A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN BIBLICAL TRADITION

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ABSTRACT The Romanian biblical tradition is a vast and diverse research field, still in its early stages of exploration. The research potential is significant and interesting for researchers in many subjects Using a philological approach, future interdisciplinary groups may be created, groups which could easily include theologians, historians (cultural, artistic, anthropological), translation experts, ethnologists, IT experts or philosophers.
KEYWORDS Bible, tradition, Romanian, interdisciplinarity

0. Introduction

A fundamental building stone of Christian doctrine, and one of the most important sources related to the European collective imaginary, the Bible played a central role in the emergence of some salient features of the Romanian culture. In the reception of the Holy Scripture, Romanian culture was influenced by numerous interferences and differentiating particularities coming from other Western cultures, but also from neighbouring south-eastern, Balkanised and mostly Orthodox nations. The first general observation is that biblical texts began to be translated into Romanian (most probably around the 16th century) several centuries later than they were into Western vernacular languages (English, German, French, Italian, Spanish etc.), and a few centuries earlier than was the case with the neighbouring Orthodox cultures (Russia, Bulgaria, modern Greece etc.). The main explanation for this chronological delay lies in the historical specificity of the Romanian people. While their language has Romanic origins, their written culture was established as a

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result of a strong Slavonic Byzantine influence which came to prevail in the country immediately after its ethnogenetic core was defined. Moreover, this influence persisted for a long time throughout the medieval period. As a consequence, here, the function of 'sacred language' – i.e. to receive and transfer the concepts and imagery of the Bible – was not fulfilled by the Latin language, as was the case in the West, but rather by Slavonic (in the first centuries) and Greek (starting with the 17th century) – these two being the primary 'sacred' languages of Orthodoxy. Ecclesiastical culture, including the reading and interprettation of biblical texts, was therefore subscribed to the general standards of medieval Slavonic Byzantine Orthodoxy.

One may also assume that the partial or complete manuscripts of *Itala* (the oldest Latin version of the Scriptures), or the *Vulgate* itself (the official Latin version, pertaining to the Catholic Church, established in the 4th century by St. Jerome), were also used in pre-Romanian communities, even if accidentally in the precarious cultural conditions of primitive Christianity. Along with these, there were Greek versions of biblical texts, probably originating from the *Septuagint*, a translation of the canonical books of the Bible written between the 4th and 2nd centuries B.C. in the Judaic Greek communities in Alexandria and Jerusalem, and later adopted by early Christians as *textus receptus*. However, the protochronistic allegations forwarded by some literary historians concerning a so-called "pre-Romanian literature", including some form of scriptural influences, are totally devoid of historical argumentation or logical foundation. Very hard to prove are also the firm beliefs of certain philologists (e.g. I. C. Chiţimia), based on the existence, in the oldest Romanian texts, of some 20-30 "lexical relics" (Latin-derived words that later disappeared) allegedly related to Romanian translations of the Bible presumably made directly from Latin, long before the 16th century, and possibly even before, and independent of the strong Slavonic influence (which only started around the 10th-11th century).

In the strict framework of historical philology, and beyond the inextricable network of a popular Christian mental communality, the reception of biblical texts by the Romanian people can be followed via three distinct routes: biblical insertions in worship-related Christian

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books, partial interpretations, and full biblical translations into Romanian. In line with an Orthodox cultural specificity, the first two routes are much more important, more dynamic and more richly represented in comparison with the third; the reason for this is the fact that direct access to the sacred texts or to a reading of the Bible does not, in the Orthodox tradition, equate with an act of faith *per se*, and even less with one of worship-related importance.

1. Slavonic Romanian Literature of the Bible

In Slavonic Romanian literature – i.e., the ensemble of Slavonic texts, either translated or (less often) original, that were produced or copied into Romanian –, biblical texts play an important part. In the vast range of Slavonic manuscripts, some of which are beautifully illuminated and archived in great collections of various local or foreign libraries, there are many such biblical texts, coming form Romanian scholars. Most of them are worship-works: a) (tetra)evanghel(iar)ul (the Book of Gospels), a book of worship containing ample Gospel passages arranged by pericopes according to worship necessities; b) apostolul (the Apostle), a collection of passages extracted from the Acts and Epistles, also organised by pericopes; c) psaltirea (the Psalter), a worship book in which the 151 biblical psalms are displayed in *kathismas*, according to worship rigours. Noteworthy examples include a Tismana *Evangheliar* (designed in 1405 by the monk Nicodim, a scholar with Macedonian roots and refugee from Mount Athos, established in one of the Romanian principalities, a man who significantly contributed to the intellectual expansion of the monastic life in his adoptive country) and a *Tetraevanghel*, the calligraphy of which was made by the Moldavian Gabriel Uric in 1429, presently archived at the Bodleian Library of Oxford University.

The introduction of the printing press in the Romanian principalities is closely linked with the necessity of copying church works, destined not only to internal, worship-related needs, but also used for distribution purposes among neighbouring nations – the Serbs and Bulgarians particularly –, who were severely affected by the Turkish influence. Alongside the 1508 *Liturghier* (the Book of Liturgy), and 1510 *Octoih* (the

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Octoechos), the third Slavonic book published by the Serbian monk Macarie was the *Tetraevanghel* (Târgovişte, 1512). Another publisher specialized in Slavonic works, Dimitrie Liubavici, published a *Tetraevanghel* (Târgovişte, 1546-1555) and an *Apostol* (1547). The Bible texts contained in these Slavonic versions were most likely derived from the Slavonic tradition in the Balkan region, either Serbian or Bulgarian, even though we cannot rule out the hypothesis that some biblical works were written in Slavonic by Romanian scholars in Romanian monasteries. Still, the factual demonstration of this hypothesis awaits completion. What is certain is that all of these Slavonic Apostles, Books of Gospels and Psalters, as well as other church-related books and manuscripts, have constituted the main source for the first Romanian translation of the Bible. To finish with these specific aspects, we should also observe that, following the militant ideology of the Transylvanian School, the cultural Slavonic period in Romania was often attacked and described as a regressive period, or even a cultural halt. Using expressions such as "pâcla slavonismului" ("the muddy fog of slavonicism") or "barbaria slavonă" ("the Slavonic barbarism"), Romanian historians and philologists, some of them of indisputable scientific status, have neglected the principle of scientific objectivity, while also disregarding the reality of historical facts and conditions. Such depreciative and subjective evaluations cannot be justified. In order to serve as support and expressive instrument for a semantic universe as refined as Christianity, a historical language (*any* language), in this case Romanian, needs a relatively extended period of time to practice its literary varieties in writing. Also, for almost 1,000 years the Church accepted and used very few languages (Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Gruzin and Slavonic); therefore, the Romanian case is by no means singular, but rather part of a general rule. We should also observe that the early Romanian versions of the Bible are heavily impregnated, in terms of lexis, phraseology, syntax, and style, with Slavonic elements (obviously the source language for translation). In addition to the somewhat artificial aspect of these early versions, they had a sacred character, which forced the translators to find adequate equivalents for each word in the source texts. This literal principle in transposing the

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sacred texts, formulated early by St. Jerome, had been accepted as obvious and natural, up until close to the present day.

2. Early Romanian Bible Literature

The earliest surviving Romanian texts with a literary character and biblical content can be traced back as far as the first half of the 16th century, mostly Psalters (e.g. *Psaltirea Scheiană*, *Psaltirea Voroneţeană*, *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki*) and Apostles (*Codicele Voroneţean*, *Apostolul Popii Bratul*). Being manuscript copies of lost original works, they amount to a corpus in the sense that they appear to textually derive from the same prototype, have an archaic character, show heavy Slavonic influences, as well as dialectical particularities of a northern origin – e.g. the intervocalic */n/>/r/* (rhotacism) in words such as *lu(n)ră* for *lună*, *bi(n)re* for *bine*, *me(n)re* for *mine* etc. Because of this phonetic idiosyncrasy, the respective texts are often referred to by specialists as "rhotacizing texts". These aspects have stirred lengthy and controversial debates among Romanian philologists, particularly aimed at localizing and dating the oldest literary texts in Romanian, and especially keen on exploring the motives and cultural-historical and religious contingencies behind such texts. Today, especially following the research work around Bucharest-based scholar Ion Gheţie (in the second half of the 20th century), it is generally assumed that the decision to translate the texts of the Bible into Romanian cannot be separated from the innovative ideas of the religious Reform taking place in the West. The translation of the Holy Scripture into vernacular languages ranked high among the essential programmatic points of the Reform's protestant leaders Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Jean Calvin (1509-1564). In its Lutheran and Calvinistic variants, the Reform was adopted early (i.e. starting from the first decades of the 16th century) by the Transylvanian Saxons and Hungarian people of Transylvania ("nations" which, alongside the Székelys, had political control over this region). Furthermore, the main linguistic *stratum* of these texts (which include a rather non-unitary language!) would point the researcher, according to the above-mentioned Gheţie, to the dialectical region of Banat-Hunedoara, in which the attempts to Calvinize the Romanians in Transylvania initiated by most of

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the princes of Transylvania (Ioan Sigismund Zápolya, Sigismund Báthory, Gabriel Bethlen) were successful. Eventually, Calvinistic Romanian communities were established, and they proliferated up until the end of the 17th century.

Older theories pointed either to alleged influences of the Hussite movement (point of view supported by Nicolae Iorga and Sextil Puşcariu), or to the interior "impetus" (the theory of P. P. Panaitescu) – both of which have proved unsustainable. According to Nicolae Iorga, some of Jan Hus' (cca 1369-1415) followers, exiled from the German Empire in the first half of the 15th century, allegedly settled in Maramureş and the north of Moldavia where they managed to convince local scholars that the meanings of the Holy Scripture can only be transmitted in a language that is accessible to all individuals. P. P. Panaitescu, on the other hand, emphasized a supposed "internal necessity" of the Romanian society, which might have determined the translation of the first Apostles, Books of Gospels and Psalters. The well-known scholar even imagined a concrete historical frame pertaining to these first translations, with the Peri Monastery from Maramureş where, as part of the struggle for autonomy against the (Ukrainian) Episcopy of Muncaci, Romanian monks tried to suppress Slavonic as a language of worship in Romania.

