

THE MOST IMPORTANT ROMANIAN VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE

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Abstract: The interest for having the biblical text in Romanian has always dominated the conscience of the Romanian people. The first biblical manuscripts found in the north of Transylvania, at the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century (1480-1500). The New Testament of Bălgrad (1648), the first complete edition in Romanian was followed by the Bible of Bucharest. After almost a century after its release, the bishop Samuil Micu Clain made a new translation known as the Bible of Blaj (1795). The Bishop Filotei of Buzău printed five volumes, between 1854-1856, known as the Bible of Buzău. Andrei Țaguna (1808-1873), started printing a new edition followed by others in the next years.

Keywords: Bible, New Testament, translation, biblical text.

1. Introduction

As with other old translations of the Holy Scripture in the vernacular languages of the people converted to Christianity, the interest for having the biblical text in Romanian has always dominated the conscience of our people, although it has long been read and heard in Latin, Greek or Slavonic. Considering that the Romanian language was a language in continuous development and transformation, it was natural for the Scripture to be translated from time to time in the common language that evolved with the changing of one generation to another. Translators have always had help from their predecessors, considering their work a holy patrimony they received, and they have adapted the ancient texts to the understanding of the contemporary, seeking the accessibility rather than the originality of the religious language. This is the reason why we have so many translations of the Bible in our language, in which we notice a specialized literary style regarding religious topics. Thus, in Romanian translations it occurs more often the inclination towards “spiritualizing” the expression, sometimes resulting a deliberate archaic text. This doesn’t mean that the text becomes less clear. Due to prolonged use of the Romanian in the Liturgy and due to the fact that, apart from the actual reading,

the liturgical prayers have been “welded” together with the help of biblical words and expressions, literary Romanian was modeled, even since the beginning, by the first quasi-literary translations of the Bible. Therefore, with some renewals required by the evolution of the language, the translations of the last seven decades are accessible to average readers, which is a great advantage. Furthermore, Romanian is favored by the fact that due to high fluxion, the word order is very elastic and can use this important means of emphasizing; analyzing closely the Hebrew or Greek phrase topic, we realize that the same effects are being obtained¹.

Until the beginning of the 18th century, the liturgical language of the Romanians was ancient Slavonic (also known as *Medio-Bulgarian*), used within the churches of all the Romanian territories north of the Danube. In this language there were multiplied, with the help of the copies that monks have made within the monasteries, not only the holy books required for the church services (worship), but also the rare reading books for the scribes of those times. Also, writing in Romanian before 1858 that is before the lord Alexandru Ioan Cuza, was done using the Cyrillic letters, which was also used for the translations of the Bible. After 1858, the Holy Scripture began to be printed using the Latin alphabet. Thereby, for more than five centuries, the Romanian people has the Scripture translated in its own language, according to the first biblical manuscripts found in the north of Transylvania, at the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century (1480-1500)². No doubt that the originals of these first translations will have been written long time before, their source being lost in time. The translations we have received are copies, usually fragmented, written later by the calligraphers, of whose names we don't know. These first translations from Slavonic to Romanian, made on the advice of the Hussites of Bohemia, who were chased away to Christian Moldavia, were the answer to the need of the Romanian monks: to be in the know of the sacred writing. They came from the rural area and didn't know the Slavonic, although they were the only scholars during that time, in the same manner in which the monasteries were the only “schools” and cultural establishments. The fact that this sacred texts written in Romanian contain a language and a culture older than the date of their arrival, which were all over the place-especially among the missionary monks- in all the regions inhabited by Romanians, constituted a prologue that aided their acceptance easily everywhere. The translations of the northern monasteries of the country (Maramureș, Bucovina) symbolized the first understanding of this incomprehensible foreign language and they offered Romanians the chance to understand the sacred books in their language. These

¹ For further details, see Monica Broșteanu, *Numele lui Dumnezeu în Coran și în Biblie*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2005, pp. 237-290.

² Pr. Prof. Dr. Milan P. Șesan, *Originea și timpul primelor traduceri românești ale Sfintei Scripturi*, Cernăuți, 1939, pp. 104-112.

texts were spread throughout copies and arrived in the southern territory that is Wallachia. In time they were reviewed and the errors and the dialects specific to the north were eliminated³.

2. The New Testament of Bălgrad (1648)

Bălgrad (today's Alba Iulia) represents, after Târgoviște, Sibiu and Brașov, a fourth center of the 16th century where Romanian books will be edited in Cyrillic writing, thus favorably influencing the evolution of the Romanian culture and literature. The intense printing activity held here, starting with 1567 up until 1702 is marked by the release of the New Testament of Bălgrad, in 1648, a reference piece of work in the evolution of the Romanian biblical text. We are talking about the first complete edition of the New Testament in Romanian, an unprecedented achievement in our country and also a premiere for the other people of the South-Eastern Europe⁴.

The book demanded time and expenses. In March of 1643, Simion Ștefan, an ex-monk of the Bălgrad Monastery, is named archbishop of Ardeal (1643-1656), after the removal of Ilie Iorest (1640-1643). Around 1620, the idea of translating the Bible in Romanian was circulating, intention which wasn't completed, but to which the scholars of Transylvania didn't give up. It is supposed that just after the election of Simion Ștefan efforts have begun to translate the New Testament. On the 5th of August 1643, the Calvinist superintendent Ștefan Gelejii Katona sends a letter informing the Romanian protopopes that "we are struggling to translate the New Testament from Greek, language used by the evangelists and the apostles, into Romanian and to print it to mend the souls of the numerous poor Romanian villages". He also announces them that he has found someone who knows Greek and Latin, asking for the outstanding tax left unpaid since the time of Ilie Iorest; each and every priest is constrained to pay up a florin. Another proof of the implication of the new metropolitan is indicated by the 15 conditions contained in his confirmation diploma (10th October 1643). This specified the obligation "to preach God's word everywhere following the Holy Scripture translated in Romanian"⁵. After analyzing the documents containing the data about the translation and printing of the New Testament, it was reached the conclusion that the printing started at the end of 1646 or at the beginning of the next year and the paper used, having the

³ Pr. prof. univ. dr. Stelian Tofană, "Tipărituri și ediții critice ale textului sfânt în limba română", in *Biblie și multiculturalitate. Dinamica granițelor culturale ale Europei determinată de traducerea și circulația textului sacru*, coord. Ioan Chirilă, Editura Limes – Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, pp. 16-17.

⁴ Cf. Eugen Pavel, *Carte și tipar la Bălgrad (1567-1702)*, Cluj Napoca, 2001, pp. 14-93.

⁵ Ioan Lupaș, *Documente istorice transilvane*, Vol. I, Cluj-Napoca, 1940, pp. 227-228 (doc. 95). See also I. Minea, "Despre Noul Testament din 1648", in *Cercetări Istorice*, Iași, Nr. V-VII/ 1929-1931, p. 350.

thread-mark with the emblem of Gheorghe Rákóczy I (1630-1648) and indicating the source as being the “mill of Lancrăm”⁶.

