THE WALLACHIANS IN THE *NIBELUNGENLIED* AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE EASTERN ROMANCE POPULATION IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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Abstract. This article analyses the fragments in the Nibelingenlied that refer to the Wallachians, by their name (Adventure XXII, Stanza 1366 in manuscript C), the name of their country (Wallachian land), and/or of their leader (Ramunc – actually still a collective name, reaffirming the Roman origin of those Wallachians) (Adv. XXII, S. 1370 MS. C; XXXI, S. 1925 MS. C).

The mentions above lead to the Romance population from Pannonia to the east, echoing the times of the first two crusades, when that particular people, the Romanians, were neighbors of the Poles, Russians, and "Greeks" (Byzantines), precisely as they were grouped by the lied (Adv. XXII, S. 1366 MS. C).

The Wallachians were a Romance nation in the east of Europe, with leaders of their own, having a good cavalry and distinctive costumes. They represent the offspring of the Romance population attested in various sources, both north and south of the Danube, from the times the Roman province of Dacia onward.

Keywords: *Nibelungenlied, Wallachians, eastern Romance.*

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Introduction

      The *Nibelungenlied* (*Song of the Nibelungs*) is a German folk poem, a late *saga*, wrote in the style of the French *Chanson de Roland* or the Spanish *El Cid*.

      It was written in Middle High German, dialect spoken between ca. 1100 and 1500 AD. The language of the *lied* contains many archaisms, showing that the older traditions are mixed with the later ones. The oldest complete manuscripts, kept in museums, are from the 13th century (manuscript, i. e. Handschrift: A[1] – München; B[2] – St. Gallen, Switzerland; and C[3] – Karlsruhe), while there are 35 known fragmentary manuscripts from the 12th to the 16th century.[4]

      This confirms that the final text must have been finished not later than c. 1200 AD, in Passau or somewhere close.[5] The

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[1] *Das Nibelungenlied*, Handschrift A, Hohenems-Münchener Handschrift um 1280, München, Staatsbibl., Cgm 34, 60 Blätter, Pergament Codex containing: *'Nibelungenlied'* (A), *'Klage'* (A), Ps.-Engelhart von Ebrach: 'Das Buch der Vollkommenheit' (Streuüberlieferung) [Nachtrag] (Marburger Repertorium, http://www.mr1314.de/1483).

[2] *Das Nibelungenlied*, Handschrift B, St. Galler Handschrift um 1250, in Pergament Codex (Marburger Repertorium, http://www.mr1314.de/1211), is as follows: [a] St. Gallen, Stiftsbibl., Cod. 857 noch 318 Blätter; [b] Berlin, Staatsbibl., mgf 1021, 5 Blätter; [c] Karlsruhe, Landesbibl., Cod. K 2037 [früher Privatbesitz Antiquariat Joseph Baer, Frankfurt a. M.]. Containing: 'St. Galler Handschrift 857' (ehemals) enthaltend: Wolfram von Eschenbach: 'Parzival' (D [D]) [= a]; *'Nibelungenlied'* (B) [= a]; 'Klage' (B) [= a]; Stricker: 'Karl der Große' (C) [= a]; Wolfram von Eschenbach: 'Willehalm' (G) [= a]; Friedrich von Sonnenburg: Sangspruchstrophen (G) [Nachtrag] [= a]; Konrad von Fußesbrunnen: 'Kindheit Jesu' (L) [= b]; Konrad von Heimesfurt: 'Unser vrouwen hinvart' (E) [= c].

[3] *Das Nibelungenlied*, Handschrift C, Hohenems-Laßbergische Handschrift um 1230, Karlsruhe, Landesbibl., Cod. Donaueschingen 63 [früher Donaueschingen, Fürstl. Fürstenbergische Hofbibl., Cod. 63], noch 114 Blätter, Pergament Codex containing: *'Nibelungenlied'* (C), *'Klage'* (C), (Marburger Repertorium, http://www.mr1314.de/1482).

[4] Lothar Voetz, https://www.blb-karlsruhe.de/blb/blbhtml/nib/einfuehrung-voetz.html. Hagen, 1854, 573-577: about the discovery of some mss., then about 22-23.

[5] Lothar Voetz, *loc. cit.*: "With a content based on older oral traditions, 'Nibelungenlied' acquired written shape at 1200 or shortly afterwards. The

poem's connection with the oldest historical events are the references to Attila (Etzel) and his Huns, and Theodoric, the king of the Ostrogoths (Dietrich von Bern). The poem assimilates themes of older saga, like Eddas (c. 9-10th cent. AD) or Waltharius (c. 1000 AD).[6] Gh. I. Br tianu wonders if the *Nibelungenlied* does really evoke something about the battle in 437, when the Burgundians were banished from their homeland on the Danube and arrived in Switzerland.[7]

Some scholars, like H. Weber or D. B. Shumway, connected the *lied* with its ancient targeted time of Attila, trying to seek evidences for the characters and places from the 5th century onward.[8]

Texts

I will reproduce below the three main stanzas that refer to the Wallachians, in their original text of the manuscripts and in different editions.

(1) Adventure XXII, Strophe - Stanza 1278 A / 1335 B / 1366 C / 1339:

(a) MS. (Handschrift) C (the oldest, dated c. 1230 AD),[9] Blatt 52v,[10] Stanza 1366:

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language of the 'Nibelungenlied' is medium high German. An 'original' is not obtained. The author of the 'Nibelungenlied' is unknown. The anonymity of the poet is probably also decisively conditioned by the genre of poetry. There is much to suggest that the 'Nibelungenlied' would have its origin connected with Passau or the metropolitan area of the medieval diocese of Passau, which included Vienna, too, at that time. As the client and patron of the unknown poet of the 'Nibelungenlied' is considered more likely to be Wolfger of Erla, that of 1191 - 1204 was Bishop of Passau." Cf. B. Augustana, http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/12Jh/Nibelungen/nib_intr.html, Cf. Classen, 1997, 1.

[6] Br tianu, 1980, 22.
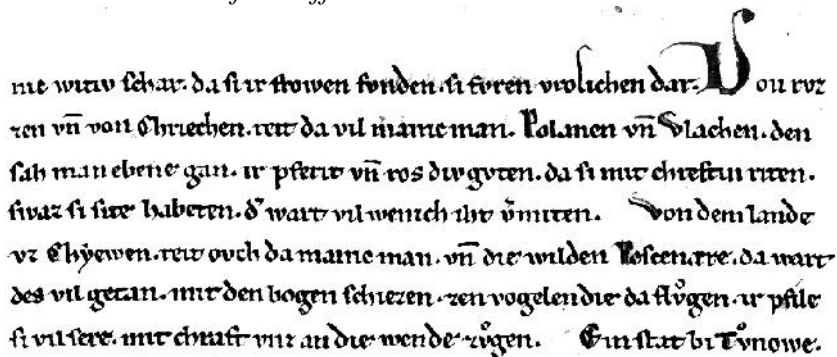
[7] *Ibid*. Cf. Greenfield, 1994, 184-185.

[8] Weber, H., 1814, 39-41.

[9] Patrimonia 289: *Die 'Nibelungenlied'-Handschrift C* - Codex Donaueschingen 63, webmaster@blb-karlsruhe.de, Die Nibelungen-Handschrift C digital, https://www.blb-karlsruhe.de/blb/blbhtml/nib/uebersicht.html; Ute Obhof, *Die 'Nibelungenlied'-Handschrift C*, Codex Donaueschingen 63/Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe, Hrsg. von der Kulturstiftung der Länder,

Transcription (OCR) of the official website:

" 1366,1))V((on Rvzzen vñ von Chriechen reit da vil manic man

1366,2 Polanen vñ Vlachen den sah man ebene gan

1366,3 ir pferit vñ ros div gvten da si mit chreftin riten

1366,4 swaz si site habeten   d/er wart vil wenich iht v/er\miten"

Facsimile of the official website:

(b) MS. B (dated c. 1250 AD), S. 1335 [356b]:[11]

"Von Rivzen vnd von Criechen reit da vil manich man
den Poᵉlan vnt den Walachen sach man swinde gan
ir ross div vil gvten da si mit creffte riten
swaz si site heten der wart vil wenich vermiten"

Facsimile of the official website:

(c) MS. A (dated c. 1280 AD), S. 1278:[12]

Transcription of the official website:

"1278 Von Rvzen vnd von Kriechen reit da manich man
den Polan vnd den Vlachen sach man swinde gan
ros div vil guᵒten si mit krefte riten
1279 swaz si siten heten der wart vil wenic vermiten "

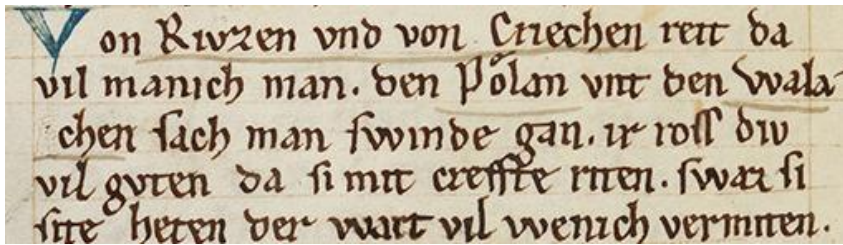*Facsimile of the official website:*
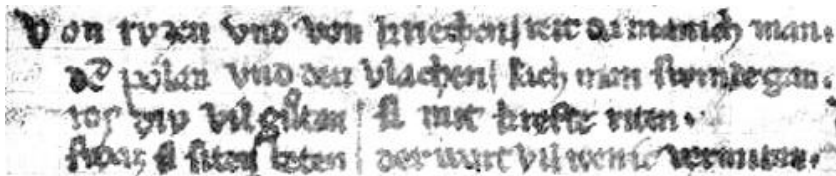
(d) Simrock,[13] Zweiundzwanzigstes Abenteuer - *Wie Kriemhild bei den Heunen empfangen ward*, S. 1278-9/ 1388:

- Original text:

"Von Riussen und von Kriechen   reit dâ manec man;

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den Pœlân unde Vlâchen   sach man swinde gân
ros diu vil guoten   si mit kresten riten.
swass si site hêten,   des wart vil wênec vermiten."[14]

- Modern German:

"Von Reußen und von Griechen / ritt da mancher Mann:
Die Polen und Walachen / zogen geschwind heran
Auf den guten Rossen, / die sie herrlich ritten.
Da zeigte sich ein jeder / in seinen heimischen Sitten."[15]

(e) Needler, s. 1339:[16]

"Of Reuss men and Greeks there / great was the tale,
And rapid saw ye riding / the Wallach and the Pole
On chargers full of mettle / that they did deftly guide.
Their own country's custom / did they in no wise lay
aside."[17]

(f) Shumway:[18]

"Of the Russians and the Greeks there rode there many a
man. The right good steeds of the Poles and Wallachians were
seen to gallop swiftly, as they rode with might and main. Each did
show the customs of his land."

(g) Armour: [19]

"[When they spied the queen, they came on in stately
way.] Russians and Greeks were there. Polacks and Wallachians
spurred along, delftly managing their good horses, displaying
themselves each according to the custom of his own land. …"[20]

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[14] Simrock, 1868, 430.
[15] Simrock, 1868, 431. Simrock, 1900, 194.
[16] Needler, 1904 (1905, 1906).
[17] Needler, 1904, 335.
[18] Shumway, 1909.
[19] Armour, 1999. Cf. other English editions: Hatto, 1962, Prose translation;
Ryder, 1962, Verse translation.
[20] Armour, 1999, 102.