During the second half of the 16th century, the expansion of the Holy Scripture in Romanian is significant and dramatic, especially via the complex translation, revision, and publishing activities of Coresi (also known as "Deacon Coresi"). Originally from Wallachia, he published, between 1559 and 1581, in Braşov and in other cities in Transylvania, many worship books in Romanian and Slavonic, with a foreword or afterword in which – depending on the respective edition's sponsors, clients or intended audience – the religious orientation (either Lutheran, Calvinist, Orthodox or neutral) was made rather clear. Among the approx. 35 of his publications, besides liturgical books (the Liturgy Books, the Book of Needs, and Octoechos) and Catechisms, there are also Bible-oriented worship works (in the sense defined above). In Slavonic, Coresi published a *Tetraevanghel* (three editions, 1562, 1579, and 1583) and the *Psalter* (two editions, 1570 and 1572), plus *Psaltirea*

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slavo-românească (1577), a bilingual version, while in Romanian he distributed an Apostle (*Lucrul apostolesc*, 1566), a *Psalter* (1568) and a *Tetraevanghel* (1561). Particularly relevant cases are Coresi's Books of Homilies, called *Cazanii – Tâlcul evangheliilor* (1567) and *Evanghelia cu învățătură* (1581) –, which can be considered this prolific scholar's masterpiece. Ample patristic literature and homiletic Byzantine compilations, the two books of homilies contain frequent and comprehensive biblical insertions. The demand for religious books with scriptural content in the Romanian must have been quite high at that time, as other publishers had initiated similar projects. For example, in 1570, Deacon Lorinț was publishing, in Brașov, two editions of the Evangel (1570 and 1579), while typographer Călin was reproducing, in 1566, probably with the deacon's consent, Coresi's *Tetraevanghel*. In what the method is concerned, Coresi may have translated some of the input himself, while at times relying on experienced scholars such as Father Iane and Father Mihai from Șcheii Brașovului. Quite often, though, he would revise and adapt many older Psalters and Apostles translations, and maybe even Evangels, in the local dialect (Wallachian). What is certain is that, compared with the rhotacizing texts, Coresi's language and style are much more evolved, fluent and closer to modern literary Romanian. In what the dialect is concerned, Coresian publications follow, with relative consistency, the tradition of the "Wallachian literary dialect" (*cf.* Gh. Ivănescu) – this being an area which included Wallachia (Coresi's homeland), but also the south of Transylvania, Brașov and Sibiu. The Wallachian character of the works determined some philologists to speculate that, starting from the 16th century, the Coresian publications established the Wallachian basis of modern literary Romanian. However, factual reality and ulterior texts contradict these opinions, as all other regional literary varieties (including at least the dialects from Moldavia and Banat–Hunedoara) thrived in various texts throughout the 17th century and during the first half of the next century.

Palia de la Orăștie (1582) was the first printed book in Romanian where the biblical text was no longer conceived and presented as part of the worship discourse or Christian dogmatism, but rather as a book in its own right. Printed in a typeface very similar to that used by Coresi

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(Şerban Coresi, Deacon Coresi's son, is mentioned as a typographer along with one Marien Diacul), the volume contains only the first two books of the Bible which were called, as was the entire work, by their Slavonic names, *Bitia* (Genesis) and *Ishodul* (Exodus). The ample preface and an afterword give informations on the authors, the cultural, religious and political context, as well as the purposes behind this cultural enterprise. The volume needs to be regarded as part of the effort to calvinize the Romanians via the political authority in Transylvania. Prince Sigismund Báthory is mentioned as such a political authority, as well as Mihail Tordaşi, superintendent of the already calvinized Romanians, plus the edition's sponsor, Gesti Ferenz of Deva (the military governor of Transylvania, a supremely powerful personage in that context). As their titles clearly show, the authors of the translation are Romanian Calvinized scholars: Ştefan Herce, "preacher of the Gospel" in Caransebeş, and Efrem Zacan, "preacher" in the same city, Moisi Peştişel, "preacher of the Gospel" in Lugoj, and Arhirie, archpriest of Hunedoara. Apart from Coresi and another two or three contemporary scholars, these four figures seem to be the oldest names of confirmed Romanian "intellectuals". Although the translators emphatically and prudently declare that they followed the original Hebrew, Greek and Slavonic versions of the Bible, some philologists (Mario Roques, Viorica Pamfil – the first modern editors of the Bible) proved that the project's main source, although unnamed, was the Magyar *Pentateuch* published in Cluj, in 1551, by the Reformation scholar Gáspár Heltai (1490-1574), with probably a *Vulgate* edition of the Bible kept at hand in the process of translation. With manifest influences in phonetics and morphology (also lexis, partially) from the translators' mother tongue (a subdialect from Banat–Hunedoara), the text of *Palia de la Orăştie* do not exceed the stylistic threshold of previous Romanian translations; in fact, in certain regards, they come beneath standard. Another significant fact is the frequent reference to the use (in two instances) of the form ***ro**mân*, alternating with the etymological and more popular version *r**u**mân*. The phenomenon is interpreted as a spontaneous analogical creation (*r**o**man* < lat. *r**o**manus*), a sign of the Romanians' awareness of their Roman ancestry – at least in the case of several 16th century scholars.

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As a part of the same Calvinized background, one needs to mention the Metropolitan Bishop of Ardeal Simion Ştefan's (d. 1657) endeavour to publish new, complete versions of the *New Testament* (1648) and the *Psalter* (1651). Printed in Alba Iulia with advanced technology, these monumental works represent an obvious leap forward in shaping the literary means of expression in Romanian for the biblical message. The first preface to the New Testament, dedicated to Gheorghe Rákoczi, the "prince of Transylvania", and signed by Simion Ştefan, who presents himself as "Archbishop and Metropolitan of Bălgrad, Vad, Maramureş and all the land of Ardeal", displays a solid biblical erudition. A second preface, dedicated to the readers ("predoslovie către cetitori"), unsigned but most likely belonging to Simion Ştefan, containes the proof that one of the principles of the humanistic philology had already been adopted: the critical comparison of various "Greek, Serbian, and Latin sources" (Rom. "izvoade... greceşti, şi sârbeşti, şi lătineşti"), "the Greek book being the spring of the other books". This second preface also contains a series of valid intuitive statements concerning the justification of neological borrowings – in order to designate some objects, institutions, ancient relationships or concepts (*poblican*, *cangrenă*, *sinagogă* etc.) –, a deliberate choice to avoid excessively regional words, and the preference for widely spread expressions ("like money, those words are good, which are understood by all"). The 1648 version was fully adopted later by the *Bucharest Bible* (1688), thus becoming, at least in what the New Testament is concerned, the basis for the entire Romanian tradition of the Bible.

The expansion of the Protestant movement throughout south-eastern Europe, including the Ottoman Empire (Cyril Lucaris [1572-1638], Patriarch of Constantinople, was eventually convicted of supporting Calvinism!), triggered a significant wave of rejection in the high-ranking Greek Orthodox pulpits. One such anti-Calvinist champion was Metropolitan Varlaam of Moldavia, who published in 1645 a polemical brochure against Calvinism, *Răspuns împotriva catihismusului calvinesc* (A Reply against the Calvinistic Catechism), while implicitly admitting the (Protestant!) idea that the Church needs to adopt a vernacular language as part of its services – indeed, such a decision was probably no longer safe to procrastinate. Through his *Cazania*

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(Homiliarium) printed in Iaşi (1643), Varlaam initiated a long and complex process of substituting Romanian for the Slavonic used in the Church, which took about a century to complete. Thus, the book entitled *Cazania*, an anthology of sermons extracted from the Byzantic-Slavonic homiletic tradition, also includes quite a lot of biblical material in itself, especially the evangelical pericopes for Sunday mass.

The editing and interpretation of the Bible in Romanian was also a constant activity for Dosoftei and Antim Ivireanul, two metropolitan bishops and writers, as part of their missionary and scholarly endeavour. Dosoftei included in his work, *Parimiile preste an* (Iaşi, 1683), ample biblical passages mainly from the Old Testament (even entire books occasionally, e.g. *Jonah*), as original versions. The Psalms were of particular interest to him. Considered the first important Romanian text of "poetical" nature, Dosoftei's erudite Psalter (*Psaltirea "pre verşuri tocmită"*, Uniew, 1673) is in fact a personal work, with no real worship significance. For worship purposes, Dosoftei published an additional Psalter (*Psăltire de-nţăles*, Iaşi, 1680) in Slavonic Romanian. Antim Ivireanul also published, among many liturgical works, a Book of Gospels (*Evangheliar*, 1697), a Psalter (*Psaltirea*, 1710) and a New Testament *(Noul Testament*, 1702), a revised text of the New Testament printed in Alba-Iulia (*Noul Testament de la Bălgrad*, 1648).

Starting from the last decades of the 17th century, the number of worship books with biblical content increased exponentially. In the established centres of Romanian ecclesiastical culture (Neamţ, Iaşi, Bucharest, Snagov, Râmnic, Buzău and later Blaj) tens of successive Psalters, Apostles and Books of Gospels were published; along with the other Church books, they helped to establish, towards the end of the 18th century, the uniform and general version of old literary Romanian. Leaving aside what may be considered a worship-related component of the Romanian biblical tradition, we will henceforth focus only on presenting the complete versions of the Bible in Romanian.

