

Ioan Piuaru-Molnar, *Deutsch-Walachische Sprachlehre, Gramatică germano-română*, Viena, 1788, vol. I (605 p.), vol. II (559 p.), Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 2018.

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It is well-known that culture truly develops only as a result of conjugated, linked efforts; culture is not the follow up of a fragmented struggle—be it the individual struggle of many a scientist, prestigious and prodigious in their respective fields. This piece of truth ought to be not only reiterated, but reinforced by action and facts, such as the unceasing putting forth of past intellectual achievements of the society in order to be (re)analysed by a judgment refined by perpetual intellectual acquisitions. One thus agrees that critical editions of texts are crucial to one’s comprehension concerning the dynamics of a culture, in its historicity. To possess a deep knowledge of a certain text, of its intrinsic and adjacent values, of its importance on multiple levels—mediated by very well constructed critical text editions—grants trustworthy premises for a research that would combine monographic knowledge and synthetic comprehension.

The editorial effort is all the more necessary when the text material is represented by works that, as those of Ion Piuaru-Molnar, have given, at the time of their writing, full measure of humanity’s good quality.

Although Ioan Piuaru-Molnar is often mentioned in various histories of the Romanian literary language, in chapters covering issues of philology, grammar, grammar books’ writing history, and cultural history, the whole and profound content of his works is rather lesser-known. Therefore, the value and importance of this Transylvanian scholar’s activity in the development of the Romanian culture, in general, are still insufficiently comprehended—a state of fact that’s fairly improved with the publishing of this critical edition of Ioan Piuaru-Molnar’s grammar from 1788.

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Ioan Piuaru-Molnar’s *Deutsch-Walachische Sprachlehre*, Viena, 1788, is a complex grammar whereby the conception and arrangement of its content, and its purpose. The latter is as practical as it can be: to provide the society of various agents of German language (clerks, merchants and dealers, travelers, etc.) who were interacting with Romanians, with an instrument that would facilitate communication between the two linguistically different categories of people, and that could also function as a handbook for acquiring Romanian. And the goal itself imposed some elements of conception and structure upon the grammar. This is why Ioan Piuaru-Molnar’s *Deutsch-Walachische Sprachlehre* is an *explained grammar*, and is completed by some sort of conversation and writing manual that would satisfy the needs of its main intended reader.

First, there is the part dedicated to *phonetics and orthography*. It’s the section in which one can clearly see the utilitarian aspect of the book. Ioan Piuaru-Molnar uses German in explaining the Romanian grammar, but employs—often and understandably—Romanian words, which he writes with the current Cyrillic letters and immediately transcribes with Latin letters, to the benefit of the German reader. Since the transcription concerns the latter, not the Romanian mind, it is executed according to the rules that result from the phonetics of the German language. Thus, the German reader is provided with a guide towards a correct reading of the Romanian words, and gains access to the Romanian pronunciation, in general.

The grammatical component comprises a section of *morphology*, and one of *syntax*. Both explain the grammatical system of the Romanian language,

and offer details about the usual grammatical classes and their categories. The author affords thorough attention to various problems that might bother the German speaker when confronted with Romanian (issues related to gender, number, nominal declension and verbal conjugation, their “valets”, etc.), and to the right principles in forming, recognizing and using of the parts of speech, phrases, sentences and clauses.

In presenting the *lexical-semantic* level, the author applies the method of the lexical fields – an option justified by the intention to ease the foreigner’s effort of entering the lexical universe of the Romanian language. Although it is seldom and exceptionally used in the case of the Indo-European languages, this method is common in the case of other language (especially Asiatic, and from Middle East), and is quite fruitful. In this way, when trying to appropriate new lexical material to one self, one does not start from complete ignorance—namely from a state affairs in which all that the reader can perceive are some sound waves that must be learned together with their general and specific meanings—, but from something that he/she already knows, namely from common concepts grouped together in lexical fields that are to be found in the majority of languages (with, of course, the shades of extension, meaning, usage and contextual values that differentiate them from language to another).

All the above indicates, on one hand, Ioan Piuaru-Molnar’s endeavor to structure his grammar according to the concrete needs he anticipates in its readers, and, on the other hand, the agreement with a supple conception, that serves the main purpose of the book. We concede that the efficiency of a paradigm as such is as high as it can be, excelling other types of handbooks for learning a foreign language.

