching activities, I have involved students, the majority of which were with some main cultural and linguistic background (Albanian, Aromanian, Greek, Macedonian, Serbian) in projects focused on lexicography, translations and Balkan studies (anthropology, mentalities) seen as modalities to assess knowledge and to receive feedback from the learners of Romanian language in North Macedonia.

Registering in the dictionaries up to 10 000 headwords so far with gradually stratified meaning (basic, secondary, metaphorically deviated) and differencing contexts marked by phrases and sentences numbered by 1, 2, 3 organized from core/center to significant margins (conceptual metaphors): Two examples of sense degradation Mk. *азно* 'treasure'> Rom. *hazna* 'cesspit, dung hole' while the primordial meaning moved to the background of language and became less used. An interesting case of meaning evolution in symbiosis is a derivate of a Latin root *lenis* 'laziness' and the collective and place suffix *-işte* that generated a sublime word in Romanian *linişte* 'quietness'.

Old Lexical Items in The New Linguistic Garments or Blurred Etymologies for the Words from Substratum

Albanian served as a basis of comparison for Romanian substrate elements belonging to so called Thracian-Illyrian stock of words. However, Albanian and Romanian comparable vocabulary items have been connected to two different etymological strata like those of Balkan relics or Latin etyma that survived in the three languages (Albanian, Aromanian and Meglen Macedonian, Romanian) supposed to be in long term contacts in ancient times and in the period of Roman Empire domination.

A few words supposed to belong to substratum have been analyzed and interpreted as survived in Albanian, Macedonian, Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian and Dacian-Romanian (Brâncuş, 2002, pp. 22-39; Candrea, 1932; Capidan, 1923, pp. 444-554; Giuglea, 1922, p. 346; Mihăescu, 1960, pp. 279-290; Niculescu, 2007, pp. 32-37; Polák, 1958, pp. 693-699; Rosetti, 1947, pp. 342-356; Rohr, 1999, Rohr, 2002; Russu, 1959, pp. 49-83; Ungureanu, 2016, pp. 15-22; Alexe, 2021). They are considered to be relics or vestigial elements circulating in both contemporary languages: Alb. *avull* – Mk.Ar. Mg. *ăbur*-Rom. *abur* (Atanasov, 1978, p. 23) 'steam' is in fact an Indo-European term having cognates in Sanskrit *abhrá*, Avestan *awra*, Middle Persian *abr* 'cloud', Pashto *abrah* and Balochi *hawr* 'rain', Ossetian *ha-abrá* 'sky' and even Latin and English 'aura'. An interesting case of common etymology, divergent semantics and meaningful symbolism is represented by the pair Mac. *ко́пил*е (-ња), bastard' (Popovski & Atanasov, 2007, p. 295) and Rom. *cópil*₁ 'maze runner/tiller, unwanted plant' and *copíl*₂ 'child, infant, descendant, offspring'. Connected to etyma from different languages like Albanian, Greek, Hungarian, Old Russian, South Slavic or even Thracian these terms display a variety of meanings spanning from concrete like *steam* or *bastard*, 'child, tiller' to metaphorical such as *aura, tramp, vagabond, vagrant*. Although explicable at the metaphorical or even mythological level such a difference in meaning places the words among the Balkan linguistic vestigial elements claimed by the artisans of modern national but in fact Indo-European languages. Among other linguistic relics of the Balkans (Kaluzhkaja, 2001, p. 239) with unclear etymology we can mention a term like Mac. *стопан*, Rom. *stăpân*,

Arom. Mgl. *stăpân* (Poposki & Atanasov, 2007, p. 710) 'boss, master, (land)owner/lord, proprietor', which has developed as other ancient words some derivates adjectives, nouns (Mac. *стопанство* 'national economy') and verbs (Rom. *a stăpâni* 'to dominate, to master, to own' and a variety of meanings in collocations, expressing domination, ownership, self-confidence (*stăpâne, stăpâne/Mai cheamă şi-un câine; stăpânul inelelor, săpân pe sine*).