3. Complete Versions of the Bible in Romanian

3.1. Although, as one may conclude from above, the textual basis of the Romanian biblical tradition can be traced back to 16th century

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partial translations and gospel versions, it is considered to have really been established when the *Bucharest Bible* (= *BB*), also known as *Şerban Cantacuzino's Bible*)[1], came out of the printing press, in 1688. The synthetic, founding character of the *BB* refers to the circulation of the complete biblical text. Due to its highly symbolic prestige, its numerous literary qualities, sheer size and the authority it bestowed on its editor (Şerban Cantacuzino, prince of Wallachia), it became a model for all subsequent Romanian versions. The concept of 'tradition' needs to be understood here in its most concrete sense, i.e. a stylistic and relatively stable lexical-semantic paradigm that is maintained throughout the successive versions of the Bible in Romanian (also in terms of textual interconnections). It means that, for more than two and a half centuries, the original orientation of the *BB* was preserved, as well as a large quantity of textual elements (translation options, terminology, semantics, phraseology, onomastics etc.).

Although contemporary researchers following in Nicolae Iorga's footsteps (e.g. Virgil Cândea, N. A. Ursu, Al. Andriescu) have clarified both the general circumstances (cultural, religious, political) around such a monumental literary work and the numerous details of a complex editorial dynamics, many errors or erroneous comments still persist in various lectures, courses and such other books.

One such frequent though unfounded interpretation forwards the idea that the *BB* is an "apotheosis" of all previous translation efforts, or a "synthesis" of many partial translations, printed or circulated before 1688. In fact a simple textual comparison reveals a different history of

[1] *Biblia ádecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a ceii Vechi şi ale ceii Noao Leage, toate care s-au tălmăcit dupre limba elinească spre înţelegerea limbii rumâneşti, cu porunca preabunului Domn Ioan Şărban Cantacozino Basarabă Voievod* (...), Bucureşti, 1688 [modern ed.: *adică Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Vechiului şi Noului Testament* (...) Bucureşti, 1988 (*Cuvânt înainte*: Teoctist, patriarh al B.O.R.; coord.: I. C. Chiţimia, Mihai Moraru; revizuire: I. C. Chiţimia, Alexandru Ciurea, Mariana Costinescu, Magdalena Georgescu, Mihai Mitu, Alexandra Moraru, Pandele Olteanu, Dan Simonescu, Florentina Zgraon; transcrieri: Teodor Bodogae, Valentin Chelaru, I. C. Chiţimia, Alexandru Ciurea, Mariana Costinescu, Anca Cristina Gherman, Ecaterina Ionaşcu, Zamfira Mihail, Aurelia Mihailovici, Ion Radu Mircea, Mihai Mitu, Alexandra Moraru, Mihai Moraru, Pandele Olteanu, Dan Simonescu, Florentina Zgraon).

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this translation. The New Testament books are directly and textually linked with the corresponding volumes of the 1648 *New Testament* printed in Bălgrad (Alba-Iulia); they represent a revision and an adaptation of previous works, maybe via a *New Testament* collection published in Bucharest (1682). The respective text is reviewed and adopted almost *verbatim* by Antim Ivireanul, in his *New Testament* edition (1703); this fact only highlights the high degree of popularity and authority associated with the primary 1648 version. As for the 1688 *Bucharest Bible*'s Old Testament, this represented a completely new version, without a direct connection with any previous works in Romanian as *Palia de la Orăştie* (1582) or the many Psalters, whether in manuscript or printed. If such a concrete textual continuity cannot be proved, it is safe to assume that the authors of the new versions did not need to invent a completely new style or biblical language; rather, they aligned their work with an existing tradition, relatively well-formed albeit young, a tradition to which they contributed a certain consistency and new hallmarks. In a general sense, one must note, as for the potential pre-existence of some expressive dimensions of literary Romanian, that the authors of the *BB* refined and enriched the language, especially considering the size and complexity of a text such as the Old Testament. They almost literally made the *BB* "a synthesis of all the efforts made by generations of Romanian scholars, in hard times, over three hundred years, across all the Romanian principalities" (*cf.* N. Cartojan).

There is another frequently repeated erroneous affirmation: the *BB* is some form of old literary language model, "an unsurpassed literary monument" (N. Iorga), and, implicitly, that it is the founding text of modern literary Romanian. Facts, however, lead to quite a different conclusion. If we accept the scientific definition of literary language – i.e. an exemplary variety of a national language, characterized by intentional and consensual usage by all its users and at every level (phonetic, morphological, lexical, syntactic), containing relatively stable and unitary norms that are explicitly codified or at least held in generic and constant use – one will conclude that the *BB* text does not live up to these expectations at all. Philological research has long demonstrated that, in this respect, the *BB* could not have been a literary language model. A

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simple and comprehensive reading of the text shows to any informed reader many writing and phonetic inconsistencies (the same word, often on the same column, with varying spelling, emphasis etc.), morphological inconsistencies (different plural variants, significant verbal tense fluctuations), and lexical inconsistencies (the co-occurrence of different lexical elements from North and South, a varying adaptation of proper names etc.). There existed other contemporary texts, including Church-related materials, which were closer (in terms of exemplarity, unity and normative consistency) to the literary language than the *BB*. This composite-linguistic aspect of the *BB* has two main explanations. The first concerns the fact that old literary Romanian was simply affected by a low normative consistency. The second explanation is more specific. Initially written by an author familiar with the Moldavian literary tradition (Nicolae Milescu Spătarul), the biblical text was revised before being published by the Wallachian scholars (Radu and Şerban Greceanu), and eventually revised by another Moldavian author (Mitrofan, a former collaborator of Dosoftei at Iaşi, bishop of Huşi and the future bishop of Buzău). Furthermore, one must note the rather short amount of time that the Bucharest editors had to complete the work. These known contextual variables, as well as the absence of any form of "self-check", i.e. an intentional preoccupation with normative consistency, caused the *BB* to be less than unitary in terms of literary norms; it is rightfully considered a collective oeuvre. In the view of many scholars, it is a collective and anonymous effort of generations of intellectuals who contributed each in his own way to the translation and circulation of fundamental biblical texts.

However, there is another assessment mistake in crediting the Greceanu brothers with translating and editing the first Romanian complete version of the Holy Scripture. In order to clarify this matter, it is necessary to briefly examine the concrete historical context as well as various contributions in what the *BB* is concerned. Firstly, this Bible was not conceived as a work restricted to church use, so it was not bound to liturgical norms. For church use, there were other versions of older works at the time, such as Books of Gospels, Apostles and Psalters, where passages from the Old and New Testament were selected and

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presented in a succession specific to the logic of a liturgical discourse. There were also interpretative works, designed to explicate various religious points; the most important of these was Varlaam's *Cazania*, which was constantly reprinted. At the end of the 17th century, two of the main Romanian regions witnessed an intense and accelerated activity of elaborating and printing fundamental liturgical texts that were strictly necessary to everyday worship and church activities (Liturgy Book, Book of Needs, Triodion, Octhoechos etc.). Publishing the full version of the Bible was not, therefore, a pressing matter and was not among the priorities of the Church elite, i.e. Metropolitans Dosoftei and Theodosius. As history shows, this immensely difficult albeit prestigious task was undertaken by the lay intellectuals of the age, commissioned and supported by the highest political authority, Şerban Cantacuzino, the Prince of Wallachia. While struggling to strengthen his personal political influence, the prince saw in the symbolic gesture of editing the holy books in the language of his subjects a major opportunity to enhance his status and to project his image as an enlightened Christian leader. It is also relevant that, under the same sponsorship, a complete version of the Bible (the *Septuagint* and the *New Testament*) had been printed in Greek just the year before, in 1687, this time in Venice. If we correlate the two events, it becomes clear that Şerban Cantacuzino was determined to mark his political status as leader of the Orthodox world in the Balkan region and to promote his family as the legitimate guardian of the imperial Byzantine heritage. The urgency of this political drive explains the evident haste with which the *BB* was prepared and published. In this context, it also marks the acute decline of the Slavonic language; its former role of "superimposing" language would soon be taken over by Greek. The prince sought to involve first-rate Greek intellectuals in his Bible project, including one Sevastos Kimenites, rector of the Royal Academy in Bucharest, and Ghermano Nissis, rector of the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople; they were long term guests at the royal court in Bucharest. But those appointed to actually write and prepare the text for print were two young men of noble Romanian families, Radu Greceanu (cca 1655-1725) and Şerban Greceanu (d. cca 1710), who were

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themselves highly skilled and talented men of letters with an excellent education in Greek studies.

Written in a mature and precise manner, probably under the supervision of Constantin Cantacuzino (the prince's brother), the preface signed by the prince himself is rhetorically rich, nuanced, and contains many references to the history of the Bible text. The ruler dedicated the work to all of his subjects in this manner, following the medieval model of hierarchy in his address:

> "celor ce să află lăcuitori supt stăpânirea noastră, preasfinţitului mitropolit chir Theodosie, iubitorilor de Dumnezău episcopi, preacuvioşilor egumeni, smeriţilor preoţi, blagorodnicilor boiari şi tuturor celoralalţi pravoslavnici creştini" ["to those who live under our rule, the Most Blessed Metropolitan Theodosie, the God-loving bishops, graceful abbots, humble priests, blessed lords and all other God-abiding Christians"].