However, the Transylvanian scholar’s book aims to accomplish also something else. It is a temptation every author is presented with, be their writing designed to teach a foreigner a language, or composed for the native speaker... At least from Dimitrie Cantemir on, but mostly during the age of the Transylvanian School, the polyglot scholars have always complained about the shortage of the Romanian language. In this situation—perfectly normal with any unpracticed language, one that lacks an elaborated aspect and which has not yet gone through a process that would have transformed

it into a language “lămurită și adusă la regulile gramaticești, apoi și înmulțită cu cuvinte obicinuite la învățături, care nu se află la vorba de obște” ([Engl.: “refined and brought to grammatical rules, then enriched with words proper to sciences, that are absent from the common language”], Ion Budai-Deleanu)—, any Romanian polyglot well acquainted with several prestigious cultures and highly developed languages feels the inevitable and irresistible need to standardize the Romanian language. Therefore, besides the above-mentioned purpose, *Deutsch-Walachische Sprachlehre* is also a concretization of its author’s struggle to standardize the Romanian language, to fit it up with means of expression proper to various and complex needs of communication. These are characteristics shared by languages that has developed an aspect that is in the position to express higher and more complex scientific and cultural contents.

We believe that all these elements can highlight the value of Ioan Piuaru-Molnar’s grammar. First, he offers a grammar that has the attributes of correctness in conception and construction; of equilibrium regarding its format and the difficulties its reader is presented with; of efficiency concerning its purposes and gains. Second, the objectives of the book and the solutions applied in order to achieve these objectives underline the fact that the author understands that a durable edifice requires a solid foundation, as well as constant and valuable conjugated efforts, inside and around the frame of a given culture—no matter how incipient and poor it be.

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The editors Ana-Maria Minuț and Ion Lihaciu understand how important a critical edition is for the study of a language, and thus assumed the difficult task of providing the Romanian philology with a much-needed edition of Ioan Piuaru-Molnar’s *Deutsch-Walachische Sprachlehre*. Due to this grammar’s dimensions and complexity, a critical edition of it had to satisfy several demands.

First, because of the text’s length (540 p., in Kurzbeke edition, Vienna, 1788), the present critical edition had to be structured in two volumes, which comprise the substance of the *princeps* edition as follows: the 1st volume: *Partea I. Despre ortografie* and a fragment of *Partea a II-a. Cercetarea cuvintelor (Etymologia)*; the 2nd volume: the rest of *Etymologia*, *Partea a III-a. Despre sintaxă, Culegere de cuvinte*

românești și germane, Niște dialoguri, pentru a cuvînta despre multe feliuri de stări înainte, Niște povestiri, Stil trebnicesc, cărți și alte însemnări aseamînea and *Indice de cuvinte germane*. The original text's facsimiles are presented on the left-hand page of the edited version, each edited page rigorously following the structure and the content of the original page, so that the researcher can easily take in both states of the book, in order to carry on their own studies—beyond what the present edition offers, as a result of an already remarkable analytical effort.

Then, since it is a handbook for learning Romanian through German, with a terminology, explanations, and lexical and discursive equivalents in German (and, with the first-mentioned component, also in Latin), the editors had to translate these parts, but also to preserve the foreign linguistic code in two cases. First, when they dealt with instances of Latin terminology (I, p. 10, 72). This editorial decision implicitly highlights a current concern in the epoch, to which Iona Piuaru-Molnar adheres, namely to impose in the science of language a modern and unitary terminology, whose correctness and clarity is guaranteed by Latin. The second situation that demanded the preservation of German was given by the presence of the German equivalents of Romanian words and various pieces of discourse; they were preserved as such, with the occasional corrections when the editors detected mistakes concerning the form of German words in the original text. These interventions, however, are never tacit, but marked in the text, and explained in the footnotes. On the other hand, the emendation of semantical inaccuracies is never made in the text itself, but, again, in the footnotes.

The Romanian component of the grammar appears in a double hypostasis: as the graphic expression of the grammatical, lexical and discursive elements that are presented in text—written with Cyrillic letters; and as the acoustic image of these elements (with the exception of the short stories from *Niște povestiri*, and the letters from *Stil trebnicesc, cărți și alte însemnări aseamînea*)—written with Latin letters and according to the German orthography, in order to “guide, to some extent” the German reader in pronouncing Romanian (see *Vorrede/Prefață*, p. 85). The authors of the edition do not intervene substantially in the case of the second hypostasis, but confine their actions to put

Ioan Piuaru-Molnar's “phonetical transcriptions” between square brackets, while letting untouched the correspondences (e.g., Rom.Cyr. **ш** /ʃ/ – Germ. [sch] /ʃ/; Rom.Cyr. **ц** /ts/ – Germ. [z] /ts/; Rom.Cyr. **ѣ** /i/ – **ä**; etc.) created by the Transylvanian scholar. In this situation, this is the only pertinent and useful editorial solution, because it succeeds in conveying the conception of the book, as well as the coherence of the orthographic system designed and implicitly proposed by Molnar.

