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***THE HOMILETIC IMPORTANCE
OF THE ROMANIAN HOMILIES (“Cazanii”)***

- DOCTORAL THESIS -

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**Cluj-Napoca
2020**

Content

***THE HOMILETIC IMPORTANCE OF THE ROMANIAN HOMILIES*, doctoral thesis elaborated by Fr. PhD. Vidican Emanuel, under the scientific guidance of Pr. Prof. Univ. Vasile Gordon PhD**

- SUMMARY -

In the bibliographic section "sources of the sermon" is with honour included the CAZANIA – the HOMILY, a first-hand source, not only in the more distant or closer past, but also in the present. It is the subject dedicated to our work, proposing to highlight the fact that this Monumental Book is particularly useful today, not only a valuable piece of heritage and archive. Useful, if used with discernment, as a sacred source of inspiration, both in terms of content and in terms of language and style.

The DEX is as explicit as possible in this regard : "Cazania is a church book of sermons or homilies for Sundays and Holidays, which comments on the Gospel texts."¹. The synonyms of the term "cazania" are: "book of teaching", "chiriadromion", "didahia-didache", "propovenanie", "poucenie / paucenie", "preaching", "preaching" etc. It seems that, translated from Hebrew into Greek, the term had two lexical variants: "Διδαχη" (didaha / didahe / didahia) = *teaching* ; " Κυριακοδρόμιον " (*Chiriadromion*) = *Track / Sunday Itinerary* . And the word itself *boiler* (the VSL. *Kažaniše*) have the following meanings: *teaching, exhortation, admonition, reprimand (in the pastoral-pedagogical sense)* .

We consider , thus, that the treated topic is a major one, considering the special impact that the Romanian Homilies had in the cult of the Church during several hundred years. Impact from several observation points: *homiletical, liturgical, pastoral, literary and historical* . We emphasize: Homilies are not only valuable pieces of archive and heritage, but liturgical books with current beneficial impact, at least from two points of view: 1. As a source of inspiration for today's sermons; 2. As effective sermons, which can be read from time to time, as things used to be in the past.

The recent re-edition of Cazania (2014), with the blessing of Father Patriarch Daniel, represents, together with the editorial act itself, a recognition of its current liturgical and homiletical validity.

In the plan of the thesis, well organized, there is, on the one hand, a presentation of the historical context in which the Homilies were moulded, on the other hand, of the homiletical

¹ <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/cazanie> , accessed 20.02.2019

context in which they fit, mentioning some representative names of Romanian preachers, from all times, together, of course, with the well-known authors of the *Cazania*s themselves.

RELEVANT ELEMENTS OF CONTENT

THE PLACE OF THE HOMILIES IN THE RELIGIOUS CULTURAL SERVICE OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH represents a first step of the work, in which are presented some historical landmarks, important for the context in which the Romanian Homilies appeared. Thus, we highlight the fact that the Christian populations, south and north of the Danube, used the Greek religious texts, which Saints Cyril (826-869) and Methodius (815-844) translated into Slavic language. The adoption of Slavonic, as a religious language, was also a political act dictated by Constantinople conquered by the Latin Crusaders. For the officialization of the Holy Mass, the Slavonic language was used, which appeared from the Greek language even in the Romanian principalities, existing in the 4th century. This explains the Greek translations by the brothers Cyril and Methodius, born in Thessalonica in the ninth century, but with a mother of Slavic origin, mastering both languages very well. The dispute between Pope Nicholas I and the two brothers was over the clerical authority between the Pope and Patriarch Photius of Constantinople, which ended with the recognition of the Slavonic language as a liturgical language, along with the Latin liturgical language. The oldest Slavonic manuscripts on the current territory of our country date from the twelfth century, respectively a *Codice* preserved in the original from 1392. The presence of Grigore Țamblac, who came from the Patriarchate of Constantinople to Suceava, represents an especially significant moment. This great theologian - monk preacher gives sermons (also) in Romanian because the audience was of Romanian descent, who spoke only Romanian. At the same time, we also mention as exponents of the transition from the Slavonic language to the Romanian language and the hieromonk Macarie, who, in 1508, printed the first Liturgy in Bucharest. In 1521 we find the oldest secular text, written in Romanian, with the Cyrillic alphabet, Neacșu's Letter from Câmpulung, addressed to the mayor of Brașov, Johannes Benker. Also, in Brașov we find Deacon Coresi, who has been printing and translating, since 1557, important religious books, so that the Romanian language is slowly becoming the official language in the expression of the Orthodox cult.

