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Clues to the Chronology of Old Germanic Loans in Romanian and in Other South-East European Languages

After more than two decades of research on Old Germanic loans in non-Germanic languages, the present author has reached the firm conclusion that to deny the existence of Old Germanic loans in Romanian as well as in the other languages of the Balkan *Sprachbund* would simply mean going against evidence. Nevertheless, one must admit that the issue under discussion is not easy to clarify in all its details and implications, mainly since – with the notable exception of the Gothic *Bible* of Wulfila – the attestations of “East Germanic” languages and dialects are rather scarce.¹

¹ I am inclined to use inverted commas in the case of “East Germanic” since that formula appears to be geographic rather than glottogenetic. Specialists in Old Germanic have not yet clarified the mixture of Suebic (Elbe-Germanic) and Scandinavian that is apparent in both Wulfila’s Gothic and the so-called “Crimean Gothic”. Not to speak of the long discussion on

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In regard to the Old Germanic populations which, at various times, were militarily and socio-politically active in Southeast Europe, there is more than sufficient mainstream knowledge, much of which I took into consideration in my previous articles (see list of references). Here I will include only a brief list of archaeological-historical facts, finds and events that are relevant for this discussion.²

- 3rd–2nd centuries BC: West Germanic tribes of a Suebic type (*Elbgermanen*) moved into what is now Southern Poland, Western Ukraine, Eastern Romania and the Republic of Moldova; the presence of those Germanic people is indicated by finds in the areas of archaeological cultures (apparently multiethnic) such as Przeworsk (mainly in Poland) and Poienești-Lukaševka (in eastern Romania and the Republic of Moldova); historically, representatives of those Old Germanic populations were mentioned under names such as *Bastarni* (*Bastarnae*, *Basternae*), *Peucini* and *Skiri*.
- 2nd century BC: The Bastarni attacked the polities of the Getians, Thracians and Dardanians.
- 27 BC: Romans troops led by Crassus attacked territories controlled by the Bastarni north of the Lower Danube.
- About 109: Germanic warriors were represented on the Tropaeum Traiani (today's Adamclisi, southeastern Romania); those warriors appear to have been allies or mercenaries of the Dacians in the Roman-Dacian war of 101–102.
- 161–180: A long war was waged by Emperor Marcus Aurelius against the Marcomanni and other Germanic tribes that had kept Roman provinces of Central-East Europe under threat.
- 2nd–3rd centuries: Goths, Gepids and other tribal units spread over the area of what was to be archaeologically known as the Sântana de Mureș-Cernjakhov Culture.
- 238–268: Repeated Gothic incursions into the Balkans and Asia Minor.

whatever branch of Old Germanic was represented by the languages spoken by the Vandals, the Burgundians and the Langobards, respectively.

² My main sources of information are the following (in alphabetical order): Babeș (1993), Beck (1989), Gamillscheg (1934–1935), Hoops et al. (1976), Pohl (2005), Schmidt (1969), Schwarz (1972), Wolfram (1995). For more chronologically arranged data, see the opening parts of Poruciuc (2005, 2013).

