MISTAKING AN IMAGINED THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT FOR FACTUAL LINGUISTIC REALITY – A CASE STUDY

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Abstract. *Starting from the idea that the linguistic imaginary can also refer to the speaker's subjectivity, and so in certain contexts reasonableness can be overcome by emotional logic, and the two can often prevail over the rigours of truth, we tried to tackle the issue of that rather dangerous theoretical attitude of wishful thinking which may turn otherwise decent and honourable linguists into excessively authoritarian norm-setters or linguistic prophets. This attitude can be encountered in the field of etymology, too. Our case study is represented by the etymological dictionary compiled by M. Vinereanu, in which most arguments converge towards the idea that the oldest lexical layer of our language, the (Thraco-) Dacian substratum, should be better highlighted, analyzed and illustrated. Unfortunately, in the process the author made an incredible number of factual errors, some of which we undertook to exemplify, concisely analyze and amicably amend, to the best of our abilities*.

Key words*: Romanian etymology, substratum, dictionary*

1. **Introduction**

We will set off from a number of ideas, contained in the very invitation to the *ELI* Conference hosted by the University of Pitești, regarding the various values, aspects and consequences of the *imaginary* – a concept in which linguistic, social and cultural facts are intimately intertwined and conjugated. Starting from a small number of details and clarifications concerning the place of the imaginary within the body of the disciplines and sciences that study, explore and analyze language, and trying to extrapolate (even temporarily or marginally) certain manifestations of the elements of the language, we can by no means ignore the fact that: "In linguistics, the concept of *imaginary* refers to representations that develop into language architectures at all levels of description. Linguistic imaginary also refers to the notion of speaker's subjectiveness (…)"; but especially the fact that – in certain contexts, of course – "The reasonable, or the rational, is defeated by affective, emotional logic, and together they overcome the rigours of truth (…)". And finally (or especially), it is to be noted that, in the particular field of linguistics, "the concept of imaginary comes in relation to notions such as norm, grammaticalness, acceptability (…)"[1] We could personally see, without being astonished in the least, that there are theorists who are carried away by a seemingly unconstrained or incontrollable appetite for the manifold recurrences and various facets of the imaginary, reaching a detrimental, even dangerous, attitude of *wishful thinking* (or "the wish taken as actual reality"), and turning themselves, as a result of that quasi-delusional state of mind, into

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[1] "*Norm* is a concept that refers to an intermediate materialness, lying half-way between the abstraction of the language system and its use in speech, a use conceived of as a "social model".

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excessively authoritarian analysts and/or norm-setters of the linguistic and cultural reality of a natural language. Likewise, there are theorists who, metaphorically speaking, work with the sword and the hatchet, instead of the pencil or the scalpel, in a yearning attempt to see the reality adhere to their own theories, and even stick to the latter – though those theories may be beautiful and interesting, but unfortunately, more often than not, only on paper. In some modest previous contributions[1], we have already referred to such cases of overrating the often obtrusive, specious or downright false gloss of theoreticalness at the expense of actual *reality*, that factual collection of facts and abjective arguments which, in most cases, proves to be rather modest – in its wisdom and sheer simplicity. Unfortunately, in relatively recent times, we have been witnessing – since there nothing better to do about it – an onslaught, an all-out offensive of what one may call the *anti-scientific* (or anti-knowledge) attitude, especially in the fields of linguistics and history. A least since Caragiale's era, Romania has tended to turn into the land of the people having multiple and solid theories and "personal ideas". The fact is that, in the field of etymology, and in that of the history of the Romanian language, there are quite a few remarkable, interesting, and often innovative studies, but also a lot of would-be *novelties* (part of which are in fact… older novelties), of which many can be said to belong to the domain of the absolute absurdity or aberration. It is more difficult for a linguist or philologist (who happens to hold a legally certified diploma) to fully come to terms with such cases of ineptness when he/she comes to deal with specialized papers in the field of etymology and/or language history in which good faith and professional seriousness are apparently on a par with wild suppositions – i.e. ideas and hypotheses that are ostensibly uncontrolled, and, at any rate, difficult to verify, and sometimes incredibly, even indecently violent, which we have personally conceded to account for by that upsurge of *imagination* that we have mentioned, a few lines earlier, by means of the English phrase *wishful thinking* – as it is, unfortunately, the bulky and laborious dictionary compiled by Mr. Mihai Vinereanu, entitled *Dicţionar etimologic al limbii române – pe baza cercetărilor de indo-europenistică* (i.e. *An Etymological Dictionary of the Romanian Language – based on Indo-European researches*), published in 2008 by *Alcor Edimpex* Publishing House in Bucharest.