The vernacular translation of the 'Godly Scripture' is introduced as an act of a "heavenly philosophy", but also as a spiritual gift towards the "civic good" – a duty that a monarch is bound to: "to make ourselves and our neighbour humble" and to not bury the given talent, but to "multiply and share it with our obeying subjects". The preface also reveals that the translators' evolved mentality of a philological, humanistic and Christian orientation was widely recognised; the text boasts, among other things, the endorsement of a well-known Greek scholar who was visiting Bucharest at the time:

> "Aceasta am făcut la tălmăcirea aceştii Sfinte Scripturi, făcând multă nevoinţă şi destulă cheltuială, despre o parte puind dascali ştiuţi foarte den limbă elinească, pre preaînţeleptul cel dentru dascali ales şi arhiereu Ghermano Nissis, şi, după petreacerea lui, pre alţii care s-au întâmplat, şi despre altă parte ai noştri oameni ai locului, nu numai pedepsiţi întru a noastră limbă, ce şi de limba elinească având ştiinţă ca să o tălmăcească, carii luând lumină şi dentr-alte izvoade vechi şi alăturându-le cu cel elinesc al celor 70 de dascali, cu vrearea lui Dumnezău o au săvârşit precum să veade. Şi măcară că la unele cuvinte să fie fost foarte cu nevoie tălmăcitorilor pentru strimtarea limbii româneşti, iară încăş având pildă pre tălmăcitorii latinilor şi sloveanilor, precum aceia aşa şi ai noştri le-au lăsat precum să citesc la cea elinească (...). Şi spre aceasta m-am îndemnat ca să să dea la toţi dumnezăiescul cuvânt, ştiind bine că Dumnezău au poruncit sfinţilor săi apostoli să propoveduiască pre făcătoriul de viaţă, cuvântul său la toată zidirea, ca să nu

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> rămâie cineva neluminat de strălucirea darului său, care vedem până în zioa de astăzi că n-au rămas nici un neam, nici o limbă (...) ca să nu citească întru a sa limbă dumnezăiasca Scriptură" ["Thus we have had the Holy Scripture translated, with much expense and hardship, by summoning, on the one hand, celebrated and learned scholars of the Greek language, such as the wise Ghermano Nisis and, after his leaving, others who have visited us, and on the other hand our own people, not only those who were taught Greek, but also people who had Greek as their mother tongue and were able to translate from it, who taking inspiration from other old sources and joining them to the Greek source of the 70 masters, by God's will, have finished it as you can see. And even though, in some cases, the translators had a hard time finding the adequate Romanian words, they took model from other Latin and Slavonic translations and left the words just as they read in Greek (...). And to this end I have endeavoured, to share the Heavenly word with all, knowing well that God ordered his holy apostles to preach His life-giving word to all creation so that no one remains outside the light of his gift, and so we see that no people remains today that does not read the Holy Scripture in its own language"].

The political, cultural and national significance of this editorial event sponsored by Şerban Cantacuzino is even more explicitly formulated in a second preface addressed to the ruler and signed by "Dositheu, by God's mercy Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and of all Palestine". The very fact that one of the most prominent figures of the Orthodox Church signed the preface addressed to the Cantacuzino family indicates the authority the prince enjoyed in the Orthodox world. Almost certainly written by a local figure (probably the very same Constantin Cantacuzino), this dedication contains, among the arguments in support of the translation of the Holy Scripture into the vernacular, a subtle statement about the universal value of a national cultural enterprise dedicated to the entire Romanian people in all countries. It evokes the example of Emperor Constantine, who had the Holy Scripture distributed in the churches around Constantinople, or that of the Gothic bishop Ulfila who translated parts of the Bible into his people's language. Thus, the preface shows that:

> "mai vârtos vreadnic de mii de laude eşti măriia ta, care la un norod întreg dai cuvântul lui Dumnezău (...) ca să lumineaze celor den casă ai Besericii noroade: rumânilor, moldovenilor şi ungrovlahilor" ["the more praiseworthy your highness is, who offer the word of God to so many people (...) so that the light reaches the

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houses of all the peoples of the Church: Romanians, Moldavians and Ungrovlachs alike"].

3.2. As has long been assumed, the *Bucharest Bible* (1688) cannot be considered the translation of the Greceanu brothers. The two scholars, then just starting their careers, will later distinguish themselves through major works such as the Romanian translation of Prince Petru Movilă's *Mărturisirea ortodoxă* (The Orthodox Confession) and John Chrysostom's *Mărgăritare* (Pearls). Without therefore diminishing their contribution in any way, one must note that, in the case of the *BB*, they only revised an Old Testament text previously translated by the known scholar Nicolae Milescu Spătarul (1636-1708) some decades earlier. This fact is proved not only by some indirect contemporary references, but also by the existence of another Romanian version of the Old Testament in full text, now kept by the Cluj library of the Romanian Academy (the 45 manuscript = Ms. 45). Copied by one Dumitru of Câmpulung for Metropolitan Theodosius, probably between 1686-1687, Ms. 45 includes a sort of foreword by an anonymous intellectual known to have revised Milescu's original version, who explicitly says that "I have translated it into Romanian, following the source of Necolae, this book which they call the Bible". This anonymous scholar, identified by N. A. Ursu as Metropolitan Dosoftei (probably assisted by one or more of his pupils), describes in detail the alterations brought to Milescu's manuscript. We find out that they essentially followed Nicolae Milescu's methods, including his references:

> "Iară Nicolae, vrând să aducă şi el cartea aceasta den elinie la rumănie, nefiind altă dată scoasă la rumănie, au socotit şi au ales un izvod carele-i mai ales decât toate altele, tipărit în Frangofort şi ales foarte bine pre limba elinească, şi dedesupt cu multe arătări şi cuvinte puse cum le-au tălmăcit alţii (...). Zice el că pre lângă izvodul acesta au avut şi izvodul slovenescu şi leteneşte şi au avut şi alt izvodu letenescu, ce au fost scos de curând den limba jidovească, adecă den izvod jidovăscu (...). Şi iară mărturiseaşte el de zice că de cel slovenescu nu s-au ţânut, că numai acest izvod iaste slovenescu, care acum să află tipărit la Ostrov (...). Iară şi noi, pre lângă izvodul lui Necolae am mai alăturat şi alte izvoade greceşti, pren care izvoade fost-au unul carele au fost tipărit la Englitera, ci şi acesta nu să potriviia cu cel de la Frangofort (...). Apoi aflând şi noi izvod grecescu, altul de ceale den Frangofort, dupre care au scris şi Necolae, am urmat aceluia pentru

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> tocmirea soroacelor şi deplinirea cuvintelor şi întăritura oxiilor den cât am putut; (...) pentru căci izvodul lui Necolae, pentru degraba scriindu-l, n-au pus nici unile de aceastea, ci era pentru neîntocmirea lui foarte cu greu a să înţeleage vorba tălmăcirei şi abaterea cuvintelor" ["And Nicolae, wanting himself to translate this book from Greek into Romanian, since it had never been published in Romanian, selected a source that is most distinguished, published in Frangofort, a very good Greek version, with many footnotes that explain and give words as translated by others (...) He says that, apart from this source, he also had the Slavonic and Latin sources and another Latin variant, recently translated from the Jewish language, that is from a Jewish source (...). And he also confesses that he did not really follow the Slavonic source, that only this source is Slavonic which is now in Ostrog (...). And we ourselves, besides Necolae's source, have used other Greek sources, one of which was printed in England, and this too did not match with the Frangofort text (...). Then finding out about a new Greek source, different from the Frangofort text that Necolae wrote about, we followed it to better interpret the dates and give the right meaning and the right spelling as best we could; (...) because in Necolae's source, a text written in haste, they did not put any of these and because it was incomplete one could hardly understand the translation or the deviation of words"].

From a linguistic point of view, the result of this careful editing reflects the Moldavian literary norms quite faithfully and constantly. In 1686, seeking refuge in Bucharest after his protector, Metropolitan Dosoftei, had been sent into exile in Poland, Mitrofan, the future reviser of the *BB*, must have brought along Milescu's revised text as it appears in Ms. 45. It is also very likely that the local scholars in Bucharest (including the Greceanu brothers as main editors), pressed by the ruling prince who was eager to see his Bible published as soon as possible, found it very easy and convenient to use Milescu's translation and simply revise it once again using the same sources Milescu had used. A comparison between Ms. 45 and the *BB* clearly shows that we are dealing with the same text, albeit substantially revised. Working against a time limit, the Bucharest editors ended up omitting the rich biblical references indicated in the sources (either by Milescu or by his Moldavian reviser).

Consequently, Milescu remains the main translator of the *BB*, while all the other scholars, known or still anonymous, can only be credited with collaboration and revision. We still do not know the reasons why young Nicolae Milescu undertook such a difficult task: he translated the Old Testament in Istanbul, between cca 1661-1664, while serving as

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Romanian prince Grigore Ghica's royal envoy to the Ottoman Empire. His good knowledge of Greek, Latin and Slavonic as well as theology and philosophy after studying at the Patriarchal School of Constantinople and a talent clearly reflected in subsequent writings made him one of the most qualified persons in his time for this task. It is still difficult to determine whether it was his own initiative or someone else's commission. We also do not know the circumstances in which his manuscript was brought to Moldavia.

As for the translation method used by Milescu and kept by his subsequent editors, it was a literal one (*verbum a verbo*), since most contemporary interpreters of the sacred texts were still holding on to the medieval belief that following the text of the Holy Scripture to the "letter" is the best way to avoid errors. The issue of sources used by Milescu and the successive editors illustrates the humanistic principles adopted by the *BB* scholars. The preface clearly shows that they used the *Septuagint* as their primary source – i.e. the old Greek version of the Old Testament, held in high regard by the traditional Orthodox Church. As an illustration of the relative freedom of choice a lay scholar could have, the *Septuagint*, a 1597 Frankfurt am Main edition published by several distinguished Protestant Hellenists, became the source of choice because of its reputation as a thoroughly elaborated book. Milescu adopted even the "contents page" from this book, i.e. all the deuterocanonical books, including *III Maccabees* and *IV Maccabees*; also included in the 1688 edition under the title *Pentru sângur ţiitoriul gând* (Treaty on the Dominant Reason), this anonymous treaty of Stoic orientation written at the end of the Hellenistic age is now considered the first philosophical text published in Romanian. Besides the main source, the *Septuagint*, Milescu and the following editors felt the need to use the only complete Slavonic version of the Bible, published at Ostrog (Ukraine) in 1581[2], as well as a popular *Vulgate* published initially in 1565 in Anvers by the well-known printer and editor Cristophorus Plantin, and other Western editions of the *Septuagint* including the philological version of the English humanist R. Daniel (London, 1653). The translators also studied some Renaissance Latin translations of Hebrew texts that are only mentioned in passing. We can notice, therefore, an early example of

[2] *Библиꙗ сиречь книгы Ветхаго и Новаго Завѣта по ꙗзыкоу словенскоу* [...], Ostrog, 1581.

