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Dacian-Roman Cultural Personalities from Scythia Minor (4th-6th Centuries) and Their Contribution to the Affirmation and Promotion of a Humanistic-Christian Culture at European Level

Cătălina MITITELU¹

Abstract

In this study, we have evoked the names of several personalities from the Proto-Romanian culture of Latin and Greek language, from the 4th-6th centuries, located in Scythia Minor (Romanian Dobrogea). Through their pastoral and canonical activities and works with a pronounced literary, historical, theological-philosophical and legal content, they contributed to the assertion of a humanistic Christian culture of ecumenical nature and to the promotion of "unitas in diversitas" (unity in diversity), in the cultural field, at European level. Thus, they played an important role in preparing the European unity of ecclesiastical and cultural-religious nature. Through their (theological, philosophical, historical, literary, juridical etc.) works, these scholars from the Roman province of Scythia Minor are also known in history as founders of the European Christian Culture of ecumenical nature. Finally, by their works, these Scholars from the Romanian Dobrogea of the 4th – 6th centuries promoted the cultural (material and spiritual) identity of the two worlds of the Roman Empire, i.e. "Pars Orientis" and "Pars Occidentis", which underlay the cultural identity of today's Europe.

Keywords: *European culture, humanistic scholars, culture founders, the Danubian-Pontic area, proto-Romanian culture.*

¹ Associate Professor PhD, Ovidius University of Constanta, Constanta, Romania, ovidiustomis@yahoo.co.uk.

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Corresponding Author: Cătălina MITITELU

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1. Preliminary considerations

The first part of the paper deals briefly with some considerations and specifications on the Geto-Dacians' history (the natives of the former Roman province, "Scythia Minor") and culture, between the first and the sixth century AD, also highlighting their "Romanization" process, subsequent to the Roman conquest of the Danubian-Pontic-Carpathian area.

In the second part, we made a very brief reference to the Culture of Geto-Dacians from Scythia Minor, at the dawn of the first century AD, culture which was acknowledged even by the one of the greatest classical poets of the Latin literature, i.e. Ovid († 17 AD).

The third part of the paper evoked both the Daco-Roman culture of the 4th - 6th centuries, from Pontic Dacia, and the contribution brought by some exceptional personalities of the local Dacian-Roman culture from the 4th-6th centuries to its various fields (theological, philosophical, literary, historical etc.).

The reader will notice that these personalities of the Dacian-Roman culture proved their humanistic vocation of Christian origin, and at the same time contributed meritoriously to the assertion and promotion of the European culture of Greek and Latin expression. Our reader should also retain that these personalities played an important role as well in shaping a new European cultural identity, whose "*unitas in diversitas*" can also be identified in the national cultures of today's European Union states.

From the very beginning, it is noteworthy that this paper, by its content expressed in a clear and argumentative ideative thinking and by the assessment of its documentary information – either historical, literary, theological, legal, etc. – offers the reader the opportunity to notice our contribution in approaching a topic with a clear interdisciplinary profile. Moreover, we want to underline the force that guided us throughout this writing process, in order to provide new information on the contribution of some outstanding personalities of the Dacian-Roman culture from the Romanian Dobrogea, from the 4th to the 6th centuries. In addition, we also highlight our critical but objective positioning (i.e. "*sine ira et studio*") regarding the specialized literature, in terms of the approached topic.

Finally, the aim of our work was not only to familiarize the reader from different research fields of socio-humanistic nature with the ideas and thoughts propagated by the famous personalities of the Greek and Latin culture. We also aimed at highlighting the importance and the actuality of the subject, hence our "*ad fontes*" reference (to sources), i.e. to the sources of European culture.

2. Considerations on the "Geto-Dacians" from the former Roman province of "Scythia Minor" (Romanian Dobrogea)

From the 6th century BC, historical sources also made express reference to the "Northern Thracians" from the "Carpathian-Danubian area", i.e. "the Geto-Dacians". Their ethnic and cultural (material and spiritual) identity was thus outlined even "sooner than the moment when Herodotus took knowledge of the Getae and C. Julius Caesar - of the Dacians"[1].

