Antim Ivireanul and the Unification of Old Romanian Literary Language

Gheorghe CHIVU

La Divine Liturgie (Dumnezăiasca Liturghie) *imprimée par Antim Ivireanul à Râmnic, en 1706, en tant que partie d'un* ***Euchologe****, et réimprimée ensuite en tant que texte liturgique indépendant, en 1713, à Târgovişte, représente donc non seulement le livre par lequel a été officialisée la transformation de la langue roumaine en langue liturgique en Valachie, mais aussi le premier livre ecclésiastique imprimé à travers lequel a été promue, en Moldavie et au-delà des montagnes, la norme littéraire valaque.*

Mots-clés: Antim Ivireanul, Liturgikon, langage liturgique, vieille langue littéraire.

1. The end of the 17th century was marked in the Romanian space by an unprecedented come-back of the activity of translating, copying and printing of religious writings, an activity that emphasized not only the change in the attitude towards the form and the role of the church reading book and the book used in preaching sermons respectively, but also the level reached by Romanian literary language. As a consequence of the work done by outstanding intellectuals who belonged to all the Romanian provinces, such as Varlaam, Simion Ştefan, Nicolae Milescu, Dosoftei or Teodosie Veştemeanul, our cultural language had become both able to be used in the first integral printing of the *Bible* and to enter the Church as an official language of worship.

This era saw the beginning of the activity of Antim Ivireanul, a previously unknown scholar who, after a surprisingly short and efficient acquisition of Romanian, brought exceptional cultural contributions.

As a talented and persevering printer, intent not only on the on-going current printing activity, but also on the role played by printing in the dissemination of culture, he was instrumental in the appearance of Slavonic, Slav-Romanian or Greek books, imposed by the official orientation of the Court in the region of Muntenia, as well as several church printings written entirely in Romanian that were extremely useful at the time (among which we note *Psaltire* [=Psalter], Bucharest, 1694, *Evangheliar* [=Gospel], Snagov, 1697, *Noul Testament* [The New Testament], Bucharest, 1703, *Antologhion* [=Anthology], Râmnic, 1705, *Octoih* [Lectern Hymn Book], Târgovişte, 1712, *Molitvenic* [=Prayer Book], Târgovişte, 1713, *Ceasoslov* [Book of Hours], Târgovişte, 1714), or books that could be considered, in the cultural perspective of the era, as writings that had a philosophic

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

character (*Carte sau lumină* [=Book or Light], Snagov, 1699, *Pilde filosofești* [=Philosophical Parables], Târgovişte, 1713).

He disseminated the religious book outside Wallachia and even outside our cultural space, 'crossing out' special letters and printing with them books for Georgians and for Orthodox believers of Arabic language. He also printed, and this is something rare for the border between the 17th and 18th centuries, lay books in the Romanian countries, where the printing houses functioned under the strict patronage of the Church, which is indicative for the cultural opening and for the curriculum originating from Iviria (*Gramatica slavonească* [=Slavonic Grammar] by Meletie Smotriţki, at Snagov, in 1697, which was useful for the still-active schools where Slavonic was being taught, *Floarea darurilor* [=The Gifts' Flower] at Snagov too, three years later and, as some of his close contemporaries say, an *Alexandria*, probably printed in 1713).

He was a translator and a specialist reviser for several of the books that were 'translated for the first time' precisely at that time or 'printed in Romanian' at that time, after the old translations had been resumed, on the basis of some Greek originals, in Snagov, Râmnic, Târgovişte or in Bucharest, with his role being considered as very important in this respect too.

As a hieromonk of special merit who therefore enjoyed a rapid rise in the church hierarchy, he promoted through printing regulations that were useful for the reorganization of monastic life and for the social and cultural opening of the Church (among which we name *Învăţătură pre scurt pentru taina pocăinţii* [=Short Teaching For the Secret of Repentance], Râmnic, 1705, *Învăţătură bisericească…pentru învăţătura preoţilor*[=Church Teaching… for the Learning of Priests], Târgovişte, 1710, *Capete de poruncă la toată ceata bisericească* [=Outstanding Injunctions for All the Church Groups], Bucharest, 1714).

