

Petronela Savin, “The Universe of the Spoon. On Romanian Culinary Terminology”, Iași, The European Institute Publishing, 2012, 200 p.

In this paper Mrs. Petronela Savin is treating a subject less approached in the field of Romanian linguistics: the terminology related to human nourishment. The lady author founded the research she had undertaken on the documentary and content analysis, as well as on the etymological study of the names belonging to this lexical sphere, falling into the following categories of terms: edible plants, raw materials necessary for nourishment, cooked dishes, drinks, food features, actions and states regarding feeding, digestive organs, instruments, installations.

Taking into consideration the previously mentioned division, in the first chapter of the book, “*The Stratigraphic organisation of the culinary terminology*” (pp. 21-74), the author examines the inventory of names, analysing them from an etymological point of view, identifying words inherited from Latin (*fruct* = fruit, *pâine* = bread, *a coace* = to bake, *lapte* = milk, *sete* = thirst, *gură* = mouth, *lingură* = spoon, etc.), words belonging to the indigenous substratum (*brânză* = cheese, *leurdă* = a green plant whose leaves taste like garlic, *strugure* = grapes, *vatră* = hearth, etc.) words coined on Romanian territory (by derivation: *brânzică* = little cheese, *ciorbar* = a person who cooks / enjoys sour soup, *cuișoare* = cloves, *păhărel* = a little glass, *sărățele* = a sort of salted pastry products, *vișinată* = sour cherry liqueur, etc. or by composing: *pui la ceaun* = chicken boiled in a sort of big cast-iron kettle, *untdelemn* = edible oil, etc.) as well as borrowed words.

In the case of borrowings, the linguistic study is conducted from the perspective of the diachronic, diatopic and diastratic variation, as follows: names derived from Paleoslavonic or Slavonic language (*anafură* = Eucharist bread, *blid* = a wooden, earthenware or metal bowl, *hrean* = horse radish, *drojdie* = yeast, *hulpav* = greedy, etc.), from Old Greek (*ciutură* = well-bucket, *scafă* = wooden bowl, etc.), from the Turkish language (*acadea* = caramel, *cazan* = boiler, *dovleac* = pumpkin, *ghiuden* = dried pressed and very spicy sausage, *mahmur* = having a hangover after drinking heavily, *trufanda* = early young vegetable or early fruit, etc.), from neo-Greek (*aguridă* = unripe sour grape, *azimă* = unleavened bread, *zahăr* = sugar, etc.), from neo-Slavonic languages (*bragă* = millet beer, *ceaun* = a big cast-iron container used for cooking, *orez* = rice, *ștevie* = garden sorrel, etc.), Hungarian (*arpacăș* = peeled barley/wheat, *balmoș* = a hot dish made from green cheese boiled in milk, maize flour added, *hârdău* = tub, *muștar* = mustard), German (*cartof* = potato, *cremșnit* = a sort of cake with a sweet vanilla filling, *maghiran* = marjoram, *vafă* = a sort of ice-cream), French (*antricot* = steak, *cotlet* = chop, *cremă* = cream, *gamelă* = small metal bowl for the soldiers' cooked food, *lichior* = liqueur, *omletă* = omlette, *pateu* = pie, *picant* = spicy, *sos Bechamel* = Bechamel sauce, etc.), Italian (*rizoto* = a rice dish, *spaghete* = spaghetti, ravioli, etc.), learned Latin (*aperitiv* = appetizer, *a degusta* = to taste, *digestie* = digestion, etc.), English (*chips*, *coca-cola*, *fast food*, *hamburger*, etc.).

In the second chapter, “*Nuclei of nourishment terminological corpus*” (pp. 75-108), the author initiates “the placing of the corpus in a semantic pattern for classifying the terms into the following categories: names of foods, of drinks, actions, states, activities, features, ways, organs, senses, instruments and equipment” (p. 75) in order to better represent “the diachronic evolution of the lexic, pointing out the cultural models assumed in certain historical and social circumstances” (*ibidem*). On the basis of this semantic pattern one can easily notice the heterogeneous character of the Romanian culinary terminology, which includes names from Latin, Slavonic, Old Greek, Turkish, German and other languages alike, and after 1990 especially from French and English.

The last part of the work, “*A complex updating insight into the field of diaphasic variation. The discourse of the menus*” (pg. 109-138), studies the culinary lexic from the perspective of the manner in which language is used in this domain in order to create the connection between transmitter and receiver. In the beginning, she analyses the semantic, stylistic and pragmatic value of the diminutives (*dovlecel* = little pumpkin, *fripturică* = little roast meat, *mâncărică* = little cooked dish, *vițeluş* = little veal, etc.). These may indicate both the size of the object and the emotional relation to it.

Advertising – meant to influence, by persuasive methods, the consumers’ behaviour within the commercial environment – is present in the discourse of the menus too, a reason for which the latter is also an object of minute examination for Mrs. Petronela Savin.

The difference between the peasant culinary reality and the urban one is brought to the fore in the final part of the chapter in which the author examines two types of literary discourse: the former is represented by Ion Creangă’s creation, specific to the rural background, while the latter is illustrated by the works of N. Filimon and I. L. Caragiale, which depict the urban environment.

The answers attached at the end of the book include titles of cookery books and recipes belonging to the Romanian culinary history.

The knowledge of the food products terminology, the way in which this was formed and developed represent an important aspect of Romanian linguistics, which up to the present has not been the object of proper attention. Mrs. Petronela Savin’s paper is meant to fill this gap by offering an opportunity “for clarifying and developing certain directions of research which, hopefully, will benefit from the advantage of contextualisation, through later scientific contributions”.

Iustina BURCI

Romanian Academy

“C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopşor” Institute

for Research in Social Studies and Humanities Craiova

Sorin Liviu Damean (coordinator), Dan Claudiu Dănişor, Mihai Ghiţulescu, Alexandru Oşca, *The evolution of the political institutions of the Romanian state from 1859 until nowadays*, Târgovişte, Cetatea De Scaun Publishing, 2014 (306 p.).

Subordinated to the principle according to which it is researched *the mechanism of power and the institutions that enable its exercising in a state*, the work *The evolution of the political institutions of the Romanian state from 1859 until nowadays*, answers the interest shown by the acknowledged historians, or the ones who are still training. The volume was structured on 4 chapters, which observe the chronological principle for the framing of the debated problems. Each author brought his scientific contribution to a chapter, as following: Sorin Liviu Damean – *The political institutions during 1859-1918*; Alexandru Oşca – *The institutions of power during 1918-1945*; Mihai Ghiţulescu – *The political institutions during the communist regime*; Dan Claudiu Dănişor – *The evolution of the Romanian political institutions after 1989 – liberalism or another type of totalitarianism?* Each chapter has several other sub-chapters, which help the carefully done analysis, and the adequate language denotes the authors’ easiness to place themselves in the logical filed of facts and conclusions.

Our political institutions had started to be shaping by the end of the 19th century and, from that moment on, they have been affirming themselves more and more, especially since 1859, when the Romanian state gained the physiognomy of the modern European states. The Romanian state has been especially strengthen since 1881, when its full sovereignty was recognised by all the powers.