Both the literary sources and the results of the latest archaeological discoveries reveal important evidence about the ethnical and cultural-spiritual identity of the Geto-Dacians from those times.

The latest results of the historical research conducted on the Northern Thracian group (the Getae and the Dacians) reveal that "the names of Scythians (Γἔται, Getae) and Dacians (Δακκοί, Δᾶκται, Δακκῆ, Daci) were used by the Latin and Greek writers in order to designate, under the name of Getae, the tribes from the Lower Danube and, under the name of Dacians, the ones from the central and western regions of the Carpathian-Danubian area"[1].

Written sources – both from Greek and Roman times – reveal that, in 27 BC, when Scythia Minor (Dobrogea) was conquered and transformed by the Romans into a Roman province, the indigenous population of this province – obviously majoritarian in terms of number – was represented by the Getae"[2], a Northern Thracian tribe known by the Roman historians and geographers as "Dacians".

Historians also note that "from the third quarter of the 2nd century (AD)", the Greek cities (Histria, Tomis and Callatis) became an "integral part of the province border"[2], i.e. of the Roman province of Scythia Minor. Through this integration, the Greek culture – philosophical, theological, legal, historical etc. – would stimulate in fact the natives' culture from "*illo tempore*", i.e. from the 4th-6th centuries. These are the "Daco-Romans" from the northern Danubian area, included in the Roman province of "Scythia Minor", known as Dobrogea (a name that it still bears) by the Byzantines of the 10th century.

Through its exquisite scholars from the 4th-6th centuries, the Thracio-Geto-Dacian people – already in a natural process of Romanization, hence the phrase "Daco-Romans" – actually brought a meritorious contribution to the whole "*oikumènè*", i.e. the Greek-Roman world at that time, also in a manifest process of assertion and promotion of its humanistic-Christian values.

3. Considerations on the Culture of the Geto-Dacians from Scythia Minor at the dawn of the first century AD

It was said that Publius Ovidius Naso – who was "exiled"[3] by Emperor Augustus in 8 AD at Tomis, the capital of Scythia Minor – had been "the first Roman" who had inhabited today's Romanian territory and who had enjoyed the "life of a full citizen, as soldier, magistrate, writer ..." [4].

Indeed, at the dawn of the first century of the Christian era, one of the greatest classical poets of the Latin literature, namely Ovid, was forced to spend the last years of his life on the Romanian soil of today's Dobrogea.

Among other things, the two collections of poems, i.e. "Sorrows" (*Tristia*) and "Letters from the Black Sea" (*Epistulae ex Ponto*), written by the great Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso, during his exile at Tomis (9-17 AD), reveal precious information about the Geto-Dacian civilization and culture (the local Scythian Minor population of that time).

For instance, Ovid's testimonies[5] reveal that the Getae cohabited at Tomis with the Besi and the Odrisi (i.e. other northern Thracian tribes) and also with the "Greeks" (*Tristia* III, 3; III, 10; IV, 6; IV, 10) who had colonized the "Black Sea Coast" (*Tristia* V, 7, 12). Moreover, these testimonies inform us that the Getae had not been "fully subject" to Rome yet, i.e. at that time (*Epistulae ex Ponto* III, 4, 92).

Concerning the "Greeks", it should be noted that – among them – they were also Greek speakers (Hellenized Thracians) from Asia Minor, who, for commercial purposes, had stopped on the western shore of the Black Sea, i.e. today's Romanian Dobrogea, in the 7th-6th centuries BC. There, they founded the cities of Histria, Callatis and Tomis, on the old settlements of the native (Thraco-Getic) population.

As for the partial "submission" of the Getae by the Romans – to which poet Ovid expressly made reference – it must also be mentioned that this would only happen after 106/107 BC, when the Danubian-Pontic-Carpathian area would be conquered "*manu militari*" by the Romans.

The same Roman poet, i.e. Ovid, also mentioned that even the language of the Thracian settlers from Asia Minor, i.e. the Greek language, was spoken with a Getic accent (cf *Tristia*, V, 7, 51-52). This testimony also confirms that, in the 7th century BC, the first colonists, who arrived in Scythia Minor from Asia Minor, originated – largely – in the Hellenized Thracians. Moreover, in Scythia Minor, there was already an indigenous population, i.e. the Northern Thracians, that would be known by historians as "Getae" and "Dacians", whose language had a common lexical background with the Latin language from Latium.