Thus, on the 20th January 1648, the first complete translation in Romanian of the New Testament came to light. Apart from Simion Ștefan, its translation has been made also by the hyero-monk Silvestru, ex-abbot of the Govora Monastery, who adds next to his name the appellation *taha*, meaning “the quakerish, the unworthy”⁷. After his death, in 1642, the translation of the New Testament has been recommenced, re-examined and continued by a team of translators, who haven’t been nominated in the 1648’s edition. The financial support of the work was possible thanks to the Transylvanian prince, Gheorghe Rákóczy. Because the book wasn’t one meant exclusively for the cult, the dissemination of the New Testament wasn’t very intense at first within the Romanian Orthodox circles. They realized that during the month of December of the 1648’s, 800 florins were collected from the sale of the book. We have proofs that confirm the buy of a copy with 24 florins by the priest Lascu the Old from Livadea de sub Coastă, county of Hațeg. The price is rather high for that time. However, the New Testament had a fairly large circulation, especially in Transylvania, the number of the copies reaching over 160⁸.

What is seen with the arrival of the New Testament of Bălgrad is the evolution regarding the artistic features and the editing process used. The famous Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga noticed the fact that the monumental work can be singled out because of its “small, delicate, elegant letter, moderate ornaments, carved under western taste”⁹. The edition is indeed generous, containing introductions (*prefaces*) for all the books of the New Testament, in which we find general isagogic information about their origin, contents and nature. Also the actual text of the New Testament is preceded by two prefaces, the first one signed by the metropolitan Simion Ștefan himself, and the other one unsigned and attributed to the translators of the text or to some scholars, close to the Transylvanian metropolitan. The first preface is addressed to the prince of Transylvania, Gheorghe Rákóczy, to whom the metropolitan brings thanks for the support offered for the printing of the book. The second one is a *Preface to the Readers*, in which it is indicated that the translators used Yugoslav and Latin sources, apart from the Greek and Slavonic ones, leaving often some neologisms not translated. The Metropolitan Simion Ștefan confesses that he gave his best, so all the Romanians could understand the writing. If they are not to understand, the translators are not responsible for this. The fault belongs to the ones that

⁶ Sofia Știrban, *Din istoria hârtiei și filigranului: tipografia românească a Bălgradului* (sec. VII), Alba Iulia, 1999, pp. 50-51.

⁷ Pr. Prof. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, 2nd volume, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1981, p. 71.

⁸ Florian Dudaș, *Vechi cărți românești călătore*, București, 1978, pp. 158-160.

⁹ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria literaturii românești*, Ed. II, București, 1925, p. 282.

divided the country in so many regions and lordships, in this way the unity of the language being destroyed¹⁰.

The biblical text of the New Testament is divided into chapters and verses, each chapter having a suggestive title concerning its contents. On the margins of the text we may find short references to similar passages. At the end of the edition, there have been added, a guide in Slavonic for the twelve months of the ecclesiastic year and some antiphons and prokymenons used more often within the liturgical cult. The sources of this edition are indicated starting with the page containing the title, but also in the preface and errata; however, they are not fully revealed. The first source is Greek, but the edition used is not specified, thus we may assume it's about one of the polyglot editions of the Bible that were edited, accompanied by a complex critical apparatus, starting with the second half of the 16th century. Another source, declared by the translators, is the Latin one, thought by the scholars as being the Vulgate, or the new commented translations of the Holy Scripture thanks to the reformed humanists or another edition of the *Novum Testamentum*, a Latin version with the parallel text in Greek, just like the one annotated by Mathias Flacius (Frankfurt, 1659). But the Greek and Latin versions are not entirely edifying, so it has been suggested that they have appealed to the Hungarian and German versions, without exhausting the Latin versions. Another source has been identified in the Sacred Bible, the scholar Alin-Mihai Gherman reaching the conclusion that the direct source of the *New Testament of Bălgrad* would be *Testamentum Novum sive foedus novum*, which appeared in Hanovia (1623), in the Wechelius house. Also, it is said that the last source is represented by a Greek-Latin version realized by Théodore de Bèze, released post-mortem, in 1611.

Being a man reading of wide, a product of his humanistic orientation, the Metropolitan Simion Ștefan has contributed crucially, by the means of vocabulary, style and quality of this translation, to the development and unification of the ancient literary Romanian. His masterpiece wasn't meant to be a regional one, but a Romanian one, a fact that is proved by its use in the various editions of the Bible, which will be released later. To all this we may add the statement of two essential social principles, quite advanced for its time: the principle of people's sovereignty (the statement of the unity of all Romanians) and the principle of the social contract¹¹.

For the first time, the need for unification and standardization of the literary language is being promoted clearly. Alongside with neologisms (*căpitan*, *gangrenă*, *stadie*, *teatron*, *piață*, *teatru*) and the fight for unifying the literary language, we may identify regional or dialectal words or phrases. This is an explicable phenomenon because of the phase of development our language was

¹⁰ See Gabriel Popescu, "Predosloviile Noului Testament de la Bălgrad (1648), in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Nr. 5-6/ 1964, pp. 597-599.

¹¹ *Predoslovia către cititori*, p. 116.

reaching in that specific moment. The translators were “priest scholars and wise men”, Latin, Greek and Slavonic speakers, some of them originating from the Ardeal region, fact proved by the use of regional language: *alean, alămojină, corfă, ciurdă, târnat, ocă, beseadă, sudui, marhă, săcriu*. We may find as well dialectal forms such as *foale, poroboc, priiatnic* or verbal forms such as *a scria, a prenoi* (i.e. “to restore, to reconstruct), which shows us that some of these translators were coming from Banat region. Another specific regional words coming from Muntenia (*ginere, scuiپی, scuiپitură*). It has been noticed that some of the New Testament’s words, academic or regional, come either from Latin, or Greek, or Slavonic or Hungarian, another proof for the sources used. In addition we have other words originating in Turkish (*hangeriu, divan, mahramă*), German (*corfă*), but also autochthonous ones (*traistă, mărar*). Thus, by enforcing the Romanian language and culture unity, it has been contributed to the obtrusion of a lexical supradialecatal norm, which makes the New Testament of Bălgrad a literary monument, but also a paradigm of the evolution Romanian reached, in the middle of the 17th century¹².

The text of the New Testament of 1648’s was reprinted after 340 years (Alba Iulia, 1988), in a special edition, directed by the Bishop Emilian of Alba- Iulia. This new edition underlines 36 differences between the studied copies. The preamble (p. 7-30) is signed by the Bishop Emilian Birdaş, and it presents the historical and spiritual setting of the Romanian life of Transylvania during the release of the New Testament of Bălgrad, “a treasure of literary language of large accessibility, released in premiere even for the other people of the South-Eastern Europe”, thanks to the Metropolitan Simion Ştefan, “scholar hierach and the reason why the national conscience was awaken”. The reprinting of the New Testament of Bălgrad in exceptional graphical conditions offers the theologians, historians and linguists the chance to work with a precious instrument, a thesaurus left by our ancestors in order to maintain and propagate the unaltered divine word and the Romanian language, and also the way the Holy Scripture of the New Testament has been used within the divine cult of the Orthodox Church¹³.