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modern philological erudition, based on critical and comparative approaches to the biblical text, as opposed to the previous simple and literal manner of translation.

Milescu's interpretative strategies, also used by later editors, established the traditional pattern of approaching the Old Testament in the Romanian biblical tradition: the inclusion of all the deuterocanonical books (except for the *Treaty on dominant reason*, only mentioned by Samuil Micu in 1795 and Filotei in 1854-1856), the use of the *Septuagint* as a primary source, plus the critical use of other translation traditions.

3.3. Clear references to Milescu's original translation ("Nicolae's source") are to be found in the foreword preceding the third complete version of the Old Testament in Romanian from the 17th century, surviving in manuscript (Ms. 4389, the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest):

> "Nevoitu-ne-am a prepune această sfântă şi de Dumnezeu suflată carte carea se cheamă Biblia, adecă toată cartea legii vechi şi cu toţi prorocii, pre limba rumănească, carea până acum într-această limbă a noastră rumănească nu foarte se-au aflat prepusă, fără numai un izvod scris cu mâna, pre care l-au fost prepus Nicolae, spatariul moldovean, dascal şi învăţat în limba elinească, carele l-au izvodit de pre izvodul elinesc ce se-au fost tipărit în Frangofort. Ce încă şi izvodul acesta pentru multa pripă a acelui prepuitoriu, care se-au grăbit curînd a şi tălmăci şi a şi scrie, aflatu-s-au multe greşale (...). Şi am nevoit a prepune această carte a legii vechi carea se chiiamă Biblia, toată, cu toţi prorocii (că Leagea Noao, adecă Evanghelia şi celelalte cărţi ale apostolilor, toate, ce află multe pren bogate locuri, şi cu mâna scrise şi în tipariu date pre limba noatră, rumâneaşte, iar de această carte a Legii Vechi, noi, rumânii, foarte suntem lipsiţi). Drept aceaea, alăturând izvodul slovenesc carele au fost tipărit în Rusiia cea mică, în cetatea Ostrovului, şi izvodul lătinesc, care au fost tipărit în cetatea Antverpiei, şi acel izvod rumânesc, de care se spuse mai sus, aşa de pre dânsele cu multă socotinţă am prepus. Iar totuş mai mult ne-am ţinut de izvodul cel slovenesc şi de care am umblat mai aproape de dânsul" ["We found ourselves in need of translating this God-inspired book, the Bible, that is all of the book of the Old Law and all the Prophets, into Romanian, a book which has not been seen much of in our Romanian language except for a hand-written source of Nicolae, a Moldavian scholar learned in Greek, who translated it from the Greek book printed in Frangofort. However, this text was written in much haste (...) and many mistakes have come through (...) And so we needed to translate this book of the Law into Romanian, this book they call the Bible, all of it, with all the Prophets (for the New Law, that is the Evangel and all the other Apostles books, all of them, is to be found in our Romanian language in rich places, either hand-written or printed, but we so

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> lack for this book of the Old Law). Thus by joining the Slavonic source printed in Small Russia, in the city of Ostrog, and the Latin source printed in the city of Antwerp, together with the above-mentioned Romanian source, we were able to translate very carefully. Even so, we used the Slavonic source more than the others, and followed its model closer"].

Researcher N. A. Ursu attributed this new manuscript to Daniil Andrean Panoneanul, a teacher of Slavonic and Latin at the Royal School in Târgovişte, the translator of the well-known collection of canonical texts *Îndreptarea Legii* (Târgovişte, 1652). The translator used Milescu's source just as an auxiliary tool, for comparison against the *Septuagint*, as he mainly worked after the Slavonic version of Ostrog (1581), the latter constantly compared to the Plantinian *Vulgate*. Even though this complete version of the Old Testament is superior to Milescu's work in terms of literary quality and comprehensibility, it was not chosen by the 1688 editors (that is, if they were even aware of it), perhaps because it followed still too closely the Slavonic trend of earlier centuries at a time when the Greek linguistic and cultural model was becoming increasingly popular. Şerban Cantacuzino died in the autumn of 1688 and probably did not have a chance to see his Bible published. His successor, Constantin Brâncoveanu, joined the prestigious initiative himself and added his name on the title-page of the final version; this page actually replaced the original one in some editions. Among the relatively numerous editions still in use (the printing presses were generous with this project), some contain the names of highly prestigious historical figures, such as Metropolitan Dosoftei or Dimitrie Cantemir. The circulation and reception of the *BB* is in itself a subject worthy of more attention and research. In interpretative transcriptions and special philological circumstances, the *BB* has seen three reprints in modern times: in a 1988 anniversary edition issued by the Romanian Patriarchy (I. C. Chiţimia, coord.), in two volumes, in Iaşi, 2001-2002 (Vasile Arvinte and Ioan Caproşu, coord.)[3], and in the "Monumenta linguae Dacoromanorum" series, 1988-2012 (Paul Miron,

[3] *Biblia de la Bucureşti (1688)*, I-II (ed.: Vasile Arvinte şi Ioan Caproşu; transcrieri: Alexandru Gafton, Laura Manea), Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iaşi, 2001 (I), 2002 (II).

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Vasile Arvinte, Alexandru Andriescu and Eugen Munteanu coord.)[4], still in work, this time including the 45 and 4389 manuscripts.

The monumental 1688 edition of the Bible represents the reference work of the Romanian biblical tradition, because, style-wise, it illustrates the Romanian feudal church language. If we focus on more general aspects pertaining to style despite the numerous inconsistencies in form, phonetics and morphology, we come to subscribe to G. Călinescu's opinion that the *BB* "is to Romanian what Luther's Bible is to German".

3.4. The following complete version of the Bible was introduced to the Romanians by a group of clerics of the United Church of Transylvania. Although textually independent of the *Bucharest Bible* or the *Septuagint* tradition, this version displays the church style of old literary Romanian and the traditional biblical and theological terminology. The initiative to re-do the complete translation of the Old and New Testament together belongs to the Greek Catholic bishop Petru Pavel Aaron. The main reason behind this project must have been a religious one, i.e. to seal and strengthen the ties between the United Romanian Church and Rome. The choice of the *Vulgate*, the official Catholic text, as the sole reference source, also validates such an interpretation. The group of Greek Catholic editors (Gherontie Cotorea, Atanasie Rednic, Silvestru Caliani, Petru Pop of Daia, Ioan Săcădate and Grigorie Maior) coordinated by Petru Pavel Aaron was able to render a fluent and relatively clear final translation in just two years (1760-1761). As it remained somewhat idiosyncratic for over two centuries, well preserved in manuscript in Blaj, this old version in Romanian was edited in 2005 under the title *Biblia*

[4] *Biblia de la Bucureşti (1688)*, in *Monumenta linguae Dacoromanorum* series, vol. I-VII, XI, XXII, X_2, Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iaşi, 1988-2012 (coord.: Alexandru Andriescu, Vasile Arvinte, Gabriela Haja, Paul Miron, Eugen Munteau; introduceri, transcrieri, indice, comentarii: Tamara Adoamnei, Mădălina Andronic, Alexandru Andriescu, Vasile Arvinte, Ioan Caproşu, Ileana Câmpean, Eugenia Dima, Cornel Dimitriu, Mioara Dragomir, I. A. Florea, Ioan-Florin Florescu, Ana-Maria Gînsac, Doina Grecu, Gabriela Haja, Elsa Lüder, Maria Moruz, Gustavo Adolfo Loria Rivel, Paul Miron, Alexandra Moraru, Mihai Moraru, Eugen Munteanu, Adrian Muraru, Veronica Olariu, Mircea Roşian, Elena Tamba Dănilă, Sabina Rotenştein, Stela Toma, Marietta Ujică, Petru Zugun; consultanţi: Eugen Munteanu, N. A. Ursu).

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Vulgata by a group of philologists under the guidance of Ioan Chindriş, with a preface signed by Eugen Simion, as part of a Romanian Academy project[5].

3.5. The second complete edition of a Romanian Bible, currently referred to as the *Blaj Bible*, or the *Samuil Micu Bible*, was published in Blaj (1795) by the Greek Catholic bishop Ioan Bob. This massive volume is the result of a careful revision of the *BB* (1688) done by Samuil Micu (1745-1806). The Transylvanian scholar aligned the old text with the developments of the literary language, but he also operated changes in the text of the *BB* (1688) so as to clarify obscure passages by studying them against the *Septuagint* and the *Vulgate*, replacing many regionalisms and even some terms from Greek or Slavonic with lexical creations newly adopted in literary use. Otherwise, Samuil Micu maintained the number and succession of the biblical books, keeping in the summary of his edition all of the apocrypha, including the *Treaty on dominant reason* (*IV Maccabees*). In 2000, Micu's version was republished in Rome as *Biblia de la Blaj, 1795*, a high-end edition which also included the facsimiles of the original[6]. A close textual comparison enables us to conclude that the Romanian textual tradition established by the *BB*, even though heavily revised by Samuil Micu, remained intact in the sense that the following revisions were only minor and mostly restricted to phonetic,

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[5] "*Biblia Vulgata*" *(1760-1761)*, Editura Academiei Române, Bucureşti, 2005 (pref.: Eugen Simion, edit. coord: Ioan Chindriş, coord. filol.: Niculina Iacob, transcrieri: Elena Ardeleanu, Mircea Remus Birtz, Ioan Chindriş, Elena Comşulea, Florica Nuţiu, Doina Grecu, Elena Mihu, Vasile Rus, Valentina Şerban; revizie: Elena Ardeleanu, Elena Comşulea, Doina Grecu, Valentina Şerban; indici de cuvinte: Niculina Iacob, Ioan Chindriş, notă asupra ediţiei: Elena Ardeleanu, Ioan Chindriş, Elena Comşulea, Doina Grecu, Valentina Şerban, concordanţa numelor: Mircea Remus Birtz).

