HOSEA 4 IN THE ROMANIAN BIBLE EDITIONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY*

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Zusammenfassung Die geläufige Bibelausgabe in der Rumänisch-Orthodoxen Kirche – die Synodale Bibel – bietet einen auffälligen Text in *Hosea* 4. Auf das Fehlen des ganzen Verses 4 wurde schon hingewiesen (Pentiuc). Unbemerkt in der Forschung blieb meiner Erkenntnis nach das Fehlen des letzten Teils von V. 3. Dieser fehlerhafte Text hat seinen Ursprung in der Bibelübersetzung aus 1936 und wurde unverändert in allen folgenden Bibelausgaben gedruckt. Ist im Falle von V.4 mit einer absichtlichen Auslassung eines unangenehmen Textes zu rechnen? Oder lassen sich diese Auffälligkeiten durch die von dem Übersetzer Vasile Radu benutzten Quellen und Werken erklären? Diese und andere Hypothesen über die Entstehung der spezifischen Lesungen zu *Hosea* 4 in der Synodalen Bibel werden im Folgenden analysiert. Im Falle von V. 3 und 5 scheint Vasile Radus Übersetzung von zwei deutschsprachigen Werken abhängig zu sein: Emil Kautzschs Ausgabe des Alten Testaments und Ernst Sellins Kommentar zu den kleinen Propheten.
Schlüsselwörter: Rumänische Bibelübersetzung, *Hosea* 4, Vasile Radu, Emil Kautzsch, Ernst Sellin.

1. Introduction

Translating the *Book of Hosea* is a demanding undertaking: Some verses from the Masoretic Text (MT) are obviously unfaithful to their original meaning, which is difficult to reconstruct. The *Septuagint* presents significant differences from the Hebrew text (*cf.* 13:4). Textual criticism has recommended conjectures for some instances where the Hebrew text seems unclear. *Hosea* rivals only with *Job* as regards the obscurity of the Masoretic Text (Seow 1992: 292).

The Romanian Orthodox Church uses two versions of the Bible: (1) the most recent one is the anniversary Bible of Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania (BAR), and (2) the most widespread edition is the so-called Synodal Edition (SYN).[1] In SYN, *Hos* 4 illustrates very well the textual problems of the book. Conţac (2011: 195-196) have

* *Hosea 4 in den rumänischen Bibelausgaben aus dem 20. Jahrhundert.*

[1] The printed editions of SYN: Bucharest, 1968, 1975, 1982, 1988, 2008, 2013, 2014, and 2015.

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drawn attention upon the surprising translation of v. 11. It was also pointed out that some parts have been omitted from the text. V. 4 is missing entirely (Pentiuc 2001: 340). As far as we know, the absence of a part from v. 3 has passed unnoticed.

Could such features be the result of unintentional mistakes? Or is this a theological option, possibly aimed at "rectifying" an inconvenient text – as suggested by the absence of v. 4? What does the current text tell us about the bibliographic tools used by translators? This study seeks to find an answer to such questions.

2. *Hos* 4:1-4 in the Synodal Bible (SYN)

In the Romanian synodal edition of the Holy Bible, the text from *Hos* 4:1-4 differs from all modern translations of the Bible we managed to read so far. A comparison with the text of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) highlights these differences:[2]

SYN (2008)	SYN (English translation)	NRSV
1. Ascultaţi cuvântul Domnului, voi, copii ai lui Israel, că Domnul stă la judecată cu locuitorii pământului,	1. Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel; for the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the earth.	1. Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel; for the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land.
2. Că nu mai este credinţă, nici iubire, nici cunoaştere de Dumnezeu în ţară.	2. Because there is no faith, love, or knowledge of God in the land.	2. Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed.
3. Toţi jură strâmb, mint, ucid, fură şi sunt desfrânaţi; săvârşesc fapte silnice, iar sângele vărsat curge peste sânge.	3. False swearing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed.	3. Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing.
4. Pentru aceasta ţara e în mare jale, iar cei ce o locuiesc sunt fără vlagă.	4. Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish.	4. Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest.
5. Tu te poticneşti ziua, iar noaptea se poticneşte cu tine şi profetul şi voi face să piară poporul tău.	5. You stumble by day; the prophet shall also stumble with you by night, and I shall make your people perish.	5. You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night, and I will destroy your mother.