3. The Bible of Bucharest (1688)

The New Testament, fully printed for the first time by the Metropolitan Simion Ştefan, in 1648, was followed by the complete print of the Bible in

¹² Prof. Dr. Florica Dimitrescu, “Importanța lingvistică a Noului Testament de la Bălgrad”, in *Noul Testament*, Ediție festivă, Alba Iulia, 1988, p. 97.

¹³ Arhid. Prof. Ioan Ivan, “Noul Testament tipărit pentru prima dată în limba română la 1648 de către Simion Ştefan, Mitropolitul Transilvaniei. Reeditat după 340 ani din inițiativa și purtarea de grijă a Prea Sfințitului Emilian, Episcop de Alba Iulia, Editura Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române a Albei Iuliei, 1988”, in *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, Nr. 2/ 1989, pp. 113-114; Pr. Prof. Teodor Bodogae, “Noul Testament de la Bălgrad din 1648, retipărit prin purtarea de grijă a Prea Sfințitului Emilian Episcopul Alba Iuliei, 1988, 908 pp.”, in *Mitropolia Banatului*, Nr. 1/ 1989, pp. 133-135.

Romanian, within the monumental work known as “The Bible of Bucharest”, the *Bible of 1688* or the *Bible of Șerban Cantacuzino* (1678-1688). After his death (on the 29th October 1688), the lord Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714), his nephew and heir, finalized its printing.

Preparations started around the year 1682, once the required materials were collected (foreign editions, partial translations in Romanian) and the coagulation of the scholars’ group. From a marking made at the end of the Book of Apocalypse and a separate preamble we find out that at the making of the translation the scholars Șerban and Radu Greceanu and the Bishop Mitrofan of Huși have participated. The latter directed the typographical work, the redaction and the error correction of the manuscript. All of them were helped by the Bishops Gherman of Nyssa (a famous elenist and the chancellor of the Greek Academy of Bucharest, deceased during the work) and Sevastos Kymenites (the principal of the Greek School of Bucharest), the Steward Constantin Cantacuzino (who studied in Padua, Italy) and probably the Patriarch Dositei of Jerusalem (who signed the preface inscribed to the Prince). As we have seen, the complete text of the translation was printed in 1688, under the rulership of Șerban Cantacuzino and his heir Constantin Brâncoveanu, during the administration of the Metropolitan of Hungarian Vallachia Teodosie Veștemeanu, originating in the Ardeal region¹⁴. The printing started on 5th October 1687, in the typographic workshop of the Bishop Mitrofan. A second set of books, finished on the 10th November 1688 had, on the last page of the volume, 16 lines added, where explanations were given referring the “elenistic source”, printed in Franco Fortu (i.e. Frankfurt).

Șerban Cantacuzino’s Bible is a voluminous creation (41 × 26, 5 cm), containing 944 large pages, of 59 lines each, which transforms it, from the typographical point a view, into a genuine masterpiece for its era. Unlike the New Testament of Bălgrad, the chapters don’t display the representative titles for the contents of the pericope. An *errata* is being added to the book, the first one printed in the history of our country.

The biblical text is preceded by a *Foreword* of the Lord Șerban Cantacuzino for the readers (atributed to the humanist scholar Constantin Cantacuzino, the Lord’s brother), in which the quality and value of the translation is being emphasized, a translation made for the unity of the Romanian people and language¹⁵. A second *Foreword* is signed by the Patriarch Dositei of Jerusalem and is addressed to the Romanian Lord. This important preamble is valuable especially because of the man who wrote it, the Patriarch

¹⁴ cf. Pr. Dr. Ioan Dură, “Mitropolitul Teodosie al Țării Românești. Nevoința lui Teodosie ca monah, la Sfântul Munte Athos. Precizări și contribuții biografice”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Nr. 9-10/ 1988, p. 127.

¹⁵ See N. Iorga, *Istoria Bisericii Românești și a vieții religioase a românilor*, 1st volume, 2nd edition, București, 1929, p. 407.

Dositei of Jerusalem (1672-1707) who played an essential role in the fight led by the Eastern Orthodox Church against protestantism. The Hierarchy speaks eulogistically about the unique origin of Lord Șerban, descendent from the paternal line of the Cantacuzino family and maternal line of the Basarabi family, reminding also about the good done for some churches and monasteries in the country and abroad. Furthermore, he congratulates him on the initiative he took in fully translating the Bible into Romanian, comparing him with Ulfila, Ghots' Bishop, with "Egypt's Emperor" Ptolemaeus, and last but not least, with "the great Emperor Constantine (i.e. Constantine the Great)". Some authors consider this preface belong to a laic person, which is often identified with chairman N. Milescu, taking into consideration that the Patriarch Dosei had hindered, by the decision of Jerusalem's Holy Synod (1672), the propagation and translation of the Holy Scripture in other languages. But, it is less important that the Patriarch Dositei is the author of this preface, the important thing is that he signs it on his behalf, fact that underlines the significance and importance of the Bible of Bucharest in the European context¹⁶.

After the two introductory words, a white page comes next, which has on its back the contents of the entire work, with the title: *For the divine books of the Scriptures, interpretation*. On the fifth page, on the back, we may find the contents with the title: *Interpretation for the godly books of the Scripture*. Just after this 5 unmarked pages, the actual text of the Holy Scripture comes up, which has the title, written in red: *The old and new Holy Scripture*. On each front page there are two columns written with small letters. The proper names are written everywhere with small letters, the large letters appearing just in the beginning of each verse. The text of the Old Testament was brought to light thanks to the translation of the Moldavian scholar Nicolae Spătaru (*Necolae*), a close friend of Șerban Cantacuzino, who in 1662 was gone to Constantinople as diplomat, representing the Romanian countries. He was also translating the Scripture "from Greek into Romanian". His work, carried out between 1661-1664, was left in a manuscript (the famous *manuscript number 45*) and we can't know for sure if the Greceanu brothers used it or not. Milescu, for example, had used a Greek text, printed in Germany, in Frankfurt along the river Main. Thus, the text used for choice was the one of the Septuagint, but also the Latin text of the Vulgate, the Slavonic translation and the previous Romanian translations (of Coresi, Palia of Orăștie, ecc.). Both the logic of the Romanian cultural evolution and the linguistic characteristics of the text prove a "synthesis" and a "selection" of the older and contemporary texts, released within the three Romanian provinces. Of course that the precedent versions were redacted, some parts translated again, maintaining a religious continuity according to the previous religious literature. With page 751 the text of the New Testament begins,

¹⁶ Pr. Prof. Dr. Viorel Ioniță, "Biblia lui Șerban Cantacuzino – 1688 în contextul traducerilor europene", in *Mitropolia Olteniei*, Nr. 6/ 1988, pp. 66-67.

offering the four Holy Gospels (p. 751-831). The contents of the last three of them are preceded by a short *Preface*. After the evangelical writings, the Acts of the Apostles come next (pages 831-855), the Pauline epistles (pages 855-909), the epistles of the Apostles Jacob, Peter, John and Judas (pages 909-921) and in the end, “the Apocalypse of John the Theologian” (pages 921-923). It seems that the New Testament’s text was highly influenced by the New Testament of Bălgrad. The four Gospels were taken from it and printed in the Snagov Monastery near Bucharest, in 1697. The Psalms were taken as well from this work and printed separately in Buzău, and named *Psaltery*, in 1701 and 1703. From the linguistic point of view, the Bible of 1688 makes the most of the experience of the previous translations and consecrates, within an environment based especially on vocalicity, the value of the written text, establishing a continuity regarding the literary language, with the entire previous Romanian religious literature¹⁷.