2. **An interesting, yet baffling dictionary**

It is worth mentioning that, in the *PUBLISHER'S NOTE*, some of the undeniable strengths of the book are highlighted, or as many arguments that convinced the editors to print it, for the benefit of the philological community in this country, and also for the general public: "We opted for the editing of this dictionary, starting from the idea that the roots of a nation are found in the stock of words of its lexicon, which have resisted and continued in time. In the last few decades, there have been sporadic researches into the etymology of the Romanian language and its evolution over time, which have not been completed by such an extensive work. We considered that the present dictionary covers the dynamics of the vocabulary of the Romanian language, in time and space, because the author comes up with an informed, complex, and novel point of view. We hereby offer the

[1] See the final bibliography section (*References*) of the present paper.

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readers an instrument of knowledge and research based on extensive and valuable information, which is improvable at any time, and can be a starting point for other debates and scientific papers". The presentation made to the author (who is a Ph.D. of the University of Bucharest, defending the thesis entitled *Particularităţi fonetice ale cuvintelor româneşti atribuite substratului traco-dac / Phonetic Particular Characteristics of the Romanian Words Attributed to the Thraco-Dacian Substrate*) in the book's *FOREWORD* is also extremely eulogistic – and no man of good faith would have any reason to doubt its truthfulness and sincerity, as a matter of principle. It should also be emphasized that the main concepts used by the author, as methods and, in part, working hypotheses, are beyond any suspicion of scientific inalienability – which is also confirmed by the author of the foreword, from which we quoted above, a noted expert (Professor Constantin Frâncu, Head of the Department of Romanian Language and General Linguistics at the Faculty of Letters of the *"Al. I. Cuza"* University of Iași), who acknowledges Mr. Vinereanu the merit of bringing new inspiration, or fresh blood, as it were, to the scientific argumentation and instrumentation in the field: "Mr. Mihai Vinereanu aims to bring an entirely new vision of the Romanian language starting from its most stable system – the phonological system, hoping that this enterprise can be a landmark for future research in Romanian linguistics, as well as in the Indo-European linguistics in general. For this purpose, and based on the comparative historical method, he reconstructs the phonological system of the Thraco-Dacian language and the Romanian language, and compares them with the phonological system of other Indo-European languages, concluding that the Romanian language is part of the great Italian-Celto-Illyrico-Thracian group. (…) Mr. Vinereanu completely changes the angle of looking at the substratum and adstratum of the Romanian language. He has many new ideas, establishes many plausible etymologies, which are now obscure (e.g. *ghioagă*, *plug*, *a ghici*, even *a gândi* – which is not derived from *gand*, a term of Magyar origin, but from Thraco-Dacian **gandi*). The author is also right in saying that some elements attributed to the Slavic adstratum are by nu means Slavic, but Thraco-Illyrian, as they correspond to the phonology of that group (e.g. *baltă*, *daltă*, *gârbă*, *cârcă*, *târg*, etc). In science, truth stands by the side of error. (...) That is why I think that we can look admiringly at Mr. Mihai Vinereanu's closely-knit argumentation, or we can look at it with the skepticism of the man formed by reading a profuse Romance and Romanian bibliography, but we cannot neglect it. (...) Through the original material, the book authored by Mr. Mihai Vinereanu is an original lexicographic work, much different from today's dictionaries, which have neither firm principles, nor appropriate methods – hence, the diversity of controversial etymologies".

3. **Some critical notes**

Here are some remarks, which we were able (and eager) to make after reading the dictionary – To begin with, we feel the need to ask the following question: if this influence of the substratum on the Romanian language had been (or were) so very important, why is Mr. Vinereanu's demonstration – where it is really convincing (at least as a matter of principle) – virtually conducted only on terms that are quite infrequent or uncommon in Romanian (to which a number of neologisms were rather inadvertently added)? Then, the