[2] For a better understanding we reproduce here vv. 1-5 from SYN 2008.

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(a) V. 5 is the same in SYN and NRSV. Instead, vv. 1 to 4 differ significantly in SYN, where the text is, in fact, shorter;

(b) V. 1 of the NRSV is divided into vv. 1 and 2 in SYN;

(c) As a result, v. 2 of the NRSV is v. 3 in SYN;

(d) It would be expected that v. 3 of NRSV would be found in v. 4 of SYN. But v. 4 from SYN reproduces only the first half of v. 3 from NRVS: "Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish";

(e) The second half of v. 3 ("together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing") is missing in SYN;

(f) V. 4 of NRSV is entirely absent in SYN.

How could one explain the textual differences in SYN? To elucidate this question, we first need to resort to earlier Romanian translations. It may be noted that Bible editions that circulated in the Romanian Orthodox Church, from the Bible of 1688 (the first printed Bible in Romanian, translated following the *Septuagint*)[3] to the Bible of 1914 (SYN), did not include a modified text in *Hos* 4:1-4. The variant from SYN appears in B1936:

B1936	English Translation
1. Ascultaţi cuvântul Domnului, voi, feciori ai lui Israil, căci Domnul stă la judecată cu locuitorii pământului,	1. Hear the word of the Lord, ye sons of Israel, for the Lord has an indictment with the inhabitants of the earth,
2. Căci nu mai este credinţă, nici iubire, nici cunoaştere de Dumnezeu în ţară.	2. For there is no faith, love, or knowledge of God in the land.
3. Toţi jură strâmb, mint, ucid, fură şi sunt desfrânaţi; săvârşesc fapte silnice, iar sângele vărsat curge peste sânge.	3. False swearing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed.
4. Pentru aceasta, ţara e în mare jale, iar cei ce locuesc sunt fără vlagă.	4. For this, the country is in great mourning, and those who live in it are flabby.
5. Tu te vei poticni ziua, iar noaptea se va poticni profetul împreună cu tine, şi voiu distruge tumimul tău.	5. You shall stumble by day; the prophet shall also stumble with you by night, and I will destroy your Thummim.

The differences between SYN and B1936 are minor, as compared the lack of convergence with previous editions. Therefore, B1936 is the source of the specific reading of the text in *Hos* 4:1-4, found in SYN. Subsequent editions of the Bible, edited by the Romanian Orthodox Church (1968, 1975, 1982, 1988, 2008) have reproduced, with minor changes, the text of B1936, and thus the modification of the text from *Hos* 4:1-4 is found in all these editions. An exception is the anniversary Bible of Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania (BAR).

[3] See Munteanu (2012).

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The translators of B1936 were Bishop Nicodim Munteanu, the priest writer Gala Galaction and priest professor Vasile Radu. The translation of the Prophetic Books was made by Vasile Radu, as we learn from Gala Galaction's *Diary*.[4]

In what follows we shall focus only on issues related to vv. 3-5 of *Hos* 4 in B1936 and SYN.

3. Omissions in v. 3

V. 3 of *Hos* 4 can be divided into four parts, if we follow the disjunctive accents of the Hebrew text (BHS 1990: 994):

v. 3	(a)	(α) Pentru aceasta ţara e în mare jale,	Therefore, the land mourns,
		(β) iar cei ce o locuiesc sunt fără vlagă,	and all who live in it languish;
		(γ) împreună cu fiarele câmpului şi cu păsările cerului;	together with the wild animals and the birds of the air,
	(b)	chiar şi peştii mării pier	even the fish of the sea are perishing.

