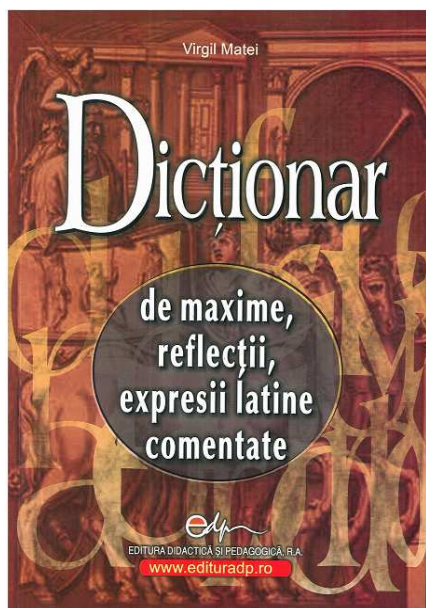


Virgil Matei, *Dicționar de maxime, reflecții, expresii latine comentate*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 2007, 472 p. (Mădălina Strehie)



Virgil Matei, author of the well-known book, *Gramatica limbii latine*, enriches the Romanian linguistics domain by publishing a volume which reflects the Roman people life experience: *Dicționarul de maxime, reflecții, expresii latine comentate*. The dictionary has five sections: *Preface, Dictionary of Maxims, Reflections and Expressions, Supplementum, Thematic Index* and *Bibliography*. The book comprises a vast corpus represented by over 4,000 maxims, proverbs and reflections, belonging to the best-known

Latin writers.

European history has made use of the Latin wisdom concisely expressed in these linguistic structures, become representative for various Imperial Houses and Royal Families.

Virgil Matei begins his book with a quotation from Cato's works: *Non pudeat, quae nescieris, te velle doceri*/"Nu te rușina să înveți lucruri pe care nu le-ai știut"/"Do not hesitate to learn things that you don't know" (*Disticha Moralia*, 4, 29). It is, indeed, a happy choice, since it is an invitation for the reader to deepen his knowledge and extend his reflection area. The purpose of his dictionary is clearly stated: it is an instrument "meant to help those who wield the pen giving their style more elegance and brilliance. (...) Therefore it will be a valuable guide for many readers ensuring that they will keep on the right track and avoid all dangers"/"în ajutorul celor care mănuiesc condeiful, atunci când vor să dea mai multă strălucire și eleganță scrisului lor. (...) Va fi deci pentru mulți un ghid prețios, care îi va călăuzi pe un drum drept, ferit de erori" (p. 5).

The substance of the book is given by the fragments selected from the works of illustrious Latin writers: Horace (*Satires*), Martial (*Epigrams*), Ovid (*Poems*), Juvenal (*Satires*), Virgil (*Eneid*), Tacit, Titus Livius (details from the history of the Roman people). Maxims and expressions are genuine wisdom treasures, referring to various areas: philosophy, Christianity, ethics, arts, literature, mythology. For example: *Audentes fortuna iuvat.*/'Norocul îi ajută pe cei care îndrăznesc.'/'Fortune favours the brave.' (Vergiliu), *Historia magistra vitae.*/'Istoria este îndrumătoarea vieții.'/'History is the tutor of life.' (Cicero), *Si vis pacem, para bellum.*/'Dacă vrei pace, pregătește-te de război.'/'If you want peace, prepare for war.' (Flavius Vegetius Renuș), *Peiora sunt tecta odia quam aperta.*/'Ura ascunsă este mai rea decât cea fățișă.'/'It is worse to hide your hatred than to show it.' (Seneca).

The book contains examples of Romanian examples of Romanian proverbs, equivalent to the Latin examples making up the corpus: for instance, *ad Kalendas Greacas* (*at the Greek calends*) corresponds to the Romanian *La Paștele cailor* (*When two Sundays come in one week*).

The Dictionary includes a *Supplementum* of Latin maxims translated into Romanian, which refer to man's character, customs, mentalities, lifeview nature and love. They are bookish in nature, reflecting aspects of the Roman civilisation.

*The Thematic Index* (p. 445-449) makes it easier for the reader to find a certain domain by indicating the page. Virtues and life principles occupy a large space in the book, since they represent role-models (truth, moderation, conscience, love, glory, happiness, wisdom). Life dimensions (experience, life, death, time) are not ignored either.

The Bibliography proves that the author has made use of the previous lexicographic works: *Dictionnaire des proverbes, sentences et maxims*, by Maurice (1960), *Un dicționar al înțelepciunii*, in 4 volumes, by Simenschy (1970-1975), all giving a complete image on the Roman world.

The size and graphics of the dictionary attract the reader, persuading him to make contact with Latin mentalities and wisdom.