Other terms supposed to belong to pre-Latin stock that was absorbed in Romanian and South Slavic languages as well as in Aromanian and Meglen dialects spoken in Macedonia are those related to poverty: Rom. *sărac* 'poor' was supposed to originate in Old Slavonic *sirŭ* 'abandoned' with cognates in Bg. Mac. Srb *sirak* 'orphan'. The second pair Rom. *sărman* – Mk. *сиромашен* 'misfortunate, poor'< Gr. *heiromahos* 'hand/palm worker' cannot be connected neither in phonetics nor in meaning and derivative mechanism (Vinereanu, 2009, p. 773). Labeled as with Albanian, Greek or Old Slavic origins such terms remain among the Balkan words with *unclear origins* (Alexe, 2021 [2015], pp. 142-143), blurred meaning, but fruitful polysemy and symbolism. The same is valid for entire lexical fields like: adjectives about animals (Alb. *shterp,* Rom. *sterp* 'barren, dry, sterile'), cattle breeding (Alb. *turmë,* Rom. *turmă* 'herd'), name of the birds (Alb *shtërk,* Rom. *stârc* 'heron'), parents, marriage and wedding terminology either nouns or verbs (Alb. *krushk*, Rom. *cuscru* 'parents in law', Alb. *nunë,* Rom. *nună* 'God mother'; Alb. *martuar,* Rom. *a mărita* 'to marry', Alb. *tatë,* Rom. *tată*, Mac. *татко* 'father'), funeral places (Alb. *qimiter,* Rom. *cimitir* 'graveyard'), banks, places of habitation, parts of the house (Alb. *katun,* Rom. *cătun* 'hamlet, small village'; Alb. *paret,* Rom. *perete* 'wall'), verbs (Alb. *shtupaj,* Rom. *a astupa* 'to cover'; Alb. *mërmerij*, Rom. a *murmura* 'to whisper'; Alb. *shkëmbej,* Rom. *a schimba* 'to change, to exchange'; Alb. *strigë,* Rom. *a striga* 'to call, to shout', Alb. *shtrengo*j, Rom *a strânge* 'to collect, to gather, to harvest, to tighten; Alb. *tradhti*, Rom. *a trăda* 'to betray').

Latin and its Survivals in the Balkans

A quite unclear distinction is attested between Balkan Latinity represented by some lexical units believed to survive by oral channels of communication and Balkan Romance Speaking (Sikimic, 2008; Geană & Nevaci 2016; Sorescu- Marinković et al., 2020). The last one remains rather a cultural construct than a linguistic one. Scholars of different backgrounds and origins (Pascu, 1923; Koneski, 1965; Nastev, 1968) have listed over the time only some concepts words found across languages often used and with a fruitful symbolism. I decided to analyze and interpret those words of mixed and unclear origins that remained important due to their rich and inferential symbolism.

Celebrations and their rituals are among the ancient words-concept whose meanings roots stay between languages: The Romanian noun *colind-*

Macedonian *koleda* 'carol' have a diminutive term in Rom. *colindeţ* and Bg. *колиндец* denominating a bun or a round shaped loaf given to the carol singers and a correspondent verb Rom. *a colinda*, Bg. *koleduvam*, Srb *kole(n)dovati*, Slo. *koledovati* 'going from house to house to perform good wishes songs accompanied by ritualistic gestures like tilling a furrow in the yard, throwing seed, making noise and touching cattle and people by a magic stick' enriched the metaphorical meaning of the word relating it to agricultural and sun celebrations performed this time. The terms were related to two different roots like Latin and Greek *kalende – calendae* and South Slavic *kolo* 'round shape, wheel' as a shape of the sun and further it can be followed to a folklore interpretation expressing cult of sun and sacred trees (Caraman, 1930, p. 39; Caraman, 1983; Liaku-Anovska, 2019, pp. 319-320). As a term with puzzling etymological explanations Rom. *Crăciun* might be found in similar phonetical forms and the same meanings in different languages like Hungarian, Aromanian in Macedonia (Schütz, 1966, p. 34; Nastev, 1988, p. 67), Old Russian *Карачун* as reminiscent from Turkic languages all revealing ancient cults of sun, fire and trees and symbolically depicting a cycle of celebrations and practices related to the cosmic year renewal and winter solstice.

Some linguistic relics of Latin origin can be found in Macedonian and Romanian in identic or similar forms and meaning: Mac. *кандила* - Rom. *candelă* < Lat. *candelum*; Mac. *олтар* – Rom. *altar* < Lat. *alter*; Mac. *поган* - Rom. *păgân* < Lat. *paganus* 'pagan'.

The next one preserved in South Romania and some Slavic cultures such as Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbian and Ukrainian displays an ethnographic reality, hidden in a custom with different names *Kaloushari* and *Rousalka*, a complex ritual of healing having the same scenario, personages and functions in all above-mentioned cultures. If in South-Central Bulgaria and Romania the dance is known as Kaloushari, in Macedonia and Northern Bulgaria the name is *Rousalki* dance (Benovska-Sъbkova, 1991, pp. 9-10; Capidan, 1923, pp. 190-191; Ghinoiu, 2013, p. 198; Pamfile, 1997b, pp. 45-55; Vojtovich, 2002, p. 447). The custom and the dance are performed in the Whitsun week and all functions, scenario and personages are alike to the Slavic nations' folklore. Its roots originating in ancient times allude, on the one hand, an initiator process, mentioning the cult of the death, of the horse, of the sun, and, on the other hand, resonate a medieval model of brotherhood by the secret ties among the members of the group, together with beliefs in fairies, divinatory and magic practices as using herbs and water for cleaning and curing (Bârlea, 1983, p. 64; Fochi, 1976, p. 50; Ghinoiu, 2002, p. 339; Ispas, 2003, pp. 148-151; Marinov, 1891, p. 166; Vasileva, 2002, pp. 169-172; Vinogradova, 1995, pp. 494-495; Vulcănescu, 1987, p. 380). Ethnographic data confirm the preservation of practices in Balkan area and the continuation of personages' image in Eastern Slavic area. In Bulgaria and South Macedonia groups of