The place of the *Cazania* – Homilies in the religious service of the Romanian Orthodox Church played a major role in transmitting the correct and unaltered teaching, from Coresi (1583) to the metropolitans of Moldavia and Wallachia, continuing with the great teachers and theologians of the XXI century.

1. GENERAL PRESENTATION OF ROMANIAN HOMILIES . Deacon Coresi laid the foundations of the Romanian literary language in its particularly high form, through his remarkable ability, which rises above many intellectuals of the time. In his *Cazania* from 1581 we find words of teaching at the great Feasts, as well as sermons, a total of 67, on Sundays over the year. ***Cazania de la Govora – The Homily from Govora***, translated by the abbot of the monastery, hieromonk Silvestru with the name: “Teaching Gospel” in 1642, was followed by the efforts of Metropolitan Simeon Ștefan of Transylvania who printed in 1648, the New Testament from Bălgrad. All these efforts were sustained by boyars and rulers, people who loved Orthodoxy

and the ancestral land. **The Homily of Metropolitan Varlaam of Moldavia**, printed in Iasi in 1643, with the support of Prince Vasile Lupu as well as other works, such as: "Answer against the Calvinist Catechism", from 1645, shed light on the preaching of the Divine Word, in the language of the people and in its meaning. Metropolitan Varlaam's sermons on Sundays and holidays, as well as on the lives of the saints, were of real use to the listeners with a spiritual message over time. **Cazania from Dealu monastery**, from 1644 - is also related to the name of Prince "Radu cel Mare", who installed at Dealu monastery, near Târgoviște, in 1508, the first printing house / printing house in Wallachia, where he brought the experienced printer, with an apprenticeship in Venice, on the Serbian monk Macarie. In addition to other cult books such as: The Liturgy, the Octoechos, the Evangelist, The Following of Christ, he also printed Cazania in 1644, also called Teaching Gospel. It should be noted that the second part of Cazania from Dealu monastery is a reproduction of Varlaam's Homily, with some content modifications. The Orthodox Church made bridges between the Cazania of Metropolitan Varlaam from 1643, and the Cazania from the Dealu monastery, from 1644 and with the Didache of Antim Ivireanul, all laying the foundations of the Romanian liturgical and literary language. **The teachings or sermons of Antim Ivireanul** as metropolitan of Hungro - Wallachia (1708 - 1716), were mostly said during the reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu, who was known in history as "old nobleman and Christian lord". This symbiosis between the metropolitan and the voivode has generated sermons and homilies of emotional beauty to this day. Theologian of a chosen culture, Antim Ivireanul left 41 sermons, encompassing all homiletic, pastoral and occasional genres, with literary nuances, using stylistic figures, such as: epithet, comparison, metaphor, personification, allegory, all giving a special beauty to his sermons. **The homily of Nichifor Teotoke**, Archbishop of Astrakhan, from 1786, originally from the island of Korfu, were delivered at the Cathedral and the Royal Court in Iasi, addressing the realities of Moldavia, presenting a true pedagogical anthology, urging parents to give their children at school. The 60 sermons on Sundays and holidays gathered in the title *Kiriacodromion*, promote the Orthodox faith but also the pedagogical value. Nichifor Teotoke's Cazania was the basis of the following Homilies from the Romanian Orthodox Church, interpreted and updated from a literary point of view, such as the **Cazania of His Beatitude Patriarch Justinian** in the three editions, 1960, 1973 and the 1987 reprinted with the blessing of **Patriarch Teoctist**. Last edited: 2014, with the blessing of **PF Patriarch Daniel**.

2. HOMILETIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMILIES. The explanation of the Gospel is the most well-known form in the transmission of the Christian message to the mind and soul of the listener. The Homilies are made to be understood by all listeners, having a great freedom in its expression. Cazania and the homily have undergone, over time, some linguistic changes, by updating the text, but keeping the accuracy of the message. One of the characteristics of the homily is the **informative quality**, the perceptive preparation, for the message to be transmitted. Speech rhetoric is based on the main elements such as: *introduction, narration, confirmation, and peroration*. The informative quality of the Cazania is the main element in the spiritual edification of the Church because it addresses those eager to know the Orthodox Christian teachings. **The explanatory quality** of the sermon is meant to bring man closer to God through humility, acknowledging his mistakes and deciding the return of the "prodigal son" but also of the teachers of the faith. **The educational-affective quality** has the function of knowing, directing, and sensitizing the listener, in other words, to get the message to the heart. **The cultural quality** is

meant to spread the Word of God among the people and from a cultural point of view, participating in the emancipation of the Romanian language and its linguistic updating.

3. THE MISSIONARY ASPECTS OF THE HOMILIES. The Christian mission has two coordinates: *Internal* and *External*, with four aspects: *evangelization*, *witness*, *diakonia* and *pastoral care*. In the **Church** - The priest is called to bring around him and the altar an authentic Christian community, using all missionary, liturgical, and pastoral means, starting from the preaching of the evangelical message. In the **Family** - The family is founded according to Christian teachings, and the man at birth is formed in this small spiritual universe. The family after the flesh of the Saviour Jesus Christ remains a model worthy of following, of mutual obedience and love, of responsibility and sacrifice. In **school**. If at the other subjects the children study Romanian Language, mathematics, History, etc., in the religion class they learn that the world and everything that exists are God's creation. The role of the Church in school is to shape the future Christians of tomorrow. In **society**. Through the parable of the "merciful Samaritan", the Church best illustrates her role and concerns for her fellow men, her spiritual sons.

CONCLUSIONS :

This thesis aims, as its first objective, to **achieve a homiletical synthesis of the most valuable Romanian Homilies**, analysed in the historical context of the sermon in Romanian, from the beginning until today. This explains, of course, the presentation, of course, of some homiletical, pastoral, and literary landmarks, adjacent to the Cazania, invoking representative names and works. The priority space in the content of the thesis was dedicated to Cazania itself, with the presentation of the authors, the context of the print, the content, the specific *features (characteristics)* and the missionary implications in the Church, family, school and society.

A special paragraph was dedicated to some "**case studies**", in fact, to the text analyses, extracted from the most important Homilies (Coresi, Varlaam, Justinian).

The countless archaeological discoveries from all over the country, the popular creation with a religious subject and the first manuscripts discovered, are testimonies that the sermon was successful in spreading Christianity on the ancient territory of our country. The Zalmoxian anchorites who greeted St. Andrew with love, recognizing in his teachings the spiritual superiority of the Christian faith, the Christian martyrs in the province of Scythia Minor and the Romanized Dacia Felix, and the presence of bishops at Pontus Euxinus and from Histros, at the first Ecumenical Synods is the undeniable proof that the sermon was successful, especially since "the blood of the martyrs was the seed for the new Christians"². Over the centuries, the ruler Alexandru cel Bun received with honours and joy the theologian Grigore Țamblac, who came from Constantinople, to preach on Romanian soil some sermons even in Romanian. The 16th century opens the way for the sermon in Romanian, which contributes, decisively, to the linguistic unity

² Alexandru Briciu, "Baptismal testimonies written by Tertullian", in: *Ziarul Lumina*, April 6, 2011.

of the Romanian people and to the appearance and consecration of the Romanian literary language, through deacon Coresi, who publishes over 35 book titles, printed in hundreds of copies. and spread in all the Romanian provinces, as proof that the people were eager not only to listen to the sermon, but also to read it, in its moments of respite and upliftment.

Cazania, with the title, *Tâlcul Evangheliilor* (1564) was a real "heavenly manna" for the Romanian people, lovers of Christ, and *the Romanian Book of Learning* of Metropolitan Varlaam (1643), with the sermons of Sundays over the year and the royal feasts, is considered "a unique monument of our literature that belongs to both Orthodox church spirituality and secular literary heritage"³.

The leaders of the Transylvanian School gave a new direction to the homiletic genre through the books of sermons they wrote, thus contributing even more to the growth of the spiritual importance of the sermon in Romanians, and the great theologians of the twentieth century consolidated, by their books of sermons, and more steadfastness in the Orthodox faith and the unitary literary language.

