Samuil Clain de Sad's Rhetoric in Obituaries

Marius Gabriel ENACACHE

Un représentant important de l'Ecole de Transylvanie, Samuil Clain de Sad, mieux connu sous le nom Samuil Micu, il a eu une activité extrêmement complexe et diversifié dans divers domaines tels que la théologie, l'histoire roumaine et la philologie. Son œuvre le plus connu est sa traduction de la Bible après la Septante Orientale (Septuaginta orientală), appelé par certains auteurs La Bible de Blaj[1]. Mais ses discours religieux sont pas assez connus et discutés dans la littérature. En consequence, il faut une redécouverte de l`oeuvre de Samuil Micu, vu que ses discours méritent d'occuper une place importante dans la tradition oratoire religieuse.

Mots-clés: rhétorique, Samuil Micu Clain, nécrologie, archetype.

A prominent representative of the Transylvanian School, Samuil Micu has had an extremely complex and diverse activity in various fields such as theology, Romanian history and philology. Among his theologica works we recall his collection of obituaries entitled *Propovedanii la îngropăciunea oamenilor morţi*, which includes a number of fifteen speeches preceded by an address to the readers. In this address, Samuil Clain stresses the importance of his speeches as being the only means to die „în pace şi întru pocăinţă, şi aşa să trăim, ca cum pururea în toată cirta de ceas am avea să murim [...] atunci ne vom îndrepta bine obiceiurile noastre, şi vom vieţui cum se cuvine"[2]. These funeral speeches were printed for the first time in 1784, and reprinted twice after that: first in 1842 in Sibiu, with the blessing of the bishop of Transylvania, Vasile Moga, and then in 1907 by Pastor John Nicorescu, professor at the seminary in Arad, with the blessing of bishop Ion I. Papp.

Therefore, Samuil Micu's funeral speeches "enjoyed the fame not only in his time but also in posteriority"[3] as witnessed by printing them three times.

[1] Ioan Chindriş, Niculina Iacob, *Samuil Micu în mărturii antologice*, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu-Lăpuş, 2010, p. 8.

[2] Ioan Nicorescu, *Propovedanii la îngropîciunea oamenilor morţi de Preotul Samuil Clain de Sad izvorâte. Editate acum pentru întăia oară cu litere latine, după ediţia de la Sibiu, anul 1842*, Tiparul tipografiei diecezane ort. române a Aradului, Arad, 1907, p. 1.

[3] Ioan Chindriş, Niculina Iacob, *Samuil Micu în mărturii antologice*, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu-Lăpuş, 2010, p. 384.

BDD-A224 © 2013 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-01 03:57:44 UTC)

Entering in the Brazilian Catholic order, he became a monk by the name of Samuel. However, his obituaries were still reprinted under the guidance of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which is a unique act in the history of Romanian Christianity. His sermons are models of eloquence for both Orthodox and Catholic believers. His speeches are written in a gentle tone, sometimes even pathetic, acting like a true father. The first funeral speeches are inspired by the Holy Fathers. We observe the same thing in Samuil Micu's speeches. Language used by him is accessible to all listeners: the sentences are short with a simplified syntax, except opening and closing statements. He doesn't discuss controversial issues between the two churches, such as the existence of purgatory or worship the statues of saints. By doing so, he addresses to all believers through preaching, both Catholics and Orthodox.

This work is truly "trailblazer" in the pulpit rhetoric and it was accompanied by a small number of similar works in old Romanian literature, such as the Zaharia Boiu's collection of sermons published in the late nineteenth century or the works of the Metropolitan Andrei Saguna published in Sibiu in 1855. It has a mainly academic nature and it is addressed primarily to improve the theologians' performance addressing the audience, preaching the true models of oratory. It was very difficult for the untrained public to access such theology writings at the end of the eighteenth century and nineteenth century. Around the same time – from XVII to XVIII centuries - Romanian language "will require a definitive liturgical language"[4]. Until then, the act took place only in the Slavonic liturgy, sermons being the only ways to train believers in Romanian. So here lays the importance in educating Christians. Today, there is a continuous attempt to rediscover and revaluate the ancient religious texts which are true testimonies of the Romanian oratorical tradition.