men were going from house to house or in the fields bless the plants and cure the people. Where there was a sick person, they named the 'house of Rousalki' signifying that members of a family were affected by fairies and put the swords over the head of ill person believing that like this they will cure him/her by performing magical dances named *horo* around the tortured person. The participants in these spiritual journeys performed in this sacred period followed the rules strictly, first they did not make a cross before the meals and in the night, they did not greet each other or with the villagers. They kept silence while passed from one house to another and spent the night in the same place. When they performed the dance, they did not allow anybody to enter the circle. Only the sick person could enter and exit the circle. When they get closer to the next village, they sent a person to check if another group of people roam in the place. It was not desired to encounter another group of performers. Groups of dancers went during the week from one village to another in Northern Bulgaria, Southern Romania and Serbia. The group was always formed by an odd number of members. Their attire is made up of caps and flowers wreaths, shoes, white shirts and pants, on the girdle they wear bells, and a long stick called *tojag* used for touching people and dancing with it in a circular movement around the ill person.

It has been stated by some Aromanian and Macedonian Scholars that the Vlachs in the Balkans were not very good at agriculture and the mountain relief rather favored cattle breeding than agriculture. This might become an explanation of the not so numerous presences of Latin terms regarding agriculture in Macedonian. Otherwise, the Indo-European ones (Dersken, 2009) are well represented in Romanian and all Romance languages, including Macedonian. The unique Latin term in this field supposed to be borrowed by both languages through Old Church Slavonic was preserved in an identic phonetical form *рало* 'beat axe,' in Macedonian and in altered but similar versions Mac. *ралица* – Rom. *rariță* 'butting (small) plough' in Romanian and regional Macedonian (Derkesen, 2009, pp. 302-303; Tomici, 1986, p. 847; Poruciuc, 2016, pp. 159-180). From an anthropological ethnographic point of view, it is believed that Aromanians were good cattle breeders and merchants as well (Capidan, 1945) and they travelled with their flocks and goods within the Balkans without borders. Two words reminiscent in both languages might witness the ancient features of this mountain and rural profession: Mk. *бивол* – Rom. *bivol* < Lat. *buballus* represent the ancestor of contemporary Rom. *bou* 'bull', was depicted in folk songs of both cultures. Significantly, in legends of Moldavia the animal appears on the flag and the coats of arms, shields as a mythical aurochs involved in hunting scenarios of state foundation. From the civilization of shepherds surprisingly both languages preserved the same term: *урда* - Rom. *urdă* 'cottage cheese' with ob-

scure etymology and only in Romanian survived the Latin one *brânză* 'cheese' also found in Eastern Slavic languages like Russian and Ukrainian as a relic.

Housing as a cultural dimension of existence has revealed over centuries various concepts related to building and masonry, the role of fire in creating the atmosphere of family and home or generated myths of long-lasting shelters or fortresses that required a sacrifice to resist in time: Mac. *шкидла*, Rom. *scândură* and Mac. *шинра* < Lat. *scindula* 'board, tile of wood' underline the role of wood in building tradition and the distribution of the terms from this semantic field in two main stylistic registers: Rom. *scândură* is the general and neutral word in the standard languages, while Rom. *şindrilă* is the colloquial and popular one.

Slavic or Indo-European?

Having been integrated in the frame of Romanian ethnogenesis, the Slavic influence was seen simultaneously as a factor of separation and unification. On the one hand, the Romanian language by the Slavic settlements in the Balkans was isolated from Eastern Romanic area and it is perceived as a 'Latin oasis in a Slavic Sea' (Tapon, 2010, p. 453), continuing a language imposed by the process of Romanization and having multiple peculiarities resulting from the cultural, geographical and linguistic context. On the other hand, it seems that the Slavic influence gave Romanian language a sense of continuity because it added to the autochthonous substratum (Dacian-Getae-Illyrian and Thracian) and the Latin one a significant stock of lexis, integrating it into the Balkan context and favouring the links between north and south of Danube, where the contacts among ethnic groups were never interrupted (Brâncuş, 2002, p. 11; Kopitar, 1829, pp. 64-65; Papahagi, 1923, pp. 93-94). In the last two decades, the hypothesis of continuity was interpreted as a reaction of the Romanian historians to counterposing arguments to Hungarian and Soviet mainly political ideologies of discontinuity, conquests and migrations.