[6] *Biblia, adecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Legii Vechi şi a celii Noao, care s-au tălmăcit de pre limba elinească pre înţălesul limbii românești* (...), Blaj, 1795 [modern ed.: *Biblia de la Blaj, 1795*. Ediţie jubiliară, Roma, 2000 (precuvântare: Lucian Mureşan; cuvânt introductiv: Camil Mureşan; edit. coord.: Ioan Chindriş; coord. filol.: Eugen Pavel, studii: Ioan Chindriş, Eugen Pavel, Transcrieri: Elena Ardeleanu, Ioan Chindriş, Nicolae Edroiu, Elena Mihu, Florica Nuţiu, Dora Pavel, Eugen Pavel, Şerban Turcuş, Veronica Turcuş, concordanţa numelor proprii: Sidonia Puiu, glosar: Elena Comşulea, Valentina Şerban, Sabina Teiuş)].

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morphological and syntactic updates; only rarely were words replaced with synonyms or new vernacular phrases.

3.6. The following traditional edition is currently known as the *Petersburg Bible* (1819)[7]. Published in Petersburg, Russia, under the supervision of Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, Metropolitan of Chişinău, this edition was a commission from the Russian Society of the Bible for the benefit of the Romanians living in Bessarabia. It is an almost perfect reproduction of the *Blaj Bible* (1795); in fact, the latter was explicitly mentioned in the preface: "that which was previously published in Transylvania". The "Alexandrian canon" was followed closely, i.e. the editors included the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament, minus *IV Maccabees*. Then there was the five-volume *Buzău Bible* published by Filotei, Bishop of Buzău, between 1854-1856[8]. As the editor himself honestly declares, this is an almost verbatim copy (using even the transitional writing conventions of the age, with only negligible changes) of the *Blaj Bible* (1795). This decision is explicitly justified, in the foreword to the readers (*Procuvântare către dreptcredincioşii cititori*), vol. I, p. 5:

> "Dintre Bibliile tipărite în limba noastră, mai bine tălmăcită şi mai luminată la înţeles este cea de Blaj; pe aceasta şi noi am ales-o de a o retipări, însă mai îndreptată şi mai curăţită de ziceri învechite acum şi obicinuite numai la fraţii noştri ardeleni" ["Among the Bibles published in our language, the Bible of Blaj is the best in what concerns translation and comprehension; this we too have chosen to reprint, but only after putting it right and removing some old sayings which were more familiar to our Transylvanian brothers"].

Just as with Samuil Micu, Filotei's text observes the Alexandrian canon including all the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament and *IV Maccabees*. The presence of the latter is explained by a general sense of respect towards local tradition:

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[7] *Bibliia, ádecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Legii vechi şi a celi noao*, cu chieltuiala Rosieneştii Soţietăţi a Bibliei, în Sanktpetersburg, în tipografia lui Nic. Grecea, în anul 1819.

[8] *Bibliea sau Testamentul Vechiu şi Nou*, acum (...) s-a retipărit (...) prin binecuvântarea, râvna şi cu toată cheltuiala iubitorului de Dumnezeu Episcop al Sfintei Episcopii Buzăul, D. D. Filoteiu (...), 1854 [vol. I: 1854; vol. II, III, IV: 1855; vol. V: 1856].

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> "Cartea aceasta nici Sf. Părinţi nu o cunosc dumnezeiască, nici în toate Bibliile greceşti nu este, pentru aceea nici într-această Biblie n-am voit din nou a o tălmăci, ci precum se află în Biblia cea veche românească o am luat şi numai pentru aceea o am pus aici, că s-au aflat în cea veche românească, altmintrelea loc între cărţile Sfintei Scripturi nu poate să aibă; aşadar şi noi într-aceasta de acum retipărire am lăsat-o iarăşi fără altă tălmăcire, spre aducerea aminte de antica limbă vorbitoare română" ["This book is not known by the Holy Fathers as Godly, neither does it feature in Greek editions, and therefore we have not translated it anew in this edition, but rather left it as it was in the old Romanian Bible and only put it here because it was in that book; otherwise it cannot belong with the Holy Scripture; and therefore in this new print we have left it untouched, so as we can all remember the ancient way of speaking Romanian"].

3.7. The *Şaguna Bible* (1856-1858)[9] can also be classified based on textual comparison, as belonging to the above-mentioned traditional Romanian canon. Its editor, Andrei Şaguna (1809-1873), first Bishop and then Orthodox Metropolitan of Transylvania, put his influence in Vienna to good use in order to revitalize and reorganise Transylvanian Orthodoxy. The Bible he published represents one integral element in a broader cultural and ecclesiastical programme. This opus (1160 pages), featuring 95 illustrations probably by Gustav Doré (which was unusual for the Romanian tradition), displays the biblical texts in two columns, printed in a classical Slavonic font. In an ample introduction, Andrei Şaguna offers general information about the history and reception of the Holy Scripture. This introduction has been a frequent subject of religious debate because, among other things, it states a principle of legitimacy with regard to a one-and-only biblical tradition within a national culture:

> "Limba Bibliei pentru un popor numai o dată se poate face; dacă s-au învins piedeca cea mare a traducerii şi dacă poporul au primit limba aceea aşa-zicând în însăşi fiinţa sa, atunci următorii n-au de a mai face alta, ci numai a o reînnoi şi îndrepta, aşa cum ar fi reînnoit şi îndreptat traducătorul cel dintâi al Bibliei, de ar fi trăit până în vremurile lor" ["The language of the Bible can only be made once for a nation; if the great hurdle of translation is overcome, and if the people of that nation accept the language as being that with which they identify themselves,

[9] *Biblia, adecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a legii cei vechi şi a cei noao* (...), tipărită (...) subt privegherea şi cu binecuvîntarea excelenţiei sale, prea sfinţitului domn Andreiu, Baron de Şaguna, Sibiu, 1856-1858.

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> then the later writers have nothing else to do but only to renew and put it right, just as the first ancient translator would have done had he lived on"].

A common sense argument at first sight, this sentence was construed as Şaguna's intention of hiding his real source, the *Blaj Bible* (1795). As it appears, while Şaguna scrupulously lists all the previous Romanian versions in his introduction, he omits the very *Blaj Bible*, the text which he, in effect, reprints via the Sankt Petersburg edition (1819). In the heat of a religious polemic, this was interpreted as "the most abominable literary theft our culture has ever witnessed"), *cf.* Ioan Chindriş.

3.8. The last direct descendant of the *BB* is the 1914 *Synodal Bible*[10]. Itself a revision of the *Blaj Bible* (via the *Buzău* and *Şaguna Bibles*), it was the 1895 initiative of Metropolitan Iosif Gheorghian. A succession of commissions appointed from the ranks of the Holy Synod elaborated this edition of the Bible, authorized by the Romanian Orthodox Church and the first to use the Latin script. Despite the relatively large number of textual interventions, they are irrelevant as compared to the *Blaj Bible*. This version, issued under the patronage of King Carol I, was highly appreciated by reputed Orthodox scholars such as Dumitru Stăniloae, Dumitru Fecioru and Bartolomeu Anania, all of whom considered it the last Romanian edition to accurately reflect the *Septuagint*.

3.9. In the interwar period, the intense circulation of the "British bibles", both inside and outside Neo-Potestant communities, made the Romanian Orthodox Church aware of the need to adapt the traditional biblical style to modernity. Thus, a long trail of tentative negotiations, uncertainty and sterile polemics followed in an attempt to make a *recepta* version of the Bible in the fashion of the Orthodox Church; and today this project has yet to be fulfilled. Issued under the patronage of King Carol I at Patriarch Miron Cristea's initiative, and approved by the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the 1936 version of the Holy Scripture is published "based on the *Septuagint* text in Greek and refered

[10] *Biblia, adică Dumnezeeasca Scriptură a Legii vechi şi a celei nouă*, tipărită în zilele majestăţii sale Carol I, regele României (...), Ediţia Sfântului Sinod, Tipografia Cărţilor Bisericeşti, Bucureşti, 1914.

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to the Hebrew version")[11]. This is the first time in the long history of Romanian translations of the Bible that Hebrew originals are legitimized in an attempt to change the still very conservative mentality of the Orthodox clergy. Opening with an ample foreword by Patriarch Miron Cristea, the biblical text displays a recognizably traditional style, but makes a clear difference from all previous versions. The authors of this work are theologians Nicodim Munteanu (1864-1948), Vasile Radu (1887-1940), and Gala Galaction (1879-1961); they practically put forward a new version of the Old Testament, derived from the *Septuagint*. This is virtually the founding text from which all modern "synodal editions" begin, with the required revisions and adaptations in spelling, phonetics and morphology, naturally.

The most accurate text in terms of following the Hebrew sources is the so-called *Radu-Galaction Bible*[12]. Published by the Royal Foundations Press in 1938 and then again in 1939, the Radu-Galaction version is preceded by a dedication to King Carol II, written by the translators, Vasile Radu and Gala Galaction. Significantly different from the 1936 text, the new Bible draws, for the Old Testament part, directly upon the Hebrew Bible; both translators being known not only as Hebrew specialists but also as supporters of Judaism. The translators justified this new orientation claiming that Romanian Orthodoxy needed to rely on the Hebrew text so as to be able to reject Neo-Protestant proselytism. However, the summary includes all the 14 deuterocanonical books nonexistent in the Hebrew Old Testament canon and equally disregarded by Protestants and Neo-Protestants. Enthusiastically applauded by the laity as a major literary event, the *Radu-Galaction Bible* was received with hostility and reticence in clerical circles, a fact bitterly noted by Gala Galaction (*Mărturie literară*, in *Opere alese*, vol. II, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură şi Artă, Bucureşti, 1958, p. 23) two decades later:

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[11] *Sfânta Scriptură*, tradusă după textul grecesc al *Septuagintei*, confruntat cu cel ebraic, în vremea domniei Majestăţii sale Carol II (...), cu aprobarea Sfântului Sinod, Bucureşti, 1936.