Talking about the “Bible of Șerban” as representing a theological and linguistic monument in the Romanian literature, His Eminence Bartolomeu Anania said, at the 300 anniversary of the release of the book in Bucharest, at the Theological Institute (on 17th November 1988), that it represents the best translation of the Holy Scripture in our country. This doesn’t mean that the following versions are disapproved. He talks about the fact that, despite the errors occurred throughout the translation and its Greek syntax, the pioneer work of translating the holy text of the group of the translators is indeed exquisite. On the other hand, according to the same confession of the high-priest of the Romanian Orthodox Church, an incursion in the history of the Romanian translations of the Bible shows us that no edition can be considered as being perfect; each and every one may be the subject of improvements:

This <completion> has a relative meaning. It’s good to remember the truth that a translation or revision of the Bible in an <complete> version (i.e. “unaltered forever”) it’s not possible anywhere, in any culture and any language; this is due to: firstly, the original texts are released in critical editions that are keep getting better and better; secondly, each and every language evolves¹⁸.

An initial interpretative translation of the Cyrillic text was carried out under the aegis of the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchy, in 1988, by a team

¹⁷ Prof. Dr. Dumitru Gh. Radu, “Cartea bisericească – factor de promovare a unității spirituale, lingvistice și culturale naționale a poporului român”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Nr. 3-4/ 1979, pp. 373-374.

¹⁸ Valeriu Anania, “Biblia lui Șerban, monument de limbă teologică și literară românească”, in *Biblie și multiculturalitate. Dinamica granițelor culturale ale Europei determinată de traducerea și circulația textului sacru*, Ioan Chirilă (ed.), Editura Limes – Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, pp. 101-103. The same article appeared in *Glasul Bisericii*, Nr. 6/ 1988, pp. 53-62.

coordinated by I. Chițimia, Alexandra and Mihai Moraru. Subsequently, the Bible of Bucharest was republished in 1997. A philological edition was initiated by Paul Miron in the series *Monumenta Linguae Dacoromanorum*, published by the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, in collaboration with “Albert-Ludwig” University of Freiburg (Germany). Until now the first five books have been released (1988-1997). The first volume of a new edition, neat by Vasile Arvinte, Iuon Caproșu, Alexandru Gafton and Laura Manea was released in Iași (“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University’s Publishing, 2001)¹⁹.

The Bible of Bucharest represents a landmark in the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church, a climax for the old era of the history’s literary language and a Romanian cultural monument, a genuine “synthesis of all the hard work the Romanian scholars have done in the worst circumstances, for three centuries, in all the Romanian countries, in order to clothe God’s word in the national garments”²⁰.

4. The Bible of Blaj (1795)

After almost a century after its release, the Bible of Bucharest (1688) became so rare that almost nobody could get it. This was the main reason why Samuil Micu Clain (1745-1806), a representative of Ardeal School, decided the making of a new translation of the Holy Scripture in Romanian, after the Greek original one. His work is known by the name of the *Bible of Blaj (the Bible of Clain)*, released in 1795, with the blessing of the Romanian Bishop of Făgăraș, Ioan Bob. It represents a new important contribution for the understanding of the word of God in Romanian and for the development of the modern literary language, of the end of the 18th century. The release of a new version of the Bible represents a key stone for the theological, philosophical, historical and linguistic work of Samuil Micu, who makes a translation similar and even a better one than the one made a century before. Throughout his work we may notice the constant tendency of the translator to get rid of the regional or popular words, which are replaced with terms that bring, semantically, novelty, accuracy and plasticity.

The preamble of this action was the initiative of the Greek-Catholic Bishop, Petru Pavel Aron, of printing the Bible in Romanian. He succeeded in realizing a part of the Old Testament’s writings. After his passing away, the translation work was continued by Samuil Micu Clain, who was a monk during that period in Blaj, an exceptional Greek and Latin speaker, and a gifted writer in Romanian. The idea of taking this important and difficult work and finish it was given by his protector, Ignatie Darabant, at that time general Vicar in Blaj. Micu decides to translate the Bible starting with 1783, while he was prefect of studies in Saint Barbara College

¹⁹ Mihai Moraru, “Prezentarea Ediției Jubiliare a Bibliei de la București”, in *Studii Teologice*, Nr. 6/ 1988, pp. 7-9.

²⁰ Nicolae Cartoian, *Istoria literaturii române vechi*, București, 1980, p. 195.

in Viena. Unfortunately, once the headquarters of the eparchy were moved, some of the manuscripts of Petru Pavel Aron have disappeared, so Samuil Micu couldn't make a use of his work. In fact, his translation was an improvement of Șerban Cantacuzino's Bible and a correction according to the Septuagint, Vulgate and other versions of what he considered to be misleading²¹. Wanting to offer the text an universal dimension for all the Romanians Of Ardeal region, Samuil Micu offered initially (around 1790) the manuscript to the orthodox Bishop Gherasim Adamovici, of Sibiu, who in his turn asked the governor G. Bánfi permission to print it, in order to remove the lack of having a Holy Scripture in Romanian (lat. *Maxima Sacrorum Bibliorum in Valachico idiomate penuria*). Finding out that the Holy Scripture is going to be printed in Sibiu for the use of all the Romanians from Ardeal, the Greek-Catholic Bishop Ioan Bob asked the same governor to deny the intercession made by Gherasim Adamovici, in order to be him the one receiving and printing the manuscript in question. Subsequently, this happened, and the Bishop formed a commission meant to complete the text with parallel notes, titles for each chapter and introductions for each biblical writing. The whole typographical work was brought to Blaj, in 1738, by the Bishop Inochentie Micu-Klein. The work was printed under this form, at the Blaj's Seminary, between the 1st November 1793 and the 15th November 1795, with the full title: *The Bible, i.e. the Holy Scripture of the old and new Law*. Details about the duration of the printed are offered by the note signed by the hieromonk Gherman, an epilogue of the typographical house's prefect, known by the name of Gherman Petralchi (or Petru Gherman of Peterlarca), who also took on the job of correcting the text²².