According to this division, in SYN one can find v. 3aαβ, but v. 3aγb is missing. Or, more simply and taking into account the content, the part related to animals in v. 3 is absent in SYN. The absence of this part of v. 3 from all current Synodal Bible editions (except BAR) is due to the text of B1936. As far as we know, this flaw remained unobserved in Romanian commentaries on *Hosea* (Chirilă 1999; Pentiuc 2001).

The translations of the Bible that circulated in the Romanian Orthodox Church before the B1936 were based on the text of the *Septuagint*. For the B1936 version the translators used both the Greek and the Hebrew texts. Is the flaw in v. 3 due to the sources used by B1936? Let us examine the possible sources that could have influenced v. 3 in B1936.

3.1. The Text of LXX

We do not know what edition of the LXX was used by Nicodim Munteanu, Gala Galaction, and Vasile Radu. The first edition of Rahlfs' *Septuagint*, published in 1935, had not been available, since the three translators finished their translation in 1932 (Plămădeală 1981: 439-440). They could have used the critical edition of Swete (SWETE), first published in 1894. But SWETE contains the part of v. 3 related to

[4] *Jurnal* II, p. 189, *ap.* Plămădeală (1981: 442). In 1939, Nicodim Munteanu was chosen Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Under his administration, a new edition of the Bible was published in 1944. In fact, only the text of NT was different from the text of B1936. The books that were translated in B1936 by Galaction and Radu are mentioned in the *Introduction* of B1944 (p. XXVII): *Job*, *Proverbs*, *Isaiah*, *Daniel*, *The Minor Prophets*, *Judith*, *Baruch*, *Jeremiah*, *3 Ezra*, *Wisdom*, *Sirach*, *Bel and the Dragon*, *The Song of the Three Young Men*, *1-3 Maccabees*.

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animals.[5] Moreover, the particular elements that differentiate *Hos* 4 LXX from the Masoretic Text[6] are not present in B1936, which might suggest that the translation was done not after LXX, but after MT.

3.2. Biblia Hebraica Kittel

As regards the Hebrew text, the translators of B1936 could have used the first two editions of the Hebrew Bible (BHK), edited by Rudolf Kittel, in 1906, respectively in 1913. Those reproduced the text of Ben Chaiim, also called Mikraot Gedolot – *textus receptus* from the rabbinic Bible, edited by Daniel Bomberg, in 1524. *Hos* 4:1-5 from Mikraot Gedolot is not different from the one in *Codex Petrogradensis*; v. 3 includes reference to the animals.[7]

But the suggestion of taking into account the entire v. 3 as a gloss or comment could have been taken by Vasile Radu from the critical apparatus of BHK (1913). Here one can identify the mentioning of "verse 3 nonn ad hab" ("versum tres nonnulli additum habent"), namely that v. 3 has been considered by some as being an addition (BHK 1913: 833).

3.3. Kautzsch' Translation

The translators of the B1936 could have had access to an important source for the literature of that time: *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments*, translated by Emil Kautzsch. The work, first published in 1894, was in its fourth edition in 1923, being considered a work of reference at that time. It was accomplished by a group that included eminent biblical scholars from renowned universities (*e.g.*, Berlin, Marburg, Ludwigsburg, Bonn, Leipzig, Konigsberg, Bern, Münster, Breslau). In this edition, *Hosea* was translated by H. Guthe; *Hos* 4:3 is printed in smaller letters than the rest of the text:

> [2] Sie fluchen und lügen, morden und stehlen, brechen die Ehe <und üben> Raub, Blutschuld reiht sich an Blutschuld.
> [3] Deshalb trauert die Erde und verschmachtet alles, was darauf wohnt, an wilden Tieren und an Vögeln unter dem Himmel; ja selbst die Fische im Meere werden dahingerafft
> [4] Wohl soll keiner hadern und keiner tadeln! <Euch, ihr Priester, gilt ja mein Hader>.