In fact, ancient words belonging to Indo-European and non-Indo-European stock have evolved at the confluences of cultures and languages and significantly changed their meaning throughout their evolution. Therefore, those more than 10000 words labelled like Slavic in Romanian or those denominating the same concepts across the cultures, but remaining with controversial and unknown etymologies can be grouped as confluent results from Indo-European or Turkic dialects. The attempts to stratify the substratum as Balkan with different origins either Thracian-Dacian, Old Celtic or Latin denote a conceptual inconsequence as autochthonous means either one of them reunited under pre-Roman (Poruciuc, 2011, 2016) and some research led to various extends spanning from some words of possible Old Germanic

origins (Poruciuc, 1992, 1999, 2000, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2016) to voluminous dictionaries of Dacian or Thracian languages (Paliga, 2009, 2020; Rohr, 1999, 2002).

Some examples analyzed below bring some insights into the field and suggest an etymological stratigraphy explained in connection with empire evolution and population settlements in the cultural territory. As it has been already demonstrated by different scholars at different times (Šafarik, 1890; Bezlaj et al., 1976) Slavic does not have neither from an ethnic standpoint nor from a linguistic one, a unity across the cultures, but rather at least three branches with a broad range of alike lexical items, but maybe in the same measure of different ones. On the one hand, the layers of Slavic have been rarely and randomly analysed in a stratigraphic approach until recently and in connection with Indo-European terms as inherited lexicon (Derksen, 2008, AHDEL, 2010). On the other hand, the investigation of Slavic inherited lexicon has never considered yet the extended links to Romanian. In result, Romanian remains considerably alike to and significantly different from all Balkan and surrounding Slavic languages, a difference which generated a considerable debate over its provenance due to sharing a 'Balkan destiny' (Flora, 1968, p. 13; Rosetti, 1986, p. 74) and reconnection to Romance languages in the 19th century.

It is commonly acknowledged in many old and new works that the influence of the Slavic language is one of the most powerful among the non-Romance influences on the Romanian language although it remained 'of obscure character' (Iroaie, 1943, p. 29; Panaitescu, 1971, p. 13). The topic of many academic controversies over the years, with many unknown and highly variable interpretations, this dimension of the Romanian language and culture is still an open field for cultural research. Over time, a lot of foreign and Romanian researchers have underlined, in numerous papers, the importance of the Slavic influence on the Romanian language considering it 'the longest and strongest among non-Romance ones' (Hristea, 1982, p. 41; Poruciuc, 2010, p. 15; Puşcariu, 1940, p. 277; Rosetti, 1986, p. 293), but to assess the dimensions of this influence is difficult because there are different sources and degrees as well as different layers coming one after another in history (Giuglea, 1988, p. 139), often replacing the centres of cultural diffusion, actioning with different degree of intensity in different regions and having regional varieties.

The first period of so-called Slavic influence is still unclear due to the co-existence of three different elements like the Romanic, the Old Bulgarian (Frâncu, 1999, p. 87) and the Ruthenian ones (Bărbulescu, 1929, p. 21), bilingualism and cultural exchanges with often changeable shapes, caused by the barbarian invasions. In addition, the second period is marked by a continuous change of centre of cultural diffusion and regional assimilation of Old Church Slavonic culture and language: first Bulgarian, after the 12th century, the Serbian one in the South West of today's Romania, respectively, Russian

and Ukrainian in the Eastern one. Although numerous researchers labelled as Slavisms various terms as undoubtedly originating in Slavic (Leschber, 1999, 2010, 2012; Mihăilă, 1973, pp. 21-26; Miklosich, 1861, pp. 5-53; Rosetti, 1986, pp. 292-320; Ungureanu, 2016, pp. 28-43) by taking in consideration their belongingness to 'Slavic inherited vocabulary' (Derksen, 2008, pp. 26-27), namely Baltic (Vraciu, 1972, pp. 125-185), Latin and Lithuanian (Meillet, 1905, pp. 323-325) and other Indo-European words (Vraciu, 1965, pp. 283-298), which passed first into Proto-Slavic, later into Slavic languages and finally into Romanian make the number significantly smaller. Therefore, the presence of comparable terms in Romanian and Slavic as resulting from Indo-European roots is not relevant for Slavic linguistic heritage of Romanian, which consists mainly of two dimensions: autochthonous items shared by the two ethnic groups in the period of co-inhabitation and vestigial elements, namely terms resulting from assimilation of groups of Slavs in the Romanian territories as a result of cultural contacts. Many of the words existing in different stylistic registers like core vocabulary, popular, archaic, dialectal or regional, are either transmitted by oral channels and reflect folk knowledge exchanges or less numerous cult loans were transferred by Old Church Slavonic.