The sequences written in Romanian with Cyrillic letters are now transcribed, in the interpretative manner, using Latin letters and according to the present philological practice, and to the characteristics of the text itself (characteristics upon which the author insists sometimes). Thus, the editors construct and use an apparatus and a system of transcription that are particular to this text, and which serve it best, since the text is seen as the intellectual product of a certain context, with justifications and purposes that might elude someone's observation, if the editorial process is to content itself with the blind applying of common editorial rules, be them correct, in general, and of venerable age. The option of rendering the diphthong /ie/ through an *e* with an *ison*, like in the original text (I, p. 14) is ingenious; like the one of marking through *i* what seems to be a phenomenon of regional phonetics that covers in fact the existence of the deep structure “pronoun + the (popular) form –*i* of the verb *a fi* [Engl.: to be]” (I, p. 15), in, e.g., „**мѣнѣнк кѣнд ми фoаме** / *mănînc cînd mî foame* [me'nănk kănd mi foame]. *Ich esse wenn ich hungrig bin.*” [Engl.: I eat when I am hungry] (II, p. 371) (cf. however II, p. 229, where the ingenious graphic solution is not used); etc.

Such editorial answers to various difficulties raised by the text are thoroughly documented in *Studiu introductiv* (I, p. 7–70), and again, briefly, in *Notă asupra ediției* (I, p. 71–73). But besides these explanations, the introductory study contains some pieces of information that are historically and linguistically important.

Ana-Maria Minuț și Ion Lihaciu bring the reader's attention to the general frame within which, beginning with the middle of the 18th century, the actions and deeds of many Transylvanian intellectuals came as the expression of their ambition to generate and sustain a current of emancipation and towards the modernization of the society, for the

benefit of the Romanian people. This process had to include the Romanian language as well, since language represented both a refining instrument and, concurrently, a mirror of the spiritual essence of the nation, and also the most effective means of affirming the nation's prestige. These are, in fact, attitudes and deeds shared by the entire Europe during the Illuminist era—a Europe packed with ideas that, passing over the dispute concerning the origin and nature of languages, build up (through John Locke, at the end of the 17th century already, James Harris, or Johann Herder) a linguistic theory that endorses not so much the language itself, as the human condition (and the condition of the nation) reflected in/through language. With regard to the synchronization of many a European humanist's endeavours concerning identity and language, Minuț and Lihaciu note (I, p. 11–12; observe the demonstration, *passim*) that Ioan Piuaru-Molnar's grammar follows not only the model of Samuil Micu and Gheorghe Șincai's Romanian grammar, *Elementa linguae daco-romane sive valachicae*, Vienna, 1780, but also the example of some foreign grammar-handbooks, with German functioning as a support in the process of language acquisition; these are J.R. des Pepliers' *Nouvelle et parfaite grammaire royale française et allemande. Neue und vollständige königliche französische Grammatik...*, and Hilmar Curas' *Erleichterte und durch lange Erfahrung verbesserte französische Grammatik*—two books that provide the Romanian scholar with options regarding the chapters' structure, the lexical correspondences in German, the most effective form of grammatical explanations, commentaries and recommendations (I, p. 11–12).

Of equal significance—if one is to grasp the scope of the epoch's cultural and linguistic preoccupation and enthusiasm, and to comprehend the worth of Ioan Piuaru-Molnar's grammar—is the fact that *Deutsch-Walachische Sprachlehre* was

republished in 1810 and 1823, in Sibiu; that both the *princeps* edition and the other two enjoyed good reviews in papers from Vienna and Jena (I, p. 67); finally, that this grammar became a source of information and model for other works of linguistic nature and books aiming at standardizing or teaching the Romanian language (I, p. 20, 22, etc.; 67–68).

Further on in their study, the editors describe and analyse the content of the book (cf. various explanatory segments that mirror the structure of the original text: *Despre ortografie*, I, p. 12–19; *Despre cercetarea cuvintelor (Etymologia)*, I, p. 19–42; *Despre sintaxă*, I, p. 42–47; *Culegere de cuvinte românești și germane*, I, p. 47–61), and make excellent observations that highlight the potential normative force (thus relevant to the construction of the modern aspect of the literary Romanian) of this—mainly—instrument for teaching a foreign language, who's public would not give, after all, their verdict about its regularity, correctness, efficiency and elaborate character. This perspective upon Molnar's handbook is facilitated by the editors' frequent and minute comparisons between *Deutsch-Walachische Sprachlehre* and Micu and Șincai's grammar from 1780.

Finally, we notice that—observing current philological habitudes and exigencies—the editors examined the three editions of Ioan Piuaru-Molnar's *Deutsch-Walachische Sprachlehre*; and, with the *princeps* edition as their basic text, they recorded, as footnotes, the inherent and numerous, yet quite insignificant, differences of form and content among the three.

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Making use of their variate and profound knowledge of philology, diachronic and synchronic linguistics, and cultural history, the editors of Ioan Piuaru-Molnar's *Deutsch-Walachische Sprachlehre* transformed their effort into an editorial product that now stands as an excellent scientific asset.