

## BOOKS

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**Elena Platon (coord.), *Enciclopedia imaginariilor din România. Volumul II. Patrimoniul și imaginar lingvistic / The Encyclopedia of Romanian Imaginaries. Volume II. Linguistic Patrimony and Imaginary*, Iași: Polirom, 2020, 486 p.**

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*The Encyclopedia of Romanian Imaginaries. Historical Patrimony and Cultural-Linguistic Identities (ROMIMAG)* was one of the most recent and ambitious projects of the Romanian academic environment. The studies on cultural identity and spiritual heritage, carried out within the framework of this project, were materialized in 5 volumes: *The Literary Imaginary, Linguistic Patrimony and Imaginary, Historical Imaginary, Religious Imaginary and Imaginary and Artistic Patrimony*.

For the second volume, the one dedicated to language, researchers from three of the most prestigious institutions in Romania came together (Babeș-Bolyai University, University of Bucharest and the Institute of Linguistics and Literary History "Sextil Pușcariu" - Cluj-Napoca). Under the guidance of Elena Platon, these



20 researchers tried to define and describe the linguistic imaginary, without, however, proposing an exhaustive presentation of it.

The volume begins with a brief description of the authors and with an introductory study carried out by the coordinator, a study in which the key notions of the book are defined - linguistic patrimony (LP) and linguistic imaginary (LIM) - and in which the interdependence of the two concepts is explained. It continues with the researchers' studies and it ends with the bibliography, name index and thematic index sections.

The volume focuses on the idea that language and national identity are closely related, considering that language is one of the most important human phenomena, if not the most important. Seen from a linguistic perspective, this identity rests both

on the historical cultural context, associated with the classical interpretations of language, and on the new ways of analyzing language, much more open to interdisciplinarity and to people - as a singularity and as an essential part of a community.

In other words, the past, the present and the future, the main landmarks of a culture, take shape in language in the form of the LP and the LIM. Through the introductory study of the volume, *Lingua volat, lingua manet*, Platon aims to explain the unity between the stability of the patrimony and the dynamism of the imaginary, demonstrating that the two should not be viewed separately when talking about language, but in complementarity. At the same time, the study is meant to remove prejudices, and change the skeptics' vision, placing the patrimony and the imaginary on the same level of language analysis.

According to Platon, language as a patrimony is rooted in classical approaches, which see language as a coherent and homogeneous system, but slightly rigid, with a high degree of stability. Language belongs to people and transcends time and space, it belongs to everyone and to each one at the same time, uniting them and encouraging them to use it even more. Language is a common good, an immaterial patrimony, but also an object of this patrimony, for having a written character.

But language is not only patrimony, because it is a living instrument. Language is also a dynamic tool, which produces changes in representations about language and which configures new meanings. Language is not only to describe reality, but also to create new realities, parallel or converging to the one unanimously accepted by the speakers.

The reason why Platon, in the introductory study, opts for equality regarding the status of the two concepts is the fact that language cannot be depicted without one of the two components. Moreover, the author's attitude is noticeable from the title, which, reminding of the famous Latin saying, *Verba volant, scripta manent*, demonstrates the speaker's inherent need to create and recreate.

Also in the introductory study, the three major theories of LIM are presented: the metalinguistic, the ethnolinguistic and the cognitivist one. The only theory currently accepted by the linguists' community is the first one, the one that focuses on the object of the imaginative act, that is, on language itself. The second perspective no longer considers language as an object of the imaginary, but as a means of expressing it, respectively as a carrier of a collective imaginary. Cognitive linguistics associates LIM with the internal mechanisms of linguistic creativity. Cognitivists talk about a type of collective imaginary, encoded in facts of language and organized according to conceptual schemes, often of a metaphorical nature, with a high degree of universality, specific not only to language, but to human thought in general.

Although she approaches LIM from an ethnolinguistic perspective, Platon supports the unification of the three perspectives in a single, by no means definitive theory, which would encourage researchers to explore even more the concept and which would lead to new forms of its manifestation.

Another proof that Platon talks about the importance of LIM is the inventory of expressions about the world, in her article dedicated to the universe of folklore. In Romanian folklore, world-making plays a fundamental role, being one

of the most prolific linguistic fields. At the same time, it demonstrates the interdependence between LP and LIM, because Romanian songs, proverbs and stories describe not only the seen, physical, real world, but also the unseen one, be it of the body, mind or soul. Without realizing it, the simple man solves the 'conflict' between LP and LIM and restores the unity of the language. The numerous examples given by Platon in her article illustrate that man perceives the world as a whole, delimiting it only in order to encompass it.

Platon opens the discussions through an anthropological work, being oriented towards the individual and his experiences. The same direction is noticeable in other studies, even if they opt for approaches focused on the modern man. And, because they cannot all be analyzed in this review, I will focus on the ones written by Anca Ursa and Anamaria Radu.

Anca Ursa dedicates her study to the Romanians' identity projections, realizing both the profile of the language and the country, as well as the people's. For Romanians, the language is a treasure, an element of national cohesion and identity space (LP), but also a mirror of the people and a bridge to the people (LIM). The country is the hearth, the national spirit, the family. When it comes to perceiving himself, the Romanian is, first of all, a Man, then part of his people. The difference between the individual and the society he belongs to is often lost in their perception, because Romanians value inclusion. Last but not least, Anca Ursa states that one of the most important identity projections is that the Romanian is born a poet, proving, just like Platon, how natural and harmonious the connection between LP and LIM is.

Anamaria Radu chooses to analyze language from a modern, up-to-date perspective, talking about the language of the Internet. Although the approach is more metalinguistic, unlike that of Platon and Ursa, the fundamental idea of the study is that the emergence of a new type of language is due to people's need to describe a reality completely different from the one they knew. Although she describes all the abbreviations, anagrams, symbols and linguistic interferences that characterize the current language of the virtual environment, Radu tries to demonstrate that the efforts to restructure and transform reality through language belong to people's imagination.

The title of the volume is *Patrimony and Linguistic Imaginary*, which means that not only the linguistic imaginary is important for this work, but also the patrimony. In this direction, the articles of Chivu, Chircu and Harhătă stand out.

Gheorghe Chivu, the volume's scientific consultant, talks about the Latin heritage and the Latin-Romance influence in the modern language, proving the complementarity of the two key notions of the book. Associating the background inherited from Latin with LP and the neological Latin-Romance lexicon with LMI, Chivu demonstrates that creating the language of culture, therefore the identity, was achieved in accordance with our Latin 'nature' and our modern 'genius'.

Adrian Chircu and Bogdan Harhătă, writing about the Thraco-Dacian substratum, respectively about the Hungarian and German adstratum, complete the 'genealogical chart' made by Chivu and bring additional meanings to the idea of linguistic heritage. At the same time, the direction of the two articles, namely the individuality of the Romanian language (either

among Romance-sister languages, or among other European languages), suggests that the metalinguistic approach is still relevant, demonstrating its place among the major theories of LIM.

The volume's studies, both those presented and those not discussed, have a strong metalinguistic or ethnolinguistic influence, the cognitivist representation

not being very discussed. I believe that several studies on LP and LIM would be necessary from this perspective as well, in order to have an overview of all the directions that represent the basis of the unified theory proposed by Platon in the introductory study. Also, it would be interesting to observe if reality's changes and, implicitly, the simultaneous evolution of language, will bring new models for understanding the linguistic imaginary.

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