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Clergy, Monks and Laymen Translators of Church Books and Their Role in the Introduction of the Romanian Language into the Cult

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Abstract

The first prototypes of Romanian translations belong to the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century. The first prints, especially books of the Holy Scriptures, appeared in Transylvania in the second half of the sixteenth century, while in Wallachia and Moldova they were printed a century later. The translation of the books of the Holy Scriptures into Romanian culminated with the printing of the *Bible from Bucharest* in 1688, a work that crowns the typographic activity until then. It is the first full print of the Holy Scripture in Romanian. Throughout the centuries, the great hierarchs from the three Romanian provinces, monks, laymen and teachers from the theological education institutions have been noted among the translators of literature and theological teaching. Supported with financial resources by the rulers of the Romanian countries, who are lovers of culture, the typographers managed to print the first biblical, patristic and cult texts very useful to the Romanian believers eager to know God in their own language.

Keywords

translations, Bible, church books, bishops, priests, religious literature

I. Introduction

In the Romanian Orthodox Church there has been a long tradition of translating biblical and patristic texts into Romanian. This problem has worried many linguists, historians and theologians. Unfortunately, the first Romanian translations came to us, without any indication about the time, place or cultural environment in which they were made. Thus, it is not surprising, that opinions of a great diversity were put into circulation, but neither could give a satisfactory and definitive answer to the questions: when, where and in what political-social or cultural circumstances have the first translations into Romanian appeared. If some of the researchers claim that the first translations of the Holy Scripture books into Romanian would be due to reformist religious movements that emerged in Western Europe, most of them believe that the tone was given by the general European tendency to renounce the old cultural languages, for the benefit of development and imposition of the national languages. Therefore, the first Romanian translations of the Holy Scriptures were made by the permanent desire of the Romanian priests, monks and believers to know the word of God in their own language, and not at the urging or under the guidance of any heterodox propaganda, before them priests and Romanian believers always resisting.

II. The first prototypes of Romanian translations

Regarding the dating of the first prototypes of Romanian translations, most researchers admit that they belong to the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century¹.

Regarding the place where the first Romanian translations appeared, we consider that they were done in central or southern Transylvania (Feleac, Remeți, Geoagiu, Prislop, the princely churches of Hunedoara county, the church of Saint Nicholas of Scheii Brasov, the metropolitan residence of Alba Iulia and so on.). We also add that in Transylvania, and in general in all the inter-Carpathian territories - Banat, Bihor, Maramures

¹ Pr. Prof. Dr. Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Primele traduceri românești ale cărților Sfintei Scripturi*, în *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1992, pp. 521-522.

- the Orthodox Church was not an “official” or “state” Church, so neither the Slavonic liturgical language could have an «Official» character, as in Wallachia and Moldova. Then, in Transylvania there was not an overlaid Romanian class (prince, the great feudalists, the high clergy) who would use Slavonic in the documents from chancellery or in the Church’s service which was meant to support cultural activities in this language, but on the contrary, a tolerated Orthodox clergy, identified in all with the life and the desires of their believers who were serfs. The “Romanian priests”, of whom Coresi spoke in some of his writings, did not have large monasteries in which to learn the Slavonic language, as those in Wallachia and Moldova had. All this leads us to believe that certain translators recruited from the Romanian priests and monks transposed, for their own needs, the first Church books from Slavonic into Romanian, which then became widely publicized among them and among the literate believers.

The fact that the first printed Romanian texts - especially books of the Holy Scriptures - appeared in Sibiu and Brasov in the second half of the sixteenth century, while in Wallachia and Moldova they were printed barely over a century, is an additional argument for the idea that also the first Romanian translations, as manuscript, were also made in Transylvania².

III. Translations and printings of the sixteenth century

In Sibiu, *the first Romanian book - a Catechism* - was printed in 1544, of which, however, no copy was kept. Its appearance in 1544 is certain because it was kept for us a contemporary note in the accounting accounts of the city of Sibiu, in which it is noted that were given to a certain “magister Philippus” - PHILIP MOLDOVEANUL two florins - for his work of printing the Wallachian Catechism. Other tangential information refers to a Saxon priest from Bistrita, Adalbert Wurmloch, who in a letter written in 1546 to the priest Ioan Hesus of Breslau, says that a Catechism was translated into Wallachian language, which “*many Romanian priests receive it as sacrosanct*”, but also many condemn it³. The third book which

² M. PĂCURARIU, *Primele traduceri românești ale cărților Sfintei Scripturi*, p. 523.