In the critical apparatus, Guthe argues that v. 3 would be a later interpolation, as it interrupts the description of the apostasy, started in v. 1, by mentioning the sentence.

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[5] [...] σὺν τοῖς θηρίοις τοῦ ἀγροῦ καὶ σὺν τοῖς ἑρπετοῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ σὺν τοῖς πετεινοῖς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ οἱ ἰχθύες τῆς θαλάσσης ἐκλείψουσιν.

[6] V. 2: "Curse and lying [...] are over the country (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)"; v. 5: "[...] we likened your mother to the night (νυκτί ὡμοίωσα τὴν μητέρα σου)." *Cf.* Glenny (2013: 38-43; 87-101).

[7] בְּחַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמָיִם וְגַם־דְּגֵי הַיָּם יֵאָסֵפוּ׃ ("with the beasts of the plain and the fowls of heaven; even the fish of the sea will perish").

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This penalty is not formulated as a discourse of the Lord, as would be expected. Also, the idea that human beings are the source of suffering for the entire nature would belong to a later epoch (*cf. Is* 33:9; 24:3-6 (KAUTZSCH, 7 and note 7).[8]

3.4. Sellin's Translation

The omission of only the second part of v. 3 appears in a work that could have been available to the translators of the Bible from 1936: *Das Zwölfprohetenbuch*, *i.e.* the *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, translated and explained by Ernst Sellin. Based on linguistic and stylistic reasons, Sellin was inclined to believe that parts of vv. 1-3 are later insertions or explanatory comments that influenced the regular meter of 4:1-10. In order to indicate insertions, Sellin rendered them with normal letters, while the body text is in italics (SELLIN: 38):[9]

Ihr Kinder Israel
1 *Höret das Wort Jahwes / Einen Rechtstreit hat er mit den Bewohnern des Landes,*
Weil keine Treue und keine Liebe / Und keine Gotteserkenntnis im Lande ist.
2 *Man schwört falsch und lügt und mordet / Und stiehlt und buhlt und bricht ein,*
Und Blutschuld reiht sich an Blutschuld
3 *Drum trauert das Land / Und welken alle seine Bewohner dahin.*
Samt den Tieren des Feldes und den Vögeln des Himmels und auch die Fische des Meeres werden dahingerafft.

In addition to removing v. 3ayb, one could not identify other elements that might suggest the influence of Sellin's work on the translators of B1936.

In conclusion, the lack of a part of v. 3 in B1936 is best explained as a choice of the translator, based on literary criticism reasons related to the text. We have not found evidence that Vasile Radu used Kautzsch and Sellin's works, as we do not know whether he knew German. But as professor at a Faculty of Theology, orientalist with studies in Paris, and translator from Arabic (Ştefănescu 1940: 716-718; Abrudan 2009), he must have been familiar with those works.

Surprisingly, the omission in the B1936, which was perpetuated in all Romanian synodal Bibles, does not appear in the translation of the Bible from 1938 (B1938), completed by the same Gala Galaction and Vasile Radu. The translation was made following the Hebrew text and the work of translation began before the printing of B1936 (Conţac 2011: 196-201).

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[8] *Cf.* also Jeremias (1983: 59, 62). Rudolph (1966: 102) finds this idea unsufficiently supported by evidence. Most commentaries do not separate v. 3 from the rest of the text (Harper 1905; Deissler 1981; Stuart 1987; Ben Zvi 2005).

[9] Rudolph (1966: 102), though admits SELLIN'S argument, does not consider it crucial for the exclusion of v. 3.

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Hos 4:3 (B1938)	English translation
Pentru aceasta ţara e în jale, iar cei ce locuesc în ea sunt fără vlagă, chiar şi dobitoacele câmpiei, chiar şi păsările cerului, până şi peştii mării pier şi ei.	For this the country is mourning, and those who dwell therein are flabby, even the beasts of the plain, even the birds of heaven, even the fish of the sea perish.