The main methods used for analysing are comparative and dissociative, because numerous terms labelled by the time as Slavic are properly Indo-European roots preserved in the Illyrian-Thracian substratum before they were borrowed in Romanian and Slavic languages. To separate such words first roots belonging to the layer of Slavic inherited vocabulary were eliminated from the inventory, whose relicts can be found in anthroponomy and toponymy as well. Some terms with Latin origins arrived in Romanian as a result of assimilation by both ethnic groups in the period of co-inhabitation. Moreover, for a lot of terms, the etymological history implies analyzing the role of layers and steps before entering the Romanian language or their evolution on the Romanian terrain because Old Slavic terms can have Greek, Iranian and Latin origins and sometimes the Old Slavic and later Old Church Slavonic served as carriers of Byzantine (Greek) or Turkic words (Evseev, 2009, p. 24; Stanciu, 2015, pp. 5-9; Stanciu, 2021) into Romanian and belonging to what is generally named 'Slavic elements with Balkan character' (Capidan, 1943, pp. 230-231; Graur, 1954, pp. 42-47; Pătruț, 1971, pp. 241-246). Additionally, the existence of some terms with Slavic origins common for Hungarian, Slovak, Slovene and Ukrainian opened the hypothesis of long-term cultural contacts in the Carpathian Mountains and Pannonia plain (Bogdan, 1894, p. 36; Miklosich, 1861, p. 24; Olteanu, 1958, p. 22). Travelling through different Indo-European language groups, numerous words have acquired secondary and metaphorical meaning becoming 'trichotomical' (Paliga, 2012, p. 347).

Different words and roots followed a complicated way being Slavic loans in Romanian through a Hungarian intermediary (Densuşianu, 1999, pp. 241-242; Şăineanu, 1900, pp. 33-34; Ivanov & Toporov, 1974, pp. 164-167). The inexistence of a written Greek and Latin culture until the 15th century gave to oral and folklore literature a special value and generated the polarized opinions in exagerating the number of Slavic terms in Romanian (Evseev, 2009) or connecting and re-evaluating them in relations with their Indo-European roots, which let to sorting the South Slavic words as a part of Balkan linguistic union

Taking distance from excessive underlying of Latinity formulated by the members of the Transylvanian School, passing through a process of founda-tion of theoretical principles, in the last two centuries, the etymology of Ro-manian has evolved in three different directions, the natural maturation based on the development of comparative and structural linguistics (Can-drea & Densusianu, 1914; Cihac, 1870, 1878, 1900; Hasdeu, 1983; Coteanu & Sala, 1987, Şăineanu, 1900), a stratification based on separating different lay-ers and influences (Bogdan, 1905; Drăganu, 1933; Mihăilă, 1960, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1996; Paliga, 1987, 1991, 1993, 2006; Ungureanu, 2016, pp. 9-28; Ungureanu, 2019; Vraciu, 1980, pp. 24-32), a perspective to diversification by considering complementary approaches, such as anthropological, cross-cultural and multi-linguistic confluences (Kahl, 2011, 2015; Poruciuc, 1998, 2010, 2015, 2016). Therefore, instead of thinking of only one language source of what are generally called Romanian Slavic terms I preferred accepting multiple etymologies, tracing etymological paths and following the evolu-tion of the words from the earlier occurrences to the current stages of mean-ing development by designing what has been named 'etymological charts' (Nourai, 2010, p. 12).

"The geography of Slavic loans in Romanian language" (Mihăilă, 1963, p. 27) has had centers of influence and edges creating overlaps and delimitating ethnographic and linguistic borders. There are three different situations in today Romanian provinces: on the one hand, Moldavia experienced the early influence of Proto-Bulgarian, on the other hand, of Kievan Russian and Ukrainian (Vernardskij, 1976, pp. 42-43; Vascenco, 1959, p. 329), Walachia was massively influenced especially by Proto-Bulgarian and later on by Macedonian, Montenegrin and Serbian, while priests found a shelter in the monasteries and developed the printing of first religious books, in Transylvania Latin was used in the Catholic Church, while Old Slavonic was the language of personal correspondence and deeds.

Due to the space limitations, I will analyze only some words that were not registered in Derksen's dictionary and have become the reason of my personal reflection on Indo-European roots and their semantic evolution. This is rather a continuation of my article (Stanciu, 2021) about the toponym

Volna in which I exposed the method of retracing etymologies to the ancient languages and following their circulation around classical as well as their echoes or reverberations in modern languages.

