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## SUMMARY

*Manuscripts with sermons from the XVI-XIX centuries.  
Transliteration, homiletic commentaries and stylistic analyses.*

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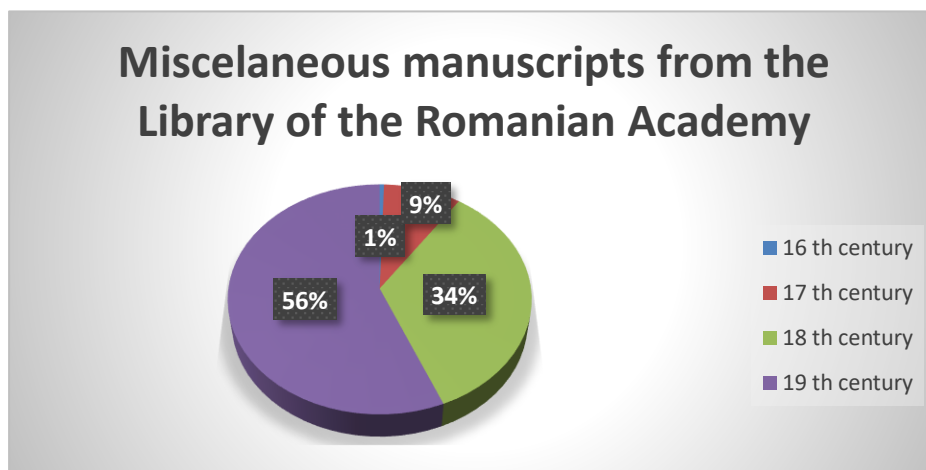
**Key words:** old sermons, Romanian manuscripts, homiletic sources, stylistic analyses, Library of the Romanian Academy.

In the downtown of Bucharest, in the proximity of many state and cultural institutions, in a building with a rich history, is the most important and valuable library in Romania: the Library of the Romanian Academy. The building, in the truest sense of the word, is a treasure: thousands of old works have been brought here over the decades to be saved from extinction or simply from poor conservation, confiscation or perhaps saved from simply being scattered into the world. These works have not been fully researched, and researchers are trying to bring to light the collections of this library.

The orientation tool we used in searching for and arranging the manuscript sermons from the custody of the Library of the Romanian Academy are the four volumes included in the *Catalogul manuscriselor românești*, signed by the illustrious researcher Gabriel Ștrempel. In researching manuscripts, he went through 6150 volumes, of which he reproduced more than 5900 in the *Catalog*<sup>1</sup>.

Father Professor Vasile Gordon's analysis<sup>2</sup> shows that at least 75% of the cataloged manuscripts have religious content, of which approx. 40% are homilies and sermons, and the most frequent, approx. 25% are the necrologues, especially coming from Transylvania. According to the presented percentage, the Library of the Romanian Academy has a total of 4500 religious manuscripts, of which approx. 1800 are homilies and sermons.

In a percentage graphic presentation things would look like this:



Each miscellaneous manuscript in contains one or more, and sometimes several dozen sermons in the manuscript, which belong, not infrequently, to several authors.

<sup>1</sup> GABRIEL ȘTREMPEL, *Catalogul manuscriselor românești*, vol. IV, Ed. Științifică, București, 1992, p.440.

<sup>2</sup> VASILE GORDON, „Izvoare omiletice inedite: manuscisele cu predici de la Biblioteca Academiei Române”, *Anuarul Facultății de Teologie București*, (2000-2001), p. 545.

In terms of age, we do not have manuscripts with sermons that go below the 16th century, and those from the following two centuries, the 17th and the 18th respectively, only add up to a total of 86 volumes.

### **Research stage**

In the initial stage of my work, I appealed to a number of authors, who devoted time to the research of some fragments from the homiletic treasury housed by our forefathers at the Library of the Romanian Academy<sup>3</sup>. Thus, valuable studies on sermons in manuscript from the Library of the Academy saw the light of day, among which we must mention:

- Comșa, Gheorghe, *Istoria predicei la români*, Editura Ministerului Cultelor și Artelor, București, 1921<sup>4</sup>;
- Gordon, Vasile, „Pareneza în slujirea pastoral-misionară a Bisericii”, teză de doctorat, *Ortodoxia*, nr. 3-4/1999, pp. 3-290<sup>5</sup>;
- Gordon, Vasile, „Izvoare omiletice inedite: manuscrisele cu predici de la Biblioteca Academiei Române”, *Anuarul Facultății de Teologie București*, (2000-2001), pp. 539-568;
- Stan, Alexandru, „Un manuscris de „Propovedanii” inedit, de la sfârșitul secolului al XVIII-lea”, *B.O.R.*, nr. 5-6/1988, pp. 134-151;
- Stan, Alexandru, „Trei vechi manuscrise inedite de cuvântări bisericesti (sec. XVII și XVIII) și locul lor în cultura noastră”, *B.O.R.*, nr. 11-12/1989, pp. 51-68.

These authors have undeniably revealed a special interest in a vast field, but, as each mentions, it remains an under-researched area.