(h) Weber, Adventure XXII:

"Adventure XXH. How Etzel and Chrimhilt held their Bridal Feast.— Etzel received his new bride at the town of Tuln, accompanied by a great host of vassals, among whom were Russians, Greeks, Poles, Wallachians, Kyben, the savage Petscheners, and many other nations. He had four-and-twenty princes in his train, among whom were Ramung, sovereign of the Wallachians; Gibccke, Hornbog, Hawart, and Iring, from Denmark; Irnfried, duke of Thurinoia; Blodelin, the king's brother; and, finally, Dietrich of Bern. Chrimhilt was instructed by Rudiger to kiss twelve of the noblest champions: the others she also received with great courtesy. A tournament was held till the evening broke in, and the whole train then proceeded to Vienna, where the bridal feast was celebrated for seventeen days. The gifts distributed by Etzel and his subject princes were incalculable; and his two minstrels, ' Werbcl and Swemmel received no less than a thousand marks. At the end of the feast, the king, with his bride and his attendants, left Vienna, and proceeded by the old fortress of Hunenburg, and by Misenburg, to his own residence, at the castle of Etzelenburg. Chrimhilt was served by seven daughters of kings, and particularly by Herrat, niece to Etzel, and wife of Dietrich of Bern."[21]

(i)   Maniu, Romanian translation:

"Puzderie o ti se roir acolo, parte rus   i parte elineasc ,
    Iar   leahi   i deopotriv   valahii,   iure   pornir   s învîrtejeasc ,
    Minunat jucându- i sirepii sprinteni, pe care c l reau cu m iestrie;
    Îmi vedeai i osebeai îndat' pe fiecare dupre portul din inutul lui de
    obîr ie."[22]

(j) Tempeanu, Romanian translation, XXII, 1399:

"În ceata cea pestri   ru i, greci destui erau,

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[21] Weber, H., 1814, 192-193.
[22] Maniu, 1958, 258.

Poloni, valahi ca gîndul de repede zburau
Pe caii lor cei ageri. Erau buni c l re i!
Precum le era firea i se purtau eroii îndr zne i."[23]

(k) My Romanian translation:[24]

Ru i i Greci – mul i au venit acolo;
Polonii i Vlahii în galop rapid se-apropiau,
Pe cai buni m re ei c l reau.
Fiecare a rii lor obiceiuri ar tau.

(l) My English translation:

Russians and Greeks – many came there;
Poles and Wallachians [Vlâchs] were arriving fast, in
gallop,
On good horses they were greatly riding.
Each did show the customs of his land.
[last verse taken from Shumway, *above*]

(2) Adventure XXII, Strophe - Stanza 1282 A / 1340 B / 1370 C / 1343:

(a) MS. C, Blatt 52v, Stanza 1370:

Transcription of the official website:

"1370,1 Der herzoge Ramunch vzer Vlâchen lant
1370,2 mit sibenhund/er\t mannen chom er fvr si gerant
1370,3 sam die wilden vogele so sah man si varn
1370,4 do chome d/er\ fvrste Gibeche mit vil h/er\lichen
scharn"

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[23] Tempeanu, 1964, 299.
[24] My translation. Cf. Maniu, 1958; Paradais, 2008. The same note for the Romanian translations of the following stanzas.

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(b) MS. B, S. 1340 [356b]:[25]

"Der herzoge Ramvnch vzer Walachen lant
mit siben hvndert mannen chom er fv^{e}r si gerant
sam vliegende vogele sah man si varn
do chom der fv^{e}rste Gybecke mit vil herlichen scharn"
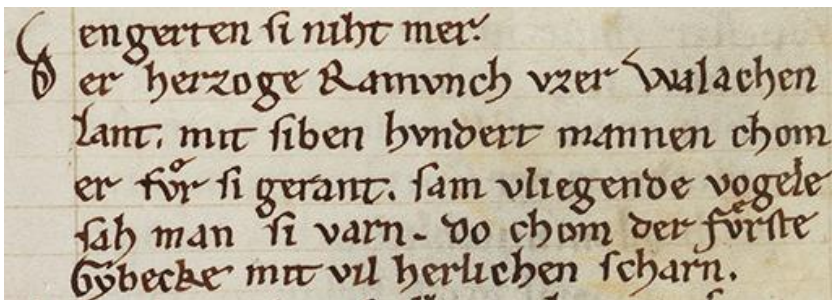
(c) MS. A, S. 1282:[26]

"Der herzoge Ramvnc v^{o}zer Vlachen lant

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[25] Handschrift B, Adventure 22, Bibliotheca Augustana, http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/12Jh/Nibelungen/nib_b_22.html# . The same note for any further quoting of the original Handschirft (manuscript) B, if not mentioned otherwise.

[26] Handschrift A, Adventure 22, Bibliotheca Augustana, http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/12Jh/Nibelungen/nib_a_22.html. For the manuscript capure: *Das Nibelungenlied und die Klage*, Leithandschrift A, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munchener Digitalizerung Zentrum, Digitale Bibliothek, Cgm. 34, [S. I.] vor 1280, um: nbn: de: bvb: 12-bsb00035316-7. The same note for any other further quote or facsimile of the original Handschrift (manuscript) A, if not mentioned otherwise.

mit siben hvndert mannen chom er fur si gerant
sam vliegende vogele sach man si alle varn
do kom der furste Gibeke mit vil herlichen scharen"

Facsimile of the official website:
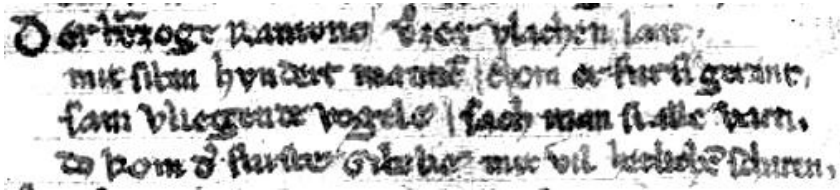
(d) Simrock, Zweiundzwanzigstes Abenteuer - *Wie
Kriemhild bei den Heunen empfangen ward*, s. 1283/ 1392:

- Original text:

"Der herzoge Râmung   ûzer Vlâchen lant
mit siben hundert mannen   kom er vür si gerant.
sam vliegende vogele   sach man sie alle varn
dò kom der vürste Gibecke   mit vil hêrlichen scharm."[27]

- Modern German:

"Ramung der Herzog / aus Walachenland,
Mit siebenhundert Mannen / kam er vor sie gerannt.
Wie fliegende Vögel / sah man sie alle fahren.
Da kam der Fürst Gibeke / mit viel herrlichen Scharen."[28]

(e) Needler, S. 1343:

 "Then the Duke Ramung / from far Wallachia
With seven hundred warriors / dashed forth athwart her
way:
Their going might ye liken / unto birds in flight.
Then came the chieftain Gibeke, / with his host a stately
sight."[29]

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[27] Simrock, 1868, 432.
[28] Simrock, 1868, 433. Simrock, 1900, 194.

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(f) Shumway:

"Duke Ramung of Wallachia, with seven hundred vassals, galloped up before her; like flying birds men saw them ride. Then came Prince Gibeek with lordly bands."

(g) Armour:

"Duke Ramung of Wallachia spurred up to her with seven hundred men. They sped like birds on the wing. Then came prince Gibek with gallant host."[30]

(h) Maniu, Romanian translation, XXII:

"Dintîi ivitu-s-a Ramung-viteazul, voivod din ogorul valahilor,
Cu apte sute de sirepi ce zboar cum rîp ie stolul potîrnichilor,
A a perindatu-s-a iure stolul, iar pre urm lor a fost trecut
Gibek-crai, carele a ijderi multe mîndre pîlcuri sub sabie în paz
a avut"[31]

(i)   Tempeanu, Romanian translation, XXII, 1343:

"Venea pe cai s lbatici, cu apte sute-osta i,
Însu i Ramuno cneazul, ce-avea als u s la
În ara Valahiei. Zburau sirepii lor.
Sosi i prin ul Gibek, înv luit în colb ca într-un nor."[32]

(j) Paradais, Romanian prose translation, XVII:

"Mai era înso it Attila de dou zeci i patru de principi str lucitori dintre care nu-i vom aminti aici decât pe Ramung din ara Valahiei, pe Gibeke i Hornbogdin ara hunilor, pe Hawart

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[29] Needler, 1904, 336.
[30] Armour, 1999, 102.
[31] Maniu, 1958, 259.
[32] Tempeanu, 1964, 300.

din ara danezilor, pe Iring i Irnfried din Thuringia, fiecare având sub porunca sa câte o mie dou sute de o teni cutez tori."[33]

(k) My Romanian translation:

R munc(h), domnul (ducele) din Valahia, [ara Vlahilor]
Cu apte sute de oameni, a venit gonind 'naintea ei.
                                    [înaintea Kriemhildei]
Ca p s rile zburând fost-au v zu i galopând.
  i a venit c petenia Gibek, cu o oaste domneasc .

(l) My English translation:

R munc(h), the lord of Wallachia,
[Wallachian land, the country of the Wallachians / Vlâchs]
With seven hundred men, came running before her,
                                    [before Kriemhild]
Like flying birds men saw them in gallop coming.
Then came prince Gibek with gallant host.
[last verse from Armour, above]

(j) Cf.: www.blb-karlsruhe.de:

"Der herzoge Ramunch vzer Vlâchen lant/mit Sibenhunduert mannen chom er fvr si gerant/sam die wilden vogele so sah man si varn"[34] - "Duke Ramunc of Walachia,/with seven hundred vassals, galloped up before her/like flying wild birds men saw them ride" //"Der herzoge Ramunc uzer Vlachen lant, / mit siben hundert mannen kom er fur si gerannt" - "Ramunc the duke, ruler over Valachs, came to them at once with his 700 men"

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[33] Paradais, 2000, 107.
[34] *Das Niebelungenlied*, Adventure 22, page 52v, stanza 1370 in Version C, http://www.blb-karlsruhe.de/blb/blbhtml/nib/uebersicht2/nib-index-6.html . Cf. also Lettsom, 1890.
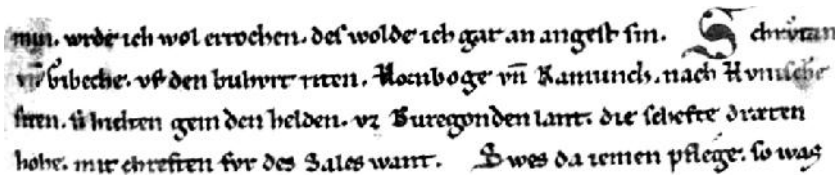
(3) Adventure XXXI, Strophe - Stanza 1818 A / 1877 B / 1925 C:

(a) MS. C, Blatt 68r,[35] Stanza 1925:
Transcription of the official website:

1925,1))S((chrvotan vñ Gibeche vf den buhvrt riten
1925,2 Hornboge vñ Ramunch nach <hvnische/n\> siten
1925,3 si hielten gein den helden vz Buregonden lant
1925,4 die schefte dræten hohe mit chreften fvr des sales

want

Facsimile of the official website:

(c) MS. B, S. 1877:[36]
"Scrvtan vnde Gybecke vf den bvhvrt ritten
Ramvnch vnd Hornboge nach hivnisschen sitten
si hielten gegen den helden von Bvrgonden lant
di shefte dræten hohe veber des kvneges sals want"

Facsimile of the official website:

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[35] http://www.blb-karlsruhe.de/blb/blbhtml/nibelungen/ni-67v-68r.html#seitenanfang
[36] Handschrift B, Adventure 31, Bibliotheca Augustana, http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/12Jh/Nibelungen/nib_b_31.html.