Out of fifteen speeches entitled *Propovedanii*, thirteen belong to theologian Samuil Micu. The other two speeches: a sermon from the fourth century and another from the first century belong to Saint Basil the Great and Father Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria. Of the thirteen original sermon, I decided to pay attention to a child's funeral Speech (*Propovedania VII*), a priest's funeral Speech (*Propovedania X*) and a Dean's funeral Speech (*Propovedania XI*); discourses characterized by a wealth of strategies and rhetorical figures, thus pulling out their characteristics. It is clearly noted the influence of the two translations of the thirteen sermons, common elements aimed the form and the content, being thus a conclusive argument to support the hypothesis that all thirteen sermons have a single creator, namely Samuil Micu. Indeed, the two translations have a higher tension compared to the other sermons, but this is due to the complexity of the topic: the apparent injustice caused by the death of a worthy young man and a speech to ease the torment of a troubled man "living his last moments of life

[4] Informaţie preluată de pe site-ul: http://www.teologiepentruazi.ro/2008/08/29/etapele-sinuosului-drum-al-slujbelor-ortodoxe-in-limba-romana, accesat la data de 15.10.2012.

BDD-A224 © 2013 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-01 03:57:44 UTC)

dramatic and heartbreaking"[5]. The two translations will approach two opposite strategies, first serving to instill confidence and hope among listeners, while the second sermon distressing, it grieves the loved ones. Both strategies can be found in Samuil Micu's speeches.

The analysis of these three sermons will consider five components: *exordium, division, narration, confirmation* and *peroration*, their identification being easy to do as they comply the exact steps that have proved to be effective over time. Sermons are frequently short stretching, standing out through a careful organization. The three sermons open with one biblical quote which aims to introduce the topic under discussion and which is also an argument that gives credibility to the speech. Thus, the speaker appeals to the most valuable source, the most credible for the audience to support his hypothesis: the Bible. Salutation is missing in all his speeches, the transition from the preaching to the liturgical act being not marked as such. The kind of exordium encountered here is the *solemn exordium*, specific to funeral speeches, "characterized by height and spread ideas that are composed in a brilliant style"[6]. Introductory phrases are of great extent, with a complex syntax, being true hymns to God's goodness and justice. Yet, the language used is accessible to all social groups, without an excess of neologisms or specialized terms:

„Dumnezeu cel ce este bunătate în tot chipul desăvârşit şi peste toate, carele toate le stăpâneşte şi le ocârmuieşte spre folosul nostru, acela din nespusa sa bunătate bine a voit a face pe om, şi a-i da toate făpturile cele văzute spre slujba lui; că l-a pus în raiu, în grădina bunătăţilor şi a desfătărilor, precum din sfânta scriptură bine ştiţi" (*Propovedania VII – La prunci morţi*).

This way, the priest draws the audience's sympathy; he behaves like a bandage covering the listeners' grief. The approach is obtained indirectly through their involvement in the enunciation of it, the preach being thus assumed by all listeners. This is a result of the use of verbs in the form of first person, plural number: "shall we say". Speaker's attitude is one of solidarity with the suffering parents, to share their feelings. He, like a parent, on a gentle tone, assumes the task of giving advice, in order to urge the audience in a certain direction. We find the same attitude in the other two sermons:

„Cela ce învaţă curat cuvântul lui Dumnezeu, şi celece învaţă cu nevoinţă le şi păzeşte şi le face. [...] să fim umiliţi ca el, să fim răbdători, blânzi ca el, să lepădăm toată mărirea, pompa, bogăţia, dezmierdarea, desfătarea – ca el; pururea de cele cereşti, despre voia părintelui celui ceresc, de câştigarea împărăţiei ceriurilor să gândim, să cugetăm, să vorbim ca el" (*Propovedania XI*).

The next stage of the sermon, *the division* is seen in modern oratory treaties as a step whose presence is not mandatory. It is aimed to "facilitate the task of the

[5] Informaţie preluată de pe site-ul: http://www.crestinortodox.ro/dogmatica/viata-vesnica/iesirea-greu-sufletului-69178.html, accesat la data de 17.09.2012.

[6] Vistian Goia, *Retorică şi argumentare. Note de curs pentru studenţii în jurnalistică şi ştiinţe politice*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 68.