³ Ioan BIANU, Nerva HODOȘ, *Bibliografia românească veche, 1508-1830*, Tom. I, București, 1903, p. 22.

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came out from the typography of the master Filip Moldoveanul, from Sibiu⁴ during the years 1551-1553, was a Slav-Romanian *Tetraevangheliar*. It is the first bilingual book in Romania, as well as *the first book in Romanian language kept until today*⁵.

In Brasov, two people who played an important role in the beginning of the Romanian book were met at this time: the deacon *Coresi*,⁶ who came from Târgoviște and Hans Benkner, the Saxon mayor of Brasov, owner of the first paper mill in Transylvania.⁷ Coresi settled in Scheii of Brasov and enjoyed the support of the Saxon officials regarding the printing of his books.

Between 1560 - 1561 the first Romanian edition of the *Tetraevanghel*, appeared. At the base of the printing of this voluminous book of 246 pages were the old Romanian translations of the Holy Scriptures, with the necessary language corrections, made, of course, by the priests from the church "Sfântul Nicolae", in Șcheii of Brasov.

Another book printed by Coresi in Brasov was *the Christian Question*. Only 11 sheets were preserved (probably were 14). In the "prologue" of this fragment it is shown that the booklet was translated from Slavonic by "some good Christians", "with the knowledge of the bishop Sava of the Hungarian Country", being dedicated to the metropolitan Ephrem of Ungrovlahia (1558-1566).

Another Romanian book printed by Coresi - probably also in 1561 - was *the Codex (Pravila) of the Holy Fathers*, kept fragmentary. It was a translation from a Slavonic version contains a series of "canons" and is the oldest printed Romanian Codex (Pravila).

As for the Romanian texts that were the basis of the prints of Coresi, most historians consider it is about older translations. There were several translation centers in Romanian, because we have different translations of

⁴ Romanian typist and engraver, employed as a scribe of the magistrate from Sibiu, a speaker of Slavic, Latin and German languages and one of the first Romanian diplomats.

⁵ M. PĂCURARIU, "Tiparul în Țara Românească și Transilvania în secolul al XVI-lea", in: *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, ediția a II-a, Tiparul Tipografiei Eparhiale, Sibiu, 1978, p. 137.

⁶ Deacon, translator and artisan Romanian typist from Târgoviște (+1583), learned the art of printing from the Serbian typographer Dimitrie Liubavici.

⁷ Nicolae CARTOJAN, *Istoria Literaturii române vechi*, Editura Minerva, București, 1980, p. 98.

the Apostle (1565-1566), *the Liturgy book* (1570), and *the Psalter book* (1577).

In the year 1582, another work of special importance, called *Palia from Orăștie*, appeared in Romanian language. It contains the first two books of the Old Testament and is printed by the hardship of Serban, the son of Coresi and of the deacon Marian. The translation was made after a Hungarian text of the Old Testament, translated and printed in 1551 in Cluj by the Calvinist Pastor Gașpar Heltai. With *Palia from Orăștie*, ends the series of the first Romanian prints from Transylvania of the 16th century. The typographic activity will be started again in Alba Iulia only after more than half a century.

IV. The great cultural achievements of the seventeenth century

With all the difficulties of the time, in the first half of the seventeenth century, the Transylvanian rulers managed to keep their believers and the orthodox faith in front of the Calvinist propaganda supported by the principles of Transylvania. After the removal of the Holy Confessor Ilie Iorest from the Metropolitan throne, the new Metropolitan Simion Stefan (1643-1656) definitively links his name to the history of the Romanian culture by printing in 1643 *the New Testament of Alba Iulia*⁸.