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author's straightforward, drastic and apparently overconfident statements concerning the derivation of most terms included in the dictionary (directly – or possibly) from pre-Latin roots actually sound rather supercilious, and consequently superficial, mainly when one tries to compare the Latin (or Slavic) roots invoked by other / earlier etymologists with the form, the meaning and the usage of the terms in question, e.g. "*a: *ad* "at, near" (*IEW*, 3); cf. Osc. *az* "la", Cymr. *add* "at", Gall. *ad*, Got. *at* "at, near", O.H.G. *az* "at, near", Eng. *at* "at, near". One cannot therefore state that the Romanian preposition *a*, respectively *la*, could be derived from Latin. It is obvious that it was, and is, very common in many IE languages. It may come from the pre-Latin word stock"; ● "*abia:* Lat. **ad-vix* from *vix* "only, hardly" (Philippide, *Principii*, 91; Puşcariu, 3; Candrea-Densusianu, 224; Ciorănescu, 12). Cihac thinks it comes from O.S. *abije* "immediately", which, in terms of semantics, has nothing to do with Rom. *abia* [sic!].[1] (...) Rom. *abia* could come from the same radical as Lat. *vix*, where the labio-velar *kŭ* became the simple voiceless labial sound *p*, which then became voiced. It is difficult to follow all the stages, from the PIE form to modern Romanian, but it must have been prefixed with prep. *a* (*ad*), perhaps in a relatively late phase. It should be noted, from the very outset, that many adverbs, prepositions and Romanian conjunctions are explained by various kinds of Latin "compounds", which are sometimes extremely long, going up to 3-4, or even 5 Latin elements in order to "achieve" the result aimed at, a procedure unbelievable for any language [sic!][2]. Of course, Lat. *vix* is very similar in meaning and form to the term in the Romanian language, but Rom. *abia* cannot come directly from Lat. *vix* "hardly, barely", or from one of its compounds. They are just related forms, against an IE background. Naturally, we should have had in Romanian, from Lat. *vix*, *(*a*)*vis* (*a*)*ves*), *(*a*)*bis* (*abes*), but not *abia*[3]"; ● "*abraş:* Tc. *abraş* (Şăineanu, II, 7; Ciorănescu, 21). Şăineanu believes that the Turkish form comes from Arabic, and it is from Turkish that it was taken over by Romanian. We have to mention that the word also exists in Bg. – *abraš*, and in Albanian – *abrash*. The root cannot be of Turkish or Arabic origin, because it is also present in other IE languages that have never had language contacts with Turkish[4]".

Here are several cases of obviously erroneous and/or far-fetched etymologies: "*ac* (…) is a possible loan from the Thraco-Dacian language, although some scholars consider it a Latin loan (see Corazza, 1969) (cf. *acru, oţet*)"; ● "*adăsta* (Arom. *adastŭ*) – "to wait". Lat. **adastare* (Puşcariu, 22; *REW*, 148; Ciorănescu, 72). Meyer-Lübke, following Puşcariu, translates Lat. *adastare* by "to wait in a queue, to hesitate", while Ciorănescu thinks it is an

[1] This statement flies in the face of linguistic reality: there is a rather recent 'trend' in Romanian usage, which encourages this very sense of *abia*, e.g. "*Abia ce / Tocmai ce* a primit coletul (și a și plecat)" (i.e. "hardly, no sooner, as soon as, immediately as").

[2] Let us just compare it with French *oui*, *déjà*, *jamais*, *dorénavant*, *toujours*, *aujourd'hui* ou *néanmoins*, or Eng. *although*, *throughout*, *nevertheless*, etc.

[3] Why then have Lat. *corvus*, *vervex* and *veteranus* been continued by Rom. *corb*, *berbec(e)* and *bătrân*, respectively? Moreover, it is a notable etymological fact that final consonants in Vulgar Latin were dropped – i.e. no longer pronounced, in the course of time – in Romanian, e.g. *porcus* > *porc(ŭ)*, *sic* > *și*, *est* > *e*, *sum* > *sŭ/-s/îs*, *ad* > *a*, *aut* > *au*, *quam* > *ca*, etc.

[4] However, the author leaves those languages unmentioned: the ensuing list of roots seems to be a mere patchwork of forms and meanings that loosely have to do with the notion of "fierce, violent".

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adastare meaning "to be present". In fact, there is no such attestation of a Latin verb, either in classical Latin (cf. *TLL*), or in Medieval Latin (cf. Niermeyer), and if there were any verb having the meanings indicated above, it would be semantically incompatible with Rom. *adăsta*". Other such instances, which we culled from the letter *A* of the Vinereanu dictionary, are *acest/a, acera, acolo,* and *adălmaş* (var. *aldămaş*).