BDD-A224 © 2013 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-01 03:57:44 UTC)

audience"[7] in the reception of the message. Samuil Micu succinctly states a plan for each of the three sermons, which emphasizes the importance of the process of developing sermons:

„Şi aşa voiu întocmi propovedania, cât întâi voiu povesti: cum toate neamurile şi cele mai străine pururea s-au obicinuit a cinsti foarte pre preoţii săi. A doua, voiu arăta: cum în legea noastră creştinească s-au cinstit preoţii. A treia, voiu vădi pricina cea din lontru, adecă: vrednicia şi înălţarea preoţiei noastre, pentru care să cade a se cinsti preoţii foarte" (*Propovedania X*).

We see here a perfect overlap between the three parts of the sermon with the three stages following division. Thus, the narrative will consist of the speaker who will "tell" the story; the second, in which the speaker "will show" is, in fact, the *confirmation* stage; and in the final one, *peroration*, he "will evince that the final cause", that will again restate succinctly the theme and the main arguments used in the sermon.

Another feature of ancient funeral speeches is the increased attention paid to the narrative part. Among the sources used by the priest at this stage of discourse we identified fragments from the biblical texts and of the patristic. The Greek theologian Theodor Nikolaou said that "Theology Scripture and tradition are the same"[8]:

„Sfântul Antonie cel mare, măcar că întru atâta cinste era el înaintea împăraţilor, cât osebită norocire îşi ţinea, ca să primească vr'o scrisoare dela dânsul: măcar că de dânsul ascultau fierele codrilor; măcar că de dânsul se temeau duhurile adâncului, şi măcar că toţi călugării Egipetului îl cunoşteau pre dânsul părinte şi învăţător, totuşi precum să scrie la viaţa sfântului Atanasie: întâlnindu-se în drum cu vreun preot, îndată cădea în genunchie înaintea lui; nice nu se ridica, până când sărutându-i mâna nu dobândea dela dânsul blagoslovenie" (*Propovedania X*).

Resorting to the rhetorical figure called *oratorical amplification* through *anaphora* "even though" ("rhetorical process consisting in the repetition of a word at the beginning of several sentences to emphasis some ideas"[9]) the speaker deliberately amplified the Saint's qualities. Anaphora introduces a series of arguments with the same intensity and importance. All these arguments indicate the greatness of St. Anthony the Great who kneels before any priest. The inflow of examples taken from patristic theology emphasizes extensive knowledge of the speaker and sermon-making complexity that requires "careful reading, personal reflection, documentation, time, emotions, passion, skill and so on"[10].

[7] Alexandru Ţiclea, *Retorica*, Editura Universul Juridic, Bucureşti, 2008, p. 266.

[8] Theodor Nikolaou, *Teologie şi cultură*, Traducere de: Ioan Vasile Leb, Ioana Velica, Adina Paraschiv, Vasile Cristescu, Editura Limes, Cluj, 2001, p. 17.

[9] Silvia Săvulescu, *Retorică şi teoria argumentării*, Editura comunicare.ro, Bucureşti, 2004, p. 85.

[10] Eugen Jurca, *Retorică şi omiletică. Curs practic. I. Omilia exegetică şi cea tematică*, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu-Lăpuş, 2009, p. 6.

BDD-A224 © 2013 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-01 03:57:44 UTC)

Obituaries of the twentieth century, unlike the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have more diverse sources such as literary texts, both in prose and in verse or various theological studies.

Unlike the first two parts of speech, the pathos plays a crucial role at this stage. Appeal to emotions is achieved by using exclamatory sentences and repetitions with great force in persuasion: "A bitter and great lamentation! This is what they feel when they see their loved sons dead" (*Propovedania VII*). In this passage the pathos reaches a maximum intensity because of the use of words with great expressiveness: *jelly, bitter complaint* and *grief*. The pathetic tone, appeal to the audience's feelings are essential elements of obituaries. To move listeners, the orator must be sensitive to such arguments so that he would be able to live the same feelings in order to be credible to the audience. Tatiana Slama-Cazacu stressed that the message is primarily influenced by the "state broadcaster (emotion, thought)"[11]. In other words, the speaker cannot detach from his own creation, even if the main goal is to persuade the listeners.

