

A NEW THEORY ON THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE NAME OF “MOLDOVA”

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Abstract. The goal of this paper is to present a new possible explanation for the name of the historical and geographical region called “Moldova”. The meaning of the word “Molde” is considered in “Old Norse” language, that is an old North Germanic language, and for the first time is connected to the name of Moldova. The meanings and origin of the words “Molde, Mulde” in Germanic languages and “Moldă” in Romanian language are studied and proved as related.

Keywords: Moldavia, Moldova etymology, toponymy, Old Norse, Goths, Romanian language

1. Introduction

Since hundreds of years linguists, historians and politicians try to find the origin of the name of the geographic and historical region called “Moldova” (Moldova or Moldavia in English). This vast and rich territory, situated in Eastern Europe, between the Eastern Carpathians and the Dniester River is nowadays divided between three European countries: Romania, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

In antiquity Moldova was inhabited by the Getae-Dacian tribes and the majority of its territory was not conquered by the Roman Empire. Due to its strategic location between Europe and Asia, at East of Carpathian Mountains and north of Black Sea, Moldova was invaded by many migrating people, such as: the Goths, Huns, Avars, Slavs, Bulgarians and later by the Mongols, Tatars etc. Archeological discoveries and written documents¹ show that the territory was continuously inhabited.

The medieval Principality of Moldavia (1359-1775) included the following geographical areas: Moldova, Bessarabia and Bukovina. The majority of the inhabitants of this territory speaks the Romanian language.

In 1775 the north-western part of Moldova, was included in the Holy Roman Empire (of the German Nation) and later, after the dissolving and reorganization

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¹ A.D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană*, vol. II, Chapter III, [History of Romanians from Dacia Traiana], “Elf” Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, p. 176.