He especially emerged as an accomplished preacher who was equally well versed in the rules of church discourse and the rules necessary for the complete adaptation of the language and structure of his sermons depending on his interlocutor, irrespective of the latter's culture, and this was first and foremost due to his *Didahii*, which quickly developed into patterns, but also to the letters of support that he sent to the country ruler in the year that proved to be crucial for the latter, more specifically 1712.

2. A lot of competent literature has been written on the topic of the canonical importance and literary value of Antim Ivireanu's sermons. The metropolitan bishop's exceptional oratorical talent has been underlined repeatedly and much has been made of the originality of the *Didahii*, as an answer to the hypothesis of its having been translated from the work of the great Byzantine preachers of the time. Very numerous elements of attitude and structure have been revealed in order to differentiate his texts from the homilies of his famous predecessors from the Romanian space, namely deacon Coresi and especially metropolitan bishop Varlaam.

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

But an analysis of the homilies by Antim at the beginning of the 18h century applied equally to the linguistic forms, stylistic registers and textual structures also emphasizes a hard-to surpass science of using the sacred text and of interpreting its letter for an efficient communication with the believers. This includes any believer who was present in the church, regardless of their rank and social standing, but obviously differentiated individually according to the culture and power of understanding the church text. A communication in which the religious quotation was explained almost didactically, in order to increase the listeners capacity of understanding the spirit of the holy books and thus compensate their frequently insufficient knowledge, or one in which the biblical quotation evolved into a means of structuring the text. A communication in which the appeal to the Romanian biblical tradition, which had already been constituted, in our view, towards the end of the 17th century and the application to the Greek-Byzantine rhetoric that had become constantly better known around the year of 1700 juxtaposed beneficially with the adequate utilization of certain elements that had doubtless originated in the culture or even the lay literary norm, in a symbiosis that was without precedent in old Romanian writing.

The equally canonical and literary qualities of these *Didahii* proved beyond doubt an admirable rhetorical talent and linguistic intuition and brought them to the fore of public conscience, and numerous copies some of which were made before the 19th century even outside Wallachia ensured they played the role of a model that deserved to be followed in the process of renovating and unifying the old Romanian literary expression to a higher cultural elevation.

3. The exceptional role played by Antim Ivireanul in the printing of the book necessary for delivering the sermon in Romanian, a language that had thus become officially accepted for good, after a period of official vacillation between old church Slavonic and neo-Greek, as a language of worship and culture is well known.

Following the activity that Antim pursued as a printer, a printing proofreader and later on as a metropolitan bishop conscious of the role and the importance of the church book, Wallachia became as early as the first decade of the 18th century the main producer and, in the conditions of the time, the great exporter of religious books. The intense work of the printing establishments in Snagov, Bucharest, Râmnic or Târgovişte prepared the ground not only for the diminution of the influence previously exerted by the Moldavian norm (the *Bible from Bucharest* is the main 'witness' of this influence, and Dimitrie Cantemir, who had deep and extensive knowledge about the writing of the time stated in *Descriptio Moldaviae* that the people in Wallachia had adopted the Moldavian language and orthography as a model), namely not only for the lessening of the Moldavian cultural influence, but also the placing of Wallachia in the forefront of the printing activity and through the role of the book, in the forefront of cultural activity.

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

(A reckoning apparently lacking any significance, done on the basis of the books that are recorded in *Bibliografia românească veche* [=Old Romanian Bibliography], see Gheţie, *Baza dialectală*, p. 277 – shows that following this intensive development of printing in Wallachia from 1717 to 1750 84 titles were printed in Wallachia, while in Moldavia 30 such titles were printed and, in Transylvania, only 8.)

However the lessening of the Moldavian influence saw a simultaneous increase of the role played by the religious book in Wallachia, which had thus become equally a printing model for printing (whose letter and even page type-setting were imitated) and a textual and linguistic model (the writings and basic norms of which will be reproduced with small modifications and hesitations) for the Moldavian and Transylvanian writings in the framework of the process of unifying the Romanian literary expression and of constituting the first unique super-dialectal norm, a process that was practically complete, as regards the book destined to the Church, by the middle of the 18th century.

A proof of this role is the version of the *Gospel* printed by Antim in 1697 in Snagov. A resumption and re-interpretation through a more accurate 'printing proofreading' of the bilingual Greek-Romanian text, which had also been produced by Ivireanu in Bucharest in 1693 (on the basis of the *Gospel* from Wallachia published in 1682 under the patronage of Şerban Cantacuzino), the afore-said text will become a yardstick and a linguistic model for the majority of the editions of the *Gospel* that appeared after 1723.