In preaching the funeral of a priest and of an archpriest, the orator emphasizes the importance of their mission, the true missionary of God. This path does not arise simply from the tragedy of missing persons but also from how they have given their entire life serving God: "I read about a pious again, saying that if he happens to meet suddenly a priest and an angel, he will worship the priest first and after that the angel. But what wonder is it, if angel himself teaches us to do the same" (*Propovedania X*). We observe an increase of the importance of priest's mission, "beyond its natural"[12], specific to a rhetorical figure called *hyperbole*.

In the argumentation stage, Samuil Micu uses the "whole arsenal of material evidence and arguments"[13]. Among other rhetorical strategies used by the speaker I have identified the following: the rhetorical question, the denial rhetoric, the persuasive strategy of archetype and the imperative persuasive technique. The believer's archetype is a model that embodies a number of qualities necessary to every believer in goodness, faith, love and fairness; the ideal type of identity is Jesus Christ's identity. Régis Boyer assigned three connotations of the archetypes: a temporal dimension - the prototype, with a timeless and primordial aspect; the ethical dimension - as the ideal model, which has nothing primordial and metaphysical dimension - a supreme, absolute, perfect image that transcends particular circumstances[14]. Even if he delivers the sermon at the funeral of a priest, timelessness is present in speech. The orator avoids talking about death at this stage of speech, resuming to presenting a large number of arguments. Both, the image of

[11] Tatiana Slama-Cazacu, *Viaţă, personalitate, limbaj: analize contextual-dinamice*, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti, 2006, p. 21.

[12] Silvia Săvulescu, *Retorică şi teoria argumentării*, Editura comunicare.ro, Bucureşti, 2004, p. 101.

[13] Alexandru Ţiclea, *Retorica. Ediţia a II-a, revăzută*, Editura Univers Juridic, Bucureşti, 2008, p. 267.

[14] Vezi Régis Boyer, *apud* Camelia Mihaela Cmeciu, *Strategii persuasive în discursul politic*, Editura Universitas XXI, Iaşi, 2005, p. 141.

BDD-A224 © 2013 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-01 03:57:44 UTC)

the priest and the archpriest as they emerge from the above examples are central to the sermons. They lose their individuality in preaching became they become prominent representatives of clergy and community. In the society of the eighteenth century the church's representatives were regarded as true models of behavior. Therefore, this strategy was highly effective in argumentation. Stating a large number of arguments is another specific feature of funeral speeches.

The persuasive technique of the imperative is present in all stages of his speeches. It is closely related to pathos because the imperative sentences primarily produce emotions. Imperative is specific to a type of argument called the "stick argument" which "may take the form of imperative"[15]: "It is truly after God, is not a higher power than priestly power I shall say only on the earth, but in the heaven!"(*Propovedania X*) or "Că aceasta din pruncia lui cea dintâi, îndată cum a ajuns la vârstă [...] în toate zilele seara, şi dimineaţa, cu mare fierbinţeală se ruga lui Dumnezeu, dă mulţumită lui Dumnezeu pentru bunătăţile cele lui rânduite [...]. Întru acest chip se cade voi, părinţilor, să deprindeţi pe fiii voştri!" (*Propovedania XI*).

The Christian commandments and laws are imperative, but forgiveness is also imperative for those who repent. Imperative creates a safe condition, compliance with those orders provide an added advantage. The imperative was discussed by Immanuel Kant in the "Critique of Practical Reason", there being "two ways dictating a decision of will: an imperative condition or hypothetical bias arising from a subjective and individual who follows a particular purpose", and a categorical imperative "which shall be subject to objective laws, universally valid and necessary"[16]; categorical imperative acting "in a way that higher your actions that they can be imposed as universal law"[17]. Clearly, in obituaries dominates unconditional or categorical imperative of moral value.

The final stage, *peroration*, "is the pathetic segment that combines with argumentation, a specific rhetorical moment par excellence"[18]. It embodies the speech as a "closely related sermon topic"[19] prayer to God: „Fă Doamne, ca sfârşindu-se ei viaţa cea pământească, să vină aici întru împărăţia ta, întru lumina ta, să ne vedem şi să ne desfătăm în vecii vecilor. Amin!"(*Propovedania VII*). Next I will present some examples of rhetorical figures from the obituaries:

1. *Blessings*: "Fă Doamne, ca sfârşindu-şi ei viaţa cea pământească, să vină aici întru împărăţia ta, întru lumina ta, să ne vedem şi să ne desfătăm în vecii vecilor. Amin!" (*Propovedania VII*).