(c) MS. A, S. 1818:[37]

Transcription of the official website:

"Schrvtan vn–Gybeche   vf den bvhurt riten
Ramvnch vn–Hornboge   nach hvnischen siten
si hielten gein den heiden   von Bvrgonden lant
die schefte dræten hohe   vber des kvniges sales want"

Facsimile of the official website:
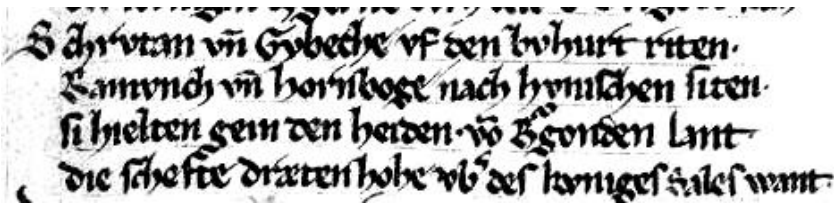
(d) Simrock, Zweiundzwanzigstes Abenteuer - *Wie Kriemhild bei den Heunen empfangen ward*, S. 1818/ 1975:

    - Original text:

"Schrûtan unde Gibeke   ûf den buhurt riten,
Râmunc unde Hornboge,   nâch Hiunischen siten.
si hielten gein den helden   von Burgonden lant.
die schefte brœten hôhe   über des küneges sales want."[38]

    - Modern German:

"Schrutan und Gibeke / ritten zum Buhurd auch,
Hornbog und Ramung, / nach heunischem Brauch.

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[37] Handschrift A, Adventure 31, Bibliotheca Augustana, http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/12Jh/Nibelungen/nib_a_31.html. For the manuscript capure: *Das Nibelungenlied und die Klage*, Leithandschrift A, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munchener Digitalizerung Zentrum, Digitale Bibliothek, Cgm. 34, [S. I.] vor 1280, um: nbn: de: bvb: 12-bsb00035316-7, http://www.bavarikon.de/bookviewer/kpbO-BSB-HSS-00000BSB00035316_00001#, http://bildsuche.digitale-sammlungen.de/index.html?c=viewer&lv=1&bandnummer=bsb00035316&pimage=00035316&suchbegriff=&l=en.
[38] Simrock, 1868, 612.

Sie hielten vor den Helden / aus Burgundenland:
Die Schäfte flogen wirbelnd / über des Königssaales Wand."[39]

(d) Needley, s. 1880:

"Schrutan and Gibecke / rode into the mellay,
Eke Ramung and Hornbog / after the Hunnish way;
Yet must they come to standstill / 'fore the thanes of Burgundy.
High against the palace / wall the splintered shafts did fly."[40]

(e) Shumway:

"Schrutan and Gibecke, Ramung and Hornbog, rode into the tourney in Hunnish, wise. They addressed the heroes from the Burgundian land. High above the roof of the royal hall the spear-shafts whirled. [Whatever any there plied, 'twas but a friendly rout.]"

(f) Armour:

"Schrutan and Gibek came next, and Ramung and Hornbog, after the manner of the Huns. They all bare them boldly before the Burgundians. High over the king's palace flew the splinters."[41]

(g) My Romanian translation:

Schrutan i Gibek s-au întrecut în turnir,
R munc(h) i Hornbog – în felul hunilor;
Treceau mândri înaintea eroilor din Burgundia. [ara Burgunzilor]
Suli ele zburau înalt spre pere ii palatului regal.

(i) My English translation:

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[39] Simrock, 1868, 613. Simrock, 1900, 262.
[40] Needley, 1904, 458.
[41] Armour, 1999, 142.

Schrutan and Gibek competed in tournament,
R munc(h) and Hornbog – in the Hunnish way;
They boldly before the heroes of Burgundy.
> [Burgundian land, the country of the
> Burgundians]

After a brief analysis, we notice that, in the original German manuscript text, the Wallachians appear also as 'Vlâchen', and Wallachia as 'Vlâchen lant', in the oldest form of this ethnonym, before the 'a' after the 'v' [Valâchen] was added to it. The name of the country appears also in the oldest form, meaning, actually, "the country of the Wallachians", as they appear in so many names of countries, like Burgundy [see the third stanza quoted above: 'Burgonden lant'].

Debates and Conclusions

1. Nibelungenlied and contemporary chronicles

Although the *lied* claims to tell a story of Attila's time, the environment described there is from the 9th – 12th centuries. The presence of the Russians, Pechenegs, Poles, and Hungarians among the people "contemporary" with the Huns of Attila (Etzel) confirms that.[42]

Robert Roesler would not admit that *Nibelungenlied* referred to the Romanians, because this would contradict his theory, built on political reasons, which postulated that the Romanians came north of Danube in the 12th century, as employees of the Hungarian crown. If this was the case, the *Nibelungenlied* could not mention the Romanians as a well constituted *ethnos*, with its own leaders, north of the Danube. In Roesler's vision, Wallachia points to some Frankish or north Italian lands. But those territories would have been well known by the author(s) of the poem, while the poem presents Walachia as a faraway country, in the 'Hunnish' realm, and puts it next to

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[42] V. E. Tonnelat, *Le chanson des Nibelungen*, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, Paris, 1926, p. 175 sqq., 325-327, apud Br tianu, 1980. Coroban, 2013, 119-144.

Poland, which is east and north of Danube, meaning exactly where modern Romania stands.

An early mention of the ethnonym *Vlachs*, in various forms, appears in the *Gesta Hungarorum*, the chronicle of Anonymous Notary (magister P.): "The name under which were about to be known the most often the Romanians by foreigners in the Middle Ages was, nevertheless, that of "Vlah" (Germ. *Walach*, Gr. *blachos*, Sl. *vlas* and *voloh*, Hung. *oláh*). One of the first sure attestation of the north Danube Romanians under this ethnonym belongs to the anonymous notary of the king Béla, who wrote a little before 1200 and mentioned the Romanians in Transylvania."[43]

Sorin Paliga noticed, among other authors, the refined ethnological knowledge of this chronicler for his time. He thinks that the first mention of the *Vlachs* in *Gesta Hungarorum*, as *Blachi*, in the expression "Sclavi, Bulgari, Blachi ac pastores Romanorum" should be understood with a following copulative Latin word "ac". Therefore, he formed two groups of four already distinguishable *ethn* : Slavs and Bulgarians, and further Pannonian Romance and Proto-Romanians.[44]

Other authors, like S. Brezeanu and Al. Madgearu, give, however, pertinent arguments for the interpretation of the same Latin word "ac" as an explanation, and not as a copulative particle.

S. Brezeanu and Al. Madgearu correctly pointed out that on a mere lexical ground both meanings of Latin "ac" are acceptable: copulation or explanation. Therefore, the meaning can be revealed only "in the light of the ethnic realities in Pannonia at the beginning of the Middle Ages".[45]

First of all, in *Gesta*, "the expression *pastores Romanorum* has, regardless of the meaning of the particle *ac*, an ethnical meaning and not socio-professional, because the first three terms of the passage are clearly invested with ethnical content."[46] Secondly, S. Brezeanu and Al. Madgearu outlined other equivalent occurrences, as in the chronicle of Simon de Kéza of

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[43] Brezeanu, 1999, 48-49. Cf. id., 1982, 400-403.
[44] Paliga, 2015, 467-476.
[45] Brezeanu, 1999, 153. Cf. id., 1981, 1313-1340.
[46] Brezeanu, 1999, 153.

Bihor county, between Wallachians and the "shepherds and the colonists of the Romans", and in *Descriptio Europae Orientalis*,[47] by the Dominican Anonymous, between *Pannoni* and *pastores Romanorum*. Thus, Brezeanu concludes that "By this, the meaning of the particle *ac* in the excerpt "Sclavi, Bulgari et Blachi ac pastores Romanorum" is also explained, and it can only be explanative ("meaning", "or"), underlining the identity between "Blachi" and "pastores Romanorum"."[48] Or, as otherwise said by Madgearu: "The translation of the words *Blachii ac pastores Romanorum* was discussed by many researchers. Usually, *ac* means "and." Therefore, it was argued that Blachii were another people than the "shepherds of the Romans." Other historians have shown however that ac can be sometimes translated as "or", "that is." Based on the text of Simon of Keza and on the significance of the fragment from GH, they translated the expression as "Blachii, the shepherds of the Romans.""[49] He also pointed out that the first group in the famous quote, "Sclavi Bulgarii" could be very well understood as a unity, "the Bulgarian Slavs", because, originally, there was no comma between them.[50]

A lot of scholarly work, based on the old chronicles, present the eastern Romance population at the dawn of the Middle Ages as a mainly or pronounced pastoral people.[51]

The use of the ethnonym *Romani* is allocated by the Carolingian scholars to the population of Rome, other Roman populations being designated by local names (*galli*, *aquitani*,

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[47] Živkovi , 2013, 102-103: "Notandum est hic quod inter Macedoniam, Achaiam et Thessalonicam est quidam populus ualde magnus et spatiosus qui uocantur Blachi. Qui et olim fuerunt Romanorum pastores ac in Hungaria, ubi erant pascua Romanorum propter nimiam terre uiridatetem et fertilitatem, olim morabantur,/ sed tandem ab Hungaris inde expulsi ad partes illas fugierunt. Habundant enim caseis optimis, lacte et carnibus super omnes nationes. Terram enim horum Blachorum, que est magna et opulenta, exercitus domini Caroli - qui in partibus Grecie moratur - fere totam occupauit et ideo conuertit se ad regnum Thessalonicense et actu mari terraque expugnauit ciuitatem Thessalonicensem dictam cum regione circumadiacente." Ibid., 134: "Pannoni autem qui inhabitabant tunc Pannoniam omnes erant pastores Romanorum et habebant super se decem reges potentes in tota Mesia et Pannonia." Cf. Popa-Lisseanu, 1934, 101-111. Kovaleu, 2013, 59.
[48] Brezeanu, 1999, 155.
[49] Madgearu, 2005, 46.
[50] Madgearu, 2005, 45.
[51] Brezeanu, 1999, 153. Madgearu, 2005, 82.

rhaeti etc.). The Dominican anonymous used in this way the term "Pannoni" to refer to the Romanized population found by the Hungarians in the Pannonian plain.[52] The same use, to designate Romanized populations, had the German word "*walch-walach*" and its Latinized variants taken from Byzantine sources.[53] The last ethnonym appears in *Gesta Hungarorum* for the Romanian population in Transylvania (Ch. 9, 24-27), for Gelou, *quidam Blacus*, *dux Blacorum*, who leads the *Blasi et Sclavi*, and in Banat (Ch. 44), for Glad, *dux … Cumanorum et Bulgarorum atque Blacorum*.[54]

The presence of the Romance population in Pannonia at the arrival of the Hungarians is clearly inferred by the first Hungarian chronicles, by the Anonymous Notary of king Béla, by Simon de Kéza and by the Domincan Anonymous. But their inference had serious historical bases. All these authors had contact with the Romanians of their time, and an old Romance pastoral population was known in Pannonia "by the author of the primary *Gesta* and by Anonymus or only by the first named"[55]

