

FOREWORD

As *HEROS Journal* enters its fourth issue, it continues to develop as a space for international scholarly dialogue dedicated to Romanian Studies. The contributions brought together in this volume reflect the breadth of contemporary research in the field, illustrating how Romanian language, literature, history, and culture continue to generate productive conversations across disciplines, methodologies, and academic traditions. In doing so, the journal reaffirms its commitment to promoting innovative research while strengthening the international community of scholars engaged with Romanian Studies.

Several contributions in this issue revisit historical and linguistic questions through innovative perspectives. Carmen Dura continues the research initiated in the previous issue of *HEROS Journal* with the second part of her detailed analysis of Johann Ignaz von Felbiger's eighteenth-century bilingual educational work, this time focusing on syntactic phenomena regarding the predicate, the predicative complement, and the verb's arguments. The volume further explores linguistic history through Adam Mikołaj Matuszczak's investigation of Serbian influences on the vocabulary related to traditional culture and cuisine in the Banat Romanian dialect, illustrating the complex cultural and linguistic interactions that have shaped regional varieties of Romanian.

The issue also opens new directions of inquiry into literary, cultural, and contemporary social phenomena. Alexandra Olteanu examines the emergence and marketing of the historical novel as a literary genre in the nineteenth century, while Anamaria Radu and Alexandra Cotoc propose a thought-provoking exploration of artificial intelligence and Romanian cultural heritage through the concept of Eminescu's AI doppelgänger. Cristina Hurdubaia's ethnographic case study offers valuable insights into processes of self-cultivation and domestic reconfiguration in the context of Romanian migration, further expanding the journal's interdisciplinary perspective.

The volume concludes with two book reviews that further enrich its intellectual and thematic scope. Brendan Humphreys offers a compelling discussion of Bruce Lincoln's *Secrets, Lies, and Consequences: A Great Scholar's Hidden Past and His Protégé's Unsolved Murder*, an important and thought-provoking work that sheds new light on the life of the Romanian historian of religions Ioan Petru Culianu and the circumstances surrounding his unsolved murder. The issue closes with Nadia-Flaviana Albescu's engaging review of Crina-Magdalena Zărnescu's *Delicatese cu spirit și savoare. Identități culturale și culinare*, inviting readers into a delightful exploration of culinary traditions, cultural memory, and shared identities, and providing a fitting conclusion to a volume that celebrates the richness and diversity of Romanian Studies.

This issue also marks the beginning of a new institutional collaboration with the Romanian Language Lectureships at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and Heidelberg University, initiated through the commemorative conference dedicated to Alexandru Cihac, organized at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz in November 2025 to mark the bicentenary of the scholar's birth. We are particularly grateful to Professors Anca Gâță and Romanița Constantinescu for this fruitful partnership, which will continue with the publication of the special fifth issue of *HEROS Journal* (December 2026), dedicated to the topic of etymology.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the authors who have entrusted *HEROS Journal* with their work and whose contributions continue to shape the journal's academic profile. We are equally indebted to the peer reviewers, whose rigorous evaluations, thoughtful recommendations, and unwavering commitment to academic excellence ensure the quality and integrity of every issue. Their work remains essential not only to maintaining the journal's scholarly standards but also to strengthening the growing HEROS community as an international space of intellectual exchange, collegiality, and collaborative research.

We hope that this fourth issue will inspire further research, encourage new interdisciplinary collaborations, and continue to foster meaningful dialogue across disciplines and national academic traditions, further consolidating *HEROS Journal* as an international forum for Romanian Studies.

The Editors