Concerning the "classical" Geto-Dacian culture – which was established "during the first half of the 2nd century BC, and which evolved uninterruptedly until the conquest of Dacia in 101-106 BC"[6] – it was noted that "we are dealing with a native culture that perpetuates and enriches the material and spiritual wealth accumulated over the previous centuries"[6].

The same historians also noted that "in the 4th century BC, the elements of the native culture still emerged, perpetuating ancient traditions; however, this time, they merged with Roman, Gothic and Sarmatian elements, forming a synthesis represented by the culture known as Sântana de Mureș-Cerneahov"[6].

Therefore, the conquest of Dacia by the Romans between 101 and 106 AD did not represent "the disappearance of the native culture", but only the "end of its evolution peak"[6]. This conquest contributed to the formation of another cultural identity, known in history as the Daco-Roman Culture, expressed in the Geto-Dacian, Latin and Greek languages. It is noteworthy that this culture lasted until the end of the first millennium, when one can speak of the end of the formation process of the Romanian people, and *ipso facto* of the Romanian culture.

4. The Daco-Roman culture of the 4th-6th centuries from Pontic Dacia and its theological-philosophical nature

As far as the cultural life is concerned, the cohabitation of the two peoples – the Geto-Dacians and the Romans – led naturally to the propagation and assertion of the local Dacian-Roman culture of Latin expression. In fact, the representatives of this culture contributed to the promotion of the Geto-Dacian-Roman culture, and to the dissemination of a culture of humanistic origin, with a clear European vocation.

In the 4th-6th centuries, on the land of today's Romanian Dobrogea – the former Roman province of Scythia Minor – there lived outstanding personalities of the classical Greek-Roman and Ecumenical Christian Culture, who left us reference works in the theological, philosophical, literary, canonical-legal field etc..

We are referring to a plethora of erudite clerics (bishops, priests and especially hieromonks and native monks from the 5th-6th centuries), from the province of Scythia Minor (Dobrogea), hence the name of "Scythian monks"[7], whom some foreign scholars misidentified with Jordan's (Iordanes) "Goths".

In this period (4th-6th centuries), the Dacian-Roman culture from Pontic Dacia (Scythia Minor) had a pronounced theological-philosophical

nature, expressed in the Christian religious spirit (the Religion of the people inhabiting this geographical area, i.e. today's Romania).

Through their interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary works and daily activities, these exquisite scholars from Scythia Minor (the 4th-6th centuries) excelled in the assertion and promotion of both the classical Greek and Latin culture of humanistic origin and of the Christian culture, expressed in both languages.

Through this humanistic culture with a pronounced theological-philosophical nature[8], the exquisite Dacian-Roman scholars from Scythia Minor asserted their ethnic, cultural and spiritual identity and contributed to the promotion of a Christian culture of European humanistic origin.

It is also noteworthy that, even since the early Christian centuries, the Church in the southern and northern Danubian area had been in canonical communion with the Church of the Old Rome[9], wherewith it remained connected until after the separation of the Eastern Church from the Western one, produced by the Schism of 1054.

In 330, the imperial city of Constantinople – built on the settlement of an ancient Thracian fortress, known by the Greeks as "Bizantion" – became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Thus, the relationships between the Church from the Romanian area (i.e. the South and North of the Danube) and the Roman State [10] (and *ipso facto* the Archdiocese of Constantinople) became a reality.

From the second half of the 5th century, the Danubian-Pontic-Carpathian area also entered the area of political, cultural and ecclesiastical influence of the "New Rome" (see Canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council). This was in particular due to the canonical communion relationships between the Autocephalous Archbishop See of Tomis and the Archbishop See of Constantinople, raised to the status of Patriarchate in 457, under a Constantinopolitan Synod Decision [11].