Orthodox theology Romanian of the twentieth century, by Patriarch Justinian Marina and the 12 volumes entitled generic *Apostolate Social* and through reprinting *Cazaniei* after Nichifor Theotokos enriched treasure our literature religious and contributed massively to perfection Romanian language contemporary literature as well as the elevation of secular literature to the highest aesthetic requirements, continued efforts of great theologians and teachers. We also mention the fact that the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church established, since 1950, that, after reading the Holy Gospel, the priest should interpret the text read, in the hearing and for the benefit of all.

Starting with the *Teaching Gospel*, printed in 1581, in Braşov, the Cazania and interpretations of the Holy Gospels were the books that spread, uniformly and in unity, the accuracy of the word that led to the formation of the literary language, "like a honeycomb."

At the same time, the reading of Cazania by the priest or singer is no longer practiced, but its teachings are an inexhaustible and valuable source in the preparation of the priest to explain the text of the Gospel, adapted to the current requirements and context.

From this perspective, *Cazania* can be considered a blessed fountain with spiritual water and an inexhaustible source of inspiration in the word of instruction. Another benefit of *Cazania*, at present, is that it keeps the red thread of the Church's teaching, unaltered and protected from the danger of dogmatic mistakes that can lead to heresies. To be inspired, at present, by the content of the Cazania, especially by that of Patriarch Justinian, composed after the *Chiriadromion* of Nichifor Teotokos, is more available to priests and the fact that the expressions, content and message are closer to contemporary literary language and much more accessible to the general public. Another advantage and a spiritual gain is the fact that we do not deviate from the unitary teaching of faith, of preaching the word of God, following, like a red thread, the message

³ Luminița Drugă, *Romanian Book of Learning of Metropolitan Varlaam of Moldavia (1643): linguistic study*, EduSoft Publishing House, Bacău, 2006, p. 84.

transmitted. The natural inspiration from the homilies and sermons of the Cazania do not totally exclude their reading on the pew, on certain Sundays. Here is what His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel says in the *Preface* to the last edition of *Cazania*, printed relatively recently at the Biblical Institute Publishing House:

"In principle, each preacher must present his own homilies and sermons on the pulpit, and Cazania should be only a first-hand source, as well as other priority sources, such as the sermons of the Holy Fathers and of representative servants: hierarchs, teachers of theology, or priests with a special homiletical vocation. But, when the priest does not have a personal sermon ready, due to unforeseen circumstances, he can usefully use the reading of Cazania, or he can give a blessing to be read by the singer or by someone else accordingly. It must be taken into account, however, that the reading benefits from a clear diction, a warm tone and a natural voice, always adapted to the content, knowing well that the optimal reception of a read text depends, to a large extent, on the quality of the reading.⁴"

It is a known thing and it is good to have in our souls, us, priests, who transmit the word of the Gospel that: "the sermon is not a delight to the hearers, a speech to the liking of the heart, nor is it a pile of meaningless words or ideas, but it is the starting point of the teaching with the deed, of the understanding of the truth of the faith, by performing all the virtues ", as we read in the *Homiletics* - written for the students of the Faculties of Theology⁵. In religious literature, the Homilies are happily intertwined, in a holy symbiosis, with the teachings of the Holy Fathers, endowed by God with the grace to transmit, unaltered, the word of the Church and to enlighten the souls of the listeners, through sermon, from the height of the pulpits or from in front of the altars. In retrospect, we realize that the texts of the *Homilies* remain unaltered. As current as the homiletic sermons and writings of the Holy Fathers, such as the *Word on Lent* (St. Basil the Great), the treatise *On Priesthood* (St. John Chrysostom) or the *Word of the Night of the Resurrection* , all in the "language of the ancient Cazania ", mentioned by the Bessarabian poet Alexei Mateevici. Therefore, the Homilies are rich sources of inspiration for all times, even for the preacher of the third millennium. We hope that this thesis, through the homiletical, historical and literary information on the most important Homilies that have been printed in our Church, arranged unitarily and chronologically, can provide new starting points for those who wish to deepen the comparative study of exegetical homilies and of thematic sermons, regarding: *sources, themes, foundations, major ideas, moral exhortations, literary-stylistic analysis, etc.*

⁴ † Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Preface* , in "Cazania", Biblical and Orthodox Mission Institute, Bucharest, 2015, p. 15.

⁵ Vasile Gordon (coord.), Adrian Ivan, Nicușor Beldiman, *Omiletica* , p. 55.

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