4. Verse 5: "Your Thummim" (B1936)

This variant, unusual among Romanian translations, is present only in B1936 and B1944. The edition from 1968 revised the v. 5 and replaced "your Thummim" with "your people." If a haplography may be taken into account in the case of v. 3ayb-4 from B1936, in other words an inadvertent error of the translator, in the case of v. 5 such an explanation is excluded.

We did not encounter the reading "your Thummim" in any biblical translation. The first two editions of BHK (1906, 1913) mention no text witnesses for this variant. The critical apparatus of the 3rd edition of Biblia Hebraica mentions as hypothetical the reading "*Your Thummim* and your Urim will be silent," with reference to *Deut* 33:8.[10] But as this edition of the Hebrew Bible appeared in 1937, it could not have been used for B1936.

Instead, translators could find other works of textual criticism on *Hosea*. K. Budde[11] have proposed a similar version, preferring to read "your Urim" (אוּרֵיךְ) instead of "your mother" (MT).

4.1. Kautzsch

As indicated above, Vasile Radu reproduced v. 3 partially, as Sellin actually did. However, in the case of v. 5b, Radu seems to have been influenced by the work of Kautzsch, which suggested the reading:

> [...] und ich will eure Tummim vernichten!
> ("[...] and I will destroy your Thummim!").

The translator considered the reading "your Thummim" more plausible than "your mother" (MT).[12] The variant proposed in KAUTZSCH and adopted by Radu belongs to the field of textual criticism.

The discussion of vv. 3 and 5 makes us believe that Vasile Radu turned out to be more than a translator. His intention seems to have been that of restoring a precanonical shape of the text, where the canonical seemed improbable/ doubtful or corrupt. The solutions adopted by Radu were based on critical works of some

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[10] "*Num* l וּדמוּ תֻמֶּיךָ וְאוּרֶיךָ, *cf. Dt* 33:8?" (BHK 1937: 898).

[11] "Zu Text und Auslegung des Buches Hosea", JBL 45/1926, 280-297, *ap.* Wolff (1961: 88).

[12] "5 ist vielleicht tummèkā zu lesen statt des unverständlichen immèkā (= eure Mutter) des MT" (KAUTZSCH: 8).

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renowned scholars in the field of biblical research.

5. The Omission of v. 4 in SYN and B1936

SYN (English translation)	NRSV
1. Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel; for the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the earth.	1. Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel; for the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land.
2. Because there is no faith, love, or knowledge of God in the land.	2. Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed.
3. False swearing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed.	3. Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing.
4. Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish.	4. Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest.
5. *You* stumble by day; the prophet shall also stumble with you by night, and I shall make your *people* perish.	5. You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night, and I will destroy your mother.

The absence of v. 4 from MT or LXX in the editions of the Romanian Synodal Bible was noticed by Pentiuc (2001: 340). As already mentioned, it is an omission taken from B1936. As a result of that omission in SYN 2008, the question arises concerning the identity of the subject rendered as "you" in *Hos* 4:5:

> *Tu* te poticneşti ziua, iar noaptea se poticneşte cu tine şi profetul şi voi face să piară poporul tău (SYN 2008).
> ("*You* stumble by day; the prophet shall also stumble with you by night, and I shall make your people perish.")

Does the pronoun "you" refer collectively to the "land and its people" mentioned in v. 4? It would be the only acceptable solution in the context of vv. 1-4, where, under different forms of address, the Israelites are hinted at ("sons of Israel", v. 1; "the inhabitants of the land/ the country", v. 2; "all", v. 3). "You" should therefore be understood as a reference to the people.

But the end of v. 5 – "I will make your *people* perish" – makes the identification above ("you" = people) less plausible. The same pronoun ("you") is described here as being a part of the people. It follows that the subject of v. 4 in SYN 2008 cannot be the people considered collectively, but an individual or a group within that people.