The translation was started by the hieronymite Silvestru, formerly abbot at Govora, but he was unable to see the fruit of his scholarly labors, dying during the translation work. His work was continued by the Metropolitan Simion Stefan, who, through his corrections, emphasized the need to create a single literary language for all the Romanian lands.⁹

In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Metropolitan Peter Movilă of Kiev sends, at the request of the ruler Matei Basarab¹⁰, in Wallachia, a

⁸ Emanuel CONȚAC, *Dilemele fidelității: Condiționări culturale și teologice în traducerea Bibliei*, Logos, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, pp. 31-39; M. RĂDULESCU, "Noul Testament de la Bălgrad (1648). Modele și izvoare", in: *Studii și cercetări lingvistice*, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iași, 1982, p. 33.

⁹ Grigorie T. MARCU, „*Considerații asupra Noului Testament din 1648*”, in: *Studii Teologice*, XXV (1973) 9-10, pp. 605-618; M. PĂCURARIU, "325 de ani de la apariția «Noului Testament de la Bălgrad»", in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, (1973) 11-12, pp. 1206-1215.

¹⁰ Dan SIMIONESCU, Damian P. BOGDAN, Începuturile culturale ale domniei lui Matei Basarab, in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, (1938) 11-12, pp. 866-880; V. DURĂ, "Biserica

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complete printing press together with some leading printers from Lavra Pecersca. It was placed at the monastery in Câmpulung in 1642, during the Metropolitan Theophilus (1636-1648), where was printed in Romanian, the work entitled *Everyday learning*, translated from Greek, under the guidance and at the expense of the hieronymite Melchisedec.

In 1640, the new printing house from the Govora monastery in Oltenia brings to light the Codex (*Pravila*) from Govora or the small Codex (*Pravila*), so named for its small format, through the obstinacy of the abbot Meletie the Macedonean.¹¹ It was the first book printed in Romanian, in Muntenia. It was translated from Slavonic by the monk Mihail Moxa or Moxalie from the Bistrița monastery, who had took over a chronograph, which is a history of the world, in 1620.¹²

In the same year came out of print also in Govora, a *Romanian Breviary (Ceaslov)*, the first Romanian book of cult in Muntenia, and in 1642 began the printing of the book entitled *The Gospel of Teaching or Cazania*. It was translated from the Russian language “with the obstinacy” of the hieronymite Silvestru, who was helped by the chancellor Udriște Năsturel, brother-in-law of Matei Basarab¹³.

The typographic activity of the Metropolitan Theophilus was continued in Wallachia by his successor, the Metropolitan Stephen (+ 1668)¹⁴, formerly abbot in Tismana, who performed a beautiful cultural activity, supporting the use of the Romanian language in cult instead of the Slavonic one.

The most important work in Romanian that appeared under the Metropolitan Stephen was *Straightening the Law or the Great Codex (Pravila)*, appeared in Târgoviște in 1652. It was a new law book, with almost 800 pages, translated from the Greek by the monk Daniil Panonianul, originally from Transylvania, assisted by two Greek teachers.

din Țara Românească în epoca lui Matei Basarab”, in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, (1971) 5-6, pp. 577-592.

¹¹ Gheorghe IONESCU, “Mănăstirea Govora și egumenia lui Meletie Macedoneanul”, in: *Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice*, (1971) 2, pp. 28-32.

¹² N. CARTOJAN, *Istoria Literaturii române vechi*, p. 175; Ioan BIANU, Nerva HODOȘ, *Bibliografia românească veche, 1508-1830*, pp. 181-183.

¹³ M. PĂCURARIU, “Mitropoliții Teofil și Ștefan ai Ungrovlahiei”, in: *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. 2, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1981, 48.

¹⁴ Radu CREȚEANU, “Mitropolitul Ștefan I al Ungrovlahiei”, in: *Mitropolia Olteniei*, (1977) 1-3, pp. 119-139.

The second half of the seventeenth century was culturally marked in Muntenia by the activity of the Metropolitan Varlaam (1672-1679), who printed a single work entitled *The Key to Meaning*¹⁵ and Theodosius (1668-1672/1679-1708), with three prints: *a Slavic-Romanian Liturgy book* in 1680, *the Gospel* (1682) and *an Apostle* (1683), both translated into Romanian. These two hierarchs were closely supported by the rulers of Wallachia, Serban Cantacuzino (1678-1688)¹⁶ and Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714)¹⁷.