As "representatives of the Hungarian consciousness" (Gy. Kristó, apud S. Brezeanu),[56] both the Anonymous Notary of king Béla and Simon de Kéza did not want to place the Romance population in Pannonia at the time of the arrival of the Hungarians, but they were forced to do so because that information was still too well-remembered in their time. The Wallachians (*blackii*) were placed, for instance, clearly among the autochthonous populations in Pannonia and all the Eastern Europe by Simon de Kéza, as the remnants of the Roman colonists in the time of Attila and up to the time of Arpad, in contrast with the newly arrived.[57]

From the detailed treatment of this subject by S. Brezeanu we extract only his reference to J. Jung: "Judged from this perspective, the thesis of the anachronism, for which Anonymus is blamed by modern historians, appears as aberrant, as remarked J. Jung a century ago. Referring to the supposed immigration of

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[52] Brezeanu, 1999, 154-155.
[53] *Ibid*., 101 sq. ("Valah. Originea i evolu ia unui cuvânt").
[54] *Ibid*., 155 (""Romani" i "Blachi" la Anonymus. Istorie i ideologie politic "). Madgearu, 2005, 32-33. Pop, 2011, 141-166.
[55] Brezeanu, 1999, 153.
[56] Brezeanu, 1999, 161.
[57] Brezeanu, 1999, 160-161. Madgearu, 2005, 47-51.

the Romanians north of the Danube in the 13th-14th centuries, the German historian justly underlined that "the Hungarian national pride would have been very well satisfied to legitimate its rule over those late nomads with that delay, if things would have been so… But we find no such thing. The Hungarians in the 13th century… rationalized otherwise, at a time when they would not support their rule on words [I am not quite sure what the author means by "support their rule on words"] and they would not conceal it. The "notary" wrote with the intention to exalt the Hungarians and to do so he falsified the tradition; but as for the Romanians he had no such intention, which made it necessary to give the real tradition, as it circulated in his time… Because we must not presume that a forger could be so stupid to falsify more than it is necessary for his purpose.""[58]

Treating the topic from another perspective, Al. Madgearu reached the same conclusion. Even if the Hungarian chroniclers of the Middle Ages operated many propagandistic stratagems to sustain the Hungarian rule – and precisely because this was their intention –, their information about the presence of the Romanians in Pannonia and in Transylvania at the arrival of the Hungarians was correct: "The *Blachi* of the Anonymous Notary and Simon of Keza are not the Pannonian Romance population that survived among the ruins of the former towns, because they would not have been described as "shepherds of the Romans." This expression reflected the way of life of the Romanians with whom the Hungarians came into contact in Pannonia. Shepherding was the main occupation of the medieval Romanians. Thus, the notion of "Vlach" and "shepherd" became almost synonymous. This stereotypical image of the Vlachs as shepherds assures us that those *Blachi ac pastores Romanorum* could only have been the Romanians. It is interesting to observe that even in the 16th century, German author Hans Dernschwam believed that the Transylvanian Romanians descended from the "sheperds and brigands of the Romans." / The tradition preserved by the Hungarian *Gestae* confused the Romanians and the Pannonian Roman population from the Hunnish period, no longer in existence when these texts were composed. The Romanians were anachronically transferred to the age of Attlia, because their existence during the reign of Arpad was remembered. Except for

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[58] Brezeanu, 1999, 159.

these confusions, the tradition written down by the Anonymous Notary, by Simon of Keza, and by other chroniclers reflects a real fact: the existence of a Romanian population in Pannonia in the early Middle Ages. One of the controversial pieces of information transmitted by GH is truthful."[59]

Gesta Hungarorum was written about the same period as the final editions of the *Nibelungenlied*, in the late 12th century AD. German populations had adopted by then the term *Wlach – Wallach* for the Romance populations in general. Hence, we might wonder whether *Nibelungenlied* referred to the western, central European or eastern Romance populations. Nevertheless, contrary to the chronicles, the *lied* was not composed by some who could make distinctions between Romance populations of that time in ethnological terms, but only on geographical and political criteria. Thus, the *Nibelungenlied* clearly pointed to a Romance population situated from Pannonia to the East, as all the editors, translators and scholars treat the passages with "Wallachians" and "Ramunc" (except Roesler and his followers, for their biased reasons).[60]

The same eastern Romance population, the Romanians, is mentioned in Pannonia and in Transylvania by the first Hungarian chronicles (the first of them lost, and preserved for us those of the Anonymous Notary, the short version of Simon of Keza, the work of Dominican Anonymous, and those influenced by all of the mentioned). Not long after these sources some papal and other documents mentioned the Romanian population south and east of the Carpathians (e. g. Seneslau, the duke of the Wallachians, 1247).[61] The Byzantine sources mention the Romance population south of Danube even much earlier – and some of them will be referred to below, in connection with the information in the *Nibelungenlied*.

The reference to the Wallachians as an eastern people in the *Nibelungenlied* is clear,[62] and it appears in three places, one

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[59] Madgearu, 2005, 82.

[60] Adolf Ambruster, "*Nochmals „herzoge Râmunc ûzer Valâchen lant”*", in *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, XII, 1973, nr. 1, pp. 83-100, apud Giurescu & Giurescu, 1974, 134, 139. Cf. Hurdube iu, 1944. See also the notes below.

[61] Cf. Giurescu & Giurescu, 1974, vol. 1, 216.

[62] Magoun, 1945, 129-130. Ambruster, 1993, 42-44: "*Der Nibelunge not*", XII, ed. K. Lachmann, Berlin, 1878, p. 174 apud *ibid*.; Fritz Schuster, *Herzog*

where Ramunc(h) (or Ramung) and Wallachia are together (Adv. 22, S. 1343/ 1370 – MS. C), one with Wallachia (Adv. 22, S. 1339/ 1366 – MS. C), and one with Ramunc (Adv. 31, S. 1818/ 1925 – MS. C). The ""Duke" Ramunc is a well-known character in the second part of this poem, too (*Die Klage*), as well as in other creations of the German medieval literature."[63]

I agree with two Romanian historians (A. D. Xenopol and D. Onciul), that the latest information in the poem about the south-east Europe and the (Proto-)Romanians must have been taken from the time of the first two crusades (1096, 1146) – two events with the most powerful impact on the central European mind regarding the lands at east and south of Pannonia: "Although not only the neighbors of the Daco-Romans testify, in the first notes about them, the antiquity of this people in his country. This information we have also in the German poem *Nibelungenlied*, where the Vlahs, with their duke Ramunc (explained by Mr. Xenopol as a transformation of the name Roman), are mentioned in the cortege of Attila. The poem being finished at the end of the 12th century, Mr. Xenopol rightfully maintains that the memory of the Vlahs must have been entered it later than in the time of the first crusade (1096) but no later than in that of the second crusade (1146). Thus, we have here a pretty early testimony about the antiquity of the Romanian people in the region of Dacia." [64]

Therefore, the *Nibelungenlied* has an important informative value for the Romanians' history, because it mentions

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Ramunc aus dem Walachenland, in "Sudost-Forschungen", XI, 1946-1952, p. 284-290.

[63] Ambruster, 1993, 43 sq.: "The subject of the "duke" and of the Romanians was resumed by A. Armbruster, *Nochmals „herzoge Râmunc uzer Vlâchen lant",* now in our volume *Auf den Spuren der eigenen Identität,* Bukarest, 1991, p. 75-93." Cf. Weber, Henry W., 1814, 211-13.

[64] "Dar nu numai vecinii Dacoromanilor mărturisesc, în cele dintâi ştiri despre aceştia, vechimea acestui popor în ţara lui. Cunoştinţa aceasta o aflăm şi'n poemul german *Nibelungenlied*, unde Vlahii cu ducele lor Ramunc (explicat de d. Xenopol ca transformare germană a numelui Roman) se află amintiţi în suita lui Attila. Poemul fiind sfârşit în forma sa de-acum pe la capătul secolului XII, d. Xenopol susţine cu bun temeiu că amintirea Vlahilor nu poate să fi intrat în el mai târziu decât pe timpul cruciadei întâia (1096) sau cel mult al celei a doua (1146). Deci avem şi aici o mărturie destul de timpurie despre vechimea poporului român în părţile Daciei." in Onciul, 1968, 146-147. Cf. id., 1971, 47–180. Cf. *ibid*., 1885.

their ethnonym several times and because of the way it does that. Together with most of the scholars, I believe that the name Ramunc is rather a collective name than a specific personal one, underlining the ethnicity of the lord (*herzog*) of country (*lant/ land*) of Walachia, who allegedly took with him 700 men at the wedding of "Attila/ Etzel" with Kriemhilda.[65] Therefore, the name *Ramunc* strenghtens, for the audience, the idea of a Roman origin for the Wallachian people which the *lied* mentioned east of Pannonia. Such an association is not at all singular, as we can see in the writings of the priest of Dioclea (12th century)[66] and in the above mentioned *Chronicle* of Notarius Anonymus.

While the *Gesta Hungarorum* of Notarius Anonymus revealed the situations at the arrival of the Hungarians in the Pannonian Plain, the priest of Dioclea gave a diachronic witness for the penetration of the Bulgarians in the Balkan Peninsula. Both of them mention the Romance populations. Cumulating their information, these populations dwelled in Pannonia, Transylvania and Balkan Peninsula.

The above evidences are clear enough to show us that the Wallachians in the *Nibelungenlied* refer to a Romance population well represented in the 10th-12th centuries AD, and situated from Pannonia to the east, neighboring at north with the Poles and the Russians, and south with the "Greeks", i. e., the Byzantine Empire. To reach this conclusion it is enough to highlight the references to the ethnological realities of those centuries. The way the *lied* grouped the populations and the mention of the Wallachians together with the Russians, Greeks and Poles exclude

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[65] N. Iorga and Gh. I. Br tianu have identified Ramunc with Roman Mistislavici, the prince of Halich and Galitia (c. 1200 AD), while others thought it was a collective name: A. D. Xenopol, D. Onciul, G. Popa-Lisseanu, and Ambruster – see Ambruster, 1993, p. 43.

[66] A priest in Dioclea, Macedonia, writing in the middle of the 12th century, gave witness about the penetration of the Bulgars in the Balkan Peninsula. This caused the contraction of the territory of the Romance speaking populations: "Bulgari … ceperunt … totam Provinciam Latinorum, qui illo tempore Romani vocabantur, modo vero Morovlachi, hoc est nigri Latini vocantur" [Ambruster, 1993, 30: Presbyter Diocleatis, *Regnum Slavorum*, in I. G. Schwandtner, *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum veteres ac genuini*, III, Viennnae, 1748, p. 478]. He established a clear connection between the Vlahs and the Roman origin of their language. The specification in the prefix, 'moro-' (Gk. 'μ ῦ ', Lat. '*nigri*') designates a faction of the Vlach people, allowing us to understand there are others, too.

the possibility for the author(s) to refer here to a (much better known by the author) central European or Italian Romance population.

When the *lied* says "Russians and Greeks – many came there;/ Poles and Wallachians (Vlâchs) were arriving fast, in gallop,/ On good horses they were greatly riding./ *Each did show the customs of his land*." (Adventure XXII, Strophe - Stanza 1278 MS. A / 1335 MS. B / 1366 MS. C / 1339), it is like trying to make an explanation for the "eastern peoples" in the time of Attila. Of course there are projected back in time the peoples from the late 10th to 12th centuries AD,[67] but this does not reduce at all the fact that all the people mentioned in that strophe stand for the eastern peoples of those centuries, and therefore the Wallachians could not be the Italians or some central European Romance populations, but only the east European Romance population, and hence the forefathers of the Romanians, or the Proto-Romanians, if we like.