- 251: Emperor Decius and his son were killed in a battle against the Goths led by “king” Cniva, who had Carpi, Bastarni, Taifali and Vandals among his allies.
- 269: Claudius II (Gothicus) defeated the Goths near Naissus (today’s Niš).
- 271: Aurelian’s victory over the Goths was followed by the strategic withdrawal of Roman legions and administration from Dacia Antiqua.
- 280: Most of the Bastarni were settled in Thrace: the rest of them followed in 295.
- 332: An important number of Visigoths became federates of the Roman Empire under Constantine the Great.
- 341: Wulfila (Ulfilas) was consecrated bishop of the Christians living in territories controlled by the Visigoths north of the Danube.
- 348: Due to persecutions by heathen Visigoths, numerous Christians, led by Wulfila, migrated from the north of the Danube into the Empire; other Christian refugees followed the same way in the period 369–372.
- 375–376: The Huns destroyed the polity of the Ostrogoths north of the Black Sea.
- 378: Emperor Valens was killed by rebellious Visigoths at Adrianople.
- 391–401: Visigoths led by Alaric I plundered eastern Roman provinces (some “Bastarni” were also mentioned among Alaric’s allies).
- 418: The Gepids of the Pannonian-Carpathian area were subdued by the Huns.
- 454: Final defeat of the Huns by a Germanic alliance, the main leader of it being Ardaric, the king of the Gepids; subsequently, the Ostrogoths known as *Valameriaci* settled in Pannonia.
- 474: King Theoderic of the Ostrogoths came to rule Macedonia.
- 488: Theoderic (the Great) moved his people to Italy and established his capital at Ravenna.
- 567: The Gepidic kingdom (also covering territories of former Dacia Antiqua) was destroyed by the Avars and the Langobards.
- 568: The Langobards moved to Italy.
- 602: Emperor Mauritius was overthrown by Phocas, whose tyrannical rule marked the last phase in the history of the Eastern Roman Empire; during that period “a flood of Slavs and Avars spread over the Balkans” (Ostrogorsky, 1969, p. 85).

The selected dates and data above cover almost nine centuries marked by various types of contact (and exchange) between Germanics and non-Germanics of south-east Europe.³ Such lists – however well-ordered their chronology may appear – are too lapidary, and most of them refer to violent events (wars, invasions, rebellions, displacements and migrations), rather than to cases of symbiosis, bilingualism and assimilation, all made possible by co-territoriality.⁴

Traditionally, the migration of the Langobards to Italy is considered to have marked the end of the spectacular *Völkerwanderungen* of Old Germanic tribal unions. Less spectacular, but ethnogenetically more significant, were the Old Germanic communities that decided to stay put and not to participate in “final” migrations.⁵ Such speakers of Old Germanic *Rest- und Trümmersprachen* (cf. Beck, 1989) appear to have lingered “insularly” in south-east Europe and to have preserved their identity for longer or shorter times, before being assimilated by more numerous populations.⁶ Here are only a few examples of proved persistence:

(a) Archaeological finds prove that Gepidic communities still existed in the area of the former kingdom of the Gepids several centuries after the destruction of that polity (cf. Kiss, 1987). As for post-567 events, according to Ostrogorsky (1969, p. 102), in the year 626 “the Avar Khan and his hordes of Avars, Slavs, Bulgars and Gepids appeared before Constantinople and besieged the city by land and sea.”

(b) In 715, the “Gothogreeks” (that is, Hellenized Ostrogoths) in the Byzantine province of Opsikion are known to have been participants in the events that led to the enthronement of Theodosius III (cf. Ostrogorsky, 1969, pp. 154–155).

³ I counted nine centuries, from 3rd BC to 6th AD, whereas other authors took into consideration a shorter period. For instance, in István Bóna’s opinion (as quoted in Curta, 2001, p. 204, footnote 29), the year 568 marked the end of the ‘almost 600 years’ rule by successive Germanic tribes in the Carpathian basin.”

⁴ In presenting the important amount of Slavic loans in Romanian as resulting from “the coexistence of the Roman and Sl[avic] speaking population for several centuries”, Shevelov makes the following statement (1964, p. 160): “This was a typical case of coterritorial languages, not just contiguous.” Although the effects are not as spectacular as the ones of the Roman-Slavic contact (as viewed by Shevelov), we should interpret Old Germanisms preserved in Romanian and in other languages of East-Southeast-Central Europe also as resulting from situations of “coterritorial languages”.

⁵ I refer to the historically well attested migrations such as the ones that eventually led to the total assimilation of the Goths in Spain, the Vandals in North Africa and the Langobards in Italy.

⁶ Gamillscheg (1935, p. 240) – in following the vision of Diclescu (1922) – presents a ninth-century situation as follows: “In jener Zeit ist von den Gepiden nicht mehr die Rede. Sie sind mit den Romanen zu einem Volk, den *Wlachen*, *Vlachoi*, verschmolzen”.