The translation of the books of the Holy Scripture into Romanian culminated with the printing of the *Bible from Bucharest* in 1688, also called *the Bible of Serban Cantacuzino*, a work that crowns the typographic activity until then. *It is the first full print of the Holy Scripture in Romanian.*

The printing began under the guidance of the former bishop Mitrofan de Huși, in November 1687, and ended in the autumn of 1688, when Constantin Brancoveanu was the ruler. The brothers Radu and Șerban Greceanu, used several previous translations, including the translation of the Bible into the manuscript of the Moldavian scholar Nicolae Milescu Spătarul (1636-1708)¹⁸.

Nicolae Milescu's masterpiece on the field of our religious literature was the translation from the Greek source of *the Old Testament*, which was missing until then. Another work in the Romanian language of Nicolae Milescu, with a theological character, is represented by *an Orthodox Catechism*, translated from the Greek language, following the work of the Patriarch Athanasie of Alexandria and in which, in the form of questions and answers, he addresses the fundamental problems of the Orthodox dogma. The work also preserves the following interesting phrase regarding the origin of the Romanian language: "*God is called in the Latin language DEUS, and in the Greek language THEOS, and in Romanian is called GOD, which name is taken half from Latin, and half from Hellenic*"¹⁹.

¹⁵ Nicolae SERBĂNESCU, "Varlaam, mitropolitul Țării Românești, (1672—1679)", in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, (1958) 12, pp. 1120-1158.

¹⁶ Nicolae C. TURCU, "Biserica din Țara Romnească în timpul domniei lui Șerban Cantacuzino", in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, (1966) 1-2, pp. 100-128.

¹⁷ Nicolae IORGA, "Activitatea culturală a lui Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu", in: *Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secției de Științe Istorice a Academiei*, Seria II, București, 1914, p. XXXVII.

¹⁸ Petre V. HANEȘ, "Nicolae Milescu traducătorul Bibliiei de la 1688", in: *Glasul Bisericii*, (1962) 9-10, pp. 942-964.

¹⁹ N. CARTOJAN, *Istoria Literaturii române vechi*, p. 233.

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There were more scholars in Moldova of Vasile Lupu (1634-1653) than in Muntenia of Matei Basarab (1632-1654). Advised by his scholarly boyars and the Metropolitan Varlaam, Vasile Lupu, addresses the Metropolitan Peter Movilă and obtains from Kiev the first typography that arrives in Moldova. He installs it in the cellars of the Monastery the Holy Three Hierarchs and, under the guidance of the metropolitan Varlaam, he prints only Romanian books, all with a different content than the one of the church service books²⁰.

His most important work, and at the same time one of the most important in the history of the old Romanian culture, is *Cazania*, which appeared in Iasi in 1643²¹.

The second important book of Varlaam is the one entitled *Seven Mysteries of the Church*, which appeared in Iasi in 1644 (339 pages). The translation of this book was made also by the chancellor Eustratie, and is written in the form of questions and answers.

In the age of Matei Basarab and Vasile Lupu, from the cycle of the books which were used in the church, were printed only *the Cazanii*. Enthroned on the metropolitan throne of Moldova, Dosoftei (1673-1686) initiates the great reform of the nationalization of the divine service. Two years after his election as Metropolitan, he gives *the Psalter* to the Romanian language, which is translated in verses and printed at the Uniev monastery in Poland.

Also in 1673, the Metropolitan Dosoftei translated into Romanian and printed at Uniev the Acatist of *the One Who gave birth to God* and in 1679, trying to rebuild the old typography of Vasile Lupu from Iasi, he printed *the Divine Liturgy*, the second translation following Coresi and the first made by a hierarch. By this, he made available to the priests the most important book to help them perform church services in the Romanian language.

Starting with the year 1680, he begins with the introduction of the Romanian language into the church instead of the Slavonic, bringing to light its translations under the presses of the new typography: *an incomprehensible Psalter*, a comprehensible Molitvelnic in 1681, a new edition of *the Holy Liturgy* in 1683 and *the Pareмии throughout the year*, all in Romanian. Between 1682-1686, he printed another great and significant

²⁰ N. CARTOIAN, *Istoria Literaturii române vechi*, pp. 192-194.