The same thing will happen with other books of church reading (which had reached a certain formal unity after the printing of the first integral *Bible* in Romanian and after the reproduction of some of the older versions of biblical books by appealing to the Greek originals, but this process will also be illustrated by some of the books used for sermons, despite the fact that in order to avoid the deviations from the Orthodox rite and some unwanted terminological slip-ups, this type of religious writings continued to be illustrated for a while by bilingual, Slav-Romanian printings, or by Greek writings and only afterwards by books transposed into Romanian according to originals written in neo-Greek (a language of worship and culture agreed upon around 1700 by the Court in Wallachia).

4. A special place in this action of dissemination of the writings and norms in Wallachia that had a decisive role in the process of unification of old Romanian literary language in the book destined to for sermons but also of the constitution of our liturgical language was occupied by the printing and subsequently the re-printing and dissemination of the third Romanian version of the *Missal*, the third after the one printed by Coresi in Braşov in 1570 and after the one Dosoftei translated and printed „cu multă osârdie, să-nţăleagă toţi spăseniia lui Dumnedzău cu întreg înţăles" [= with a lot of diligence, so that everyone may understand God's word to the full], in 1679, and resumed with the benevolence of the Patriarch of Alexandria in 1683, a version through which the Moldavian metropolitan bishop

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

was the first to try to make Romanian into a language of worship. (A manuscript version of the *Missal*, different from the one put under the printing press by the Moldavian metropolitan bishop, circulated in manuscript copies, in the closing decades of the 17th century and immediately after the year of 1700, throughout the Romanian territories from beyond the mountains.)

In the last years of the 17th century, the *Holy and the Godly Liturgy* continued to be disseminated in Wallachia, as we mentioned previously, under a Slavonic form, with only the ritual and certain prayers being translated into Romanian, so that the manner of delivering the sermon could be respected by the priests who no longer knew (at times) the Slavonic language. (In the *Missal* printed in 1680 in Bucharest and resumed in 1702 in Buzău, we read lines that are significant as regards this aspect of the liturgical texts: „Aceasta dară văzând că necum lipseaşte în limba noastră de-a fi ca să înţeleagă nărodul, ce încă şi mulţi, de nu mai mulţi preoţi şi alalt cin beserecesc de a cunoaşte orânduiala şi ţeremoniile ei cum a să sluji trebuie", 4v) [=So as he realized that the people had no way of comprehending him, and quite a lot of them, the other priests and the other priestly order too, did not know how to organize the service and its ceremonies]. „Slujba de toate zilele" [= The 'day-to-day sermon'] was read, as it is written in the directory made up by Patriarch Dositei of Jerusalem together with metropolitan bishop Teodosie, in the 'Slovenian or Greek language, and not in Romanian or in any other one tongue', and this might have been conceived as a reaction of the ecclesiastical officials in Wallachia to the Calvin and Catholic propaganda.

The *Order of the Holy and Godly Liturgy*, which Antim issued 300 years ago, in Târgovişte, which had both the ritual and the text of the sermon translated into Romanian, represented in this context an event whose significance was equally religious and cultural.

Nevertheless, the 1713 printing from Târgovişte, which illustrated a cultural and religious direction that contradicted both the Greek and the traditionally Slavonic current dominant at the Princely court in Wallachia was not the first edition of the sermon book that had taken as a starting point Nikolae Glikis, Greek *Evhologhion* from 1691.

The text was an extremely faithful re-printing of the greater part of the first volume of the *Evhologhion*, which had been issued by the same Antim in the year of 1706 at Râmnic. This was a resumption of the text that in the book from Râmnic started with the *Rânduiala diaconiei* [= Order of Deaconship] (on page 33) and ended (on page 190) with the last lines from the *Văzglaşeniile în ziua Sfintelor Paşti* [= Prayers on the Day of the Holy Easter]. (The prayers printed in the 1713 book on the pages from 205 to 210 are missing from the structure of the book that had appeared in 1706, but it is not out of the question that the unique copy from the Library of the Academy should be lacunose and the ending of the 1706 book should have coincided with that of the new printing.) This re-printing witnessed the respecting of the linguistic form, even the outlay of some extensive fragments and the same engravings were used (such as in the *Închipuirea sfântului discos* [=The

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

Imagining of the Holy Thaler], *Însemnare pentru sfărâmarea sfântului agneț* [=Noting for the Destruction of the Holy Eucharist] or the portraits *Sf. Ioan Zlatoust, Sf. Vasile* and *Sf. Grigorie*).