Romanian etymological dictionaries (Ciorănescu, 2002; DLRM; DEX; MDA) have recorded as of Slavic origins numerous words connecting their etymologies only to one idiom like Bulgarian, Serbian or Russian. This link induces the idea of a direct borrowing without considering the multiple etymological layers, which better explain the evolution in meaning. Therefore, more than 4000 words with uncertain (Vinereanu, 2009) or unknown etymologies and more than 10000 words with 'obscure or unsatisfactory etymological explanations' (Paliga, 1991, p. 101) may be considered, while some articles and dictionaries of Slavic languages (especially Bulgarian and Serbian) started considering the Romanian terms in relation with their etymologies. Almost nobody has taken the wider path of etymology research following the first records of the term in a language, its evolution and meaning development in the languages it was borrowed from, eventually its geographical, metaphorical and style distribution. Reckoned as widely spread within archaic, colloquial and popular registers of Romanian the words of Slavic origins belong in fact to a shared heritage and have circulated from ancient to modern languages changing their meaning either by extensions, metaphorization or limitation. An example in this regard is a word recorded in all Romanian dictionaries with either Albanian *mlašk* (Philippide, 2010, p. 724), Ruthenian (Ciorănescu, 2002, p. 516) or Old Slavic, Bulgarian and Serbian origins (*mlaka*, Scriban, 1939, p. 822) and regional distribution: Rom. *mlacă* 'swamp, marsh, slough, muddy pool, warm spring' (DEX, p. 662; DLRM, p. 508), which has quite recently been reintegrated into a stratigraphic meaning analysis and reconnected to Greek μέλκιου 'source, nymphs, playful, spring' (Beekes, 2010, p. 926). Suspected of having connections with Balto-Slavic words (Russ. *moloko* 'milk', Lit. *malkas* 'draught') the term of apparently unclear meaning was related to Gothic *milhma* 'cloud' (Snoj, 2002), Latin sources and is to be found in Romanian, Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian (Bezlaj et al., 1976), with very similar conceptual meaning interwoven at metaphorical level. What unifies the semantic matrix of the word may be found in my opinion in the different aggregation states of the water (clouds, marsh, spring), which sometimes may receive a foamy white color similar to the one of milk. As a term denominating primordial elements, it was supposed to have moved from a concrete to an abstract meaning. At least in idioms and phrases the symbolism of colors was related in the case of other words from the lexical family like Rom. *baltă* 'pool, puddle, plash, fish pond'< Alb. *baltë*, Sl. *blato* (DEX, p. 87) of possible Illyrian origins (Giuglea, 1988, p. 42), actually Indo-European (Derksen, 2008, p. 64), *mlaştină* 'marsh, swamp, slough', *mocirlă*ʼ < Bg. *močilo* (DEX, p. 664), *smârc* 'muddy

pool') or other term for mud like *mâzgă* 'slime' < Sl. *mězga*, Bg. *măzga* (DEX, p. 635), *noroi* 'mud, mire, ooze, slash, dirt, filth' < Bg. *naroj* (DEX, p. 721) or even *cocină* 'pigsty' < Bg, *kočina* (DEX, p. 201) which have received in collocations, idioms and phrases either positive (*a prinde mâzgă*, lit. 'to catch some slime', metaphorically 'to become rich/wealth' (Scriban, 1939, p. 822) or negative and pejorative *a trăi (ca) în cocină, mocirlă, mlaştină, noroi* 'to live an immoral, low, miserable, unworthy life'. Belonging to Balkan and South Slavic linguistic area and not being found in Eastern and Western Slavic (Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Polish, Slovak) I suppose that all these terms actually have Indo-European etymologies and due to their ancestry have received different concrete and metaphorical meanings.

It is of a common knowledge that body parts and existential objects around house, greetings and tools have very different lexical and semantic representations and there is an alike and a very different way of evolution, divergences and complementarity among the term belonging to the same lexical family or synonymic series. A rich group of lexical items are comprised in this field and denote either a semantic congruence or a straight divergence in meaning evolution. Apparently very different as evolving from various Indo-European roots, the body parts display a common zone of meaning and a similar stylistic distribution in the dialectal and spoken registers of Romanian and Slavic languages. Although the majority of the items are significantly different (*mână - ruka* 'hand, arm, palm', *picior - nog* 'leg', *cap - golova* 'head', *inimă - serce* 'heart', *creier - mosg* 'brain', *plămân - lehk* 'lung'), there are some common words reflecting sometimes synonymy or semantic divergences. Among them *copită - kopyta* 'claw, hoof' was original to this cognate set and that meanings such as Slav **noga* 'foot, leg' developed, via several transitional steps, from 'claw, hoof'. However, Romanian and Slavic languages have a specific term for 'hoof', *kopyto* (*koph₂ uto-) with Baltic, Indo-Iranian and Germanic cognates, which prevents us from positing simply 'nail' > 'hoof' > leg'. On the other hand, a simple derivation leg' > 'foot' (or 'leg/foot') > 'finger/toe' > 'nail' does not work either because *PIE *ped* - 'foot' is a standalone concept attested in all the key branches, including Anatolian and Romanian. It is not derived from 'leg' and does not spawn forms with meaning 'finger/toe' or 'nail'. One possible explanation is that *PIE *ped* - 'leg' referred exclusively to 'sole of foot' as a body part doing the stepping. 'Foot' as a 'collective of toes and toenails' may have been lexicalized differently, grouped with 'ankle' and 'calf' and labelled by a form similar to **dHmogʷʰ-/*dHnogʷʰ-/*dHlogʷʰ*. In this case, Romanian *picior* 'leg' marked a Romanic evolution of Proto-Indo-European reconstructed *root * ped*-: Latin *petioles* > Rom. *picior* (de casă, de munte) 'leg', (abutement, bottom/foot of the mountain' and *peţiol* 'petiole, leaf stalk', Fr. *pied* 'leg', Eng. *pedestrian* while Romanian and Slavic *copită, kopyta* 'claw, hoof' and *glezna*, 'ankle'

marked a different process of assimilation, a stylistic distribution (popular/standard) and may represent a semantic archaism.

