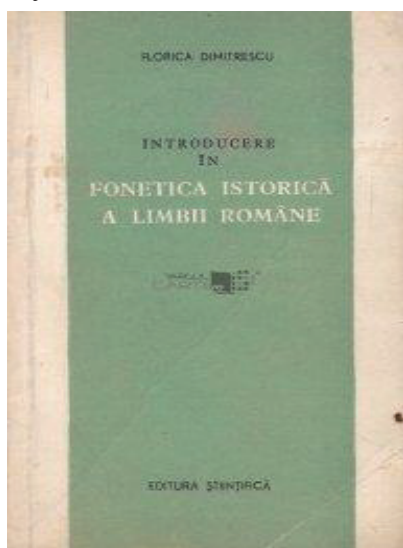


FLORICA DIMITRESCU, 95 years

One of the greatest linguists of this country celebrated her birthday on April 4th this year, reaching the venerable age of 95. She has covered the Romanian linguistic scene for more than 70 years, both through the richness and strength of her scientific works, as well as through the effects in time of her professorial contribution to the Department of the History of the Romanian Language at the University of Bucharest.

1. FLORICA DIMITRESCU – THE PROFESSOR

I met Professor Florica Dimitrescu in my first year of college, in the Student Scientific Circle, in which she often participated, together with professors Jacques Byck and Alexandru Niculescu, and from the third year (1961–62) she was my



teacher in the annual History of the Romanian Language course. She was part of the wonderful group of teachers who, in an uncertain and oppressive age, contributed to making our university youth years, full of scientific and intellectual joys. An extraordinary memory dates from those times: around the year 2000, she gave me back a thesis from June 1962, representing my paper from the History of the Romanian language exam, which was entitled “The History of the Romanian Personal Pronoun”, kept by the teacher as a sign of the pleasure she took in evaluating it. Reading it forty years later, I was impressed by both the

descriptive and theoretical information, proving that, at that time, students were provided with such modern and interesting knowledge. *The History of the Romanian Language* coursebook (1978, EDP, 372 pp.), a collective work of the Department of History of the Romanian Language, is coordinated by Florica Dimitrescu, who, as the head of the History of the Romanian Language course, is responsible for the design, structure and content of the textbook. The book incorporates two previous works by Florica Dimitrescu, *Introduction to the Historical Phonetics of the Romanian Language* (Editura Științifică, 1967) and *Introduction to the Historical Morphosyntax of the Romanian Language* (Tipografia Universității din București, 1974). An exceptional synthesis of the history of the Romanian language (it includes fundamental data on the origin of the Romanian language, on its evolution from Latin to Romanian, as well as the description of the fundamental components of the history of the old language, especially of the 16th century), the book from 1978 (“the yellow book”, as the students used to call it) functioned for decades as a reference

work for Bucharest and Cluj philology students, but also for Romanian and foreign linguists interested in the history of the Romanian language.

2. FLORICA DIMITRESCU – THE LINGUIST

Closely examining the author's preferred research directions, what shocks in the first place are the two **temporally opposite** directions regarding the analysis material (the Romanian of the 16th century vs the Romanian of our days), but also as opposite moments of the author's existence (the beginning of her career vs the second part of the professional career).

2.1. The 16th century is investigated by the author both as a text editor (Florica Dimitrescu is the author of the excellent edition of Coresi's *Tetraevanghel*, Editura Academiei, 1963, applying, in the editing process, like her teachers J. Byck and Al. Rosetti, the transliteration method; together with Alexandru Niculescu, she



is the author of the work *Testi romani antichi*, Padua, 1970, the first collection of old Romanian texts intended for foreign countries), as well as analyzing and describing already edited old texts. The synthesis books presenting the ancient Romanian language are representative (*Introduction to the Historical Phonetics of the Romanian Language*, Editura Științifică, 1967; *Contributions to the History of the Ancient Romanian Language*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1973; *Introduction to the Morphosyntax of the Romanian Language*, Editura Universității din București, 1974), but also numerous detailed studies, such as: “The

Territorial Distribution of the Romanian Lexicon in the 16th Century”, 1973; “On the Relationship between Coresi’s *Tetraevanghel* and Radu’s Gospel from Mănăcești”, 1973; “Lexical Parallelism between two Sixteenth-century Texts”, [2011] 2014 etc.). ● Some studies, through the breadth of the text and the amount of work stored (see *Parallel Lexical Index. XVI Century*, 1973, 125 pp.), reach the dimensions and importance of a real book (see the parallel recording of 5000 words of the Romanian language from the 16th century), allowing highly relevant comparative lexical observations. ● A project of great scientific value in which Florica Dimitrescu committed herself body and soul was the elaboration, as author and coordinator, of the *Dictionary of the Romanian Language from the 16th Century*, a project that had reached completion, being submitted for printing to Editura Academiei Române. An unfortunate fate turned the manuscript into ashes, following a fire in one of the rooms of the Academy that stored the manuscript. The extensive presentation of the work advocates for the scope of the research and for the

irreparability of the loss produced, as well as the remaining 2-3 pages of the layout, both published by Florica Dimitrescu in 1973.