---

[15] Camelia Mihaela Cmeciu, *Strategii persuasive în discursul politic*, Editura Universitas XXI, Iaşi, 2005, p. 191.

[16] Informaţie preluată de pe site-ul: http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant, accesat la data de 20.09.2012.

[17] *Ibidem*.

[18] Alexandru Ţiclea, *Retorica*, Editura Universul Juridic, Bucureşti, 2008, p. 269.

[19] Ioan Toader, *Retorica amvonului*, Editura „Presa Universitară Clujeană", Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 105.

BDD-A224 © 2013 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-01 03:57:44 UTC)

2. *Comparison*: "Şi totuş preotul când ceteşte deslegarea de asupra capului omului păcătos la divanul ispovedeniei, mai mare minune face, de cum ar face omul acela slobozind, albind şi tămăduind pe arapii aceia" (*Propovedania X*).

3. *Metaphor*: "Şi iată îndată căzute lanţurile păcatelor cele mai mari decât adiamantul de pe ticălosul acela; dreptatea lui Dumnezeu bagă sabia în teacă şi se dumireşte" (*Propovedania X*).

4. *Repetitions*: "Nu voiu să grăiesc multe despre acelea ce *a învăţat* părintele nostru protopop (N.), că dintru acestea se vede, ce *a învăţat* el, cât de spăsitoare toate cele *a învăţat* el, şi cât se lovesc cu celece a învăţat Dascălul cel mare Hristos, şi cum a luminat pe toţi aceia, oricâţi au auzit cuvântul lui şi propoveduirea lui" (Propovedania XI).

5. *Rhetoric amplification*: "O, cât se turbură de jele maica, şi cât se umple de umilinţă tatăl, cât îi doare, când îşi petrec pruncii dela casă la groapă; o câtă întristare au inimile lor pentru prunci, ma vârtos când sunt vorbitori, aducându-şi aminte de cuvintele lor cele dulci" (*Propovedania VII*).

In his wide work, "most of it unrevealed yet, we find in Samuil Micu"[20] a spirit attracted by rhetoric. Therefore, his obituaries are complex creations as shown, rich in rhetorical strategies and rhetorical figures.

Bibliography

Sources

Nicorescu, Ioan, 1907, *Propovedanii la îngropîciunea oamenilor morţi de Preotul Samuil Clain de Sad izvorâte. Editate acum pentru întăia oară cu litere latine, după ediţia de la Sibiu, anul 1842*, Tiparul tipografiei diecezane ort. române a Aradului, Arad

Secondary literature

Chindriş, Ioan, Iacob, Niculina, 2010, *Samuil Micu în mărturii antologice*, Edituar Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu-Lăpuş, 2010

Cmeciu, Camelia Mihaela, 2005, *Strategii persuasive în discursul politic*, Editura Universitas XXI, Iaşi

Goia, Vistian, 2007, *Retorică şi argumentare*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca

Jurca, Eugen, 2009, *Retorică şi omiletică. Curs practic I. Omilia exegetică şi cea tematică*, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu Lăpuş

Nikolaou, Theodor, 2001, *Teologie şi cultură*, Traducere de: Ioan Vasile Leb, Ioana Velica, Adina Paraschiv, Vasile Cristescu, Editura Limes, Cluj

Săvulescu, Silvia, 2004, *Retorică şi teoria argumentării*, Editura Comunicare.ro, Bucureşti

Slama-Cazacu, Tatiana, 2006, *Viaţă, personalitate, limbaj: analize contextual-dinamice*, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti

[20] Ioan Chindriş, Niculina Iacob, *Samuil Micu în mărturii antologice*, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu-Lăpuş, 2010, p. 12.

BDD-A224 © 2013 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-01 03:57:44 UTC)

Ţiclea, Alexandru, 2008, *Retorica*, Ediţia a II-a, revăzută, Editura Universul Juridic, Bucureşti
Toader, Ioan, 2002, *Retorica amvonului*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca

BDD-A224 © 2013 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-01 03:57:44 UTC)