(c) Paulus Diaconus (*Historia Langobardorum*, I, 27) mentioned that, in his own time (around 790), there were Gepids still living in their old Middle-Danube homeland, “under the harsh rule of the Huns” (that is, of the Avars).

(d) Gothic was still used as a church language in Tomis (today’s Constanța, Romania) in the 9th century, as mentioned by a contemporary Frankish monk, Walafrid Strabo (cf. Bennett, 1980, p. 19).⁷

In the paragraphs below I will present and discuss more concrete textual references to the earliest Germanic moves within Southeast Europe. I will begin by mentioning what was most probably the earliest written attestation of a Germanic group in south-east Europe. The text I refer to was presented (in 2012) by Alexandru Avram as a “decree” inscribed in stone by late-third-century BC inhabitants of the Greek colony of Histria, on the Black-Sea coast of today’s Romania. The inscription (dated to the period between 220 and 200 BC) mentions a group of mounted archers hired by the notables of Histria. The mercenaries, whose leader was one Ates, belonged to the tribe of the Skiri, as we can see in the following fragment of the epigraphic document under discussion:

...συγκεκ[λειμέν]ων τε τῶμ πολιτῶν δ[ιαπο]-
σταλεις π[άλ]ιν δια πολεμίας πρὸς Ατην [και τοὺς]
Σκίρους...

It so happens that among the earliest attested Germanics, the Skiri⁸ were the ones whose ethnic name is quite transparently Germanic, since it can be referred to words such as Gothic *skeirs* ‘clear’ (cf. Köbler, 1989, s.v. *skeirs*) and English *sheer* (< Old English *scīr*) ‘bright, fine, unmixed’ (cf. Hoad, 1993, s.v. *sheer*). Specialists drew the conclusion that the ethnonym *Skiri* (probably a self-designation that meant “Pure Ones”) indicated Germanics of unmixed race, unlike the Bastarni (see below).⁹

⁷ In Constantinople (Istanbul), as late as the sixteenth-century, Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq had the chance to record a whole glossary of “Crimean Gothic”, his informant being a Crimean Greek (cf. Stearns, 1989).

⁸ It is worth mentioning that Odovacar – who became an “Italian king” and practically put an end to the Western Roman Empire in 476 – belonged to a “Scirian royal clan” (Wolfram, 1988, p. 188). Almost eight centuries separated Ates of Histria from Odovacar of Rome.

⁹ According to the Reallexikon (Hoops et al., 1976, p. 88, where several other specialists are quoted), it appears that there is an etymological relationship between the (now international) common noun *bastard* and the ethnonym *Bastarnae*, the latter being thus in itself an indicator of mixed-race, in contrast with the “purity” indicated by the ethnonym *Skiri*.

Several decades after the Histrian inscription, Polybios – a cultured Greek who had many things to engage him in Rome – heard about an attack of the Bastarni (instigated by the Macedonians) against the Dardanians, as related in the following fragment (my translation after the Piatkovski edition of Polybios, XXVI, 9):

At the same time [as the delegation from Rhodes, in 177 BC], there arrived in Rome the Dardanians who wanted to signal to the Senate the appearance of the Bastarnae, whose number, force and warlike potential worried them profoundly; the Dardanians also informed the Senate of the alliance concluded by [King] Perseus with the Galatians.

It is not clear whether Polybios – like other Greeks and Romans of his time – wrongly considered the Bastarni to be Galatians (that is, Celts), or whether he simply referred to another strategic alliance concluded by the Macedonian king in the same period. Anyway, Polybios's report clearly indicates that the Bastarni had already become a considerable military-political factor, which already threatened the area of Roman interest.