2.2. The other direction, **the lexicon of the current language**, largely focuses the author's scientific interest in the last five decades, with special concern for the investigation of the lexicon under various aspects (*infra*, 2.2.1), but also under the aspect of compiling dictionaries, the author coming up with the ingenious idea of the compilation of a dictionary of recent words, but also with the "labour" of its realization (*infra*, 2.2.2).

2.2.1. In the field of the **current lexicon**, the author approaches numerous directions, such as: word formation, composition and scholarly composition with prefixoids and suffixoids, acronyms and their history, onomastics, a lexicon of occupations, a chromatic lexicon, a gastronomic lexicon, a textile lexicon, a pandemic lexicon, terminologies (medical, biomedical, meteorological, astronautic), loans of various origins (English and American words, French and Italian Romance loans, words of Japanese origin), examining the phenomena as a whole, but also with many descriptive details. Here are some representative titles for each direction:



- **for word formation, prefixoids and suffixoids, various acronyms** ("Trends in Word Formation in the Current Romanian Language", [1970] 2018; "Brief History of an Acronym – DNA", 2003;

"From the Lexical Novelties of the Romanian Language; "The Harvest" from March 2016", [2017] 2018; "A New and Rare Suffixoid: **-șima**", 2000; "**Euro** – An Unfinished Portrait of the **euro-** Prefixoid", 2002; "Observations on the **mini-** Prefixoid", 1995; "Observations on the **tele-** Prefixoid", 1995; "Portrait of an Expanding Prefixoid: **ciber-**", [2016] 2018; "Specific Features of Composition in the Current Literary Romanian Language", 1995; "Aspects of Pseudoprefixation in the Current Literary Romanian Language", 1995; "Aspects of pseudosuffixing in Current Literary Romanian", 1995, etc.);

- **for synonymy** ("Considerations on New Synonyms in the Romanian Language", 2002-2003; "Aspects of Synonymy in Biomedical Language", 2005);

- **for terminologies** ("Notes on Astronautical Terminology in Romanian Language", 1995; "Observations on the Structure of Meteorological Bulletins", 1995; "A Disease – Many Names", 2004; "Etymological Considerations Regarding Biomedical Terminology", 2005);

• **for various semantic fields: the chromatic field** (“From Mihai Eminescu’s World of Colours”, [2016-2017] 2018; “About Colours and Much More. From the Current Colour Scheme”, 2002; “Turkish Origin Chromatic Terms in Romanian”, 2011; “Notes on Some Names from the Current Colour Scheme” 2011; “From the Current Colour Landscape”, 2018; “Recent Phrases Constructed with Chromatic Terms”, 2018), **the field of occupations/professions** (“About the Multiple Names of Professions in Current Romanian”, 2018; “Lexical Novelties in the Field of Professions”, 2019; “The Current Lexicon of Occupations”, 2022; “Male and Female Occupation Names in the Romanian Language from the 16th Century”), **the gastronomic field** (“Recent Italian Elements in the Romanian Gastronomic Lexicon”, 2007; “From the Semantics of Gastronomic Lexical Elements of Italian Origin in Current Romanian”, 2009; “Foreign Influences in Gastronomic Terminology”, 2019), **the field of textile fabrics** (“Names of Artificial Textiles in Romanian”, 1999; “Synthetic Textile Materials in Romanian”, 1999; “Linguistic Considerations on Textile Names in Romanian”, 2010; “An Etymological-semantic Perspective on Turkish Origin Romanian Elements in the Area of Textiles”, 2010; “Observations on Names of Fabrics, Clothing and Footwear, in Coresi’s *Tetraevanghel*”, [2011] 2014; “Reflections on Names of Fabrics, Clothing and Footwear, in the Text of *The Palia from Orăştie*”, [2010] 2014), **pandemic field** (with numerous articles and the extraordinary synthesis from the recent book dedicated to COVID and its “entourage”, Editura Academiei, 2022), but also other microsystems (of coin names, of the “butcher”, etc.);