[12] *Biblia, adică Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Vechiului şi a Noului Testament*, tradusă după textele originalelor ebraice şi greceşti de preoţii profesori Vasile Radu şi Gala Galaction din înalta iniţiativă a Majestăţii sale regelui Carol al II-lea, Fundaţia pentru Literatură şi Artă „Regele Carol II", Bucureşti, 1938 (ed. a II-a, 1939).

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> "Traducerea Sfintei Scripturi este una din cele mai evidente minuni pe care Providenţa m-a învrednicit să le văd în viaţa mea... Multă vreme, nu-mi venea să cred că sunt în faţa unei realităţi: luam cartea, o cercetam, o răsfoiam şi găseam în ea cuvintele şi ritmul frazei mele... După cum a fost cu toată literatura mea, tot aşa şi cu Sfinta Scriptură: am ridicat împotrivă-mi – ca altădată Fericitul Ieronim – noian de duşmănii, văzute şi nevăzute, mărturisite şi nemărturisite" ["To translate the Holy Scripture is one of the most evident graces which Providence has bestowed upon me in my entire life... For a long time, I couldn't believe my eyes: I would take the book in my hands, gaze at it, browse it, and find there the words, the rhythm of my sentences... As with all my literature, so was the case with the Holy Scripture: I have aroused against myself – as Saint Jerome once – a see of enmity seen and unseen, confessed and held back alike"].

Suspicious of such more or less "dubious" intellectual initiatives, the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church has repeatedly tried, with increasing difficulty throughout the decades of communist dictatorship, to impose "authorized" versions – stylistically adequate and conforming to liturgical texts and tradition. A first attempt in this sense was that of Nicodim Munteanu, elected patriarch in 1938. In 1944, authorized by the Holy Synod, he issues a book that replicates the 1936 version[13], but substitutes his own version for most translations from the other two previous collaborators. The next synodal edition will be published as late as 1968, as part of Patriarch Iustinian's initiative, this time with the traditional text included, approved and edited by a commission of Orthodox theologians: Ioan Gagiu, Teodor M. Popescu, and Dumitru Radu[14]. Such revised versions are also contained in the following synodal editions (1972, 1982[15], 1990 etc.).

3.10. A special place in the traditional canon of Holy Scripture translations into Romanian is held by the *Anania Bible*, published in 2000 by Bartolomeu Anania[16], current Metropolitan of Cluj, Alba, Crişana and

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[13] *Biblia, adică Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Vechiului şi a Noului Testament* [translation: Nicodim Munteanu], Bucureşti, 1944.

[14] *Biblia sau Sfînta Scriptură*, Bucureşti, 1968 [revison: Ioan Gagiu, Teodor M. Popescu and Dumitru Radu].

[15] *Biblia sau Sfînta Scriptură*, Bucureşti, 1982 [revison: Constantin Corniţescu, Ioan Muncea, Nicolae Petrescu şi Dumitru Radu].

[16] *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură*. Ediţie jubiliară a Sfîntului Sinod (...). Versiune diortosită după *Septuaginta*, redactată şi adnotată de Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, Bucureşti, 2001.

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Maramureş. Derived from a radical critique of the previous traditional versions, this work represents in fact a stylistically new author version. It is is marked by a clear orientation towards a literary expressivity and a tangible preference for the spoken language. The translator, also a known author in his own right (Valeriu Anania), proclaims his work to be a return to the *Septuagint* as the only true source, an effort meant to amend the other "mixed" versions (i.e. based on *Septuagint* and Hebrew-Masoretic texts) published by the Romanian Patriarchy, all of which were still showing influences from the Radu-Galaction edition. Ambiguously declared an "anniversary edition of the Holy Synod", the Anania version is accepted by the Romanian Orthodox Church, but has not yet been declared the official edition.

3.11. The most recent Romanian translation of the original Greek Old Testament is the *Septuagint* (vols. I-VIII, 2004-2011)[17]. The series is a project run by the New Europe College from Bucharest (headed by Andrei Pleşu), a collective enterprise of a group of classicist philologists. It represents a completely new translation, on philological grounds, based on the most recent editions of the *Septuagint* (Rahlfs and Ziegler). The translation also includes ample commentaries (theological, historical, anthropo-archaeological, textual, philological etc.), but maintains the traditional style.

Starting from the second half of the 19th century, one also notices attempts of transposing the Holy Scripture that stepped outside the traditional cultural and religious sphere in terms of style and language. Thus, a new direction emerges apart and away from the "mainstream" conservative models. Without mentioning the countless New Testament and Psalms editions, often published with explicit cultural purposes by various Christian denominations of Romanian language, we will refer to

[17] *Septuaginta*, vol. I-VII, Iaşi, 2004-2011 [coord: Cristian Bădiliţă, Francisca Băltăceanu, Monica Broşteanu, traducători: Cristian Bădiliţă, Ion Pătrulescu, Ioana Costa, Eugen Munteanu, Mihai Moraru, Florica Bechet, Alexandra Moraru, Cristina Costena Rogobete, Francisca Băltăceanu, Gheorghe Ceauşescu, Vichi Dumitriu, Ştefania Ferchedău, Theodor Georgescu, Octavian Gordon, Ştefan Colceriu, Lia Lupaş, Monica Broşteanu, Marius David Cruceru, Cristian Gaşpar, Iulia Cojocariu].

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some versions that are more important from a literary and cultural point of view.

3.12. The *Heliade Bible* (1859)[18] represents the first attempt to translate the Holy Scripture into Romanian initiated by a lay intellectual outside the Church. Exiled in Paris, the great writer and national mentor Ion Heliade Rădulescu (1800-1872) decided to continue his mission of awakening the Romanian nation by translating and commenting on the Bible. Starting from the original Greek version of the *Septuagint* (published in 1843 in Athens), Heliade fundamentally breaks off with the traditional Romanian biblical style, proposing instead a very personal rendering, marked by many neologistic borrowings from Greek and Latin meant to replace the traditional, usually Slavonic, terms. We do not know whether Heliade completed his work. The published edition (272 pages) includes what the author calls *Genese*, *Exodu*, *Leviticu*, *Numerii*, *Deuteronomiu*, *Jesus filiul lui Nave*, *Judici*, *Ruth* and *A regilor* (only the chapters I and II of *Kings*). Simultaneously, at the same publishing house and in the same year, Heliade also published *Biblicele, sau notiţii istorice, filosofice, religioase şi politice asupra Bibliei* (Historical, philosophical, religious and political notes on the Bible). The innovative brilliance of both his translation and commentaries comes from the richness of his neologistic creations along with a certain confidence and internal coherence of the discourse itself, which gives the text an artistic potency, as opposed to the rigorous biblical style. A small sample of the first three verses of *Genesis* is illustrative, here in the original Latin script:

> "În început creó Dumne¸deu cerul şi terr'a. Iar terr'a erà neve¸dută şi informă, şi întunerec peste abysu, şi spiritul lui Dumneḍeu se purtà peste ape" ["In the beginning God created the sky and *terra*. And *terra* was unseen and without form, and darkness ruled over the abyss and the spirit of God held itself over the waters"].

The Paris issue was received quite coldly by the Romanian clergy. In fact, the absolute novelty of the style, the peculiar discourse, and the choice

[18] *Biblia Sacra que coprinde Vechiul şi Noul Testament* dupŏ quei septedeci, tradusa din hellenesce dupŏ editia typarita în Athene 1843, sub preveghierea Synodului sacru al Helladei, de I. Heliade. R., Paris, în typografia lui Preve si Comp, 1858.

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for an extreme etymological approach sparked a harsh opposition from Andrei Şaguna. Even at the risk of appearing ultra-conservative in an age when the modern Romanian public was veering towards Latin and Heliade was widely popular, the Metropolitan of Sibiu would radically reject the new initiative, and deny any competence on the translator's part in approaching the Holy Scripture. A raging polemic followed in the form of successive letters published in two periodicals: *Telegraful român* (in Sibiu) by Şaguna, and *Naţionalul* (in Bucharest) by Heliade. In the rich sequence of mutual abuse, one can distinguish two apparently opposed and final views. On one side, Şaguna believes that the translation and interpretation of the Bible must not be attempted outside the Church's authority (the only institution that holds the canonical vocation and legitimacy of Tradition). To Heliade, however, the main prerequisites for working with sacred texts are philological competence, a thorough knowledge of the Greek language and pure erudition. Furthermore, with the reserved pride of a man crowned the legitimate master of literary Romanian by his generation, Heliade invokes his very talent as yet another justification for his project.

3.13. The *Aristia Bible*[19], published in Bucharest (1859) "at the expense of the British and Foreign Society for the Dissemination of the Holy Word throughout Britain and other nations", seems to be the first Romanian Bible sponsored by the British Society. With just 156 pages, the volume contains only three biblical books: *Genesis*, *Isaiah* and the *Psalms*. The author, Constantin Aristia (1800-1880) was a teacher of Greek and drama, poet, columnist, actor and prolific translator from Greek and Italian. Unlike the front page, written entirely in Latin etymological script, the text itself is a mixture of Slavonic and Latin scripts. This is an experiment, abundant in Latin Romanic neologisms and spontaneous lexical creations, some explained in footnotes. Here are, for example, the first verses of the *Genesis*:

[19] *Biblia sacra* din ultima editiune ellenică recorrectata supra ebraiciloru Arhetipi, tradusâ de K. Aristias, cu cheltueala Societătii Ierografice Bretanice şi Streine spre propagarea Sfintului cuvintŭ in Bretania si la alte natiuni (...), Bucurescĭ, 1859.