²¹ M. PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor Români*, p. 470.

work, translated and processed from Greek and Slavonic, entitled *Life of the Saints and how they minister*, in 4 volumes, to which he has been working hard on, for 25 years.

During the Polish exile (1686-1693), the old Metropolitan, in addition to other concerns, began to translate into Romanian *the Exposition of the Orthodox Faith (the Dogma)* St. John of Damascus.

V. The apogee of printing of the cult books

Throughout the eighteenth century, the typographies from Bucharest, Râmnic and Iași worked without interruptions and others only sporadically. In Transylvania, the Orthodox Church did not have its own typography, so it was forced to print its necessary books in Vienna, at Buda and Sibiu, in particular typographies. There were printed translations from the Holy Fathers, from the modern Greek theologians (Ilie Miniat, Nichifor Theotochi and etc.), from the Russian theologians (St. Dimitrie the Metropolitan of Rostov, Plato the Metropolitan of Moscow, etc.).

Samuil Micu managed to translate many works from the Holy Eastern Parents, and printed a new edition of *the Bible* in Blaj (1795)²².

Being in the service of the ruler Serban Cantacuzino and later of Constantin Brâncoveanu, the governor Mitrofan²³ who became the leader of the royal typography in Bucharest, printed in 1691 in Bucharest, the book "*The Pearls of Saint John Hrisostom*", which had been translated into Romanian by the brothers Radu and Serban Greceanu.

At the beginning of the 18th century, in the year 1705, when Antim Ivireanu was elected to be enthroned as ruler of Ramnic, he also founded the first printing press from here, in which he printed 9 books, of which 3 Romanian and 3 Slavic-Romanian, all books of Christian service, among which *the Liturgy book* and *the Molitfelnic book*, the first Romanian editions in Muntenia (1706). Throughout his cultural activity, he has translated, printed or supervised the printing of 63 books, of which 22

²² M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, ediția a II-a, Editura Institutului Biclic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1978, p. 282.

²³ Gabriel COCORĂ, "Un mare tipograf român în circuitul european în secolul al XVII-lea: episcopul Mitrofan al Buzăului", in: *Tipar și cărțurari*, Editura Litera, București, 1977, pp. 143-179.

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in Romanian. The most important of the Romanian printings were *the Psalter* (1710), *Octoiul* (1712), *Liturghierul* and *Molitvelnicul* (1713), *Catavasierul* (1714), *Ceaslovul* (1715). Metropolitan Antim has the great merit of setting a modern foundation for our Romanian church language and of introducing for eternity the Romanian language into the church service. For example, *the Liturgy* translated by him in 1713 differs very little from the liturgical text used today²⁴.

An outstanding translator and scholar at the court of the Ruler Constantin Brancoveanu was also the youngest son of the priest Ion Cornea from the Church of Șcheii Brașov, Teodor Cornea²⁵. He also had the title of ambassador of the ruler of Muntenia at the royal court of the Tsar Peter the Great. After the war of 1711 between the Russians and the Turks he remains permanently in Russia.

The great scholar elaborated the first *Latin-Romanian Dictionary*²⁶ of the Romanian culture and donated in 1725 *the versified Psalter* to the Romanian church from the Șcheii of Brasov²⁷.

The most important bishop of Ramnic from the second half of the eighteenth century was Chesarie (1773-1780). He restored the typography and in just four years he printed about 10 books of Christian service. It is noted the *Mineie*²⁸ for the months of October-March, first printed in Romanian, between 1776-1780, which is his masterpiece²⁹.

²⁴ M. PĂCURARIU, "Importanța mitropolitului Antim Ivireanul pentru Biserica și cultura românească", in: *Mitropolia Banatului*, (1966) 7-9, pp. 493-515.

²⁵ Scarlat STRUȚEANU, "Frații Corbea, doi umaniști ardeleni la Curtea lui Constantin Brâncoveanu", in: *Ramuri*, XXXIII (1941) 1-2, pp. 44-55.

²⁶ Grigore CREȚU, *Cel mai vechi dicționar latino-românesc*, București, 1905; László GOBL, *A magyar szotdrir dalom hatása az oláhra (Influența ungurească asupra lexicografiei românești)*, A N K, XLVIII, Kotetebol Budapesta, 1932, pp. 4-22; Ștefan MANCIULEA, *Cel mai vechi dicționar latino-românesc*, BCB, Blaj, 1939, p. 51.