However, these relationships with "the New Rome", *alias* Constantinople, could not lead to the interruption of the canonical relationships between the Northern-Danubian Church and the Church of "the Old Rome". This reality is confirmed by the correspondence of several Popes of Rome with the Primates of Tomis Autocephalous Church [12].

These canonical connections between the Church from Scythia Minor – whose civil and ecclesiastical metropolis was established at Tomis (today's Constanta) – and the main ecclesiastical centers from *illo tempore* also contributed to the promotion of the cultural (literary, theological, canonical-legal, etc.) unity in the Christianized Greek-Roman world, known as "*oikoumène*".

5. Some exceptional personalities of the Dacian-Roman culture from the 4th-6th centuries

The historical and literary sources of that period retained the names of several exquisite scholars who – by their works – proved that they were not only exceptional theologians, but also scholars with a chosen humanistic philosophical, literary and legal education and training.

Among these, we first mention Archbishop Gerontius (Terennius/Terentius) of Tomis, who participated in the Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 381). He was expressly nominated in a Decree by Emperor Theodosius I (July 30, 381) among the ten Orthodox hierarchs appointed to observe the reception and application of the resolutions of the aforementioned Council. Moreover, the aforementioned Decree provided for the obligation of those who inhabited "the cities of Thrace and Scythia" to be in full "communion" of faith with "*Terennio, episcopo Scythiae*" [13], i.e. with Terentius, Archbishop of Tomis and Metropolitan of Scythia Minor. Otherwise, they would be seen as "heterodox" because they would not be "faithful to (...) one and the same Divinity ..." [14] whom the Fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council had been faithful to, including the Primate of Scythia Minor [12].

However, the Decree of Emperor Theodosius the Great easily reveals that Terentius, Archbishop of Tomis (participant in the Second Ecumenical Council), was not only one of the outstanding personalities of the theological world of that time. He was also a philosopher by education and training, who excelled in his knowledge of Greek philosophy, and whose vocabulary was used in some texts written during the Sessions of this Council.

Moreover, it should also be pointed out that the association between Thrace and Scythia Minor – made by Emperor Theodosius the Great – is another obvious testimony revealing the common origins of the Thracian population from the two Roman Empire regions, i.e. "Thracia" and "Scythia Minor". It is noteworthy that, at that time, this population was already undergoing a Romanization process.

His successor to the See of Tomis was Archbishop Teotim (end of the 4th century - the first half of the 5th century). In 392, St. Jerome [15] listed him among the great scholars of that time. Moreover, according to historian Sozomenos (375/400 – aprox. 450), he was "a Scythian, i.e. a local Thracio-Geto-Dacian from Scythia Minor, who had been "*ἐν φιλοσοφία τραφεῖς*" [14] (educated in the spirit of philosophy). This made him live in a sober way, but not like the philosophers who belonged to or who were part of the thinking systems of the various philosophical schools of their time, but like those

who knew "*monastica filosofia*"[16], i.e. the philosophy of the ascetic-monastic life [17].

Among others, Archbishop Teotim of Tomis "wrote short treatises in the form of dialogues, in the old eloquence style"[15]. This attests that the Tomitan hierarch was acquainted quite well with the register of the classical Greek-Latin culture and literature.

In his turn, scholar Valentinian, Archbishop of Tomis, is also another outstanding personality of the ecumenical Christian world of his time. Thus, Pope Virgilius (537-555) corresponded [18] with him and asked for his opinion in the theological issues debated at the Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 553). Moreover, Emperor Justinian nominated him at the 7th Session (May 26, 553) of the Fifth Ecumenical Council among the Orthodox hierarchs who enjoyed a unanimously recognized theological authority.

6. Precisions and assessments concerning the intellectual profile of some scholars from "Scythia Minor", who contributed to the promotion of the humanistic Christian-culture at European level

In the same period (5th-6th centuries), beside these scholar-hierarchs, other clerics from the Roman province of Scythia Minor (and especially monks) asserted themselves as true founders of the European culture of Christian-humanistic origin.

One of these was St. John Cassian (360-435). Born and educated in the schools and monasteries from Scythia Minor (Tomis, Histria, Callatis, etc.), Saint John Cassian completed his theological-philosophical and ascetic-monastic education and training – over a period of 20 years – in the great Lavras (i.e. important great monasteries) from Palestine, Syria and Egypt.