Bringing with him 700 men, galloping aside their northern neighbors (here, the Poles) and presenting their country's costumes, as well as being represented by Ramunc in a tournament (challenging Hornbog), the Wallachians are described in the *Nibelungenlied* as a well-represented and well constituted east European Romance nation, among the others mentioned together.

2. Echoes from the distant past in the Nibelungenlied

The *lied* did project its populations back in time, but it is also no less true that the *saga* maintained some exceptional echoes from distant times. This is the reason why I think the *lied* must be understood as a composition in layers, retaining old tradition and even old information and replacing it with contemporary data when the older one is out of reach. Knowing

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[67] Cf. Mueller, 1962. Werner Hoffmann, 1974. Ehrismann, 2002. Hans Szklenar, 1977, 41-61. Hennig, 1981, 356/182. Gottzmann, 1987, 25. Mertens 1996, 65. Schulze, *Das Nibelungenlied*, 1997, 193. Id., "Gunther ...", 1997, 44-45. Id., 2005, 781-855. Quast, 2002, 289-291: oral communication – *mære*. Lienert, 2003, 132. Cowell, 2007, 48: "powerful individuals "take charge of the information", they imposed personalized symbols and resist social codes".

what we know about the projection of information back in time, we should not lightly dismiss altogether some comments as that old one of H. Weber (1814) that I mentioned in the introduction. This editor interprets the lied as really providing some information from the distant times of Attila. Of course the understanding of the *lied* evolved since the 19th century, but, as I said, I would not dismiss all the arguments about the distant echoes from the times of Attila without reading them.

Thus, for the purpose of commenting I will quote some paragraphs from H. Weber: "[p. 39] Of the historical origin of the great epic Song of the Nibelungen, (for the Book of Heroes, though placed before that poem, on account of its relating the actions of older heroes, was evidently compiled in much later times, and is far more fabulous,) a few data and coincidences are all that can be expected. Attila (there named Etzel) needs no explanation; and it is well known that he had Thuringia, Poland, and Wallachia under his dominion, as related in the poem. His wife Halche, the Herka of the Wilkina-Saga, is mentioned in the fragments of the embassy of Priscus to that king, where she is named Erca. In the Hungarian chronicle of Thwortz, Dietrich, (that is, rich in people, afterwards corrupted into Theodericus, but by Procopius always spelt   ,) not the celebrated Theoderic, king of the Ostrogoths, but one of his predecessors, who lived 80 years before, is represented as fighting with an army composed of Ostrogoths, Germans, and Longobards, against the Huns, at their first irruption into Europe, by whom he was defeated, and forced to join Attila with his own forces, as in the Wilkina-Saga and the Nibelungen. It is there likewise related, that Attila left his kingdom to his two sons, Chaba and Aladar, the former by a Grecian mother, the latter by Kremheilch, (Chrimhild,) a German; that Theoderic sowed dissension between them, and took, with the Teutonic nations, the party of the latter, in consequence of which a great slaughter took place, which lasted for fifteen days. // [p. 40] and terminated in the defeat of Chaba, and his flight to Asia. There is, however, some confusion respecting the Theoderic (Dietrich) of these romances. Several allusions are made, which would cause us to believe Theoderic the Great was intended. In the fragment of Hildebrand, he is evidently and indubitably alluded to, as well as his enemy Odoacer. But he was not born till about the year 442, his great eruption into Italy, and his defeat of

Odoacer did not take place till 480, nor his death till 526; whereas Attila was leader of the Huns already about 428, invaded Italy, and defeated the Western Goths, about 450, and died soon after. It is therefore probable, that an earlier Theoderic is the subject of these romances. Gunter, king of Burgundy, is probably Guntachar, who was actually king of the Burgundians, resided at Worms, and was slain in a battle with the Huns, about 436. Siegfried cannot so easily be traced to any historical personage. It has been conjectured, with some probability, that he was Sigbert, who is said to have been major-domo to Theoderic, and to have dwelt, with his wife Chrimhild, at Worms. His castle of Santen is undoubtedly Xanten, a town on the left side of the Lower Rhine. Tronek, the possession of Hagen, may have been (according to the supposition of Johannes Mueller, the admirable historian of Switzerland) the ancient Tournus, (Tornucium.) Isenland may either have been an additional fiction about Iceland; or the celebrated castle of Isenburgh, on the left side of the Rhine, Charlemagne's favourite place of residence, may be intended. There is a great and inexplicable confusion respecting the real meaning of the title of the poem. In some places, Nibelungenland is evidently Norway; but, in general, here, as well as in the Niflunga-Saga, it means Burgundy. The Nibelung heroes in the latter are always Burgundians, but in the poem they are sometimes warriors of that nation, at others, Siegfried's auxiliaries from Norway. The great Niblung treasure is represented as having come from that country [p. 41] where Siegfried slew Prince Niblung and his brother. Bern, the residence of Dietrich, is not the city so called in Switzerland, but was the original Gothic name of Verona."[68]

Thuringia, Poland, Russia and Wallachia define, of course, regions which had different names and ethnic composition in the times of Attila, but, yet geographically speaking, those regions were part of the Huns's domination. However, it is remarkable that the *lied* retained accurate information from the times of Attila regarding the name of one of his wives (Halche/ Herka/ Erca), as mentioned in two other sources (*Wilkina-Saga*, *Priscus*). Weber gives valuable information also about Dietrich – Theodericus (   ) in the *Nibelungenlied*, as a predecessor of Theoderic

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[68] Weber, H., 1814, 39-41.

the Great of the Ostrogoths, in corroboration with two other sources (*Thwortz*, *Procopius*).

D. B. Shumway also pointed to information coming from old times: "In its present form it is a product of the age of chivalry, but it reaches back to the earliest epochs of German antiquity, and embraces not only the pageantry of courtly chivalry, but also traits of ancient Germanic folklore and probably of Teutonic mythology."[69]

Of course, it is expected from a *saga*, that there are different mixed layers of information. Theoderic (Theodoric) the Great exerts a great deal of attraction, due to his personality. Thus, a Theoderic with his magnitude is involved in the tragedy that occurred, according to the legends, after the marriage of Attila with Kriemhild. Nevertheless, maybe some of the contributors who shaped the *saga* felt the anachronism, for Theoderic the Great was too young to be a protagonist in that drama. This is the reason why the ambiguity might be seen in the *lied*, as Weber pointed out, and a connection might be done with a more plausible candidate to participate in events of Attila's time. This is "not the celebrated Theoderic, king of the Ostrogoths, but one of his predecessors, who lived 80 years before." Weber pointed out that the name in general has been Hellenized from the German Dietrich, "that is, rich in people". Procopius spells Theoderic the Great, indeed as   - e. g.:

- "… ῶ   ὐ ἐ   μ   ῳ ἐ Ἰ   ἐ ά   ἱ   " [70] = "[they] who didn't follow Theuderic when he went from Thrace to Italy").

- " Ὑ ὸ ἐ   ὐ ὐ ὐ   ἱ   , ἶ ἐ ἱ   ά   ῴ   , ὅ   ἐ ἰ Ῥ μ   ,   ἡ   μ   , ἀ ῆ , ἀ   ὸ   ἱ ἐ   ὸ ὐ   ἀ   ἐ   ῳ.   ἐ   ὺ , ἀ   ῦ   ἐ   μ   ,   ῳ   ή ἐ Ἰ   ì Ὁ   ῳ ἐ   ῖ   ì   ὴ ἐ ἐ   ὐ ῷ   ì   . ἄμ   ì   ῖ , ἄ   ì ἐ ' ἀ   μ   ῆ ή   ,   μ   ῳ Ῥ μ   ì Ἰ   ῶ ἄ   ἀ   ῆ   ῖ μ   μ   ῳ ἐ   ì   ." = "Sub idem tempus Gotthi, qui Imperatoris permissu Thraciam incolebant, in

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[69] Shumway, 1909, i.
[70] Mih escu *et alii*, 1970, 432.

Romanos rebellavere, duce Theoderico, qui vir erat Patricius, et Byzantii sellam Consularem ascenderat. At Zeno Aug. rationem optimam et re nata inire callens, Theoderico suasit, ut Italiam peteret, et, cum Odoacro collata manu, sibi Gotthisque Imperium Occidentis pararet: cum esset convenientius, praesertim Senatori, tyrannum exigere, et Romanis atque Italis praeesse omnibus, quam armis cum Imperatore contendere, et in tantum venire discrimen." = "The same time, the Goths, who were dwelling in Thrace with the permission of the emperor, rebelled against the Romans, [under] the duke Theoderic, who was a patrician man, and bercame consul in Byzantium. But the emperor Zeno, knowing to take advantage in any situation, convinced Theoderic to go to Italy, and, tying Odoacer's hands, to take for himself and his Goths the Western Empire. Because it was convenient for him, especially as a senator, to remove the tyrant, and rule over all the Romans and Italians than to put himself in a great risk by starting a conflict with the emperor." [71]

Theodoric the Great was the son of the king Thiudimir, and was born in Pannonia in 454, one year after the Ostrogoths defeated the Huns at Nedao. He was raised in Constantinople as a captive, and later ruled over the Goths in Thrace. With mandate from the emperor Zeno, he marched into Italy in 489, and, after hard battles and twists, he won against Odoacer in 493 and killed him in a banquet. As we can see the theme has important similarities with the legendary banquet in the *Nibelungenlied*, which ended with the killing of Attila by Kriemhild, and which corresponds with the rumor that Attila was murdered after his wedding with his wife (H)Ildiko.

Modern scholars signaled the anachronic use of the image of Theodoric the Great in the legends of Dietrich von Bern in

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[71] Procopius, *De bello gothico*, V, 1, 9-11, in Procopius, 1833, 7; id., 1919, 4-7. Id., 1919, 5, 7: "it was about this same time that the Goths also, who were dwelling in Thrace with the permission of the emperor, took up arms against the Romans under the leadership of Theoderic, a man who was of patrician rank and had attained the consular office in Byzantium. But the Emperor Zeno, who understood how to settle to his advantage any situation in which he found himself, advised Theoderic to proceed to Italy, attack Odoacer, and win for himself and the Goths the western dominion. For it was better for him, he said, especially as he attained the senatorial dignity, to force out a usurper and be ruler over all the Romans and Italians than to incur the great risk of a decisive struggle with the emperor."

spite of the insistence of the medieval legends to affirm their identity:[72] "There are traces of a form of the Dietrich legend in which he was represented as starting out from Byzantium, in accordance with historical tradition, for his conquest of Italy. But this disappeared early, and was superseded by the existing legend, in which, perhaps by an "epic fusion" with his father Theudemir, he was associated with Attila, and then by an easy transition with Ermanaric. Dietrich was driven from his kingdom of Bern by his uncle Ermanaric. After years of exile at the court of Attila he returned with a Hunnish army to Italy, and defeated Ermanaric in the Rabenschlacht, or battle of Ravenna. Attila's two sons, with Dietrich's brother, fell in the fight, and Dietrich returned to Attila's court to answer for the death of the young princes. This very improbable renunciation of the advantages of his victory suggests that in the original version of the story the Rabenschlacht was a defeat. In the poem of *Ermenrichs Tod* he is represented as slaying Ermanaric, as in fact Theodoric slew Odoacer. "Otacher" replaces Ermanaric as his adversary in the Hildebrandslied, which relates how thirty years after the earlier attempt he reconquered his Lombard kingdom. Dietrich's long residence at Attila's court represents the youth and early manhood of Theodoric spent at the imperial court and fighting in the Balkan peninsula, and, in accordance with epic custom, the period of exile was adorned with war-like exploits, with fights with dragons and giants, most of which had no essential connexion with the cycle. The romantic poems of *König Laurin*, *Sigenot*, *Eckenlied* and *Virginal* are based largely on local traditions originally independent of Dietrich. The court of Attila (Etzel) was a ready bridge to the Nibelungen legend. In the final catastrophe he was at length compelled, after steadily holding aloof from the combat, to avenge the slaughter of his Amelungs by the Burgundians, and delivered Hagen bound into the hands of Kriemhild. The flame breath which anger induced from him shows the influence of pure myth, but the tales of his demonic origin and of his being carried off by the devil in the shape of a black horse may safely be put down to the clerical hostility to Theodoric's Arianism. / Generally speaking, Dietrich of Bern was the wise and just monarch as opposed to Ermanaric, the typical tyrant of Germanic legend. He was invariably represented as slow of provocation and a friend of peace, but once