²⁷ N. CARTOJAN, *Istoria Literaturii române vechi*, p. 417.

²⁸ G. F. ȚEPELEA, "Mineiele de la Râmnic. Contribuția lor la dezvoltarea limbii române literare și la biruința ei definitivă ca limbă de cult", in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, (1966) 3-4, pp. 369-387; G. ȚEPELEA, "Mineiele de la Râmnic. Contribuția lor la dezvoltarea limbii române literare și la biruința ei definitivă ca limbă de cult", in: *Studii de istorie și limbă literară*, București, 1970, pp. 76-102.

²⁹ Mihai MANOLACHE, "Viața și activitatea episcopului Chesarie al Râmnicului (1773-1780)", in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, , (1966) 1-2, pp. 129-151.

A revival of the cultural life in Moldova took place in the second half of the eighteenth century, when the Metropolitan Jacob Putneanul (1750-1760)³⁰ managed to restore to the Putna monastery the brilliance of the time of its great founder. He founded a higher school according to the model of the Kiev Academy founded by Peter Movila, under the leadership of the erudite Archimandrite Vartolomeu Măzăreanu³¹. A good speaker of Russian and Greek, Vartolomeu left us a series of translations (over 15 books in Romanian) which enriched our church literature.

The Archimandrite Vartolomeu, as well as the Metropolitan Jacob, triggered a true cultural current at Putna monastery, evident through the multitude of the translations made during this time by different monks and teachers.

Another innovator of the monastery life was the abbot *Paisie Velicovschi*³², who in 1779 was entrusted with the leadership of the Neamt monastery, which was an important center of culture and spiritual life. The translations of the writings of the Holy Fathers into Romanian and Slavonic languages were continued by him here, as well as in Dragomirna, while he was also correcting some of the old translations.

The most outstanding disciples of Paisie from Neamt were the monks *Gheorghe*, future abbot in Cernica and Căldărușani, *Gherontie and Grigorie*, well-known translators of theological books from Greek to Romanian³³.

In Transylvania, at the beginning of the 19th century, Petru Maior (1756-1821), though united, proved to be an objective historian and printed several volumes of *Sermons* and *the Church History of the Romanians*, and in Banat, the priest Dimitrie Țichindeal (1775-1818) stands out as a translator through some literary works³⁴.

³⁰ N. GRIGORAȘ, "Mitropolitul Iacob I Putneanul", in: *Mitropolia Moldovei și a Sucevei*, (1958) 9-10, pp. 791-810.

³¹ D. DAN, "Arhimandritul Vartolomeu Mazăreanu. Schiță biografică și bibliografică", in: *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Literare*, s. II, t. XXXIII, 1911, pp. 243-347.

³² Paul MIHAIL, "Starețul Paisie de la Neamț, înnoitorul monahismului", in: *Mitropolia Moldovei și a Sucevei*, (1962) 5-6, pp. 409-417; Petre I. DAVID, "Cuviosul Paisie cel Mare (Velicovskî) un desăvârșit monah român. Noi cercetări și ipoteze", in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, (1975) 1-2, pp. 162-193.

³³ D. FURTUNĂ, *Ucenicii starețului Paisie în mănăstirile Cernica și Căldărușani*, București, 1927, p. 175.

³⁴ M. PĂCURARIU, "Literatura teologică în Țările Române în secolul al XVIII-lea", in:

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The pious Gherontie Dascălul from the Neamț Monastery († 1812) was one of the disciples of the abbot Paisie and the first spiritual father of the Metropolitan Gregory Dascălul (1823-1834). The two monks, Gherontie and Gregory, began to translate different teaching books from Greek into Romanian³⁵.