The biblical text is written, usually, in two columns, excepting some introductory parts of Old and New Testament's books, written in one column. Each page has, usually, 63 lines. The printing was done with characters of three different sizes: line letters of 2 mm, used in introductions, 4 mm capital letters and simple initials of 6mm, used mostly for the titles of the writings; line letters of approximate 1,5 mm, with capital letters of 2,5 m, used for printing the actual text < small letters of around 1,2 mm, used in the scholiasts of the Bible (the arguments of the chapters, foot notes, parallels). Larger characters belong to the type used in the typography of Bălgrad, in 1683-1702. Without excelling in richness, the Bible contains some decorative elements, a stylistically finesse. We find three types of vignette, with one or three occurrences: the first one at the end of the Old Testament, the second at the end of Mathew and John's Gospels and the Epistle of Colossians, the third at the end of the New Testament. Two little xylographs, neo-byzantine in style, illustrate the beginnings of the Gospels mentioned above. The title page generates the same sobriety like the one found

²¹ Eugen Pavel, "Un monument de limbă literară: Biblia lui Samuil Micu", in *Biblia de la Blaj*, ediție Jubiliară, Roma, 2001, p. 5.

²² Cornel Tatai-Baltă, Teodor Smericinschi, "Din activitatea tipografiei de la Blaj (1787-1821), reflectată de un material arhivistic", in *Apulum*, Nr. 19/ 1981, pp. 248-256.

in printed work of Bălgrad and Bucharest. The printing is done in black, on an indigenous piece of paper: a thicker type of paper, a little porous, used especially in printing the Old Testament and another type of paper, thinner, used in printing the New Testament, from Sibiu.

The volume contains some short critical observations and also some exegetic explanations to some of the verses, very influenced by the catholic theology. In the *Foreword*, Samuil Micu justifies his action, based on two fundamental arguments: firstly, the Bible of 1688 was printed “in an obscure and twisting Romanian...”. The preface of the edition, named *Foreword to the Holy Scripture*, contains some elements referring to the canon, substance, integrity and infallibility of the Holy Scripture, and also some succinct biblical hermeneutical information. Furthermore, at the end of the New Testament the list of the Apostles, of the Sunday Gospels and important celebrations during the ecclesiastic year were added. The bible contains the non-canonical books and apocryphal writings (e.g. IV Maccabaeus) and also a philosophical essay, *Treatise on the dominant reason*, written by the Hebrew historian Joseph Flavius.

The translation of the Gospels distinguish itself by the modernity of the expression, from the literary point of view, the text isn't tributary to the previous transpositions. Unlike the Bible of Bucharest (and in part of the version written by Petru Pavel Aron), the New Testament text of the Bible of Blaj doesn't have so many convergent points with the New Testament of Bălgrad. On the other hand, it stands up because of its convergent elements with the Four Gospels of Coresi (gr. *Tetraevangelion*), Samuil Micu knowing, for sure, the version from Brasov of 1561. However, the Bible of Blaj doesn't lack in translational errors of the biblical text or wording errors. Samuil Micu himself, warn against the *Preface* of his work, stating that it present certain ambiguities in terms of wording.

Professor Victor V. Smigelschi tried to reprint de Bible of Blaj at the beginning of the previous century. His transcription, put together with a new edition of the LXX and Vulgate, included some error corrections of the first edition. Its text can be found today in the Romanian Academy Association of Cluj-Napoca (*Ms. rom. nr. 284*). The jubilee edition of the Bible of Blaj was published in Rome, in 2001, with the celebration of 300 years since the unification of Transylvania's Church and Rome's Church.

The work of Samuil Micu is a masterpiece of its times, the 17th century, having a very important role in the process of unification of the literary Romanian. Thus, his work has become, for many centuries, an actual archetype in our ecclesiastical literature and for the Romanian biblical language. We can detect easily the influence Micu has on the following translations of the Holy Scripture (the Bible of Petersburg, the Bible of Buzău, the Bible of Andrei Șaguna, even the Bible of 1914, even though it is not always acknowledged.

5. The Bible of Buzău (1854-1856)

After more than a century and a half from the release of Șerban Cantacuzino's Bible (1688) and almost six decades from the release of the Bible of Samuil Micu (1795), the need for a new edition of the Bible was felt more and more, both for the believers and the professors and students of the newly created Theological Seminaries of Iași (1803), Bucharest, Buzău (1836), Râmnicu-Vâlcea (1837) and Sibiu (1850). Therefore, the one who took the initiative of printing this new scriptural edition was another person who loved books, the Bishop Filotei of Buzău, who printed five volumes between 1854-1856 (Vol. I – 1854; Vol. II, III, IV – 1855 and Vol. V – 1856).

The Bible of Buzău is not, in fact, a translation of the holy text, but rather a reprinting of the Bible of Blaj, edited by himself. In the *Foreword*, the Bishop Filotei mentions some universal principles, regarding the Holy Scripture²³:

- the unequaled importance and indissoluble unity of the Scripture;
- the reading of the Scripture and meditation on the reading leads to salvation, both for the clergy and believers;
- the lack of the holy books in our Church represents an important minus, doubled sometimes by the “lack in theological education of the priests” and “the needs of the people's souls”.

As with the Bible of Blaj, the Bible of Buzău contains the same number of books, including the “apocryphal” for the specific canon of the alexandrine Old Testament and the assignment of the non-canonical Book IV Maccabaeus of “Josephus Flavius”. The text of each biblical writing is divided in chapters and verses (excepting the IV Maccabees Book, divided only in chapters), preceded by a *Foreword*, which contains, as usual, some isagogic fundamental notions (author, addressee, motives, place, purpose, date, integrity). In the fifth volume, which contains the canonical writings of the New Testament, some introductory themes in the study of the Scripture are presented: the inspiration of the Holy Scripture, the integrity of the holy text, the division of the biblical books, the meaning (theology) of the holy text etc.

If we analyze comparatively and carefully it, the Bible of Buzău stands out as a synthesis work which, although is very influenced by the text of the Bible of Blaj, follows actually in some sections the text of both the Bible of Bucharest and the Bible of Petersburg, philologically, translational and theologically speaking. The analysis of certain terms from the New Testament indicates that those who composed the Bible of Buzău have consulted other translations than the ones mentioned above, thing that doesn't make the edition more valuable.

²³ Dr. P. Gârboviceanu, “Sfânta Scriptură sau Biblia”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Nr. 8/ 1909, pp. 894-895.

6. The Bible of Andrei Şaguna (1856-1858)

Short time after the release of the Bible of Buzău, the Metropolitan of Ardeal region, Andrei Şaguna (1808-1873), started printing a new edition of the Bible, which took his name. His initiative was in accord with the exceptional cultural and religious environment he had managed to impose within the clergy and believers. After only two months since his arrival in Ardeal, Şaguna sends the clergy a circular letter, ordering them to respect stringently “the useful customs”. One of the most important ones was:

May every priest, wisely, gratify their wishes, and especially to read carefully the Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers...and by gaining the useful knowledge to be capable of to speak for the people wisely and efficaciously²⁴.

At the time the circular letter was delivered, the orthodox clergy was short of Romanian bibles. Thus, the beautiful volume released in Sibiu, between 1856-1858, written in an exquisite language and endowed with no less than 100 illustrations. The edition had 920 pages and had a very accessible price for that time. Şaguna’s Bible had the complete title: *The Bible, i.e. the Holy Scripture of the old and new Law*. The printing of Şaguna’s Bible has lasted two years and was held in the typography of Sibiu, founded by him in 1850. The Cyrillic letters had one color, on resistant paper used for registers (*Bücherstoff*), in folio size. The text is presented in two columns (27 × 19 cm). The edition opens with a large isagogic-historical introduction (pages III-XXI), with the title: *useful knowledge about the Holy Scripture*. About the *Foreword* of Şaguna’s Bible it has been said that it represents “a short and condensate isagogic treatise about the Holy Scripture; a very good treatise for its times”, that can be considered one of the greatest pages in our literary and ecclesiastic history²⁵.