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[72] Cf. Mark, 2014; Wolfram, 1990, 27 sqq.; Arnold, 2008; Burns, 1982.

roused to battle not even Siegfried could withstand his onslaught. But probably Dietrich's fight with Siegfried in Kriemhild's rose garden at Worms is a late addition to the Rosengarten myth. The chief heroes of the Dietrich cycle are his tutor and companion in arms, Hildebrand (…), with his nephews the Wolfings Alphart and Wolfhart; Wittich, who renounced his allegiance to Dietrich and slew the sons of Attila; Heime and Biterolf."[73]

Striving to put together all the known ancestry of Theodoric the Great in ancient authors (Cassiodorus, Jordanes, Ammianus Marcellinus), Hodgkin passed to us a lineage in which we do not find anyone else with a similar German name. The most famous of all his forefathers, already emerged from the legends into more concrete historical records is Hermanric who founded an Ostrogothic kingdom which spread from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. This started at the beginning of the 4th century AD, while the Visigoths became foederati of the Roman Empire at the lower Danube.[74] Connecting this with the archaeological record, these events could be linked with the start of the culture Sântana de Mure – Cerneahov.

The three brothers and chiefs of the Osthrogoths, subjects of Attila, were Walamir, Theudemir, and Widemir, of the Amal clan. The second one was the father of Theodoric the Great. The Ostrogoths took part in the revolt against the Huns and gained a lot from the battle of Nedao. They had fortified their position in western Pannonia, the Danube being their border with the Gepids – the glorious winners at Nedao. Theodoric the Great might have been born in a settlement on the shore of Balaton Lake, where his father had his residence.[75]

Detricus de Verona in Thurocz is not Theodoric the Great, but a German chieftain who lived earlier and led the involvement of the Germanic peoples in the fratricidal wars of the succesors of Attila.[76]

It is very possible that Thurocz retained, as the *Nibelungenlied* – and using such legends as a source – the

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[73] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume 8, 1911, 221-222.

[74] Hodgkin, 1876, 7-17.

[75] *Ibid.*, 30-32.

[76] Thurocz, 1600, chap. XI (*De ingressu Hunnorum in Pannoniam…*), pp. 14-15; XII, p. 15; XV, p. 17; XXIII, pp. 27-28; Cf. Thurocz, 1488, chap. XXIII, pp. 39-40 – *De bello post moretem Atile regis inter filios ejusdem gelto et de reditu Chabe filij regis Atile in Scythiam*. McConnell *et alii*, 2013, 184.

connection of Theodoric with Verona (Bern) and Ravenna (Raben). Thurocz put, as the *Nibelungenlied*, this bond on the shoulders of a Dietrich (Detricus) in the time of Attila, but did a critical service in writing about *Detricus de Verona* (Dietrich von Bern) not (clearly) identifying him with the later Theodoric the Great.

3. Corroboration with other sources about the eastern Romance population in the early Middle Ages

Besides offering some echoes from the distant past , and projecting back in time some of its peoples, the *Nibelungenlied* coincides, however with other sources and historic information and witnesses about the existence of an oriental Romance population in the time of Attila (and also before and after his rule). This coincidence is due to the fact that the only population besides the "Greeks" (i. e., Byzantines) from Pannonia to the east that existed in the time of Attila is the Romance population. The *Nibelungenlied* became an echo of this historical fact, alongside the Hungarian Latin, Byzantine and other Chronicles. Whether the *Nibelungenlied* is a conscious such echo or not is hard to decide. It would be easy to dismiss the question by saying that the *Nibelungenlied* refers to the oriental Romance population of the 11th century, when the first two crusades reignited the interest of the western world in the eastern Romance people. This is all true, and not long time after that period, the Roman origin of the Vlachs south of Danube would be speculated about by the Roman Church to attract this population on his side, in the time of the Asenid Kingdom in the Balkans – late 12th and early 13th centuries.

We saw, however, that the *Nibelungenlied* often mixes contemporary projections to the past with real echoes of those times. Otherwise the preservation of some traditions about Theoderic and Attila, which clearly transmit something from the past could not be explained. We could put together with those blurred memories *the way* in which the *Nibelungenlied* presents the Romanians.

First, the Wallachians in the *Nibelungenlied* are clearly placed in the east European realm; their geographical space is

definitely near that of the "Russians", "Greeks" (Byzantines) and "Poles" (XXII, 1366 C).

Secondly, "R munc(h), the lord of Wallachia (Wallachian land, the country of the Wallachians / Vlâchs),/ With seven hundred men, came running before her (before Kriemhild)." (XXII, 1370 C). The association of Ramunch with Wallachia is obvious. Ramunch is not a real name, or even if it were, this would not be so important than the fact that the author wants to transmit a message through it. And the message is: the Wallachians placed into an east European area are the offspring of the Romans; these are the 700 horsemen led by a prince to honor Attila. The Russians and the Poles are taken only as geographical marks, meaning: the peoples who lived then in those countries. The Wallachians and the "Greeks" keep that meaning, but add continuity with older "Greeks" and "Wallachians", i. e., with older Byzantines and Romance population. The deliberate construction "R munc(h), the lord of Wallachia" proves the knowledge of the author that the Wallachians are the descendants of the Romans in the eastern part of Europe.

The intended expression "R munc(h), the lord of Wallachia" in the *Nibelungenlied* evokes in this respect the comments of some Byzantine chronicles that the Wallachians are the descendants of the Romans:[77]

- Mauricius, in *Strategikon* (7th cent.), wrote about some *romaioi* (Romans), refugees north of Danube: "although they are Romans, they changed in time and have forgotten in time their own [costumes], and became more sympathetics with the enemies. We should reward those with good will [among them], and punish those who do us harm."[78]

- Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (912-959) said, in *De administrando imperii*, abut the Romance population in Dalmatia: "The emperor Diocletianus loved the country of Dalmatia, and hence he brought there from Rome a lot of people together with their families, and settled them in Dalmatia. They are also named Romans (Ῥ μᾶ   ) because they came from Rome, and they bear this name until today". [79]

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[77] Cf, Saramandu, 2008, 159–164.
[78] Mauricius, *Strategikon*, XI, 31, in Mih escu *et alii*, 1970, 560-561.
[79] C. Porph., *De adm. imp.*, 29, 3-7, in Mih escu *et alii*, 1970, 662-663.

- Ioan Kynnamos (12th cent.), who traveled north of Danube said about the people there: "a large number of Wallachians, of whom it is said they came a long time ago from Italy" (uncertain if they were from south or north of the Danube, but proving the role of the eastern Romance population in that time).[80]

Thirdly, Ramunch reappears in a tourney. This, his 700 horsemen and the presentation of the costumes of his country shows he represents an important people in the eastern European area, understood, of course, at the perception of the 11th century AD.

The expression "R munc(h), the lord of Wallachia" even evokes the mixed use of the two ethnonyms (first internal, the second external) in very old toponyms: *Vla ca*, *Romana i*, *Roman*, *Codrii Vl siei*, and others.

The proofs for the maintaining of the importance of Latin north of Danube, and of the Daco-Roman ethno-genetic synthesis after the 3rd century AD are conclusive and they come both from written and archaeological sources. The retreat of Aurelian (after 271-275 AD) was registered late and exaggerated by Eutropius (4th cent.). Aurelian's withdraw was most probable thought as a strategy to better defend the empire, never as a definitive abandonment, and even as a movement to better monitor Dacia from the cities on the north bank of the Danube.[81] Aurelian seemed to have consolidated Sucidava, making it a powerful fort on the north side of the Danube, during the same period when he organised the retreat of the army and officials from the main cities of Dacia.[82]

To the analysis made on written sources we may add the archaeological discoveries. Many Dacian and Daco-Roman necropolises, with a preponderance of incineration opposed to inhumation, in the 2nd-4th centuries AD, demonstrate the continuity of the Dacian communities, both inside and outside the present and the abandoned province. Many of them show a progressive penetration of the Roman cultural features within a Dacian territory which is much attached to its traditions and very reluctant to change them. Even the clear signs of the penetration

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[80] Ioan Kinnamos, *Epitoma*, VI, 3, in Elian & Tana oca, 1975, 239.
[81] Bârzu, 1980, 46, 49.
[82] Bârzu, 1980, 49.

of Christianity, mostly after the 4th century, would increase very slowly the percentage of inhumations, maybe due to the lack of a rigorous hierarchy as it was in the Roman realm after Constantine the Great.

Some of the mentioned necropolises belonged to the Free Dacians or Carpians (Chilia, Medie ul Aurit). Some of them, in the midst of the Roman province, had clear Dacian features: Soporu de Câmpie, Obreja, Enisala, F rca ele. Others, or in different stages, also in the Roman province, had Daco-Roman features: Soporu de Câmpie, Obreja (Alba district), More ti, Lechin a de Mure (Mure district), Iacobeni (Cluj district), Sighi oara-Pîrîul Hotarului, Alba Iulia – in Transylvania; Locusteni (Dolj district), F rca ele, Dane i, Romula, Sucidava – in Oltenia. Some of them had Daco-Roman mixed features even immediately after the Aurelian retreat: Bratei, Locusteni (2nd-3rd centuries AD).[83]

Analyzing the persistence of the late Romance population in Pannonia at least until the 7th century AD,[84] and the penetration there of the Romanian population since at least the 9th century AD,[85] Al. Madgearu concluded that "the data recorded in *GH* [*Gesta Hungarorum*, n. n.] about the presence of the Romanians in Pannonia in the period of the Hungarian conquest is reliable."[86]

Latin was the official language in the Eastern Roman Empire until Justinian and the empire knew two major expansions north of Danube, in the time of Constantine and Justinian. The influence of Latin and Roman culture expanded fast over the borders. For instance, a cremation votive altar, from the time of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD), with clear autochthonous funerary features, discovered by V. Pârvan (1911) north of Danube, at endreni (Ia i district, north of Ia i city, on river Prut), bore a Latin inscription, of a Roman magistrate from Asia Minor. The same influence at Barbo i and Poiana, on the river Siret, all of them north of Danube, in the southern Moldavia.[87]

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[83] Popilian, 1980, 59-63, 86-87. Protase, 1976, 77-78, 85-87.
[84] Madgearu, 2005, 59-76.
[85] Madgearu, 2005, 77-81.
[86] Madgearu, 2005, 81.
[87] Pârvan, 1913, 103-106. Bârzu, 1980, 47: "l'autel votif de endreni, qui atteste le cas d'un autochton usant de la langue latine".

