Between Philology and Bibliophily

Abstract

The present volume is an exploration within the book's universe, conceived as a triptych: *Old Unknown Books; Books with Manuscript Writings; The Book of Books: the Bible of Samuil Micu (1795).* The study comprises several direct investigations, which resulted in a few research discoveries that are meant to develop our knowledge of old Romanian libraries.

In the first section, a precious *ex libris* is presented, one that belonged to the High Steward Constantin Cantacuzino and was identified on a rare book, *Commentarii in octo libros politicorum Aristotelis*, edited in Paris, in 1645. This particular issue of the book speaks once again for the bibliophile preoccupations of the noble intellectual of Muntenia. He possessed an impressive collection of books, actually one of the larger to be found in Eastern Europe in the 17th century. Further, a series of completions to *The Old Romanian Bibliography* are being brought, therefore extending the repertoire of the Romanian mediaeval and early

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modern printing. Within *Addenda*, seven so far unknown books, discovered by the author, are being described: *Psaltire [Psalter]*, Râmnic, 1736; *Ceaslov [Breviary]*, Bucureşti, 1754-1755; *Catihisis mic*, Sibiu, 1807; *Proscomidia Sfintei Liturghii*, Buda, 1814; *Catihismul mic*, Sibiu, 1818; *Psaltire [Psalter]*, Sibiu, 1825; *Ceaslov [Breviary]*, Sibiu, 1826. The author also advances a series of rectifications of the bibliographic description of some books printed between 1643-1826.

In the second section, the author makes a few transcriptions of several manuscript writings and notes found on the sides of some old printings, and comments upon them extensively. The structures of the collective mental are being reflected in almost each of these glosses, where quasi anonymous scribes evoke everything that was linked to the book's destiny, to the methods of its obtaining and intact transmission over the years, as well as the events they witnessed throughout time. The important value of the manuscript writings and notes is also certified through the information they convey regarding the existence of some dialectal phonetical phenomena, words and lexical variants nowadays gone, scarcely known or having regional circulation only, and the preservation of some forms that reflect characteristics of the spoken language.

The last section is dedicated to a representative book that concerns the redefinion of the old Romanian writing in connection with the modern Canon, that is, the translation of *The Bible* published

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by Samuil Micu, in Blaj, in 1795. The first part stands for a research of the biblical sources, that reveals, along with the main model, that of the *Bible* of Bucureşti from 1688, other sources, such as the edition of *Septuaginta* published by de Lambert Bos, in Franeker, in 1709. To this edition, we should add one of the polyglot editions which made use of the notes ascribed to the well-known specialist in the Hebrew culture François Vatable, respectively those published at Heidelberg (1586, 1599, 1616) or in Paris, between 1729-1745. Beyond these sources, Samuil Micu didn't ignored the local tradition, the Psalms of David being reproduced, with high fidelity, after the edition of *Psaltirea*, published at Blaj in 1764, and *Rugăciunea lui Manase [The Prayer of Manase]* being thoroughly transposed after the breviaries published at Blaj, beginning with 1751. The filiation of texts is closely followed through parallelisms and edifying textual comparisons. Finally, the author sets under scrutiny the linguistic concordances between the *Bible* of Bucureşti and the *Bible* of Blaj. The analysis conveys further scientific arguments regarding the bigger part played by the edition of 1795 within the process of unifying the Romanian literary language, and argues for the fact that the before-mentioned edition of the *Bible* was to become, for more than a century, a model for all the Romanian bibles.

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