But the real name of the book was put on the title page. (In the 1706 printing the title page – *Evhologhion*, *adecă Molitvenic*, *acum întâi într-acesta chip tipărit şi aşezat după rânduiala celui grecesc, ... prin osteneala şi toată cheltuiala iubitoriului de Dumnezeu chir Antim Ivireanul*, *episcopul Râmnicului* [=Evhologhion, meaning Prayer Book, now for the first time printed and type-set according to the Greek one, … due to the diligence and all the expenses paid by Antim Ivireanul, the bishop of Râmnic, who loves God], the verses at the coat of arms, the text signed by Mihai Iştvanovici, printed on the first 4 sheets and the contents were identical for the two volumes which, although they had their pages numbered differently, did not exhibit the formal necessary differentiation between the Missal and the Prayer Book.)

The new printing from 1713 bore witness of small text modifications that were meant to avoid for instance the repetitions of some words: „iară aprinzătoriul de *sfeaştnice* aprinde sfeaştnicele şi pune sfeaştnicul cel mic înaintea dverii cei mari" [=and the one who lights the candlestick lights the candlesticks and puts the smaller candlestick before the big door] (1706, p. 1-2) becomes „iară aprinzătoriul de făclii aprinde sfeaştnicele şi pune sfeaştnicul cel mic înaintea dverii cei mari" [=and the one who lights torches lights the candlesticks and puts the smaller candlestick before the big door] (1706, p. 1-2) Or some explanatory passages that in the 1706 book were placed between brackets were eliminated: thus on page 3 of the 1713 book, the passage „Încă să să ştie că dveara cea mare niciodată nu să deşchide, ci numai la începutul vecerniilor la bdenie, când cădeaşte sângur preotul şi la toate vâhodurile vecerniilor şi la ale liturghiei şi la *Cu frica lui Dumnezeu* până la sfârşitul liturghiei" [=And let it be known that the big door must never be opened, but only at the beginning of the evening service, when the priest alone does the service and at all the beginnings of the evening service and the liturgy and *With the fear of God*] is absent, a passage that in the first volume of the 1706 book is found on the same page 3.

5. *Rânduiala Sfintei şi Dumnezeieştii Liturghii* [=The order of the holy and Godly liturgy], printed by Antim in 1706 and then resumed faithfully in 1713 was naturally disseminated in Wallachia, although several copies of the printing had arrived, in a period when the printing establishment from Blaj which printed for the churches in south-western Transylvania and in the region of Banat had stopped its activity in 1702, while the one in Iaşi printed religious books only sporadically and for churches in Moldavia, from Transylvania and Banat. (A series of copies of Antim's *Missal* have been found in Braşov, Sibiu, Târgu-Mureş, Cluj, Satu-Mare, Timişoara, but also in Galaţi or Piatra Neamţ.)

The book printed by Antim was thus known and of course used not only in churches in Wallachia (for which the text was reprinted six times until the middle

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

of the 18th century), but also in places of worship situated in the other Romanian provinces. This fact contributed to the transformation of the *Missal* of the metropolitan bishop from Wallachia, whether directly or through the repeated subsequent editions, into a source or model for the printings that appeared, for example, in Iaşi or in Blaj.

Thus, a perusal of the text of the 1759 *Missal* from Iaşi, we observe that despite the notes that „Evlohie monah diortositoriul" [=Hermit Evlohie the printing proofreader] made at the end of the book, which might lead us to believe that we are confronted with a new translation of the text from Greek („vrând noi a tocmi într-însele cuvintele tocma deplin după izvodul ellinesc" [=as we meant to arrange the words exactly in the manner of the Hellenic source], f. 170^{v}), some fragments have a form that is almost identical to the corresponding fragments in Antim's printing, while the differences only pertain to the use of certain Slavonic terms and their being replaced by a corresponding Romanian word, a vacillation that was but natural at a time when attempts were made to stabilize the religious terminology.