• **for Romance and non-Romance loans** (“Romance Lexical Elements Recently Introduced into the Romanian Language”, 1985; “Recent Italian Elements in Romanian”, 1997, 1999; “Recent Japanese Elements in Romanian”, 2000-2001; “From the Life of Recent Words in Romanian: *paparazzo, tsunami*”, 2006; “Non-French Latin-Romance Elements in the Current Lexicon of the Romanian Language”, 2007; “About Recent Latin-Romance Lexical Elements of the Romanian Language. Quantitative Considerations”, 2007; “French - Source of Enrichment of the Romanian Language”, 2009; “Anglo-American Loanwords in Romanian”, 2009; “From the Biography of a Word: *casata*”, 2010; “Old and New Italian Origin Loans in Romanian”, 2014; “An American Origin Scientific Term of and its “Family” in Romanian, 2016; “From the English Origin Terminology of the Pandemic”, 2022);

• **for onomastics** (“From Current Romanian Onomastics, with a Special Focus on Multiple First Names”, [2017] 2018; “From the History of Multiple First

Names in Romanian”, [2017] 2018; “From the History of Double Personal Names in old Romanian”, [2017] 2018);

- **for etymologies** (“Observations on the Etymological Structure of Coresi’s *Tetraevangel*”, 1973; “Etymological Clarifications”, 1973; “Etymological Considerations”, 1995; “Considerations on the Etymology of Romanian Neologisms”);

- **for lexicographic analyses** (“Additions to the DEX Supplement”, 1995; “An Important Dictionary of Linguistic Terminology” (review, 1998); “Notes on the Registration of Some Recent Words in *The Great Dictionary of Neologisms* by Fl. Marcu”, 2008; “From the History of Some Lexicographic Works – after 50 years”, 2012; “Considerations on the Treatment of Some Neologisms – The Letter Q”, 2012).

Beyond the multitude of published texts (books and hundreds of articles) and the variety of titles and lexical domains investigated, the wealth of sources, the



originality and novelty of the observations, the double interest for certain domains, synchronically and diachronically (see, for example, the domain of occupations or the domain of textiles, each examined for current Romanian, but also for the 16th century), impress and also in the case of some semantic fields, the expansion of the perspective of analysis from the monographic, strictly linguistic one, to the extralinguistic one; the most recent work (*From the Terminology of COVID-19 and its “Entourage”*, Editura Academiei Române, 2022, 330 pp.) proves a deep and nuanced analysis of the most unexpected

extralinguistic implications of the pandemic field (relations with school and education, with circulation and transportation, with food, with clothing, with finances, etc.). The works highlight the special linguistic sense of the author for the dynamics of the lexicon in general and the current one in particular.

2.2.2. We owe Florica Dimitrescu the creation of scientific interest in **dictionaries of recent words**, primarily including the words not recorded in existing dictionaries, but also the unrecorded meanings or new phrases, either words and meanings entered through borrowing, or forms and meanings created and developed within the Romanian language. We also owe Florica Dimitrescu the elaboration of these dictionaries, which meant, in addition to the effort of selection and editing, the entire effort of elaborating the conception. The three successive editions of the *Dictionary of recent words* (DCR 1982, 1997, 2013) brought to Romanian linguistics a special interest in the dynamics of the recent lexicon,

creating a real research “school”, based on reliable criteria for preparing the material (selection of terms, establishing contexts, establishing meanings, attempting standardization, dating operations, establishing etymologies). In addition, it provided a huge current corpus, representing a special source for further research; the objective has already materialized in dozens of articles based on the corpus of the Dictionary. Personally, I have benefited on several occasions from the wealth of information in this corpus, starting from the idea that xenisms, words recently entered into Romanian and not yet integrated, do not have an inherently fixed inflectional pattern, marking, through their oscillations, the most characteristic trends and directions of evolution of the current moment.