It was also in the second century BC that Bastarnic incursions disturbed not only the Dardanians, but also the Thracians south of the Danube as well as the Dacians and Getians north of the same river. One aspect of that conflict situation is mentioned by Trogus Pompeius (as quoted in Murgescu, 2001, p. 37 – my translation):

The Dacians are also a branch of the Getae [...]. During the reign of Oroles they fought without success against the Bastarnae; therefore, as punishment [...], they were forced, at the king's command, to sleep with their heads in the place of their feet and to do to their wives services which the latter would usually do to their husbands. The punishment was removed only when, by their bravery, they wiped out the shame which they had brought upon themselves in the aforesaid war.

Old Germanic issues of the West were first discussed by Caesar, who – especially in his *De bello Gallico*, I, 2 (cf. Caesar, 1960) – described the way of life and the warlike potential of first-century-BC *Suebi*; according to Caesar, the *Suebi* of his time were dominant among the *Germani*. As for facts about south-eastern Europe in the *Kaiserzeit*, it was Tacitus who, towards the end of the first century, first presented the *Peucini* (who lived in the area of the Danube Delta) and the *Bastarnae* of the Carpathian-Danubian area as being “like Germans”. Nevertheless, the Old Germanics known under the two above-mentioned names were not at all “pure” and “unmixed”, as we can see in the following fragment from chapter 46 of Tacitus's *De origine et situ Germanorum* (generally known now as *Germania* – cf. Tacitus, 1960):

The Peucini [...], who are sometimes called the Bastarnae, in language, social habits, mode of settlement and dwelling are like Germans [*sermone, cultu, sede ac domiciliis ut Germani agunt*]. They are a squalid and slovenly people; the features of their nobles get something of the Sarmatian ugliness from intermarriage [*conubiis mixtis*].

It was not only “ugliness”, but also skill in horsemanship that “East Germanics” – from the Skiri of Histria to the Vandals and the Goths of later times – must have acquired by their close contacts with Sarmatians and other Skythoid populations of the steppes.

Since the earliest Germanics who moved south-east – from the Elbe to the Black Sea – can be said to have been of a Suebic type, certain pieces of information provided by Caesar and Tacitus about the *Suebi* of their own times, are worthy of consideration. Here is, for example, a fragment from Tacitus’s *Germania*, 38:

We must come now to speak of the Suebi, who do not [...] constitute a single nation [*non una gens*]. They actually occupy more than half Germany, and are divided into a number of distinct tribes under distinct names, though all generically are called Suebi. It is the special characteristic of this nation to comb the hair sideways and fasten it below with a knot [*insigne gentis obliquare crinem nodoque substringere*]. This distinguishes the Suebi from the rest of the Germans; this, among the Suebi, distinguishes the freeman from the slave.

In this case the Roman historian’s observations perfectly correspond to plastic representations. For instance, in Ramage and Ramage (2001, p. 199) there is a description of the Germanics who were represented on a monument still standing in southeastern Romania:

One of these [rectangular reliefs of Tropaeum Traiani] [...] shows a Roman soldier with armor, helmet, shield and sword, attacking two bearded Dacians who wear baggy trousers. The seated man must be a German mercenary soldier, as we can tell by the knot of hair tied at the side of his head.

A more precise interpretation of the same relief – with reference to another famous monument (Trajan’s Column in Rome), and to a very early attestation of Old Germanic self-consciousness – is to be found in the *Reallexikon* (Hoops et al., 1976, p. 89, s.v. *Bastarnen*):

Wenn die Deutungen einzelner Figuren der Trajanussäule [...] und des Tropaeum Traiani bei Adamklisi (Dobrudscha) [...] als Bastarnen zu Recht besteht, wird man auf Grund ihres Swebenknoten [...] sagen, daß sie sich selbst den Sweben zugeordnet haben. [...] Der wichtigste Stamm der B[astarnen] waren die Peukiner [...]. Die Peukiner haben ihren Namen von der Deltainsel der Donau Peuke (Georginsinsel).