Sometimes, the author may be said to prove sheer bad faith in arbitrarily recognizing – or rather assigning – pre-Latin etymologies, e.g. "*adăpost* (…) It is a form composed of prep. *ad* and a **postum*, a participle form of a verbal root **ponno*, which is not, however, necessarily of Latin origin[1], although the origin of these component parts is difficult to clarify. *Probably* from the pre-Latin stock" [e. ours]; ● "Unlike Latin and Spanish, Rom. *adânc* has an altogether different meaning. Moreover, Latin rounded vowels did not produce, or better to say do not have, unrounded vowels as their Romanian equivalents, which would represent still other exception to the rule[2]. Therefore, *REW* (144) and Rosetti (161) prefer a Vulg. Lat. **adancus*".

At other times, however, the author actually proves (scientific) ill-faith in discriminatorily treating the meaning – or the form *and* meaning – of the etymological roots analyzed, e.g. "*adia* (Arom. *adil'iu* "1. to breathe, to blow; 2. to caress") – 1. (of the wind) to blow gently; 2. to caress. The etymology proposed for this verb was Lat. **aduliare* (*REW*, 204), which could be the vulgar Lat. form of *adulare* "to adulate". It is obvious that the sense of Lat. *adulare* (**aduliare*) could not have deviated in such a way that it meant *a adia* ("to blow gently") in contemporary Romanian[3]"; ● "*acolo* (…) Lat. **eccum illoc* (Philippide, *Principii*, 92; Pușcariu, 15; Candrea-Densusianu, 12; *REW*, 4270; Ciorănescu, 54). As in the case of *aci* (*aici*), Rom. *acolo* cannot have come from the above-mentioned Latin compound"[4]; ● "Rom. *agudă* derives from *acru*, just like *agriş* and *aguridă* (see *agriş, aguridă*), due to the sour taste of the fruit (see *acru*)"[5]; ● "Therefore, the meaning and structure of the Sanskrit and Lithuanian forms make us believe that Rom. *aidoma* comes from the pre-Latin stock"; ● "*aluat* – The supposed Latin etymon is not attested in Latin, and has no correspondents in the Romance languages". Typically, the author ascribes many etyma to internal word-formation mechanisms, without being too much concerned about demonstrating the fact, e.g. *ameţi, amorţi, amuţi* (all said to be formed in Romanian!), or *apăra* ("Therefore, it is hard to assume that Rom. *apăra* ("defend") comes from Lat. *apparare*"); ● "*asemăna* (…) This verb does not come from Latin, since it has the same root as *samă*, in the old sense "a number of, a number equal to", with numerous correspondences in many IE languages, including Latin. *simulo*" [sic!]; ● "*azvârli* (…) Onomatopoeic formation from *zvar* plus the verbal suffix *-li*;[6] cf. Bg. *vărliam*, S.-Cr. *vrljti*. The South-Slavic forms probably come from Romanian (see *zvârli*)"; ● *alac* ("In any case, the

[1] Though the particular root present here is *-post*, an obvious, unquestionable past participle of Lat. *pono*!
[2] What about Lat. *fontana* > Rom. *fântână*, or Lat. *hirundinella* > Rom. *rândunea*/*rândunică*?
[3] What about Rom. *a afla* (< Lat. *afflare*) and *a umfla/îmfla* (< Lat. *inflare*)? Or the neologic loans *a flata*/*flatare, flatulent*, etc.?
[4] Yet the author fails to demonstrate why.
[5] Though the respective forms seem considerably apart (*agd-* vs. *acr-*).
[6] What about similar onomatopoeic verbs like *a sfârâi*?

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Romanian form seems to be native. Mag. *alakor* comes from Romanian"). Here are other such cases of etyma that are superficially treated in the dictionary (under the letter *A*), on account of the same prejudiced view: *adevăr*, *adineauri*, *ademeni*, *agale*, *aievea*, *alunga*, *astupa*, *asupra*, *asuda*, *aşeza*, *aştepta*, *aţâţa*, *auă*, *azi*.

