

## THRACIAN-DACIAN-ROMAN AND ROMANIAN ONOMASTICS IN THE ALPINE-PADAN AREA

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### ABSTRACT

As a probable consequence of some Thraco-Dacian population movements in the north of today's Italy (dating back to the time of the Roman Empire, starting with the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries), a Thracian-Dacian-Roman community was established in the Alpine-Padan area, evolving towards a Romanian nucleus by the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Later, at the latest in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Romanian element here was assimilated, primarily by Italians, but also by Rhaeto-Romans, Slovenes, Croats, Austrians, however, documentary, onomastic and cartographic sources reveal the presence, in this area, on the one hand, of several dozen Romanian toponyms, and on the other – of more than 20 Italian and/or Rhaeto-Roman anthroponyms with similar or even identical Romanian correspondences. These Thracian-Dacian-Roman onomastic elements are betrayed either by names that attest to the Romanized Dacians in the area, or by terms from the Thracian-Dacian substratum of Romanian that entered the local toponymy. Also, although rare, the mentions that recall the Romanians in the aforementioned area are not lacking, being doubled by dozens of names related to the physical-geographical specifics (geomorphological, phytogeographic) or to elements of humanization (mountain properties of some shepherds, agricultural activities, deforestation of forest vegetation, construction and defense of some fortifications, etc.). Last but not least, various linguistic particularities are highlighted, inherited by these Romanians, either from the Thracian-Dacian substratum, or from the time of Romanization and even from the period of coexistence with the ancient Slavs.

**Keywords:** Thracian-Dacian-Roman population, Romanians, Alpine-Padan area, onomastics

### INTRODUCTION

In the academic year 1914-1915, within the course on *Romance Morphology*, held at the University of Bucharest, by Ovid Densusianu, a chapter on *Rhaeto-Romance Toponymy* was included[1]. The author drew attention to some similar, even identical, forms between the toponymy of this group and the Romanian one. Two decades later (1938), Nicolae Iorga held a radio conference, entitled: *Our smallest brothers: the "Ladin" Romans*[2]. More recently, we drew attention, both in a published communication (2002-2005)[3], as well as in the materials of the doctoral thesis, to the presence, in northern Slovenia and northeastern Italy, of several Romanian toponyms[4]. To reinforce this reality, Andrej Pleterski states that, when the Slavic ancestors of the