Ein Peukiner der Zeit nach Nero wird in einer Inschrift (CIL VI 4344) als *natione Germanus* bezeichnet.

I will not delve further into the Old Germanics of imperial Roman times since the historic deeds of Goths, Gepids, Vandals and Langobards are much better known, due to the abundant first-hand information we can find in the works of several important historians, the most notable being Ammianus Marcellinus and Procopius (see Ammianus Marcellinus, 1862 for the former; Procopius, 1916 and Procopius, 1972 for the latter). I will, however, give at least some sentences from Procopius's *Secret History* (18, 15–21), since they reflect the sixth-century vision of the most active Germanic tribal units of that time (my translation, after Procopius, 1972, p. 149):

Before this war [against the Goths in Italy], the rule of the Goths stretched from the lands of the Gauls to the borders of Dacia, where the city of Sirmium lies. When the Roman army arrived in Italy, the Galliae and a part of the country of the Veneti were occupied by the *Germanoi* [=Franks], while Sirmium and the lands around it by the *Gēpaides* [=Gepids]; but all those lands were totally devoid of inhabitants [...]: some were destroyed by the war, others by sickness and famine [...]. After Justinian's ascent to the throne, the *Hounoi* [=Avars], the *Sklavenoi* and the *Antai* would almost yearly attack the Illyrians and the whole of Thrace, from the Ionian Sea up to the borders of Byzantium...

From a Romanian perspective, situations and events of the 5th–8th centuries appear to be most significant, since it was the period during which the Vulgar Latin of Southeast Europe gradually became Romanian, and also since towards the end of the same period Romanian began to assimilate Slavic loans. Those loans certainly included a number of Old Germanic terms that had been borrowed earlier into “Common Slavic”.¹⁰

I also have sufficient reasons to pay special attention to contacts and situations that preceded the formation of Romanian identity by many centuries. Since I observe a principle that I usually formulate as “languages die – words

¹⁰ For instance, the Romanian term *scutar* ‘shepherd in charge of a sheepfold’ (from which *Scutaru* derived, as a common Romanian family name) is best explained as based on Old Slavic *skoto* ‘cattle’, which appears to be a borrowing from Gothic (according to Mańczak, as quoted in Birnbaum and Merrill, 1985, p. 59), or from some other Old Germanic language. Whereas Gothic had *skatts* ‘money’, Old Frisian had a semantically more archaic *schat*, which could mean either ‘cattle’ or ‘money’ – cf. Pfeifer et al. (2004), s.v. *Schatz*. Of the Slavic words of OGmc origin that were borrowed into early Romanian, worth mentioning are *cneaz*, a *dumi*, *gomon*, *ploscă*, *viteaz* and others.

survive”, I assume that Old Germanic loans in Southeast European languages can reflect not only direct contact, but also transmission through intermediaries. More concretely, one can hardly imagine any direct contact between speakers of “Skirian” and speakers of Romanian proper. But one can imagine borrowings from the languages spoken by Old Germanics such as the Skiri and the Bastarni into the local languages that were to represent the substratum of Romanian and of other languages spoken in Southeast Europe in late-ancient and medieval times. Also, one can discover that a number of Old Germanic terms borrowed into Late Vulgar Latin were perpetuated in both West and East Romance (see, for instance, *tubrucus* ‘bootleg’ and *tufa* ‘plume, tuft’, discussed in Gamillscheg, 1935, pp. 257–258).

Pre-Gothic Germanics of south-east Europe are worthy of study, also because their possible contributions (however indirect) to the stock of Old Germanic lexical matter preserved in non-Germanic languages of the areas under discussion have been generally neglected. From Diculescu (1922) to Rosetti (1986)¹¹ and Mihăescu (1993),¹² the focus of the scholars who had things to say about Old Germanic loans was rather exclusively on Goths and Gepids. It was Gamillscheg who added the language of the Langobards as a possible source of Old Germanic loans in Romanian (1935, pp. 260–263).