After the title page and the introductory pages, the actual biblical text follows, which contains the Old Testament (p. 3-920) and the New Testament, with separate pages (3-240). There is also a series of illustrations, after Gustave Doré (1833-1883): 58 replicas for the Old Testament and 37 ones for the New Testament. At the beginning of the four Holy Gospels, all over the page, there’s an icon of the holy author. Talking about the Holy Scripture translations in “our Romanian language”, Andrei Şaguna appreciates the efforts of his predecessors to “turn” the Bible in Romanian and their incontestable contribution to the awakening of the national conscience and the spiritual, linguistic and cultural unity of all fellow Romanians. Thus, the high hierarch doesn’t claim that his translation is original, because, in his mind, the translation of the Bible was done just once,

²⁴ Gheorghe Tulbure, *Mitropolitul Şaguna. Opera literară. Scrisori pastorale. Circulări şcolare*. Diverse, Sibiu, 1938, p. 6.

²⁵ Dr. Aurel Crăciunescu, “Mitropolitul Andreiu şi Sfânta Scriptură”, in *Revista Teologică*, Sibiu, 1909, p. 445.

the rest of the actions representing just the correction or renewal of the existent text: "... our language is a living tree, which in spring changes; its old and sear branches sap and fall on the ground, but new ones will take their place - all that's his appear and disappear, just the body stays the same". Therefore, the Romanian of Şaguna's Bible was already created by the New Testament of Bălgrad (1648) and the Bible of Bucharest (1688). Moreover, the Bible of Petersburg (1819), the New Testament of Smirna (1838) and the Bible of Buzău (1854-1856) were also used. About the Bible of Blaj (1795), nothing is being said, thing that constituted a puzzle (e.g. Gheorghe Tulbure), and sometimes abet in insults (e.g. Ioan Bălan; Mario Ruffini). It is known that the revision of the New Testament's text is based on an edition of the LXX, released in Athens in 1843, highly appreciated by the hierarch. Using all these previous editions of the Holy Scripture (especially the one printed by the Russian Biblical Society in Petersburg), Şaguna renewed and corrected the biblical text, having a signally practical purpose²⁶.

The history of Şaguna's Bible is related to the debate the hierarch had with Ion Heliade-Rădulescu, who wanted to print it in Paris, an individual translation of the Holy Scripture, accompanied by a series of historical, philosophical, religious and political annotations (*The Holy Bible which contains the Old and New Testament*. Translated from Greek by I. Heliade. R., Paris, 1858"). Discontent at Heliade's (a laic) forced Latinization of the Bible, from the philological and theological points of view, Şaguna criticized him in the Romanian Telegraph and afterwards, as a consequence of the famous poet's violent response, he condemned him vehemently in a *Pastoral Letter* addressed to the clergy, transforming the discussion into an unforgettable event.

Next to the Bible of Buzău, Şaguna's Bible of Sibiu constituted, for over a half of century, the main edition used both by the clergy and the believers from Ardeal, educated believers, scholars, but also by all Romanians. The ecclesiastic book promoted and backed up the Romanian cause, animated by the idea of independence and national unity.

In 1867, with the Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna's blessing, a new edition of the New Testament was released, having the full title: *The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, printed with the blessing of our Holiness the Archbishop and Metropolitan of Eastern Orthodox Religion from Ardeal and Hungary, Andrei Şaguna..., Sibiu, 1967*. The volume doesn't have a preface, but has short titles which announce the contents of the chapters. Basically, the edition reproduces the text of the Bible of 1856-1858, with some improvements, especially after the Bible of Buzău.

²⁶ Pr. Prof. Dr. Grigorie T. Marcu, "Sfânta Scriptură în pom românesc" (100 de ani de la apariția Bibliei lui Şaguna), in *Mitropolia Ardealului*, Nr. 11-12/ 1958, p. 602.

7.The Synodal Editions of the Bible

In 1905, the New Testament of Bucharest is released and in 1913, also in Bucharest, *the Little Bible* is being printed by Nicodim Munteanu, the Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban and the Hieromonk P. Savin. The volume contains important parts of the Holy Scripture and is illustrated with icons. In 1914 the Bible is printed entirely, as the first edition of the Holy Synod, with Canon Arămescu-Donici as Metropolitan. For its translation previous Romanian editions were used, based on the Septuagint, for the Old Testament. Some of the Old Testament's writings (the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Ecclesiast) contain a rather ambiguous translation. Reverend Academician Gala Galaction and the famous Hebraist Vasile Radu were in charge of translating and editing the text. The release of this first synodal edition of the Holy Scripture in Romanian preceded successfully the Great Unification of 1st December 1918, and also contributed to the rehabilitation of the orthodox believers' lives, who suffered because they didn't have bibles and were confused because of the release of the Romanian editions offered by the Britannic Biblical Society-many of their readers became victims of proselytism.

In 1925, the Greek-Catholic Bishop Ioan Bălan was publishing in Oradea *the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ*, an explanatory edition, continued in Lugoj, in 1938. In 1926, the translation *the New Testament of Neamțu Monastery*, done by the Bishop Nicodim Munteanu, and in 1927 another translation of the New Testament is printed, done by Gala Galaction; both editions were offered the blessing of the Holy Synod.

In 1936, with the blessing of the Patriarch Miron Cristea, a new full edition of the Bible was released. The translation was done by the priests Grigorie Pișculescu (the writer Gala Galaction) and Vasile Radu; later on the Bishop Nicodim (the future Patriarch) joined them. The contract between the three writers and the patriarchy was signed on the 5th of May 1930, for an "exact, clear and lacking in the obscurities of the archaic language translation". On the 1st September 1932 the translation was finished. It was done after the Septuagint (we don't know which edition), the Hebrew text and the modern translations (Russian, French, English and Slavonic), consulted just for the clarifications, confrontation and verifications. The bible was going to be printed in a sample – edition, the complete edition was to be printed after the consultations with the "skilled ones". Two of the most important people in realizing this project were the priest Constantin Dron²⁷ and T. Păcescu of the "Ephoria" of the Romanian Orthodox Church (whose president was C. I. Băicoianu), who always signed next to the Patriarch Miron. On the 27th May 1936, the Patriarch presents the new Romanian Bible of the Romanian Academy, during an important meeting.

²⁷ About the great personality of Father Constantin C. Dron, see Pr. Prof. Vladimir Prelipceanu, "Preotul Dr. Constantin Dron", in *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, Nr. 7-8/ 1972, pp. 618-623.