Arriving in Constantinople, John the Tomitan or John of Scythia Minor made his apprenticeship under the direction of St. John Chrysostom, who would ordain him deacon. At Rome, he would meet Deacon Leon, future Pope Leon (440-461), who ordained him priest. Finally, he spent the last 25 years of his life in Marseilles (Galia), where he founded two monasteries (one for men and another one for women), both under the Pahomiyah Rule (of St. Pahomie the Egyptian) and the Rule of St. Basil the Great. Thus, the Proto-Romanian John Cassian became also the "founder" of Western monasticism.

The fact that the Proto-Romanian John Cassian was educated and trained at the schools from the Greek cities located on the western Black Sea shore, i.e. Tomis, Histria and Callatis, is also attested by the epigraphic

testimonies discovered in their ruins. For example, the information provided by some inscriptions from Histria reveal that, in the third and second centuries BC, the young people from the Histrian gymnasium attended the lectures (ἀκροάσεις) of foreign teachers [19]. Or, these Greek speaking teachers came from Asia Minor, wherefrom the first settlers, who had populated the cities from the western Black Sea shore even since the 7th -6th centuries BC, originated. In fact, according to some specialized researchers, the "first wave" of colonists from the West-Pontic shores would have "debarked at the Ishtrians' request, at the turn of the 7th and 6th centuries BC", when "their massive penetration into the countryside" had started [20].

Future humanistic scholars from the 4th-6th centuries, such as St. John Cassian († 435) and St. Dionysius Exiguus († 545) also studied at these schools from Scythia Minor (Romanian Dobrogea), where great teachers had previously taught Greek and Latin.

We know that Saint John Cassian was a good speaker of the two classical languages, i.e. Latin and Greek, which added to his native tongue, i.e. "Getica" (it is noteworthy that poet Ovid († 17 BC) also wrote a book of poems in this language).

John Cassian was able to study at the elite schools from his native homeland (Scythia Minor/Dobrogea), "according to an almost common curriculum, which, at that time, included reading, writing, grammar, mathematics, music, rhetoric and, above all, literary notions". Moreover, as far as literary studies were concerned, "classical Greek and Latin authors (poets, rhetors, historians), such as Homer, Vergilius, Eschil, Euripides, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Horatius, Cicero, Sallustius held a leading position" [21].

In Scythia Minor, John Cassian studied not only classical Latin and Greek literature and philosophy. He also studied Christian Theology, at the Schools and Monasteries of his native homeland, as revealed, among others, by his works, i.e. "On the Incarnation of the Lord against Nestorius", "Conlationes" and "On the Settlements of the Monasteries and on the Healings of the 8 Principal Sins".

However, the latter reveals that St. John Cassian was not only a subtle theologian and philosopher, but also a famous historian of monasticism and, at the same time, an eminent pedagogue and psychologist. Moreover, his last work had an eminently philosophical and psychological content due to his philosophical and psychological knowledge acquired from Latin and Greek works. Furthermore, his last work was influenced by (and it can be assessed through the lens of) the teachings of the Holy Scripture and of the Church Fathers who had preceded him (of which Archbishop Teotim of Tomis, who was his main mentor).

John Cassian had the opportunity to meet his Tomitan hierarch, Saint Teotim, who was both an outstanding theologian and philosopher, in Constantinople, where he defended St. John Chrysostom from his detractors' lying accusations.

Another representative of the Proto-Romanian science and culture of that era was St. Dionysius Exiguus (about 460-545), who became famous not only due to his translations and works in the field of canon law, Eastern Church theology, astronomy, history of Christian literature, etc., but also due to his knowledge of Dialectics. He taught this subject at Vivarium Academy in Calabria (province of southern Italy), founded by Casiodor (about 485-585) [22], who was the disciple of philosopher Boethius († 525), the last representative of the Roman culture of late Antiquity and Prime Minister of the Ostrogoth Emperor Theodoric the Great († 526).

His interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary training is also underlined by the Forewords, Comments and Footnotes accompanying his translations from Greek into Latin, which also offered him the opportunity to highlight his skills as a writer, commentator and translator.

Like his predecessor, Dionysius Exiguus (the Humble) was trained and educated in the (public and church) schools of his native homeland, i.e. Scythia Minor (Dobrogea), and especially in its metropolis, Tomis (Constanta). Among others, there he became acquainted with "*Leges Bellagines*" (Laws of Belagine). These constituted the code of laws which, "thousands of years ago", had guided "the Pelasgians, the forerunners of the Thracian-Romanians" [23], and then the Thracio-Geto-Dacians, i.e. his direct ancestors.

According to some well-known scholars, these "Belagine Laws", which "are the basis of human civilization" [24], were drafted by the Pelasgians in the Carpathian-Danubian area [24]. In fact, these laws are known as "The Laws of Zalmoxis", a historical character that the Father of History, i.e. Herodotus of Halicarnas (484 BC - 425 BC), considered contemporary with Pythagoras (*Historiae*, IV, 96). However, this historical figure, i.e. Zalmoxis, was in fact a religious "reformer". Through his moral-religious teachings, he had preached to his people, namely to the Northern Thracians (Getae, Dacians, etc.), from the Danubian-Pontic-Carpathian area, bringing "Zalmoxism" closer to the people's power of understanding. This people honored him as a "worthy leader", i.e. "able to lead, to advise" [25].

It is not surprising that Dionysius Exiguus, even though he had been educated and trained in Roman Law Schools – in his native homeland and in Constantinople and Rome – offered the Western world a Collection of Laws (Dionysiana) with a pronounced religious-moral content (like the "Belagine Laws") [23] and not with a purely legal one. This confirms that Dionysius

was well acquainted with the old Code of laws of his ancestors, i.e. with the "Belagine Laws", written in verses. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the Geto-Dacians of his era – undergoing a Romanization process – continued to recite and sing the text of these laws.

At the same time, it should be noted that not Iordanes (half of the 5th century AD) – a Romanized Goth (Getae) from Moesia – translated these "Laws" for the first time, but Dionysius Exiguus, who knew them "from his Geto-Dacian ancestors"; the latter had observed and conveyed them exactly, "orally, from generation to generation" [23].

In the Danubian-Pontic-Carpathian area, the provisions of these Thraco-Geto-Dacian "laws" had been preserved and transmitted under the name of "*Jus Valachicum*" [26], which was actually identified with customary law (the law of the Land).

It is also worth mentioning that "*Jus Valachicum*" – based on "Belagine Laws", translated for the first time in Latin by the Proto-Romanian Dionysius Exiguus – had been known since the Middle Ages, both in today's Polish and Hungarian territories [25].

The desire for knowledge and spiritual perfection led Dionysius first to the East, then to Constantinople, and finally to Rome, where he was the counselor of "Ten Popes"[27] in matters of theological, canonical, astronomical, historical, philosophical nature.

Dionysius Exiguus remained in the universal history of the Church and in the history of European culture, especially due to his great idea of abandoning both the traditional calculation of time (which started with the foundation of Rome, i.e. 754 BC) and "Diocletian's era". The latter was still used in Dionysius Exiguus's times by the Church of Egypt because it reminded the Christians of the persecutions triggered against them by this Roman Emperor (284-305).

Therefore, humankind owes to the Proto-Romanian Dionysius Exiguus the establishment of the "Christian Era", i.e. "our Era", because, across time (years), he claimed that the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ represented the beginning.

Dionysius Exiguus, from Scythia Minor (today's Romanian Dobrogea), chose to calculate "the passage of time starting with the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that – as confessed by the Father of the "Christian Era", i.e. Dionysius Exiguus from Dobrogea – all of us would be acquainted with the beginning of our hope; thus, the cause of human race redemption, i.e. the Passions of our Savior, should be perceived more clearly" [28].

John Maxentius (6th century) was one of the famous "Schytian Monks"[29]. Moreover, he was considered the most prominent exponent of the Byzantine Theology [30] of his time.