So far I have checked and re-checked the specific Old Germanic features of over 70 Romanian words, of which the list below presents the ones most acceptable as Old Germanic loans:

ateia ‘to dress up, to adorn’; *ban* ‘a boyar of high rank’; *a bănui* ‘to suspect’; *bănat* ‘accusation, trouble’; *bântui* ‘to punish, to haunt’; *bardă* ‘broad axe’; *boartă* ‘a freshwater fish’; *bordei* ‘pit house, booth’; *borț* ‘womb of a pregnant woman’; *brândușă* ‘crocus (or several other plants with sword-like leaves)’; *brusture* ‘burdock’; *budă* ‘seasonal shelter in the woods’; *bumb* ‘button’; *bundă* ‘sleeveless coat’; *burtă* ‘belly’; *căina* ‘to lament, to wail’; *cioareci* ‘peasant’s trousers

¹¹ Although Rosetti remained skeptical about possibilities of proving Old Germanic origins for Romanian words, he included a special chapter on that issue in his *Istoria limbii române* (1986, pp. 220–224).

¹² « Les éléments vieux germaniques du roumain tirent leur origine du gothique et du gépidique. [...] Comme on peut constater, ces quelques éléments vieux germaniques reflètent le contact entre les autochtones et les populations germaniques allogènes entrées en Dacie après que les Romains aient cédé cette province aux Goths. Les termes respectifs évoquent soit des ustensiles de ménage, des pièces vestimentaires ou des moyens de transport, soit l’organisation sociale ou des êtres mythiques. » (Mihăescu, 1993, p. 322)

(of homespun cloth); *ciuf* (tuf) 'tuft of hair or feathers'; *căulă* 'small raft (for fishing), float (for fishing nets)'; *cocon* 'child (of noble descent)'; *coti(u)gă* 'cart, forepart of a plough'; *cotingan* 'youth, lad'; *cotropi* 'to invade'; *fară* 'kin, sib, lot'; *filmă* 'an evil fairy' (in Banat); *gard* 'fence, weir, garden'; *gata* 'ready' (plus the verbs *găta* and *găti* 'to finish, to prepare, to cook'); *găman* 'glutton, cowherd'; *grind* 'sand bank, ridge, hill'; *ghiborț* 'a freshwater fish'; *grindei* 'a piece of the plough'; *grindel* 'a freshwater fish'; *grundet* 'a freshwater fish'; *grunz* 'lump, clod'; *hânsă* 'part (of a whole)'; *hânsar* '(medieval) hired horseman that fought only for boot, ploughman'; *holm* 'steep bank, hill'; *holtei* 'bachelor'; *hultui* 'to graft' (in Moldavia); *huscă* 'salt obtained by evaporation'; *însăila* 'to tack, to stitch'; *julfă* 'ritual cake (containing a paste of crushed hemp seeds)'; *murg* 'dark bay (horse)'; *nasture* 'button'; *plug* 'plough'; *pungă* 'purse, pouch'; *rapăn* 'scurf'; *rânc* (*râncaci*, *râncău*) 'half-castrated (ox or horse), sterile man'; *râncă* 'bull's pizzle, horse's penis, whip, a fish'; *rânciog* 'piece of a plough'; *rând* 'row'; *rudă* 'pole'; *scradă* 'a sort of ever-green mountain grass'; *scrânciob* 'swing'; *scruntar* 'sandy or stony ground'; *slin* 'filth (on the skin)'; *smalt* 'enamel'; *smicea* 'pointed end, shoot (of a fruit tree), leaf of grass'; *smidă* 'thicket, hail, lightning'; *sprințar* 'playful, skittish, fickle'; *stei* 'rock, slab'; *sturlubatic* 'giddy, thoughtless'; *stărnut* 'a horse with a blaze'; *stingh(i)e* 'lath, pole'; *știmă* 'pixy, ghost'; *tală* 'noisy chat'; *targă* 'stretcher'; *teafăr* 'sane, wholesome'; *troacă* (*treucă*) 'trough'; *tufă* 'bush, shrub, tuft'; *tureac* (pl. *tureci*) 'bootleg'; *viscol* 'snow storm, blizzard'.¹³

Many of those words are given with "unknown etymology" in dictionaries, and many are said to have been borrowed from languages spoken by neighboring peoples.¹⁴ But all of them can in fact be interpreted as Old Germanic loans, as demonstrated either by distinguished predecessors (Diculescu, Gamillscheg, Mihăescu, etc.), or by the present author.