At that time, this was the best biblical text in Romanian, which although was pretty modern, kept some of the archaic forms became somehow sacred, that gave the language beauty and solemnity. The holy text was preceded by Patriarch Miron's *Foreword*, who was displaying the beautiful history of Holy Scripture's printing in our language, and also some information about the genesis of this translation. As novelty, the Bible of 1936 places the "Prayer of Manase" after the four books of Kings, unlike its original and traditional place of the previous editions, at the end of the Old Testament's canon. During the same year, 1936, at the end of October, the volumes printed were sold out. The Holy Synod wrote to the Central Religious Council to print some more books²⁸.

In 1938, after 250 years since the release of the first full edition of the Bible in Romanian, the "King Carol II" Literature and Art Foundation prints the Bible with the help of Vasile Radu and Gala Galaction's translation. The note in capital at the beginning, on the backside of the title page, shows how the two priests and teachers "at King Carol II's highly encouragement" have translated "the Bible, i.e. the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament after the original Greek and Hebrew texts...". In the edition's note there was mentioned the fact that the printing was directed by the Director of the Cultural Foundations, the professor and academician Al. Rosetti. It seems that the linguist professor had an active role in the realization of the Romanian text, participating at the translators' discussions, on the difficulties encountered. The translation of the Old Testament was done after the Hebrew text of Rudolf Kittel (1937), after Septuagint's text edited by R. Rahlfs (1935) and using also A. Merck's text (Rome, 1935). Thus the translators have restated the necessity of a scientific translation after the Hebrew Bible, as a basis for every theological-exegetical fundamental study of the Old Testament, but also as a fight of the orthodox missionary against the sectarian proselytism. The biblical text is preceded by a substantial *Preface*, in which the purpose to "infiltrate like a water system the fields of the Romanian heart and literature" is underlined by the Holy Scripture. For this reason, it "is meant to be spread out in hutches and palaces, on the scholar's tables and on the student's desks, and amongst the ones who love the good and love poetry". The thing that the Bible of 1938 lacks is the parallels. It seems that the genesis of this version is strongly connected with the question: who had the initiative of the Bible of 1936, which shaped a small conflict between the Patriarch Miron and Gala Galaction, but also the latter's wish to offer a better translation of the Holy Scripture? "The Royal Bible" or "Carol II's Bible" was meant to be similar to the English version of *King James* (1611), that is a "Bible of the Church for His Highness and bearing his name", after 11 years

²⁸ There are some interesting details about the genesis of this version from 1936, confessed by Dr. Archbishop Antonie Plămădeală, based on the documents discovered in the Library of the Saint Synod in Bucharest – "Biblia de la 1936", in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Nr. 3-4/ 1979, pp. 414-439 (and Anexe, pp. 443-450).

since his enthronement. Unfortunately, over the years the name will be change into *The Bible of the Foundation*, after its editing house. Although it represented and was meant to be a second edition of the Bible of 1936, this work has never been officially declared “the second edition of the Holy Synod” by the Patriarch Miron, thing that postponed the reediting of the 1936’s volume. The edition didn’t get the accreditation of the Holy Synod, displeasing Miron Cristea, who considered the work as being a defiance of his authority and a betrayal of his pact with the Metropolitan Nicodim. Gala Galaction loved, however, his work and was proud of it, asking in his will that this Bible to be put in his coffin because he saw it as a guerdon of his entire literary work. *The Bible of the Cultural Foundations* had an amazing success in libraries and was very appreciated. After only few months the whole edition was sold out (10.000 copies) and in 1939 a second edition was printed (other 10.000 copies). It was declared by the most authorized readers of the period to be an extraordinary cultural and literary event²⁹.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary years since the release of Șaguna’s Bible (1856-1858), the academician Bishop Nicolae Colan edited *The New Testament of Cluj* (1942; 1945), in order to offer the holy text to the believers of Ardeal, in an technical and graphical rendering which is distinguished among the works of this type. The language used by the scholar is a clean, beautiful one, similar to the one used in the old sermon books³⁰.

In 1944 a new synodal edition of the Holy Scripture is released, during the patriarchy of Nicodim Munteanu who translated the text entirely (51 books, the rest of 28 being rranslated by Gala Galaction and Vasile Radu). The text was translated after the one of the LXX and other translations (e.g. Slavonic, French). The *Introduction* of the synodal Bible of 1944 is the same with the one figuring in the Bible of Neamț (1936). It offers some isagogical explanations, resumed in some essential articles: “The composition and designations of the Bible”; “The Language, translations and division of the Holy Scripture’s books”; “The Fundamental ontents of the Bible”; “The division of the holy books of the Romanian and Hebrew Bibles”; “The Translation of the Bible” etc.

In 1951, with the approval of the Holy Synod, a new edition of the New Testament is released, in a reedited and resurged version in comparison with the previous ones, with the help of the theologian and literary man Gala Galaction

²⁹ Father Gala Galaction was a remarkable figure in the process of translation of the Romanian modern Bible and his prolific work stays even today as a basis for all the other versions that issued after the years ‘36-38. See Pr. Gh. Ciunescu, “Gala Galaction traducător biblic. La a 90-a aniversare a nașterii scriitorului”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, no. 3-4/ 1969, pp. 325-329; Diac. Prof. N.I. Nicolaescu, “Sărbătorirea Părintelui Gala Galaction cu prilejul împlinirii vârstei de 75 de ani, la Institutul teologic din București”, în *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Nr. 5/ 1954, pp. 555-557.

³⁰ Pr. Asist. Stelian Tofană, “Vlădica Nicolae Colan ca biblist”, in *Omagiu Mitropolitului Nicolae Colan* (1883-1993), Cluj-Napoca, 1995, p. 38.

(dead on 8th March 1962), the professor N. Popescu and the Metropolitan Tit Simedrea. After this edition the Gospel and the Apostle were amended and have been used until our days.

In 1968, after 280 years after the release of the Bible of Bucharest (1688), “*The Bible or the Holy Scripture*, printed by His Holiness the Father Justinian, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church and with the approval of the Holy Synod”. During the synodal meeting of the 3rd June 1967 the Patriarch Justinian announced that “an opportunity for the Bible’s printing in a new edition has emerged”. He suggested that, for the Old Testament (the canonical and uncanonical books) the most accurate text was the Bible of 1936, with its reedited and amended references to the Bible of 1944, excepting the text of the Psalms, for which the Psalter would be used. For the New Testament, the volume contained also the books and uncanonical fragments, plus six polychrome maps. The entire text of the Bible was carefully amended from an orthographical and linguistic point of view, under the direct supervision of the Patriarch Justinian and the commission formed by: Priest Ioan Gagi (editor of the patriarchal magazines and director of the patriarchal administration), Professor Teodor M. Popescu (University of Bucharest), Professor Dumitru Radu (Romanian teacher at the Seminary of Bucharest). At the text’s picking the deacons P. I. David and Șt. Milea (of the editorial office of the Biblical Institute and Orthodox Mission of the Romanian Patriarchy) participated as well. The printing of this edition was backed up by the *United Bible Societies*, by the headquarters in London, which send the special “Bibeldruck” paper for 100.000 copies. The high quality printing was done by the National Printing House “The Graphical Art”. The new edition of the Bible of 1968 was qualified as an anniversary volume, on the occasion of the 20th birthday of the work done by the Patriarch Justinian Marina – an event considered at that time as being “exceptional”³¹.

