

August Kovačec

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SUMMARY

Since the end of the 17th century, when it had been explicitly mentioned, the idiom of some transhumant groups of population (it. Chicchi; Rumeri) found in the Karst region and Northern Istria was usually assimilated to the Rumanian language (it valacco: Rumanian or Dacorumanian). When Rumanian dialectology had been constituted in the second half of the 19th century, the survived idiom of these groups was considered as a dialect of the Rumanian language, under the name of Istrorumanian, mainly for structural and genetical reasons. As a consequence of the incorporation of the Rumanian ethnic territories east of the river Prut into the USSR, the Soviet linguistics treated the language of these territories as a distinct Romance language, confirming such an attitude by giving to it the status of independent Romance languages. This also applies to the “historical” Rumanian dialects south of the Danube. With the exception of a few linguists during the 1950ies, and the beginning of the 1960ies, the Rumanian linguists did not accept this point of view. The sociolinguistic criteria elaborated by Žarko Muljačić, developed on the basis of the ideas of Heinz Kloss, allow us to explain the specific position of Istrorumanian (a Rumanian “historical” dialect which had developed during the last several centuries “under the roof” of the Croatian, and periodically also under the Italian language) within the complexity of the Rumanian language.