I will not give, again, etymological details for all of them here. What I can say, briefly, is that many of the words above, by their forms and meanings, appear to reflect one or another of the historical turns and stages presented

¹³ The words on the list show respectable age (on Romanian soil) not only on account of their forms and meanings, but also on account of the fact that most of them produced whole series of proper names in Romanian, an aspect which I cannot discuss within the limits of this article.

¹⁴ The fact is that an important number of the Romanian words given on the list above (for instance, *ban*, *budă*, *bundă*, *fară*, *gard*, *gata*, *holm*, *plug*, *rând*, *sprințar*, *tufă* and *tureac*) do have clear correspondents in one or several of the neighboring languages; and in many such cases it is difficult to establish how and when those words (of ultimately Germanic origins) entered the languages under discussion.

in the historical list in this article. In regard to the words in the list above, one simple thing to observe is whether or not their shapes indicate very old age on Romanian soil. For instance, just as in inherited Latin words, such as Rmn *blând*, *lână* and *scândură*, in Old Germanisms of Romanian, such as *hânsă*, *râncă* and *scrânciob* (cf. Goth *hansa*, OHGerm *ranca* and *scranc*, respectively) a pre-Romanian *án* changed into *æn* (and subsequently into *in*, now written *în* or *ân*). In Ivănescu's *Istoria limbii române* (1980, p. 202) *án* > *æn* appears as first on the list of phonetic changes that marked the earliest stage of Romanian. As for chronology proper, it is quite obvious that the change under discussion functioned in a period that preceded the assimilation of early Slavic loans (ca. seventh-eighth centuries), since Rmn *hrană* and *rană* show no sign of it.

Not only the form, but also the meanings of Rmn *tală* are significant for this discussion, especially since the shift from 'talk' to 'uproar' and 'noisy crowd' appears to reflect the very perception of Germanics by non-Germanics.¹⁵ I take into consideration that Old Germanic loans that refer to *Streit und Lärm* appear to be linked to the very essence of the *Romania-Germania* contact: "Die Wörter spiegeln das normale Verhältnis zwischen Romanen und Germanen innerhalb des Imperiums wieder." I must observe, however, that similar semantic shifts could occur outside the Empire too. An illustrative case in that respect is Russian *gómon* 'uproar' (corresponding to Czech *homon* and Polish *gomon* 'quarrel, uproar'), from which the Russian verb *gomonit'* 'to shout, to make noise' derived. As indicated by Vasmer (Фасмер, 1986, s.v. *гомон*), most specialists considered that *gomon* reflects an "old borrowing from Germanic" and that it should be referred to Old Icelandic *gaman* and to English *game* (cf. Old Norse *gaman* 'freude, spass, wollust', as given in de Vries, 1961, and Old English *gamen* 'game, pleasure, mirth, sport, pastime', as an entry of Bosworth, 1983). True enough, the phonetic shift *a* > *o* is a feature that indicates the old age of *gomon* on Slavic soil, and its meanings (with a "semantic degradation" though) can be said to have developed from the original meanings of Germanic words such as the ones given by Vasmer. However, the existence of an obsolete-dialectal Romanian noun *gomón*, meaning both 'quarrel' and 'gathering, assembly' may change the perspective a little, especially since Romanian also has a verbal derivative, *a gomonî*, which does not mean 'to make noise', but 'to deliberate, to confer, to take counsel with, to put heads together' (cf. Ciorănescu, 2001,