Maybe a Latin relict in Romanian and Slavic languages or the result of Indo-European root evolution the pair Rom. *coastă* 'rib' - Slavic *kôstъ* 'bone' (Derksen, 2008, p. 239) reflects a sort of meaning extension or restrain. Although the Latin term remained otherwise isolated in Romance area nobody has considered its influence as important as it may be in a different view of terms inherited within Balkan context. The second hypothesis of Indo-European roots evolution marked by the loss of initial prefix is also feasible for the meaning restraint. Limited to colloquial spoken or sometimes called popular style in Romanian *icra* (piciorului) or widely spread in neutral Russian language - *ikra* (noga) 'ankle' display a different distribution within language usage registers, which apply to some other categories of words like nouns, verb interjections, which created etymological doublets, triplets or quadruplets from terms of different origins, mainly Indo-European or Turkic (*timp - vreme* 'time', *port - liman* 'harbour', *poftim - na!* 'Here you go').

Two main words with regional distribution reflecting a specific geography of Slavic loan in Romanian designate the groom men: first is *staroste*, the second one is *vornicel* both denominated initially medieval boyar ranks either as chiefs of regions, fortress being in charge with administrative, judge and military attribution, leading craftsmanship or merchants' associations or being mayor (MDA, 4, p. 589; MDA, 4, p. 1309). Both terms have pan-Slavic origins with etymons in Old Slavonic. First word *starosta* (OS *starosta*, Ukr. *starosta* 'the oldest and best groom's adviser') has roots in Indo-European *stāros* (Pokorny, 2007, pp. 1004-1008) and passed into Proto-Slavic as *star'* (Brückner, 1985, p. 515; Vasmer, 1987, p. 747); the second one originating in Old Slavic *дворьинкъ* 'administrator of the castle' (Starchevskij, 1899, p. 162), 'civil servant, who takes care of court and all its belongings, responsible for fairs and trade organization' (STSRJ, 1, p. 311) and it has correspondents in Romanian and all modern Slavic languages: Bg. *дворник* 'witness of marriage', Srb. and Ukr. *dvornik* 'courtier' (Skok, 1973, pp. 465-467; Rudnicky, 1982, p. 17), Pol. *dworzanin* (Brückner, 1985, p. 105), *dvorjanin* 'the chief of the servants' (Vasmer, 1986, p. 489).

The meaning in Romanian and Macedonian is closer to the Bulgarian one as the character plays a key role in different moments of marital ceremonial spanning from wooing where he acts as a matchmaker to post-nuptial activities. As the groom's representative, he analyses the prospective bride, performs prenuptial songs in front of her parents, invites villagers to the coronation and feast, leads the suit to the church, brings the ritual bread in the feast meal, announces and collects the gifts. Chosen by the groom among close friends, he wears a distinctive sign of their ranks, a flag made up of a stick which has tied on the top a scarf sewed by groom's maids.

The central character of the wedding ritual *nevesta* 'bride, wife' allows interesting meaning extensions and philosophical speculations. The term designates the social status of a woman in the prenuptial stages like being engaged to the married one, either wife or daughter-in-law. The word originating in Old Slavic *невѣста* 'virgin or widow engaged, daughter-in-law/*невѣстка* 'son's or brother's wife' (STSRJ, 2, p. 429; Starchevskij, 1899, p. 447) and has analogous variants in Southern Romanian dialects (Ar. *neveastă*, Mgl. *niveastă*).

Generally accepted as a word with Slavic origins (Anikin et al., 2001, p. 33; Anikin et al., 2001, p. 143; Miklosich, 1861, p. 32; Cihac, 1900, p. 216; Uzenjova, 2010, pp. 62-66), it occurs in almost all Slavic languages in comparable forms: Bg. *невеста/невяста* 'bride, daughter-in-law, young wife' (Georgiev et al., 1995, pp. 587-589), Srb. *nevesta/nevjesta* 'bride, young and faithful wife, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law (Skok, 1973, p. 515), Pol. *niewiasta* (Brückner, 1985, p. 362), Russ: *nevesta*, Ukr. *nevista* (Rudnicky, 1982, p. 855). While covering in Slavic languages the meanings 'young woman, bride' in Romanian the word expresses all meanings from bride to married woman and alongside with the highly quoted *soție* 'spose', *nevastă* 'wife' remains the colloquial, but very affective and popular correspondent. Moreover, North of Danube some other significations were added to the word following the allegoric patterns in Slavic: the female friend of bride who helps with administrative works during the wedding, a folk dance and the melody used together (MDA, 3, p. 743) and the euphemistic term *nevăstuică* < Bg. *nevestulka* 'common/beech marten, weasel'.