By omitting v. 4 (MT, LXX) and rendering "your mother" (MT, LXX) as "your people", the speech in SYN 2008 loses its coherence and creates confusion in identifying text characters.

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5.1. Possible Explanations for the Omission of v. 4 in B1936

What could determine Vasile Radu – if the omission of v. 4 is due to him – make such a decision?

(1) It could be an option of literary and textual criticism. The discussion on v. 3 supports this hypothesis.[13] But it would remain a unique solution in biblical theology, since no translation of the Bible omitted that verse and no researcher treated it as textual addition.

(2) An unintentional error of the translator is not impossible. But it is hard to believe that the omission of v. 4 in B1936 is due to the carelessness of the translator. Moreover, the division of v. 1 in vv. 1 and 2 indicates the intention to keep the same number of verses of the chapter after the omission of v. 4.

(3) It could be an ideological correction of an inconvenient text. In the Masoretic Text, v. 4 allows multiple renderings:

v. 4, MT	אַךְ אִישׁ אַל־יָרֵב וְאַל־יוֹכַח אִישׁ וְעַמְּךָ כְּמְרִיבֵי כֹהֵן׃
Possible translations	"But no one judges, no one accuses anyone; for your people are like those who contend with the priest."
	"Yet let no one judge, nor accuse anyone; for your people are like those who contend with the priest."

Some Bible versions render the text in this way,[14] but most modern scholars consider the Masoretic Text as being corrupt in v. 4. Ancient versions are not helpful in this case, as they had probably relied on an already corrupted Hebrew text.

v. 4, LXX	ὅπως μηδεὶς μήτε δικάζηται μήτε ἐλέγχῃ μεδείς ὁ δὲ λαός μου ὡς ἀντιλεγόμενος ἱερεύς
	"So much so that no one sits in judgement, or reproves; but my people are as an impeached priest."
v. 4, VUL	Verumtamen unusquisque non iudicet et non arguatur vir populus enim tuus sicut hii qui contradicunt sacerdoti
	"But yet let not any man judge: and let not a man be rebuked: for thy people are as they that contradict the priest."[15]

Typically, modern translations of *Hosea* make use of a textual conjecture in v. 4:[16] (a) the word וְעַמְּךָ ("your people") becomes, through a different vocalization, וְעִמְּךָ ("with

[13] *Cf. supra*, section **3**.

[14] *Cf.* KJV: "Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people *are* as they that strive with the priest."

[15] Ancient versions, just like MT, consider "the people" to be a subject in v. 4.

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you"); (b) the first two letters of כְּמְרִיבֵי ("those who contend") are removed and the vocalization is changed – רִיבִי ("my contention").

v. 4 (conjecture)	אַךְ אִישׁ אַל־יָרֵב וְאַל־יוֹכַח אִישׁ וְעַמְּךָ רִיבִי כֹהֵן׃
Possible translations	"But let no one judge, let no one accuse; For with you is my contention, O priest."
	"But no one should be judged, no one should be accused; For with you is my contention, O priest."

This reading indicates that the character to which the text makes reference, starting with v. 4, is the priest and not the people.[17] It is not a certain priest, as in *Amos* 7, or unworthy representatives of the clergy of Israel.[18] Even if initially vv. 4-6 could have been an oracle against a certain priest (Wolff 1961: 94), in its current form *Hos* 4:4-10 makes reference to the entire clergy (Jeremias 1983: 66). It accuses the priest in the generic sense, as a representative of the priestly class, which includes past generations ("your mother", v. 5), as well as present and future ones ("your sons", v. 6) (Jeremias 1983: 66).

The fault of priesthood would have been that of neglecting their mission: to help people reach the knowledge of their God. Since priests have denied knowledge of God (v. 6), it is understandable that people are deprived of this knowledge (vv. 1-6). The fault of priesthood is not just the failure of their mission. In vv. 7-10 priests are accused of perverting their ministry, in order to gain material profits: people are encouraged to increase cultic activities and thereby increase the revenue of the clergy. It is therefore no surprise for anyone that the people practice a cult that Hosea defines as "whoredom" (vv. 11-15).