With regard to the theological literature, the Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi (1803-1846) paid special attention to the translations from Greek. Thus, through the obstinacy of the great scholarly hierarchy, they were translated and printed: *The Correct Interpretation of the Seven Mysteries* (Iasi, 1807), *The History of the Old and New Testament*, 3 vol. (Iasi 1824), *The Church History* of the Archbishop Meletie of Athens, 4 vol. (Iași, 1841-1843), *The Correct Interpretation of the Psalter*, 2 vol. (Iași, 1850-1862), *The Church History* of Theodoret of Cir (Bucharest, 1894), *The Dogma of St. John of Damascus* (Iași, 1806) and the *Lives of the Saints* in 12 volumes, translated after St. Dimitrie of Rostov (Neamț, 1807-1815). In order to perform this great cultural work (over 130 books printed at his expense or at his request), the Metropolitan Veniamin has always had numerous supporters, especially among the monks from the Neamț monastery³⁶.

In addition to the works of these scholarly hierarchs, a number of theology teachers and priests have noted through their special scholarly concerns. After the founding of the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, its teachers faced the lack of the university courses. At the beginning, this deficiency was remedied, as in the case of the seminarian education, by the translation of some textbooks used in the Theological Academies of Russia³⁷ or at the Faculty of Theology in Cernăuți. For example, the Archimandrite Gherasim Timus, while he was a professor at the Faculty of Theology, translated from French the works of the Metropolitan Macarie Bulgakov of Moscow: *Introduction to Orthodox Theology* (1885) and the *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (2 vol., 1886-1887). Silvestru Balănescu

Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, vol. 2, p. 48.

³⁵ M. PĂCURARIU, "Literatura teologică în Țările Române în secolul al XVIII-lea", in: *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. 3, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1981, pp. 39-40.

³⁶ Nestor VORNICESCU, "Literatura patristică și preocupările mitropolitului Veniamin Costachi", in: *Mitropolia Moldovei și a Sucevei*, (1967) 1-2, pp. 49-60.

³⁷ M. PĂCURARIU, "Traduceri românești din literatura teologică rusă până la sfârșitul secolului XIX", in: *Studii Teologice*, XI (1959) 3-4, pp. 182-212.

of Huși translated *the Church Law* (1892) and *the Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (5 vol., 1896-1906, with the last being assisted by Constantin Nazarie, N. Filip, Gherasim Miron, Teodor Ghiga, former students in Kiev). At the same time, several university courses used at the Faculty of Theology in Cernauti were translated from German into Romanian. For example, the priest *Vasile Pocitan* (later the Archbishop Veniamin) worked on *a Compendium of ecclesiastical law of the Orthodox Church* (Bucharest, 1898), and the bishops Athanasie Mironescu and Gherasim Timuș translated from German the course of *Universal Church History* (2 volumes; 1900-1901)³⁸.

Being very difficult to record all the scholarly obstinacy carried out by the professors of the Faculties, Academies and Theological Seminars, as well as of other translating priests from the period 1918-1948, we will limit ourselves to the enumeration of some representative works. In the first place, we must record the effort of some hierarchs (Nicodim Munteanu³⁹, Irineu Mihălcescu⁴⁰, Nicolae Colan⁴¹) and teachers (Grigorie Pișculescu/Gala Galaction⁴² - 1879/1961, Vasile Radu⁴³ - 1887/1940, I.D. Ștefănescu⁴⁴) to translate *the Holy Scripture* into the Romanian language⁴⁵.

In 1938 the priest Dumitru Fecioru (aided also by the priest Olimp Căciulă) laid the foundations of a patristic collection entitled *The Sources of Orthodoxy*. Another collection of translations bears the name, *the Library of the Church Fathers*, it is led by the priest Matei Pîslaru and appeared at Ramnicu Vâlcea, in 1935. Also, Matei Pîslaru together with the priest G.N. Nițu and prof. Ioan Mihălcescu, laid the foundations of the *Theological Collection* where appeared two volumes with translations from the Apostolic Fathers and the apostolic canons.

³⁸ M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, p. 273

³⁹ Episcop la Huși (1912-1923), Mitropolit al Moldovei (1935-1939), Patriarh al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (1939-1948).

⁴⁰ Metropolitan in Moldova (1936-1948).

⁴¹ Bishop of Vadu, Feleac and Cluj (1936-1957).

⁴² Gheorghe CUNESCU, "Gala Galaction, Bibliografie teologică bisericească", in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, (1979)3-4, pp. 451-506.

⁴³ M. PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor Români*, p. 375.

⁴⁴ Romanian art historian and connoisseur of the Byzantine culture (1886-1981).