The first penetrations in the Dacian *province*, after the retreat of Aurelian, were of some Dacians (Cipl u-Gârle, Stolniceni), and a few relocations of some Roxolan Sarmatians (Ploie ti-Triaj, Târg or, Smeeni, Doroban u, Râmnicelu). Only later, after 350, it could be seen a sporadic penetration of Goths and Alans from their preferred lands in Moldavia, in specific and restrained areas in the south-east Transylvania and Muntenia, but not west of limes transalutanus until the 5th century AD. This means that Aurelian's criterion was rather a strategic retreat than the coming of the Goths, seen in the perspective of a better restoration, the forts on the left bank of the Danube being kept. While some sites north of Danube, in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, show a clear Roman influence (e. g. Bratei, and those mentioned in the above paragraphs), others show no such influence, mostly in sites of the Gothic penetration (Palatca, Sântana de Mure). The German populations in Dacia are associated from the 4th century AD on with the culture of Sântana de Mure . This culture shows, however, in other circumstances, an evident influence from the surrounding Daco-Roman population (e. g. Smârdan, Gher seni, H rman).[88]

Constantine the Great (ruled over the entire empire 324-337 AD) reinstalled the effective Roman dominion over Banat, Muntenia and even the south of Moldavia. He restored or built many forts in this region (Gornea – Cara -Severin district, Drobeta, Dinogetia-Garv n – Tulcea district, Barbo i), he made a *vallum* with forts (Hinova, Pietroasele), and he restored a bridges on Danube and the road from one of them to Sucidava (Celei – Corabia – Olt district) and Romula (old Dacian Malva, Re ca - in Olt district, inhabited up to the 6th century).[89] Bishop Ulfila (Wulfila) preached, between 341 and 348, both in Gothic and in Latin to the people north of Danube, showing that the autochthonous population was in the process of a rapid adoption of Latin in that time.[90]

The rule of Constantine the Great encouraged the Christianity inside the Roman Empire and the export of this religion to the peoples under the sphere of influence of the Roman

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[88] Bârzu, 1980, 56-60.
[89] Bârzu, 1980, 50 (cf. D. Tudor, *Sucidava*, Craiova, 1974, p. 96). Gherghe, 2006, 359-369.
[90] Pop, 1996, 38. P curariu, 1992, 67.

Empire. The regions of Banat, Oltenia and Muntenia were under the rule of the empire in the time of Constantine, and the Dacians, the Sarmatians and the Goths were under the sphere of influence of the empire. Even the Huns started as *foederati* when they arrived in Pannonia. The rule of Attila (434–453 AD) in Pannonia and north of Danube in general was a brief interruption of the direct Roman control of these territories. However, except in Pannonia, the Huns had never a stable presence in other territories dominated by them, but a mere nominal control, through taxes and recruitment. Attila destroyed Sucidava in the time of Theodosius II (401-450), but there is no proof that other Roman forts on the left bank of the lower Danube suffered the same faith.[91] The reconstruction of the Danubian *limes* was started by Anastasius I (491-508), with the forts and cities on the north bank, and were continued by Justin I (518-527) and Justinian I (527-565), the last restoring even some northern outposts in Banat, Oltenia, Muntenia and the south of Moldavia.

The penetration of the Roman provincial culture in Dacia, north of Danube, is evident in the 4th, continuing with the 5th century (the banks of the river Târnava Mare, Alba Iulia, Napoca, Potaissa, Porolissum, Soporu de Câmpie, Archiud, Mugeni, Bratei).[92] An epigraphic proof of the Roman continuity north of Danube is the silver ring of an autochthonous from Micia (Ve el, Hunedoara), 4th cent., with the inscription "Quartine, vivas!" Some historians consider that this artifact has paleo-Christian features.[93] Other similar *fibulae* were found in Târn vioara, Porolissum, and Potaissa.[94] The two ceramic objects, a pot and a bowl, bearing Latin inscriptions, from Curcani-Ilfov (with the inscription *MITIS*), and a ceramic plate from Socetu-Teleorman (*Aureli(u)s Silvan(u)s fecit pataelam bonam*), constitute also epigraphic evidences for an autochthonous Romanized population north of Danube, who kept the skill of writing.[95] A similar newer

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[91] Bârzu, 1980, 50-51.
[92] Bârzu, 1980, 60-70.
[93] Macrea, 1958, 467–472. Bârzu, 1980, 64. Hica, 2004, 196.
[94] Fabian, 2014, 168-170.
[95] Mitrea & Deculescu, 1966, 537-549. Voivozeanu, 1970, 530 (foto). Berciu, 1976, fig. 20/2.

discovery was made at Vîrvoru de Jos - Dolj, a plate with the inscription "*Patella–patella–/ Marc[i]*".[96]

The mixed population in Dacia, with Dacian, Illyrian (due to a massive colonization from this region) and Roman origin sticks very close to the ancient cultural traditions, especially regarding the funeral, up to the late 4th century (e. g. incineration sites in Bratei 1, resilient Dacian features in sites like Arad – Ceala – Pi colt – Medie ul Aurit and Cip u-Gârle). However, the penetration of Christianity during the 4th century is obvious, and it provokes radical cultural and funeral changes in the 4th-5th centuries AD, ending the late Dacian Latène. This process is accompanied by a massive import of Roman provincial cultural features. Nevertheless, the autochthonous Dacian cultural features persists north of Danube during the entire period between the 5th and 7th centuries AD, visible mainly in ceramics, and passing to the next generations, up to the Romanian people.

During the 3rd century AD there are very few Christian elements present in archaeological discoveries north of the lower Danube. Some of the earliest archeological discoveries with Christian content, associated with autochthonous Daco-Roman features, north of Danube, are:[97]

- a Dacian cup and a cross, from Cânde ti – Vrancea, 1st - 2nd century;

- the inhumation grave 7 at Tirighina-B rbo i – Gala i, with Daco-Roman and Christian features (ivory crosses, amphora with XP) and a golden gem with the inscription "*INNOCENS*", late 3rd cent., with its owner buried VNV-ESE, with hands crossed on his abdomen (Ion T. Dragomir and Silviu Sanie, 1976-1979);

- a gem with the Good Shepherd, from Transylvania, 3rd cent.;

- a golden ring with a gem, bearing graved a peacock and a dolphin, from B ile Herculane in Banat, 3rd cent.;

- a bronze ring with a cross and crosses in Banat, 2nd-3rd cent.;

- the onyx gem from Potaissa, with the inscription " ", 3rd-4th centuries;

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[96] Toropu, Ciuc , Voicu, in http://www.dervent.ro/s/i/index-Inscr.Virvoru.html. Toropu, 1976, p. 108, pl. 4,17, a-d.
[97] Cioab , 2014. Pricop, 2008. Teodor, 2006. Vasile, 2006. P curariu, 1992, 96-100. Bârzu, 1980, 64-67. *Anuarul …*, 1981, 73-114. Stoicescu, 1980, 154.

- two lamps with crosses, two gems and a bronze cross from Romula, 3rd-4th cents.;

- crosses and ceramic lamps from 3rd-6th cents.;

- the *donarium* from Biertan, Sibiu, 4th cent. (with the inscription *Ego Zenovius votum possui*);

- a ceramic vessel from Porolissum, 4th cent. (with the inscription *Ego ...vius / ulus vot pos*); Christ's monogram;

- ceramic vessels with incised crosses, from Vaslui and Suceava, from the 4th century on;

- a pagan funerary stone from Cluj-Napoca, reused in the 4th cent. by a Christian, who added the cross, A and   ;

- lamps with crosses, 4th-5th cents.: Lipova (ceramic, fish shape); Apulum (Alba Iulia, ceramic), Dej (bronze), Sarmizegetusa (ceramic);

- a mold for crosses at Sânmicl u – Alba, 5th-6th cents.; molds of bone for crosses, in many places (Olteni-Teleorman, Budureasca-Ploie ti, Cânde ti-Buz u, Davideni-Neam , Traian-Bac u, Boto ana-Suceava etc.);

- an amphora fragment from Sucidava-Celei-Corabia - Olt, 5th-6th cents., with the inscription "X(   ) M(   ) (   )/   / ( )   / (   ) ´/ + (   )" [Mary bare Christ / Loukonochos of Lykatios/ … priest], Lukonochos, son of Lykatios, being the first Christian priest known by name north of Danube;[98]

- a bronze chandelier from a church, at R cari (Saldae?)-Dolj, 5th-6th centuries;

- and even some churches - *basilicae* (Morisena-Cenad - Timi , 4th-6th cents; Sl veni - Olt, 3rd?-4th cent., 5th-6th cents.; Porolissum, on an old pagan temple, 4th cent.; Sucidava-Celei, 5th-6th cents.; Romula, 5th-6th cents.;

- churches south of Danube, beginning earlier – Tomis, Troesmis, Beroe etc., in Scythia Minor; and later, e. g. Justiniana Prima with mission north of Danube as well.

Dacia knew a timid, but determined and very early Christian diffusion. We must not forget that even in the Roman Empire, the Christianity was a new religion, one of the numerous minorities, until Constantine the Great. Even if, as we saw, there are some signs of early presence of the Christian practice north of Danube, the determined and irreversible spread of the Christianity

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[98] Mi u, 2001.

in Dacia, north of Danube, as well as in the Empire, south of Danube, owes a lot to the reforms of Constantine.[99]

The Christianity spread in Dacia from cities to villages (e. g. late pagan character in the cemetery in Bratei 1), and from the Roman and Romanized population first to Dacian and then to the German population. The lack of Christian evidences among the sites of Sântana de Mure culture, associated with the German population and its influence over the indigenous population, in parallel with some written witnesses which support the diffusion of the Christianity to those populations (e. g. Ulfila, the martyrdom of St. Sabbas), shows that this phenomenon does not always have a thorough archaeological cover – principle applicable to the Daco-Roman population as well.[100]

The archaeological evidences show that the German (mainly Gothic) populations in Dacia suffered in the 5th century AD an intense process of Romanization and Christianization. For instance, the princely Christian grave in Apahida contained, among others, three rings with Christian symbols, and a golden *fibula* with onion head. Other Christian evidence is the medallion with cross in Some eni. Other evidences of Romanization are some discoveries in Pietroasele, Con e ti, and in imleul Silvaniei – in the later site a treasure with a sardonic *fibula*. Such *fibulae* were given by the Roman authorities to the *foederati* chieftains, as happened also with Attila, who received the title of *magister militum* and was a *chlamydatus*, a representative of the Roman power.[101]

Going back to our subject, it is worth bringing to our attention a common link between the *lied* and Priscus, for this author also mentioned the presence of the Romance population in the dominion of Attila,[102] as the *lied* also does. Although it would be hard to distinguish, in this case, if the *lied* really retained a distant echo about the Romance population in the times of Attila underneath the clear projection back in time for the populations as Hungarians, Wallachians, Russians, Poles and Greeks. But such a fine distinction is not really necessary, because the testimony of

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[99] Cf. Lifa & Ciolac, 2014, 186.
[100] Bârzu, 1980, 66-67.
[101] Bârzu, 1980, 70-71.
[102] Mih escu *et alii*, 1970, 246-299 – cf. *Excerpta de legationibus*, edidit Carolus De Boor, Berlin, 1903, pp. 121-155, 575-591.

Priscus comes and completes the information and shows that in the time of Attila there was either a Romance population or one subject to Romanization, from Pannonia to the east, exactly as the *lied* placed it.