2.3. Other domains

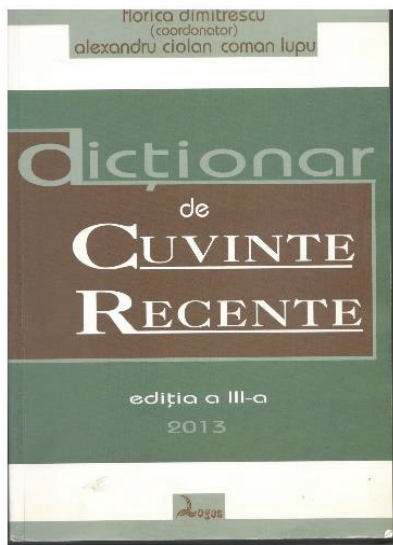
The two fields, the field of the old Romanian language and the history of language, on the one hand, and that of the most recent language, on the other, are far from having consumed the entire “availability” and scientific “force” of linguists. Numerous other scientific fields and concerns are present in her rich list of works.



2.3.1. A special share is occupied by the field of grammar, on which the linguist lent several times with scientific achievements full of substance and originality. • A special place is occupied by the doctoral thesis *Verbal Expressions in the Romanian Language*, translated into a book and published by Editura Academiei Române, 1958. 65 years have passed since its publication, but the book retains its

scientific validity intact. The modernity of the conception, manifested in the adoption of a scalar perspective on the transition from analysable grouping to locution, with an intermediate point represented by phraseological expressions, also manifested in the establishment of criteria for delimiting “degrees of phraseology”, takes readers by surprise even today. The book impresses with its “exhaustiveness”, verbal locutions being described under various aspects (components, grammatical features, origin analysis and the role played in the formation of words), as well as with the “certainty” of opinions, unexpected for such a young linguist (she was only twenty-eight years old when she defended her doctoral thesis!). The rich bibliography, with numerous foreign Western names, also impresses, being full of praise both for the authors and for the “opening” atmosphere at the Romanian Language Department, led by Professor Al. Rosetti (the year was 1958!).

• The synthesis-texts of the history of the Romanian language (see above, the “yellow book”) testify to the grammatical contributions of the author, including remarkable morphological and morphosyntactic syntheses, both as author (she is the author of the chapters devoted to nominal and pronominal inflection), and as coordinator. • There are three excellent studies of diachronic grammar in which the passage of years has not lost any of its scientific value. • Remarkable is the study “About *pre* in the Accusative in the Language of Texts Translated from Slavic in the 16th Century”, 1973, which offers nuances and corrects the previous opinion, according to which the frequent absence of *pre* in the accusative – direct object from the translated texts of the 16th century would be due exclusively to the Slavic model, therefore to a syntactical calculation after the Slavic. The author, without totally



excluding this explanation, invokes an additional argument that consists in dating the grammaticalization of *pre* very close to the time of the translations, which can explain the frequency of construction oscillations, with *pre* and without *pre*. • Noteworthy is also the study “On the *și și* Daco-Romanian Paratactic Construction”, 1973, which draws attention to a syntactic pattern, old in the language, but today restricted to popular and familiar use, in which the first “și” is a copulative coordinator, and the second, a focusing adverbial (from constructions such as: “Că și-s frați **și și** se prindu”, Ritolur Lucaci Rule, 1581). We

find here a presentation of a semantic-grammatical class of focusing adverbial clitics and, at the same time, a signalling of the type of ambiguity concerning “și”. • Interesting from the point of view of novelty is the study on the classification of Romanian verbs according to their prepositional construction (“A Way of Syntagmatic Classification of Verbs”, [1963] 2002); the study adds as a new classification criterion the construction with prepositions-regime, in which the selection of a certain preposition is predictable and explainable by the regime features of the central verb.

2.3.2. The operation of **paying tribute to previous scholars** constantly returns in her long professional career, resulting in books that reproduce the fundamental articles of the eulogized and analyze the essence of their contributions (see the book dedicated to Professor Jacques Byck, *Studies and Articles*, Editura Științifică, 1967, the one dedicated to Ion-Aurel Candrea, *I.-A. Candrea, Linguist and Philologist*, Editura Științifică, 1974, or the one dedicated to Aurel Nicolescu, *Grammatical and Stylistic Analyses*, Editura Albatros, 1982), and represent restitutions full of substance and gratitude to the leading linguists, but also to

colleagues who left us too soon. One of the most recent evocations is the tribute inside the Romanian Academy to the folklorist Moses Gaster, a communication with much new information, transmitted by the linguist with great emotion, given the tragic destiny of the scholar (the communication was published in *Academica*, XXXI, no. 10, Oct. 2021, pp. 59-69). The numerous “*in memoriam*” studies, should also be noted since they pay tribute to representative figures of the Romanian linguistic field (Clara Georgeta Chiosa, Al. Rosetti, Romulus Todoran, Teofil Teaha, Theodor Hristea, Magdalena Vulpe, Paula Diaconescu, Matilda Caragiu Marioțeanu) and international figures (L. Gáldi, Alf Lombard). In the same direction, the recent book (*Homage to Nonagenarian Romanian Linguists*, Editura Academiei, 2020),