Following the term in relation to other Slavic cultures and languages, a German lexicographer (Vasmer, 1987, 3, p. 55) enriched word's semantic and metaphorical matrix by adding to etymology the Old Church Slavonic variant *невеста*, Slo *nevesta*, and relating the term with the primordial ancient meaning *неизвестна* as derived with the prefix *не-* from the verb *ведать* 'to know' and generating a new meaning: 'the unknown' (Gimbutas, 1971, p. 139; Uzenjova, 2010, p. 75). Staying in the middle of some Slavic verbs denoting a kind of specific knowledge and understanding like perceiving deeper the things. This approach opens the possibility to interpret the word in a philosophical manner starting from its initial and taboo imagery, which refers to protecting the young girl who passes to a new condition and an alien space for her against the bad spirits. This interpretation is supported by a ritualistic gesture encountered in Romanian and Slavic marriage scenario, namely covering the bride at the end of the feast as marking the passing to the new status of wife. Some other meaning derived from Slavic languages may be related to some verbs like Lit. *vdati* or Russ. *выйти за муж* 'following the husband, get married (applying to a maid) 'or even to the ceremony of coronation (Mac. *венча/се венча* - Rom. *cununǎ/ a (se) cununa* 'to wear a

crown in the day of the wedding', 'to get religiously married', probably related somehow to the Alb. *nun* - Mac. reg. *нун*, Rom. *nun* 'God father in the day of the wedding').

Some other etymological incursions have been started following other two etymological tracks like Greek and Turkic/Turkish that have influenced both Romanian and Macedonian languages in ancient times, Middle Ages or even in the contemporary process of language standardization and semantic development (Stanciu, 2020).

Grammar and Semantics in the Balkan Sprachbund

Not only etymological, lexical similarities can be noticed as common features of the Balkan Linguistic League (Friedman, 2000) but also some relevant grammatical and semantical patterns like those that have been noticed and enumerated over the time as *explicit analytism of argument marking* (Linstedt, 2014, p. 169): enclitic articles, object reduplication, prepositions instead of cases, recipient/possession merger, goal/location merger, finite complementation, analytic future made of verb *volo* 'want', the past future used as conditional, *habeo* perfect tense (a form of past in the future working together with subjunctive, analytic comparison of adjectives.

The Balkan clitic doubling patterns have raised important issues that have challenged even the most basic assumptions about the phenomenon of clitic doubling. However, in spite of the substantial body of literature and important new empirical evidence, there exists to date no study that details the distinguishing peculiarities of this prevailing Balkan Sprachbund phenomenon across Albanian, Macedonian and Romanian languages, which would naturally lead to a better understanding of it. Despite of similar functional-cognitive inventories of clitics some nuances differentiate our target languages in this complex field: in Macedonian the clitic doubling is correlated with the deictic value of definite article, while in Romanian there are a lot of semantic (+ Animated) and pragmatical rules like known in the context, the occurrence of feminine clitic (o, ja) takes either a pre-verbal position (*о синоэс, ја испратив пораката*) or only in Romanian a post-verbal one (*am ajutat-o, întâlnind-o*).

Conclusions

At one moment in their evolution the languages as a result of social and ethnic interaction reflect specific communicative and symbolic competences as abilities of the speakers/users to encode historical/human and natural realities in words, phrases, paragraphs and texts. Found in functional contacts that might have favored convergent and divergent development both Macedonian and Romanian languages display common and similar Balkan lexis and grammatical patterns possibly created in etymological confluences and showing *borrowability hierarchies* in the cultural history of the Balkans.

Romance (Speaking) Balkans and Balkan Sprachbund have become cultural constructs including folklore traditions, literature, language and mentalities. As a carrier of culture, the language(s), has been created by the time in the peninsula or even in the extended space of imaginary Balkans. Assimilated lexis from Classical Vulgar Latin, Medieval Latin adapted the words to the morphology, syntax and phraseology. Mirroring ancient, medieval and (post) modern realities, the words of Latin and Romance, Slavic and Turkic/Ottoman Turkish origins might be organized in an evolutive continuum: those borrowed due to the existence of the Romance in the Balkans, who have conquered, controlled and dominated the realm since the first century BC by sixth century AD, when the Proto-Romance was splinted by the Slavic plundering, Old Church Slavonic, numerous Romance and Turkish items borrowed in modern times in the period of national language formation.

Different etymological layers found sometimes in continuity and interference allow to any researcher passionate about the Balkans to create a rich stock of lexical items (collocations and phrases) and grammatical patterns that can be used for comprehension, code-switching and increasing cultural motivation in second language acquisition. Common to Balkan Sprachbund grammatical phenomena like clitic doubling, interchangeable structures like habeo pro sum, sum pro habeo and even syntactic patterns like those of simple or complex sentences have generated a rich stock of similarities that bridge knowledge and help the students and teachers in learning and teaching Romanian in North Macedonia.

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