¹⁵ See Poruciuc (1999, p. 186) on the "ironic filter" as producer of contact-induced semantic shifts.

s.v. *gomon*). No doubt, the vowels of Rmn *gomon* and *a gomoni* indicate borrowing from Slavic, but the meanings of the Romanian verb suggest a correction of the etymological interpretation of Slavic *gomon* itself. Namely, rather than assuming Old Germanic source-words such as Old Norse *gaman*, which referred to merriment and entertainment, we should see Slavic *gomon* rather as based on Gothic *gaman* (that is, on a Gothic prefixed derivative *ga-man*), which meant, on the one hand, 'Mitmensch, Teilnehmer, Genosse', on the other hand 'Gemeinschaft, Genossenschaft' (as presented in Köbler, 1989, s.v. *gaman*). It appears that when the early Romanians received the Slavic word from which Rmn *a gomoni* derived, the Slavs still used that word with "positive" meanings, which recall the ones of Gothic *gaman*. If the Germanic loan *gomon* suffered "semantic degradation", it was most probably due to the fact that, as Tacitus observed as early as the first century, Germanic gatherings did produce a lot of noise,¹⁶ which may have annoyed non-Germanic ears.

Although I have made use of quite limited illustrative material, I consider that the examples above do reflect enough of the complexity of Germanic-Slavic-Romance contacts, which in practice marked the passage from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Certainly, phonetic changes and semantic shifts cannot indicate precise moments of history; but they can be referred to periods and to chronological stratifications. I firmly believe that research on Old Germanic loans from an interdisciplinary perspective (history-archaeology-linguistics) can yield results of much interest for fields such as Romanic, Slavic and Germanic studies in general, as well as for Balkan or Southeast-European studies in particular.

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¹⁶ "If a proposal displeases them, the people roar out in dissent; if they approve, they clash their spears." (Tacitus, *Germania*, 11)

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Źródła danych do ustalenia chronologii pożyczek starogermańskich w języku rumuńskim i w innych językach Europy południowo-wschodniej

Artykuł przygotowano w oparciu o dane zamieszczone w materiałach do referatu na konferencję „International Conference on Balkan Linguistics” (6–7 maja 2013, Toruń, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika); porządek poszczególnych podsekcji i paragrafów artykułu jest zatem zgodny ze strukturą tej prezentacji. Część pierwsza zawiera chronologiczne przedstawienie istotnych materiałów archeologiczno-historycznych na temat działań o charakterze militarno-politycznym oraz zdobyczy ludów starogermańskich w Europie południowo-wschodniej w okresie od III w. p.n.e. do VI w. n.e. W dalszej części przytoczono i krótko skomentowano uporządkowane chronologicznie konkretne dowody językowe. Na końcu znajduje się propozycja interdyscyplinarnego podejścia do tematu, oparta głównie na odniesieniu cech językowych do odpowiednich etapów historii i ewolucji językowej.

Słowa kluczowe: chronologia; ludy starogermańskie; południowo-wschodnia Europa; kontakty językowe; asymilacje; zapożyczenia; zmiany semantyczne

Clues to the Chronology of Old Germanic Loans in Romanian and in Other South-East European Languages

The present article is directly based on the handout of the talk this author gave at the International Conference on Balkan Linguistics (6–7 May, 2013, Toruń, Nicolaus Copernicus University); therefore the subchapters and paragraphs observe the arrangement of the materials included in that handout. The first part contains a chronological table that reflects mainstream archaeological-historical information regarding the history of military-political actions and achievements of the Old Germanic populations in south-east Europe between the 3rd century BC and the 6th century of our era. Then concrete textual proofs follow, which are chronologically arranged and briefly commented upon. Finally, the author proposes interdisciplinary approaches based mainly on reference of linguistic features to historical stages and evolutions.

Keywords: chronology; Old Germanic populations; south-east Europe; contact and assimilation; loans; phonetic changes; semantic shifts

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