„Rugăciunea 4. Cela ce cu cântări fără de tăceare şi cu **măriri** fără de încetare de sfintele puteri eşti lăudat umple gura noastră de lauda ta, ca să dăm mărire numelui tău celui sfânt" (*Liturghier*, 1713, p. 14) [=Prayer 4. The One who by relentless chanting and ceaseless praise is glorified, fill our breath with Your praise, to praise Your Holy name] (*Missal*, 1713, p. 14),

„Molitva a patra. Cela ce cu cântări fără de tăceare şi cu **slavoslovii** fără de încetare de sfintele puteri eşti lăudat umple gura noastră de lauda ta, ca să dăm mărire numelui tău celui sfânt" (*Liturghier*, 1759, f. 10^{v}) [=Prayer 4. The One who by relentless chanting and ceaseless glorification is praised, fill our breath with your praise, to praise Your Holy name] (*Missal*, 1759, leaf 10^{v}).

„Mântuiaşte, Dumne**ze**ule, norodul tău şi blagosloveşte moştenirea ta! Cercetează lumea ta cu milă şi cu îndurări! Înalţă cornul creştinilor pravoslavnici şi trimite preste noi milele tale ceale bogate!" (*Liturghier*, 1713, p. 23) [=Dear God, redeem Your people and bless Your inheritance! Regard your world with mercy and compassion! Raise the crescent of the Christian believers and send above us your richest compassions!] (*Missal* 1713, p. 23),

„Mântuiaşte, Dumne**ză**ule, norodul tău şi blagosloveşte moştenirea ta! Cercetează lumea ta cu milă şi cu îndurări! Înalţă cornul creştinilor pravoslavnici şi trimite preste noi milele tale ceale bogate!" (*Liturghier*, 1759, f. 17^{v}) [= Dear God, redeem Your people and bless Your inheritance! Regard your world with mercy and compassion! Raise the crescent of the Christian believers and send above us your richest compassions!] (*Missal* 1713, leaf 17^{v}).

Similar findings may be reached by a parallel perusal of the text printed in Târgovişte in 1713 and the text that appeared „cu blagoslovenia prealuminatului şi preasfinţitului chiriu chir Petru Pavel Aaron, vlădicăi Făgăraşului, în mănăstirea Sfintei Troiţă la Blaj" [=with the blessing of the holiest and most sacred father

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

Petru Pavel Aaron, bishop of Făgăraş, in the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Blaj], in 1756:

„Rânduiala bdeniei. După ce apune soarele, trecând puţintea vreame, toacă în toaca cea mare, iară aprinzătoriul de făclii aprinde şi pune sfeaştnicul cel mic înaintea dverii **cei** mari; iară preotul şi diaconul merg de iau blagoslovenie de la cel mai mare, de va fi acolea, iară de nu va fi acolea, fac metanie la locul lui şi merg de să închină înaintea icoanei lui Hristos de trei ori şi o sărută. Aşij**di**rea fac şi la icoana Preacist**ii**, apoi să închină înaintea dverii **cei** mari o dată şi spre strane să pleacă câte o dată şi, întrând în oltariu, ia preotul epitra**hil**ul pre sine şi svita şi, luund cadelniţa cu tămâie, stă înaintea prestolului şi zice rugăciunea **de tămâie** în taină." (*Liturghier* 1713, p. 1-2) [=Order of the evening service. After the sun sets and a little while later, the big bell is being sounded to summon worshippers for the vespers, and the torch bearer lights and puts the small candlestick before the big church door; and the priest and the deacon go and take the blessing from the older priest if he is there or if he is not there, they use a rosary on his place and go to make the sign of the cross before the icon of Christ three times and kiss it. They do likewise in front of the icon of Blessed Mary, then they cross themselves before the big door once and towards the lectern they each bow once and, on entering the altar, the priest takes the stole and, taking the censer with the incense, he stands before the communion table and utters the incense prayer in a low voice.] (*Missal* 1713, p. 1-2),