Furthermore, there are many instances of anti-Latin exaggeration in tackling etymological roots, which, in M. Vinereanu's opinion, must – unanimously and necessarily – be pre-Latin, e.g. *acum*, *amăgi*, *amâna*, *amândoi*, *ameninţa*, *amesteca*, *anina*, *aoleu* (as well as *văleu*), *apă* [sic!][1], *aproape*, *arăta*, *arcaci*, *argăsi*, *argint*, *arin*, *aripă*, *arşiţă*, *asin*, *astâmpăra*. But the most typical case of biased etymology is, of course, Thraco-Dacian exaggeration, e.g. *ajuna*, *alt*, *afară*. Also, there are quite numerous inconsistencies throughout the dictionary, as well as instances of sheer etymological guesswork and/or needless demonstration, e.g. "*alb* (…) A form **albu* must also have existed in Thraco-Dacian, especially as an extensive use of that root can be found in the Italic and Celtic languages with which Thraco-Dacian was related" – which is soon followed by *albastru*: "Lat. **albaster* from *albus* "white" (Puşcariu, 56; Candrea-Densusianu, 37; *REW*, 319; Ciorănescu, 177). The hypothesis cannot be accepted, especially since Rom. *alb* does not seem to come from Latin (see *alb*) [sic!] Therefore, Rom. *albastru* must be considered a derivative of *alb*, probably in the original meaning of "gray, grayish, smoke-coloured", a meaning also retained in Aromanian (see *alb*)"; ● "*agru* (…) The from *agru* is today rarely found in Daco-Romanian, and the form *ogor* is much more frequent (see *ogor*). Given the vast spreading of this root in IE languages [?], it can be supposed that it also existed in the pre-Latin stock". Similarly, the author pointlessly complicates the etymon of *alună* "hazelnut" (which can be simply derived from Lat. *abellana/avellana*), by unnecessarilly invoking the etymology of the place name *Abella*.

Every time he sees it fit, Mr. Vinereanu (quite uselessly) chooses to explore too distant etymologies (which are no doubt Indo-European), e.g. *asculta*, *ascunde*, *atât*, *atinge*, *atunci*, *avea* (the demonstration the author makes is a genuine acme – or perhaps an anthological gem – of pro-Dacian bias: "Therefore, we have a set of PIE **ghabh*/**khabh* both in Latin and in Thraco-Dacian, whose forms derived, following opposite paths, into Thraco-Illirian and Latin, in much the same way as Gothic did, in the case of the Eastern Germanic idioms, in relation to the Western Germanic languages (…) We can conclude that the Romanian language could have kept many more words from Thraco-Dacian, if the verb *a avea* ("to have"), which is so important, is, at least to a great extent, of Thraco-Dacian origin, despite the dominant theory concerning the origin of the Romanian language"). Here is another notable case of extremely biased exaggeration: *apăsa* ("Therefore, we can conclude, from the above, that *n* is a Latin infix, which does not exist in any other IE language, and prosthetic *a-* cannot be accounted for through so-called Vulgar Latin, as it does not exist in any other Neol-Latin language, yet it does exist in Sanskrit. From the pre-Latin stock (see *păs*)"[2]. The same goes for the (unquestionably Latin) words *aur* ("gold"): "We must not forget that the Dacians were the largest gold producers in the ancient world, and therefore they knew this metal well, so it is difficult to assume that they borrowed its

[1] Although every Romanian first-year language student knows that Lat. *quattuor* > Rom. *patru*, and Lat. *aqua* > Sard. *aba*.
[2] If so, how could Lat. *densus* give Rom. *des*? Or Lat. *mensa* > Rom. *m(e)asă*?

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name from Latin, especially since the form is well represented in so many IE languages", *apleca* and *atare*. One can incidentally come across real howlers of etymological rope-walking and contrariety to the basic rules of etymological (and historical) derivation: the author's seems to have utterly ignored – or, even worse, voluntarily gone against – the famous phonetic laws that J. Grimm construed to explain the systematic correspondences occurring between certain consonants in the Germanic languages, on the one hand, and those in Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, no less than Fr. Ch. Diez's rules concerning Romance idioms, or K. Verner's phonetic law, e.g. "*apoi*: Lat. *ad post* (Pușcariu, 98; Candrea-Densusianu, 1423; *REW*, 195; Ciorănescu, 335). If Rom. *apoi* came from Lat. *ad post*, then we should have **apost* or something similar, but not *apoi*"[1]; ● *astruca* ("The presence of the velar sound *c* in the Romanian form cannot be explained through Latin")[2].