The most relevant passage in Priscus is this: "For [the Scythians] are mixed, and – besides their barbarian language – they try to speak either the language of the Huns, or that of the Goths, or that of the Ausonians, those of them who have connections with the Romans." (ὰ ὄ ὸ ῆ α ῳ η ῦ ῆ ἠ ὔ ῆ ἠ ῆ ι ὴ ὐ , ὄ ὐ ῶ ὸ Ῥ μ ἐ μ ...).[103]
And another mention of the Ausonian language: "the barbarian who stood by me and who understood the Ausonian tongue…" (ὁ μ ι ῆ ὐ ῆ ...).[104]
Priscus could refer to those who spoke the language of the Ausoni (Italians), either as a popular (vulgar) Latin spoken naturally north of Danube, or as an effort made by those in that region who wanted to communicate in Latin. Either way, the quoted excerpts in Priscus clearly states the persistent power of Latin to influence peoples north of Danube late after the Aurelian's retreat, as a surprisingly frequently used language.

The preaching of Ulfila in Gothic and Latin north of Danube, and the text of Priscus shows a vivid use of Latin before and during the time of Attila north of the Danube, while similar witnesses continue for the following centuries.

Procopius of Caesarea wrote in the middle of the 6th century AD about a Slav, of the Anti population, who had learnt Latin among the populations north of Danube.[105] The original *magister militum per Thracias* (ά) Chilbudios

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[103] Mihăescu *et alii*, 1970, 265 – "Căci sciţii sînt amestecaţi şi pe lîngă limba lor barbară caută să vorbească sau limba hunilor sau a goţilor sau a ausonilor, atunci când unii dintre dînşii au de-a face cu romanii"; De Boor, p. 135 (see above). Marinescu, 1896 / 591: "căci fiind ei adunaţi din tóte părţile, pe lângă limba lor barbară, vorbesc cu zel séu a Hunnilor séu a Gothilor séu şi *a Ausonilor, cari din ei au mestecare cu Romanii*.".
[104] Mihăescu *et alii*, 1970, 279; De Boor, p. 145 (see above).
[105] Procopius Caesariensis, *De bello Gothico*, VII, 14, 1-6 sqq., 16, VII, 14, 36. E. g., the last reference, 36, says: " ὰ ὴ ὶ ῶ μ ὰ ἐ μ ῆ ὶ ῖ ἱ ῶ ἔ " (although he spoke Latin and he have had learnt many of Chilboudios' ways) – Mihăescu *et alii*, 1970, 445.

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seem to have been one of the numerous men in the Byzantine Empire imported and assimilated from among the Slavic population. He kept the Danubian limes safe and impenetrable for about three years, when he was finally killed in a battle (ca. 533 AD). Another Chibudios was first an Antian prisoner to the Sclaveni, and then to Antae masters. A Roman prisoner said this was the *magister militum*, in order to get his freedom, corroborated with a ransom paid to the Antae. The false Chilbudios revealed the forgery, but the Antae, interested in the reward continued the charade. Justnian offered the Antae the deserted city of Turris, north of Danube, and payment to defend the borders of the empire as foederati. The Antae agreed and asked that Chilbudios would recover his office. The plot was discovered by Narses, who sent the phony Chilbudios to Constantinople (ca. 545 AD).[106]

This episode, about the false Chilbudios, shows, for a later time than that of Priscus, that the pressure of the Roman culture and of the Latin language was present north of Danube. Bilingualism, including Latin as a language of a very high interest, must have been very frequent there, since some could learn Latin north of Danube, to use it when communicating with officials south of the river.

Similar to the penetration of the Roman power north of Danube during the time of Constantine the Great, Justinian I regained the imperial dominance over territories like (by modern names) Banat, Oltenia and Muntenia, between the Danube and the Carpathians. To this may be added that, in spite of a constant pressure from the Slavs and Bulgars, "from the archaeological evidence it seems clear that the imperial control persisted well past Justinian's accession on a strip of territory north of the Danube."[107]

The evidence given above about the persistent influence of the Latin and Roman culture in Balkans in early Middle Ages confirms the thesis that at first (6th-10th centuries AD) the Slavs suffered a cultural and linguistic influence from the Romance and

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[106] Curta, 2001, 76-81. Ziemann, 2007, 91. Rubin, 1995, 151-153. Martindale, 1992, 286-286. Cf. Cameron, 2000, 72 sqq., 474. Zinkeisen, 1832, 666, 703.
[107] Evans, 2002, 79.

then the Proto-Romanian population north and south of Danube, and only afterwards the process reversed.[108]

Teophylactus Simokattes left us a sample of the Romance language (in the course of changing) spoke in the 6th century in the Balkans (*Historiae*, II, 15: "torna, torna" – *return, return*).[109] Later, Theophanes Confessor (8th cent.) quoted the story and gave the above mentioned words twice, once with the adagio "fratre" (*Chronographia* - "torna, torna, fratre").[110] I think, as Giurescu & Giurescu, that the original form is "fratre", which was altered in some manuscripts at "frater", because it was considered an error. The reversed process could not be possible. I also agree it could not be a military command, for it could not contain the word for "brother". The expression is a proof of the local Romance language, from 587, the year of an Avar invasion south of the Danube. In either way (*fratre* or *frater*), the popular use of Latin in the Balkan region is kept in a time when Latin began its evolution toward Romance languages. Therefore, it was also the starting point of the early Proto-Romanian. It can also be noticed that the story itself says that the expression was spoken "in the tongue of the people" or "in the language of the land (country)". Thus, it wasn't the official, literary Latin, but the popular form of speaking of the Romanized population.

(Pseudo) Mauricius also gave testimony for the practice of speaking a form of Latin north of Danube is, who wrote about some "Roman" refugees in the 7th century AD from north to south of the Danube who played the role of guides in the lands northern banks, but often intentionally misguiding the Byzantines (*Strategikon*, XI, 31).[111]

And these are only some of the proofs for the development of a Romance language in the entire Carpathian-Balkan region, both north and south of the Danube.[112]

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[108] Paliga, 2003 – in agreement with Mih il , 1971.
[109] Mih escu *et alii*, 1970, 539.
[110] Cf. Giurescu & Giurescu, 1974, 177-178. The form "frater", influenced by the opinions of the editors appears also in the *Fontes...* colection (2nd vol.) – see Mih escu *et alii*, 1970, 605 (1: 22, De Boor, p. 258).
[111] Mih escu *et alii*, 1970, 561 (apud H. Mih ìescu, Bucure ti, 1970).
[112] Cf. Giurescu & Giurescu, 1974, 126-155.

4. Final considerations over the Wallachians in the Nibelungenlied

The Proto-Romanian language developed both north and south of the Danube roughly between the 5th and 10th centuries AD. Therefore, the *Nibelungenlied* refers, through the terms "Wallachia", "Wallachian land" and "Ramunc(h)" not to some obscure Romance population, but to that which had formed in the mentioned period from Pannonia to the east, to the Carpathian-Balkan area, echoing its reality in the 11th-12th centuries AD, the time of the first crusades. At that time the Wallachians were neighbors with the Poles (West Slavs), Russians (East Slavs) and "Greeks" (Byzantines), exactly as grouped by the *lied* (see Map 1, below).

Although Steven I of Hungary have had begun his reign in 1001 AD, the historiography, the placement of the Szekelys' vanguard only at the Western Carpathians in the 11th century and the archaeological proofs show that the direct domination of the Hungarian Kingdom had not penetrated farther at that time.

On one hand, the "Wallachians" in the *Nibelungelnied* is an ethnonym, and refers to the eastern Romance population, spread, as the chronicles say, from Pannonia, included, to the east (the *Geography* of Moses Chorenats'i, 9th cent. AD; the *Chronicle* of Nicetas Choniates, 12th cent.; of Nestor, 12th cent; *Gesta Hungarorum*, 12th cent.)[113].

On the other hand, the "Wallachian land" in the *Nibeungenlied* refers, therefore, mostly to the Wallachian duchies (duke: "cne(a)z" – "jude", "voievod" – "duc ") at the east of the direct Hungarian domination, who had reached that time the Western Carpathians in the 11th century AD.[114]

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[113] Giurescu & Giurescu, 1974, 132-134. Cf. Cross & Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, 35, 52-53 (& 5-6), 62 (& 25) for the *Chronicle* of Nestor.
[114] Cf. Pop, 2011, 141-166.

Map. 1. East Europe in the *Nibelungenlied*, echoing the time of the First and the Second crusades

The "latest news" was not in the Middle Ages, for distant and mysterious lands, the most up to date information, but that of some decades ago or even a century ago. A heroic ballad, a *lied*, a *saga* was an interweaven composition with "old" and "recent" information. There the "old" was told through the eyes of various authors and their knowledge of the past. The authors were unspecialized, but not ignorant, and passionate about the legends they were transmitting. The saga suffered multiple revisions from its successive authors and from its editors to whom we owe the final versions.

The rebellion of the Asenids[115] started in 1185/6 AD because of the increase of the taxes in the Byzantine Empire. This was the exact time when the last versions of the *Nibelungenlied* were produced, beginning with reuniting two Low German poems about 1150, and the merged one spreading in High German, in south German lands, about 1170. By the time when the political creation of the Asenids was perceived as a new state, in the 13th century, and even earlier, about 1190 the last versions of the *Nibelungenlied* were already created, to be written down not much later, starting most probably in Austria.[116] Thus, the rebellion and then the Wallachian-Bulgarian rule of the Asenids

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[115] Madgearu, 2014.
[116] Shumway, 1909, *Introductory Sketch*.

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in the Balkans occurred too late to be the inspirational source of the *Nibelungenlied*'s author(s), for the editors of the *lied* had already begun to issue the earliest variants we have now. The *Nibelungenlied* has, therefore, an older ancestry in the central and eastern European realm.

The events that sparked the interest about this part of the world for the German peoples were the Crusades,[117] begun in 1096 AD, continued with connected enterprises and with the second Crusade, in 1146/7 AD. This is the right period for central and eastern European peoples represented in the *Nibelungenlied*. We should not forget, in this context, that some crusader armies crossed the lands of the Wallachians, spread in Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia, in their journey to Constantinople. The German branch of the First Crusade (1096), led by Godefroy de Bouillon, crossed Hungary and the Balkans. The Norwegian Crusade (1107-1110), led by Sigurd I, had a cavalry branch that traversed Germany, Hungary, the Wallachian land(s), and the Balkan part of the Byzantine Empire.

Regaining territories from the Bulgarians,[118] the Byzantine Empire had restored his Danubian borders in the time of the emperor Basil II (958-1025 AD), just before the first Crusade (1096 AD). Thus, the mention of the "Greeks" among the neighbors of Wallachians in the *Nibelungenlied* means that the author(s) understood by "Wallachians" more their northern branch, which did not fall under Byzantine effective control, meaning those spread from Pannonia to the Danube Delta.

The references to the Wallachians in the *Nibelungenlied* are for a consolidated nation among its neighbors, represented by its elite, showing distinctive costumes, and an army with a well constituted cavalry. The realities in the time the last forms of the *lied* was composed (11th-12th centuries AD) correspond to and continue older realities, of the forefathers of the Wallachian (Romanian) people, the Proto-Romanians from the real time of Attila onward, which are partially echoed in the lied.

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[117] Laiou & Mottahedeh, 2001.
[118] Michael Angold, *The Byzantine empire*, 1025–1118, in Luscombe *et alii*, 2008, 217-253. Breisach, 1994, 132-137. Theodorescu, 1974, 48-56.

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