„Rânduiala bdeniei. După ce apune soarele, trecând puţintea vreame, toacă în toaca cea mare, iară aprinzătoriul de făclii aprinde **luminile** şi pune sfeaştnicul cel mic înaintea dverii **ceii** mari; iară preotul şi diaconul merg de iau blagoslovenie de la cel mai mare, de va fi acolea, iară de nu va fi acolea, fac metanie la locul lui şi merg de să închină înaintea icoanei lui Hristos de trei ori şi o sărută. Aşij**de**rea fac şi la icoana Preacist**ei**, apoi să închină înaintea dverii **ceii** mari o dată şi spre strane să pleacă câte o dată şi, întrând în oltariu, ia preotul epitra**hir**ul pre sine şi svita şi, luând cadelniţa cu tămâie, stă înaintea preastolului şi zice rugăciunea **tămâiei** în taină." (*Liturghier*, 1756, p. 1-2) [=Order of the evening service. After the sun sets and a little while later, the big bell is being sounded to summon worshippers for the vespers, and the torch bearer lights and puts the small candlestick before the big church door; and the priest and the deacon go and take the blessing from the older priest if he is there or if he is not there, they use a rosary on his place and go to make the sign of the cross before the icon of Christ three times and kiss it. They do likewise in front of the icon of Blessed Mary, then they cross themselves before the big door once and towards the lectern they each bow once and, on entering the altar, the priest takes the stole and, taking the censer with the incense, he stands before the communion table and utters the incense prayer in a low voice.] (*Missal* 1756, p. 1-2).

It is simple to notice that the differences usually reside, like in the case of a comparison drawn to the Iaşi version of the *Missal*, in the different form, whether Romanian or Slavonic, of certain religious terms or names of prayers, where the norms from Muntenia are accepted:

„Şi noi cântăm troparul ***Bce Dvo***, zicându-l de trei ori, iară eclisiarhul puind mai nainte pre tetrapod 5 pâini din care mâncăm la masă împreună şi un vas cu vin şi altul cu unt de

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

lemn" (*Liturghier* 1713, p. 27) [=And we sing the hymn ***Mother of God***, we chant it three times, and the ecclesiarch puts before that 5 loaves of bread onto the lectern for us to eat together and a vessel of wine and another vessel of oil] (*Missal* 1713, p. 27),

„Şi noi cântăm troparul ***Născătoarei de Dumnezeu***, zicându-l de trei ori, iară eclisiarhul puind mai nainte pre tetrapod 5 pâini din care mâncăm la masă împreună şi un vas cu vin şi altul cu unt de lemn" (*Liturghier* 1756, p. 32). [=And we sing the hymn ***Mother of God***, we chant it three times, and the ecclesiarch puts before that 5 loaves of bread onto the lectern for us to eat together and a vessel of wine and another vessel of oil] (*Missal* 1756, p. 32).

The maintaining or the reintroduction in certain contexts of the term or the Slavonic phrase was demanded, as specified by some translators or printing proofreaders of the time, by the ritual and the form that the terminology that was specific to a text of religious service had to have, which was naturally different in the writing of a church text from the usual vocabulary. Evlohie the hermit, the printing proofreader of the *Missal* printed in Iaşi in 1759, noted in this respect:

„Une cuvinte, ce să află într-însele schimbate şi mai ales puse şi tocma pre limba slavenească, nu este altă pricină de mândrie, adecă cât să facem şi de la noi adăogire de schimbare, ci vrând noi a tocmi într-însele cuvinte tocma deplin după izvodul ellinesc (cum şi cel slavenesc urmează), nu s-au putut acele cuvinte nici într-un chip a să tălmăci tocma drept după puterea lor pre limba noastră, căci este puţină. La aceasta şi noi încă dară n-am vrut a micşora sfintele cuvinte ale Dumnezăieştii Liturghii după neputinţa limbii noastre, căci nu este cazanie sau istorie Sfânta Liturghie, ci tocma însuşi dumnezăieşti şi de Duhul Sfânt suflate cuvinte. Pentru aceaea şi noi le-am pus slaveneşte şi aşa fără de îndoire să le urmaţi a le zice, ca să fie în veci de tot şi întru toate deplin Dumnezăiasca Liturghie" (*Liturghier*, 1759, f. 170^{v}) [=Some words, which are in themselves changed and more than anything are arranged identically in Slav language, are not another reason of pride, one caused by a mere change of meaning, but as we want to arrange the words according to the Hellenic source (as the Slav source shows), those words were impossible to be translated fully well into our language, since it is scarce. With this in mind, we did not want to lessen the holy words of the Godly Missal because of the little power of our language, because there is no homily or history in the Holy Liturgy, but only sacred words, inspired by the Holy Spirit. That is the very reason why we used the Slav form and as such you must say them, and let the Godly Liturgy forever and ever be fully inspired by the Holy Spirit] (*Missal*, 1759, leaf 170^{v}).