3.1. **Some evident fortes**

On the other hand, the reader of the dictionary can encounter instances where the author's criticism is (partly) justified, e.g. "*abate* (…) Lat. *abbattere* (Pușcariu, 2; *REW*, 1; Ciorănescu, 8). It is a derivative formed in the Romanian language from *bate*, prefixed with *a-*. It should be mentioned that Lat. *abbattere* "come down, get/go down, suppress" occurs in no classical text. The form appears for the first time in the *Salic Law* (Niermeyer, 1,1), a code of laws based on the old German, pre-Christian traditions, formulated by the Salic Franks between AD 507 and 511, so as late as the time of Medieval Latin, and we probably have to do with a Celtic influence, as the meaning also differs from Rom. *a abate*, hence the Romanian language could not have borrowed it from Medieval Latin. The form also exists in Aromanian, with the same meaning. Therefore, Rom. *abate* cannot come from Lat *abbattere* (see *bate*)"; ● "*adică* (…) an adverb of similar form does exist in Latin *adaeque* (*ad-aeque*) "equally, thus, so" (in *Corpus gloss. lat.*, 5, 21; cf. Ciorănescu, 81), an infrequent form, which is however close to Rom. *adică*, from which the Lat. verb *adaequo* ("to make equal, to put on an equal footing") derives". Similarly, the etymology that Mr. Vinereanu proposed for *afin* can be correct; he can also be right about the etymology of *agrişă*. Mr. Vinereanu's reticence in indicating Latin etyma seems fully justified as far as *albină* is concerned ("Lat. **alvina* is not attested, there is only Lat. *alveus* "wash basin, pail, trough", from which **alvina* is believed to come (see *albie*)". Likewise, it seems to be justified even for *a alerga* and *amiază*. Similarly, the author is quite right in ascribing etyma that contradict or complete the etyma in usual dictionaries, e.g. *alina*, *altiţă*, even *aluneca*, *andrea* (with a very interesant demonstration). Vinereanu aptly demonstrates that the verb *a aprinde* cannot come from Lat. *appr(he)endere*, being instead a derivation inside the Romanian language, from *a prinde* plus the preposition *a* (Lat. *ad*). Perhaps he is also right in demonstrating the etyma of *arcan*, *arendă*, *ascuţi* ("Rom. *ascuţi* does not come from Lat. **excotire*, instead it can be associated with *acutiare*, from which the neo-Latin forms seem to derive"), and *asfinţi*.

[1] See footnote 6 above, as well as the Italian, French and Spanish correspondents of Rom. *apoi*, i.e. It. *poi*, Fr. *(de)puis* and Sp. *(des)pues*.
[2] Although Rom. *a încărca* comes from Lat. **incarricare*, just like It. *carricare* (from Lat. *carricare*)…

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Most certainly – and quite naturally –, some etymologies are very hard to prove – and the pre-Latin roots that M. Vinereanu proposes seem to be quite appropriate and welcome. Thus, "Rom. *adulmeca* comes from PIE **odma*, through a Thraco-Dacian root **odmao* > **adumika* > Rom. *adulmeca*". A similar etymon that is very hard to prove is that of Rom. *agâmba*, which "comes from PIE **gheubh-* "to bend, to stoop". Several other roots are virtually impossible to demonstrate, or at least to judge in a constructive manner, e.g. *a aiepta, alean, alege, alinta, aprig, apuca, apune, argea, arnică* (where the author bluntly notes "uncertain origin") *arsură, arţar, astrăgaci* ("uncertain origin" again), *aşchie, atârna, auş, auşel*. Last, though by no means least, plenty of etymological notes that Mr. M. Vinereanu compiled are, to the best of our knowledge or linguistic intuition, very good, e.g. "*abua* – "to (go to) sleep". It is an old word, seldom used today, found in lullaby lyrics. It was avoided by the etymological dictionaries. It is an old pre-Latin word, from PIE **au-, aues-, au-s-* "to spend the night / to stay overnight, to sleep" (*IEW*, 72); cf. Arom. *aganim* "to spend the night, to sleep", Gr. *ιαύω* "a dormi". In Thraco-Dacian PIE **u* shifted to *v* or *b* in-between two vowels, or when followed by another vowel (see *vatră*). From the Thraco-Dacian lexical stock". Other etymologies that the author worked out felicitously are those for *abur* ("steam, mist"), *amurg* ("twilight, dusk"), *aspidă* ("aspid"), *aşa* ("thus, so, in this way"), *armăsar* ("stallion"), *arvună* ("earnest money"). The article that deals with the etymology of the toponym *Ardeal* is indeed very convincing – although we believe that many more examples of similar place names could be given from the Celtic area.

4. **Conclusion**

What we are interested in when dealing with, and trying to suitably appraise, such an approach (which is, by any scientific standards, quite laborious) appears to be the real dimension, the essential role and the overall linguistic, systematic relevance of the substratum in the historical and functional structure of our national language – and much less the theories referring to how comprehensive it could be. Every earnest contribution made by our linguists to improving the knowledge in this tricky yet fascinating area is, of course, desirable and most welcome.

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