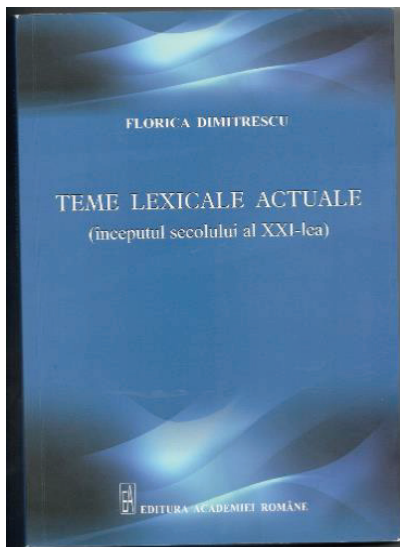
should be noted since it consists of articles intended for nonagenarian colleagues, and impresses for the beauty of the idea of a collective-tribute book and for the value of the articles dedicated to the colleagues.

2.3.3. A singular direction, which is little known in the linguistic world, starts from an excellent synthesis-study on the place of the Romanian language among the Romance languages (“Observations on the Position of Romanian among the Romance Languages”, published in Iordan Chimet, *The Moment of Truth*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Dacia, 1996, reprinted in Florica Dimitrescu, *Aspects of the History of the Romanian Language Lexicon*, Editura Universității din București, 2018, pp. 393-396), a study that introduces Florica Dimitrescu into the scarce and select gallery of Romanian linguists with special interest in this field (Sextil Pușcariu, Iorgu Iordan, Eugen Coșeriu, Al. Niculescu, Marius Sala). Precisely for the novelty of the information, I will make a very brief presentation of the article. The author fixes **three** features of Romanian in Romania as a whole: *isolation, delay, quick recovery*. The **isolation** was, on the one hand, geographical, the Romanian language being a Romance enclave among non-Latin languages, and, on the other hand, cultural, the isolation from the Western world extending until late in the 17th and 18th centuries, when Romanian scholars began to restore ties with the West. Isolation has as consequences, on the one hand, the synonymous wealth, explained by numerous non-Latin borrowings (from Slavic, Church Slavonic, Hungarian, Turkish and Greek), and, on the other hand, the adoption of the Cyrillic alphabet, maintained until late, in the middle of the 19th century. The table illustrating the “synonymous wealth” from *The Palia from Orăștie* (p. 394) is famous, where the author records the corresponding synonyms on four columns, each belonging to a different

etymological layer¹. **The delay** refers to the dating of the first texts written in Romanian and preserved so far, either original or translated texts, only in the 16th century. Rapid recovery is based on the availability and speed of the introduction of modern, Romance and non-Romance lexical borrowings, as well as the introduction of modern patterns of composition, either proper composition or scholarly composition with suffixoids and prefixoids.

3. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this presentation, I confess with embarrassment that I have only managed to offer a pale picture of what the scientific contribution of Florica Dimitrescu meant to the development of Romanian linguistics. The immense amount



of works (23 books, the first published in 1958, and the last in 2022, to which tens and hundreds of articles, studies, reviews, notices, published in Romanian or in foreign languages are added), the diversity and complementarity of the fields, the depth and validity of the ideas, including the oldest linguistic texts, the scientific generosity, visible, among other things, through the constant interest in paying tribute to the predecessors, the teachers, the colleagues, the quality of mentor for two important directions: the history of language and the current lexicon, all speak of the huge role played by Florica Dimitrescu in the linguistic

landscape of the last 75 years.

I bow with admiration and gratitude before these numerous and valuable works that Florica Dimitrescu constantly published with immense modesty and generosity. Her biological age did not bring any change in vitality and value, Florica Dimitrescu still remaining today a model of diligence, strength, positive thinking and scientific value. May you live a long life, wonderful LADY, and continue to give us a model of life dedicated to the passionate love for the Romanian language and its study.

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¹ SEE ONLY TWO EXAMPLES:

<i>Latin</i>	<i>Slavic</i>	<i>Hungarian</i>	<i>Unknown etymon</i>
fiu, fecior, făt	plod, poroboc, odrasla		cocon, prunc
mulțime, omet, lume	gloată, norod, rudă	neam	