6. The *Godly Missal*, printed by Antim Ivireanul at Râmnic in 1706 as part of an Evhologhion and then reprinted as an independent text of sermon in 1713 in Târgovişte is thus not only the book through which the transformation of Romanian language into a language of worship became official in Wallachia, but also the first book of sermon through which the literary norm from the region of Muntenia was promoted in Moldavia and beyond the mountains.

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

In the decades that followed the re-printing of Antim's *Missal*, the *Book of Hours* issued by Antim in 1715 in Târgovişte, and afterwards the 1750 Iaşi edition of the writing, which 'corresponds page by page' to the printing from Muntenia, used directly or through the agency of the (faithful) edition printed in Bucharest in 1748 (Gheţie- Chivu, *Contribuţii*, 100) will illustrate this process, which achieved the first unification of our old language of culture and laid the foundations of our current liturgical language. The same source from Muntenia would also be used by the printings from Blaj from 1751 and 1753, which also reflect the 'Books of Hours from Muntenia, placed in the tradition of of the Book of Hours from 1715 in Târgovişte', but 'most likely received, through the 1724 and 1745 editions from Râmnic' (Gheţie-Chivu, *Contribuţii*, 105).

7. The contribution brought by Antim Ivireanul to the development of Romanian printing, his activity of translating and disseminating the texts necessary for the sermon officiating in Romanian, his role in the emancipation and the renewal of the sermon and his contribution to the creation of the Romanian liturgical language, together with the constitution of the unique super-dialectal norm in old Romanian writing ensure a privileged place to the great scholar and metropolitan bishop in the history of our old culture.

Less brilliant than Dosoftei, an author of church texts with a well-rounded personality, including from the perspective of writing fiction (*Psaltirea în versuri* [=Psalter in Verses] was the first instance of rendering in Romanian of the religious model in a wide-spanning poetical text), less scholarly impressive than Dimitrie Cantemir, a creator of both an original body of literature and of scientific works of great scientific standing, Antim Ivireanul was a man of culture and simultaneously, the writer (in the broader sense of the word) who was perfectly adapted both to the requirements and commandments of his era and to the level of development of the Romanian language, a language that sought a balance and at the same time the means to impose itself as the official language of the Church at a time that can best be described as a watershed moment, when an old language of culture, Slavonic, was vying with neo-Greek, a language of prestige that was used increasingly in the Romanian space around the year of 1700.

Bibliography:

Ioan Bălan, *Limba cărţilor bisericeşti. Studiu istoric şi liturgic* [=Language of Church Books. A Historical and Liturgical Study], Blaj, Tip. Seminarului Teologic Greco-Catolic, 1914

Ioan Bianu, *Despre introducerea limbii româneşti în biserica românilor* [=On the Introduction of Romanian in the Church of Romanians], Bucureşti, Institutul de Arts Grafice „Carol Göbl", 1904

Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoş, Dan Simonescu, *Bibliografia românească veche. 1508–1830* [=Old Romanian Bibliography], vol. I–IV, Bucureşti, Stabilimentul Grafic I.V. Socec, 1903–1944

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)

Ion Gheţie, *Baza dialectală a românei literare* [=Dialectal Basis of Literary Romanian], Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române, 1975
Ion Gheţie, Gh. Chivu (coord.), *Contribuţii la studiul limbii române literare. Secolul al XVIII-lea (1688–1780)* [=Contributions to the Study of Literary Romanian. The 18th Century (1688-1780)], Cluj-Napoca, Clusium, 2000
Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria bisericii româneşti şi a vieţii religioase a românilor* [=History of the Romanian Church and the Romanians' Religious Life], I–II, Vălenii de Munte, Tipografia „Neamul Românesc", 1908/1909
Eugen, Pavel, *Arheologia textului* [=Text Archeology] , Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, 2012
Gabriel Ştrempel, *Antim Ivireanul*, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române, 1997
Mircea Tomescu, *Istoria cărţii româneşti de la începuturi până la 1918* [=History of the Romanian Book from the Beginnings until 1918], Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică

BDD-A3931 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:54:27 UTC)