⁴⁵ Ene BRANIȘTE, "Tiparul și cartea bisericească în cei cincizeci de ani de Patriarhat (1925-1975)", in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, XCIII (1975) 11-12, pp. 1421-1452; M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. 3, pp. 435-436.

Clergy, Monks and Laymen Translators of Church Books...

Professor Dumitru Staniloae, considered one of the prominent authorities of the European theology in the twentieth century and the greatest Romanian theologian of this century, translated and published in Sibiu *the Dogma of Hristu Andrusos* (1930), *The Life and Teaching of the Saint Gregory Palama* (1938), *Philocalia*, volumes 1-4 (1946-1948), volumes 5-12 (Bucharest, 1975-1991), then from the great Church Fathers (St. Gregory of Nissa, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Atanasie the Great, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Gregory of Nazianz) in the collection *Fathers and Church Writers* and other different translations in theological journals.⁴⁶

Partial translations from the patristic literature were made by the priests Ioan G. Coman⁴⁷, Olimp Căciulă⁴⁸, Nicolae Cotos⁴⁹, Teodor Bodogae⁵⁰, Ion V. Georgescu⁵¹, Nicolae Donos⁵², Iosif Gherghian⁵³, Atanasie Mironescu⁵⁴, Tilea Gheorghe⁵⁵ and others.

We also add the translation of a few works such as *the Orthodoxy and the Eucharistic Dogma* of Sergei Bulgakov, translated by Nicolae Grosu (Sibiu, 1933) and priest Paraschiv Anghelescu (1936), *The Christian Teaching in Apologetic Exposition* of Pavel Svetlov, translated by Serghe Bejan and Constantin Tomescu (2 vol. 1935-1936), *the Morality and Symbolism* of Christ Andrusos, translated by Ioan Lăncrăjan (Sibiu, 1947) and the Patriarch Iustin Moisescu, but the most important translator of this period of time was the Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu, with dozens of

⁴⁶ M. PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor Români*, pp. 419-420.

⁴⁷ Professor of Patrology at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest (1944-1977).

⁴⁸ Priest, professor and director of the "Nifon" Seminary in Bucharest (1932-1942), deputy director in the Ministry of Cults (1942-1948), director of the Library of Theological Institute (1948-1952), civil servant in the Patriarchal Administration (1952-1962), inspector general of the Patriarchy (1962-1968).

⁴⁹ Substitute professor at the Theological Seminary in Chisinau (1918-1919), then docent in 1919, associate professor (1920) and full professor (1924) at the Department of Fundamental Theology at the Faculty of Theology in Cernăuți (retired in 1941).

⁵⁰ Professor of universal Church History and Patrology at the "Andreiana" Theological Academy in Sibiu (1948 - 1952 and 1973-1981).

⁵¹ Nicolae PURCĂREA, *Urlă haita... Pitești, Canal, Gherla, Jilava, Aiud*, Fundația Sfinții Închisorilor, Pitești, 2012, pp. 183-190.

⁵² M. PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor Români*, p. 148.

⁵³ M. PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor Români*, pp. 182-183.

⁵⁴ Primate Metropolitan of Romania (1909-1911) and professor of Morality at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest (1887-1897).

⁵⁵ Inspecting priest in the Ministry of Cults (1943-1947), he published Patrology Studies and translations from the Holy Fathers.

translations and works from Russian, either theological works themselves or books for preaching the Christian teaching.⁵⁶

In the second decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the 21st century, the great professors of the two Faculties of Theology in Bucharest and Sibiu were noted among the translators of literature and theological teaching, among which we mention: Constantin Cornițescu, Alexandru Moisiu, Ioan Ică, Ioan Ică jr., Vasile Răducă. They translated several theological works from French, German, Latin and Greek.

⁵⁶ M. PĂCURARIU, *Dicționarul Teologilor Români*, p. 446; Petru REZUȘ, Corneliu SĂRBU, “Preocupări de Teologie Fundamentală în Teologia românească”, in: *Ortodoxia*, (1971) 4, pp. 517-560; M. PĂCURARIU, “Cultura teologică ortodoxă românească între anii 1925-1975”, in: *Studii Teologice*, XXVII (1975) 9-10, pp. 670-686.