We know about the Daco-Roman John Maxentius, from the Lower Danube, that "he closely dealt with combating Nestorianism, inspiring himself more than once from St. Cyril's works"[31]. This is especially highlighted by his works "*Libellus fidei*" and "*Contra Nestorianus*".

Like his predecessors – St. Teotim of Tomis, St. John Cassian, St. Dionysius Exiguus, etc. – John Maxentius was educated and trained at local schools, cities and monasteries, and wrote and studied in Latin and Greek. In fact, "the inscriptions on stone, mortar, ceramics, ornaments, etc. discovered in large numbers, especially in the Greek-Roman cities on the Black Sea coast", reveal that "the men of culture from Scythia were usually bilingual" [32], i.e. connoisseurs and speakers of Latin and Greek.

However, this epigraphic material represents not only a "precious documentary basis for the Greek and Latin language history", but also "for the evolution of the forms transmitted to the Romanian language", and especially with regard to the evolutionary process of the transition "from vulgar (Popular, n.n.) Latin to Romanian..." [32].

Among the erudite people from the 4th-6th centuries, who lived and worked in today's Danubian-Pontic Romanian area, there were not only locals (natives), i.e. Thracio-Geto-Dacians, Romans and Daco-Romans, but also foreigners. For example, Entolios of Caesarea, originating from Palestine – built – for him and his wife – a beautiful Burial Chamber at Tomis. Moreover, the jurist Symplikios and his wife, Melitis, originating from Syria – from an "important family", according to their own words – also built such a funerary monument at Callatis (Mangalia) [32].

That in the cities of Scythia Minor, and especially in its metropolis, Tomis, the science, the art and the Greek-Roman culture were at home is also attested by the monumental Mosaic Edifice discovered in 1959-1962 "on the western sea shore of today's Constanta, behind Ovid Square". This Edifice was "built in the second half of the 4th century" [32].

Exponential monuments of Dobrogea's civilization and culture from the 4th-6th centuries also include more than 30 "Paleo-Christian basilicas", which were discovered in the cities of Greek-Roman tradition, and which had been built on the former Thracio-Geto-Dacian settlements, inhabited by the natives of Dobrogea's lands [12].

Among other things, well-known scholars also mentioned that, within these "Basilicas", there were also discovered several remains of mural paintings that outrun by more than one millennium the famous frescoes from Cozia Monastery (from the end of the 14th century - beginning of the

15th century) or from Voroneț Monastery (end of the 15th century). It is noteworthy that the latter (i.e. Voroneț Monastery) was known as the "Sistine Chapel of the East" [33] due to the frescoes painted between 1547 and 1548 on its exterior walls.

7. Instead of Conclusions

Instead of Conclusions, we should retain that the Danubian-Pontic area of today's Romania, formerly known as "Scythia Minor", was part of the Roman Empire as early as 27 BC, and that in this geographical area, in the 4th-6th centuries, prestigious Dacian-Roman cultural personalities brought significant contributions to the assertion and promotion of a humanistic culture at European level.

Therefore, the exquisite scholars of that time also received the appellation of "founders" of the medieval European culture, where the values of the classical Greek-Roman and Christian culture of humanistic origin were asserted and promoted.

Moreover, these fervent promoters of the humanistic Christian culture, from the former Roman province of "Scythia Minor" (today's Romanian Dobrogea), contributed both to the assertion and dissemination of the European cultural and Christian unity within the "oecumenical world" of "*illo tempore*" (that time).

Finally, we are convinced that our competent reader will notice and retain that, despite the limited number of pages granted by the editor, for a such paper, we have been able to perform a real theoretical analysis, and, *ipso facto*, to bring more "for" and "against" theoretical arguments from the scientific literature, including thus a so-called "dismantlement of the "against" arguments".

Moreover, we are convinced that our paper will give the opportunity to the reader to appreciate and retain the key idea that mastered our approach. Thus, we aimed at drawing the attention to the specialists from different research fields that, between the 4th and the 6th century Scythia Minor was inhabited by outstanding cultural personalities who, by their oecumenical activity and literary works of diverse (theological, philosophical, literary, historical, juridical etc.) content, contributed effectively to the assertion and promotion of an European culture of humanistic nature.

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