Also on the celebration of the 24th anniversary since the enthronement of the Patriarch Justinian, on the 6th 1972, *The New Testament with Psalms* was released at the editing house of the Biblical Institute. The volumes opens with a *Foreword* (pages III-VIII), signed by the ruler of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which presents a synthesis referred to the vibrations of the Romanian orthodox believers’

³¹ Pr. Prof. Grigorie T. Marcu, “Un eveniment bisericesc: Biblia din 1968”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Nr. 5-6/ 1969, pp. 483-485. See also Prof. Gheorghe Secaș, “Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură, tipărită sub îndrumarea și cu purtarea de grijă a Prea Fericitului Părinte Patriarh Justinian, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, cu aprobarea Sfântului Sinod, București, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1968, 1396 p. + 6 hărți”, in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Nr. 7-8/ 1969, pp. 845-846; Pr. Prof. Nicolae Petrescu, “Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură, tipărită sub îndrumarea și cu purtarea de grijă a Prea Fericitului Părinte Justinian, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, cu aprobarea Sfântului Sinod. București, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1968”, in *Mitropolia Olteniei*, no. 5-6/ 1969, pp. 466-467.

souls when hearing and reading the Holy Scripture. Then the New Testament's actual text comes next, with its 27 canonical writings that have a suggestive and coherent title. The Book of Psalms (151 psalms), the most read book of the whole canon of the Holy Scripture's completes the text of the New Testament. The editions concludes with a small dictionary, containing 54 fundamental themes the New Testament talks about, disposed in alphabetical order. At the end three colored maps are included, with the Palestine of the New Testament, the Jerusalem of the New Testament and the missionary journeys of Apostle Paul. The text of the New Testament of 1972 is emendated in a way that is better than in the case of the one of 1951, revised after the Bible's text of 1968³².

In 1975 the translation of the Holy Scripture of 1968 is reprinted, with some "amendments of the text that is the revision of the translations and word correction, in order to offerr a close text to the original" (*Foreword*). The new edition presents, at the end, a chart with the units of measurment and coins mentioned in the biblical text. In 1979 a revised edition of the New Testament with Psalms is released at publishing house of the Biblical Institute and Orthodox Mission, reprinted with some emendations in 1983. The New Testament's version accompanied by the Psalms becomes the reference text of the contemporary reprinting works. In 1982, under the same Patriarch Iustin and with the approval of the Holy Synod of the Romania Orthodox Church, a new complete scriptural edition is released, with the title: *The Bible or The Holy Scripture*. The Old Testament's text is reproduced after the edition of 1975, and the New Testament's one after the edition of 1936. At the end there are six mapss and two informational pages regarding the units of measurement and the coins mentioned in the Scripture³³.

In 1988 a new synodal edition of the Holy Scripture, under His Holiness the Father Patriarch Teoctist is released, presenting the same characteristics like the one mentioned previously. After this, the Bible was reprinted eleven times, at publishing house of the Biblical Institute and Orthodox Mission, in collaboration with the United Biblical Societies. All these editions nothing more than what is written in the one of 1988. During the same year the *New Testament* with the Davidic Psalms, constituting in fact a reprinting of the text of 1979, released under the trust of the Patriarch Iustin. The biblical text has three maps: the Palestine of the New Testament with its historical division (Judaea, Samaria, Galilee, Perea) and the enumeration of the most important biblical cities: the New Testament's Jerusalem, with its memorable places (the Palaces of Hirod and Caiaphas, Golgotha, the place where the Archdeacon Stephen was

³² "Noul Testament, București, 1972", in *Mitropolia Banatului*, no. 4-6/ 1973, pp. 349-351.

³³ Nicolae Neaga, "Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură, tipărită sub îndrumarea și cu purtarea de grijă a Prea Fericitului Părinte Teoctist, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române și cu aprobarea Sfântului Sinod, Editura Institutului Biblic, București, 1991", in *Altarul Banatului*, no. 10-12/ 1992, p. 182.

murdered); the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul. The paper is a qualitative one, the printing select, the price convenient, and the size convenient even for travelling³⁴.

In 1993, the Biblical Institute and Orthodox Mission of the Romanian Orthodox Church publishes the *New Testament*, commented by the hierarch, theologian and writer Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania. He is known for his sensibility, faith and creativity in the Romanian literature. In the few words of the edition's *Note*, the author confesses that "the writer has tried to correct the things unfulfilled by others and to obtain an adapted text to the contemporaneity of the language, eliminating both the literaturization, on one hand, and the range of linearity on the other" (p. IX). The new lexical forms, not used in the previous translations, are based both on the analysis of the semantics, specific to the Greek terms and the crystallization of the semantic values of these forms, in the vocabulary of the contemporary Romanian. The importance of this volume is doubled by the presence of the annotations, short explanations, without having commentary connotations, which underline the entire signification of one term or an expression, on the subject of the original and usually of the orthodox teaching. The accuracy of the explanations found in the notes, the richness of the information which goes from the theological notions to the toponymic and onomastic ones, and to the existent relationships between the figures of the period, transform these annotations a genuine treatise, an ample piece of work. At third, or sometimes even half a page are intended for this isagogic, historical, geographical, philosophical, mythological information of the entire ancient world. Indeed, these annotations form the key of the absolute understanding of the New Testament's text and can be considered a manual, a second educational book. The ideal clarity of the entire text was realized not only with the help of the explanatory annotations, but also because of the language quality, plastic expression, semantically concentrated and obtained from the transposition of the Greek correspondences in the style of the old language. At the beginning of each book of the New Testament succinct *Introductions* emerge, containing valuable isagogic informations. Also, drawing on the critical edition Nestle-Aland, the author does a reformulation of the chapters' title. We could, therefore, say that this edition represents, at the moment, the clearest and compelling translation after the Greek version and the most accessible from the point of view of the contemporary Romanian³⁵.

³⁴ Nicolae Neaga, "Noul Testament, tipărit sub îndrumarea și cu purtarea de grijă a Preafericitului Părinte Teoctist, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române și cu aprobarea Sfântului Sinod, București, Editura Institutului Biblic, 1991", in *Altarul Banatului*, no. 10-12/ 1992, p. 182.

³⁵ Aurelia Bălan-Mihailovici, "NOUL TESTAMENT, versiune revizuită, redactată și comentată de pr. Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, București, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1993, 472 p.", in *Studii Teologice*, no. 1-3/ 1995, pp. 110-128.

In 2001, “The Bible or the Holy Scripture, Jubilee Edition of the Holy Synod, printed under His Holiness the Father Teoctist, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church: version inspired by the LXX, redacted and annotated by Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, Archbishop of Cluj”. The novelty of the edition comprises the amendment made after the Septuagint, and not after the Masoretic Text. Thus, after more than half a century, it is restored, in the Romanian translations of the holy text Septuagint’s authority. As with the New Testament presented above, the edition is endowed with extremely important exegetical and theological foot notes, and also a biblical conformity. There is, also, an electronic version on CD. Each writing is provided with precious *Introductions*, which represent important information based on the most recent contemporary biblical research.