Anticlerical prophetic speech in *Hos* 4 may disturb a reader who does not know the historical context in which it appeared. Some Romanian Orthodox priests, as well as some contemporary cantors use liturgical variants that seem more "Orthodox", though these are neither supported by printed editions of liturgical books, nor faithful to the biblical text: they conclude Simeon's song *Nunc dimittis* with "glory to thy *faithful* people" (instead of "glory to thy people Israel", *Lk* 2:32); in the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*, they mention that "a priest *of the old law*" passed by the injured man, carelessly (instead of "a priest", *Lk* 10:31).

[16] *Cf.* BHS: 994; Wolff 1961; Rudolph 1966; Weiser 1979; Andersen/ Freedman 1980; Deissler 1981; Jeremias 1983; Stuart 1987; Pentiuc 2001.

[17] Ben Zvi (2005: 103) considers that "you" in v. 4 can refer both to the priests and to Israel: "Surely, the text speaks of monarchic Israel, of priests and other Israelites long dead, but it speaks also about (trans-temporal) Israel [...]."

[18] *Cf.* Pentiuc (2001: 122).

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Given the anti-Judaic character of these variants, it is very probable that they emerged in the decades before the World War II.

Could one argue that the translator Vasile Radu has resorted to such an intervention in *Hos* 4:4? It is quite improbable, since v. 4 appears in its complete form in B1938:

B1938: 861	English Translation
Dar nimeni să nu pornească certare şi nimeni să nu mustre pe celălalt, ci împotriva ta, preote, îndrept certarea mea.	But one should not start scolding and no one should reprove each other, but against you, priest, I direct my scolding.

(4) Therefore, the hypothesis of a t e c h n i c a l f l a w, caused by a difficult text, appears to me as the most plausible. Perhaps the translator noted the existence of textual variants at v. 4 and passed on to the next verse, with the intention of returning to it later, but he never did so. Instead, in B1938, the same translator rendered v. 4 after the variant proposed by Guthe[19] or the critical apparatus of BHK (1937),[20] as most modern Bible translations do.

The last hypothesis may be taken into account only in the case of an interpreter who approaches the translation activity with great responsibility and is aware of the difficulties posed by the verse referred to above. However, this is exactly Vasile Radu's profile: a thorough theologian, scholar, whose approach of the biblical text was scientific. Radu did not limit his activity to the mere translation of source texts. He also explored scientific works about sources and adopted decisions based on his research. At least he seems to have worked in this way when translating *Hos* 4:3 (5).

Our analysis on the biblical text from *Hosea* shows that sometimes scholars can be wrong. In the case of B1936, not the scholarly principles, but rather the adopted solutions were wrong. A review of the text of *Hos* 4 in the actual Romanian Synodal Bible is therefore necessary.

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B1938 = *Biblia, adică Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Vechiului şi a Noului Testament*, tradusă după textele originale ebraice şi greceşti de preoţii Vasile Radu şi Gala Galaction din înalta iniţiativă a Majestăţii Sale Regelui Carol al II-lea, Bucureşti, 1938.

[19] W^{e}ʿimm^{e}kā rîbî hakkôhēn (KAUTZSCH: 7).

[20] וְעִמְּךָ רִיבִי הַכֹּהֵן (BHK 1937: 898).

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BHK = *Biblia Hebraica*, edidit Rudolf Kittel, Stuttgart, 1906, 1913 (facsimile in 1925), 1937.

BHS = *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, vierte verbesserte Auflage, Stuttgart, 1990.

KAUTZSCH = *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments*, übersezt von E. Kautzsch u.a., vierte, umgearbeitete Auflage, 2. Band: *Hosea bis Chronik*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1923.

KJV = *Holy Bible*, King James Version, London, 2008.

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