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> "În începutŭ a făcutŭ Dumnezeu cerulŭ şi pământulŭ. Şi pământulŭ era neformatŭ şi desertŭ; şi întunerecŭ pre faţa abissului; şi spiritulŭ lui Dumnezeu se purta pre de supra apelorŭ" ["At the beginning God made the sky and the earth. And the earth was unformed and empty; and darkness faced the abyss; and the spirit of God held itself over the waters"].

In footnotes, the words *empty*, *abyss* and *spirit*, the translator's own suggestions, are glossed via generally accepted traditional biblical terms in Romanian, i.e. *pustiu*, *adâncime fără fund* and, respectively, *duh*.

3.14. Another interesting philological experiment is the Latinist researcher Timotei Cipariu's (1805-1887) attempt to transpose the entire *Bucharest Bible* into an etymologising language. He finished it in 1870, but the three-volume book was left in manuscript. Its fait is about to change with a group of Cluj-based researchers who are now editing this massive work kept at the Romanian Academy Library in Cluj.

3.15. Around mid-nineteenth century, the British Bible Society started to become active in Romania, displaying an interest in publishing Romanian versions of the Bible. Established in 1804 in London, the British Bible Society was financing, by an internal decision of 1826, the publication of the Bible in different languages as long as they observed the "Palestinian canon" (i.e. without the deuterocanonical books) also adopted by Neo-Protestant denominations of Lutheran tradition. This fact endangered any dialogue with official Orthodox clerics as the latter positioned themselves much closer to the tradition of the *Septuagint* and the "Alexandrian canon". As a consequence, the British Bible Society ended up publishing a number of editions of the Bible unauthorized by the Orthodox Church. Since, as a rule, these "British" Bibles have no introduction or other explanatory notes and the names of the translators are absent, their history is relatively hard to trace. What we do know from secondary historical sources is that, starting from 1860, many British agents were working in the United Principalities, among whom the most prolific seems to have been Alexander Thomson. He sought various collaborators in the academic circles of Iaşi (Moldavia), recruiting translators such as Mihail Vitlimescu and Ieronim Voruslan (both of them Jewish citizens converted to Christianity), Vasile Palade (d. 1916, teacher at the „National Highschool"

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in Iaşi), Clement Nicolau (teacher at the "Veniamin" Seminar), Petre Gârboviceanu (1862-1934, teacher of philosophy and pedagogy). The Society's documents indicate that, among those who, either simultaneously or successively, translated various biblical books for the early British Bible editions, there were several known theologians such as Nifon Bălăşescu (1806-1880), Ghenadie Ţeposu (1813-1877), Constantin Erbiceanu (1838-1913) and Nicolae Nitzulescu (1837-1904), all of whom preferred to remain anonymous. One of the scholars above also published a series of personal biblical translations (i.e. the *New Testament* in 1897, reprinted in 1904, 1906 and 1910, and the full-text *Bible* in 1906), which proved quite popular among Neo-Protestant Romanians, up until Dumitru Cornilescu's edition was published. The choice of Latin script for these texts, a natural habit of those days, is also related to the influential authority of the Romanian Academy, which was then heavily endorsing the etymologist trend. The same can be said about the relatively high number of Latin-Romanic neologisms used in translations, even though these terms often stem from the main textual tradition (via the *Filotei* and *Şaguna Bibles*).

In fact, even the worship-related books published under the authority of the Orthodox Church between 1870-1890 showed the same Latin graphic and linguistic transformations. As for sources, the translators seem to have used, in addition to the traditional Romanian versions of the Bible, the Hebrew originals and some French editions (especially Segond), as well as British or German. Printed several times, even with some differences from one edition to the next, the "British" Bible text was embraced by various expanding Neo-Protestant denominations until Dumitru Cornilescu's later book – one more reason for the Orthodox Church to reject it. The first edition of this series was published in Iaşi, in two volumes with the following structure: *Pentateuch*, *Joshua*, *Judges* and *Ruth* (the first volume, 1865), and *I Samuel*, *II Samuel*, *I Kings*, *II Kings*, *I Chronicles*, *II Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Esther*, *Job* and *Psalms* (the second volume, 1867)[20]. Here are the first three verses of the Holy Scripture:

[20] *Sânta Scriptură a Vechiului şi Noului Testament*, tradusă şi publicată de Societatea Biblică Britanică şi Străină (...). Tomul I, Imprimeria Adolf Bermann, Iaşi, 1865; tomul al II-lea, Imprimeria H. Goldner, Iaşi, 1867.

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> "La început creâ Dumne҃deŭ ceriul şi pâmêntul. Şi pâmêntul era neformat şi deşert; şi Spiritul lui Dumne҃deŭ se purta pre deasupra apei" ["At the beginning God created the sky and earth. And the earth was unformed and empty; and the Spirit of God held itself over the water"].

Constantly adapting the text to the orthographic and morphological norms of the Romanian Academy, the British Bible Society reedited the text in 1873 (Pesta)[21], 1874 (Iaşi)[22] and then 1911[23] and 1921 (Bucharest)[24].

Another noteworthy book in the Romanian tradition of biblical translation is the so-called *Cornilescu Bible*, probably the most widely spread Romanian version of the Bible. After reading Orthodox theology at the Bucharest University and becoming a priest, Dumitru Cornilescu (1891-1975) devoted all his time, from 1916, to the translation of the Bible into Romanian. Sponsored by Princess Rallu Callimachi and living at her estate in Stânceşti, Botoşani, the young theologian succeeded in finishing and publishing, under the auspices of the British Bible Society, a *Psalter* in 1920, and a *New Testament* in 1921; a year later he produced a complete version of the Bible[25]. As far as style and linguistic expression are concerned, Cornilescu's version follows the Romanian biblical tradition. Not much is known about his translation techniques, working style or sources, but the outcome confirms his good grasp of the Greek and Hebrew languages, as well as German, French and English. Despite an initial warm welcome, even from some Orthodox clerics, this new version soon raised suspicions especially because of the "Palestinian canon" the book was based on, which meant that many Neo-Protestant denominations (Baptists, Pentecostals, Adventists) would adopt this

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[21] *Sânta Scriptură a Vechiului şi a Noului Testamentu*. Ediţiune nouă revăzută după texturile originale şi publicată de Societatea Biblică pentru Britania şi Străinătate, Pesta, 1873.

[22] *Sănta Scriptură a Vechiului şi a Noului Testamentu*. Ediţiune nouă, revăzută după tecsturile originale şi publicată de Societatea Biblică pentru Britania şi Străinătate, Iaşi, 1874.

[23] *Sfânta Scriptura a Vechiului şi Noului Testament*, tipărită cu spesele Societăţii de Biblice Britanică şi Străină, Bucureşti, 1911.

[24] *Sfânta Scriptură a Vechiului şi Noului Testament*. Ediţiune nouă revizuită după testurile originale şi publicată de Societatea Biblică pentru Britania şi Străinătate, Bucureşti, 1921.

[25] *Biblia sau Sfînta Scriptură a Vechiului şi Noului Testament*, Societatea Biblică pentru Răspîndirea Bibliei în Anglia şi Străinătate, Bucureşti, 1921 [translation: D. Cornilescu, ed. a II a, 1926].

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edition as a *textus receptus*. Defeated by extreme criticism and accusations of sectarianism, Dumitru Cornilescu left the country for good in 1923 (apparently heeding the advice of Patriarch Miron Cristea himself). He spent most of his life in Switzerland, remaining a symbolic figure to Romanian Neo-Protestantism nonetheless. The second revised edition of his translation[26] was republished many times in hundreds of thousands of copies, often distributed free of charge even outside Protestant circles (where it still is a reference version).

4. Conclusions

The Romanian biblical tradition is a vast and diverse field of research, still in its early stages. The research potential is quite vast, with many potential paths. Starting from the philological approach, future interdisciplinary research groups may be created, groups that could easily include theologians, historians, translation experts, ethnologists, IT experts as well as philosophers. As things are now, the main task belongs to philologists who, in our viewpoint, should channel their efforts in two main directions. Firstly, to see to the scientific reediting of all old Romanian Bibles, especially those in Slavonic or transitional script, as they have gradually become incomprehensible to the philologically untrained specialists. Because this is a decades' worth of refined work engaging considerable human resources, one might begin by, for example, turning the texts virtual and popularizing them in this form. Secondly, special tools need to be developed for the subsequent interdisciplinary projects; these tools should mainly be able to create biblical references between the *Septuagint* and the main Romanian versions of the Old Testament, plus a historical and comparative Greek-Romanian dictionary of the New Testament.

A future history of the Romanian biblical tradition should be preceded by monographic studies dealing with certain specific issues such as intertextual relationships between various editions, plus a discussion on the circumstances of the translation work of old scholars

[26] *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură a Vechiului şi Noului Testament*, Societatea Biblică pentru Răspândirea Bibliei în Anglia şi Străinătate, Bucureşti, 1926.

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(e.g. their purposes, means, methods, styles, auxiliary sources, manuscript circulation, cultural and political variables etc.). The components of this biblical tradition exist and can be used by philologists as "witness-texts", which are instrumental to the task of systematically analyzing the changes in the norms of literary Romanian (phonetic, morphological, syntactic and lexical). The specific indexing and interpretation of the biblical lexicon (Greek, Slavonic, Hebrew or Latin-related terms), and of various semantic innovations (expressions, idioms, biblically derived meanings) are other fertile directions. In the same way, the issue of onomastics în the Bible (anthroponyms, toponyms, ethnonyms, hydronyms, theonyms etc.) is a topic virtually untouched in Romanian research. There is also a need for a monographic approach to the evolution of the church-related style in Romanian – either as a *sui generis* study or in correlation with the other two varieties, i.e. liturgical and theological. Finally, another promising direction would be that of biblical references in Romanian literature.

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