### **Specific purpose and objectives**

In the present study we have purpose to analyzed written or copied sermons, which have reached our days in manuscript form, of lesser-known authors, who belonged to the lower

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<sup>3</sup> Their research was facilitated by the catalogs prepared for this purpose, those edited by Ion Bianu and Gabriel Ștrempel, the latter being, in fact, the most recent and most complete.

<sup>4</sup>The author presents several manuscripts in the custody of the Library of the Romanian Academy: Manuscript 167 (17th century): Oration at the funeral of Sofronia Ciogole, the wife of the logofat Pătrașcu Ciogolea, asleep in the Lord written by Toader; the manuscript of the priest Grigore from Măhaciu, includes a sermon about the last judgment, dating from 1583; manuscript no. 601, which includes 31 sermons, dated to the 19th century; the manuscript of the monk Meletius, which contains about 30 sermons from the second half of the 18th century.

<sup>5</sup>The thesis is a valuable tool and an excellent homiletical guide. Father Professor Vasile Gordon in his doctoral work transcribed and analyzed over 20 manuscripts with occasional sermons, located at the Library of the Romanian Academy, and the bibliographic list totals 350 titles.

clergy from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Our research on sermon manuscripts has a twofold purpose:

- first of all, we want to familiarize those concerned with the homiletic work with the sermons of the past centuries, by observing their historical course and their evolution, trying, at the same time, to show the content plan and their form in each period, but also whether they were influenced or not by the different factors;
- on the other way, we want to make known the model of sermons that circulated in the Romanian area, choosing them and presenting them in such a way that they can be used in the work of those who are preparing for the ministry of the pulpit.

### **Methodology**

Below, we try to present some stages of the development of this work:

- the selection of manuscripts, according to centuries, liturgical periods, homiletic genres, themes;
- transliteration into Latin alphabet;
- identification (if applicable) of the author, source, copyist;
- theological content analysis (themes, major ideas, biblical and patristic argumentation, stylistic strategies, relevant words and expressions ("lost", possibly recoverable archaisms));
- presentation of their homiletic and literary value.

The specifics of the evolution of preaching in the mentioned period were presented with the help of these methods, which capture the uniqueness of the eras, the ingenuity of the authors and the beauty of the parables presented.

### **Structural aspects**

The plan for the elaboration of this homiletic study is as follows:

- in the beginning of the first chapter I chose to make a historical foray into the old Romanian texts from the three Romanian lands, in the second part of the first chapter I

made a delimitation of the manuscripts with sermons from the old Romanian texts with a religious character, from the homiletic books belonging to that period;

- in the next chapter I made a short overview, starting from the first preachers in the Romanian space and up to those from the 19th century;

- the third chapter focuses on manuscripts with sermons from the Library of the Romanian Academy, here the manuscripts are divided into categories, analyzed in terms of the materials used, but especially according to the way they were made. Also here we pay attention to the authors and the place where they were made, as well as the way in which they circulated;

- the fourth chapter contains a selective presentation divided by centuries, since these old manuscripts are in the Library of the Romanian Academy and are less accessible to the general public, for their special value regarding the known beginnings of the homiletics written in Romanian, we consider it useful to we reproduce here in full, and for a more fluent tracing of our manuscripts, we note a list of them below:

**The XVI century:** 1. Ms. rom. nr: 447, *Predică la îngropăciune*; 2. Ms. rom. nr: 447, *Omile slavo-română* (Cuvânt de învățătură a celui între sfinți părintelui nostru Ioan Gură de Aur...); 3. Ms. rom. nr: 447, *Omilie*.

**The XVII century:** 1. Ms. rom 167, *Cuvânt la înmormântarea Sofroniei Ciogole*; 2. Ms. rom. nr: 4687, *Omilie pe tema sfințeniei icoanelor*; 3. Ms. rom. nr: 2644, *Cuvânt la Proslăvita Adormirea Preacurata Fecioară Maria*; 4. Ms. rom. nr: 3509, *Dumineca Fariseului și pentru vamăș*; 5. Ms. rom. nr: 3509, *Dumineca a treia în post*; 6. Ms. rom. nr: 3509, *Învățătură pentru mironosiță*; 7. Ms. rom. nr: 3509, *Dumineca 11Ev(an)ghelie Matei 51 de glav*; 8. Ms. rom. nr: 2522, *Laudă Sinților Mucenici Gheorghe și Dimitrie*; 9. Ms. rom. nr: 4642, *Omilie la Postul Mare*; 10. Ms. rom. nr: 5484, *Tâlcovanie Ev(anghe)liei de la giu(de)ț*.

**The XVIII century:** 1. Ms. rom. nr: 5318, *Slovo o strașnom sude*; 2. Ms.rom.nr: 5318, *Cuvânt Svântului Ioan Bogoslov*; 3. Ms. rom. nr: 2159, *Cuvânt la îngroparea preacuviosului părintelui nostru Paisie*; 4. Ms. rom. nr: 5517, *Învățătură spre împărați și boiari, spre episcopi și preoți, și spre toți creștinei ca să nu să îmbete*; 5. Ms. rom. nr: 5517, *Luna lui aprilie la zi întâi pomenirea maicii noastre Marii Ghiptencii, întru aceeași zi cuvânt pentru pocăința păcătoșilor*; 6. Ms. rom. nr: 5517, *Cuvânt pentru frică și pentru nefrică*; 7. Ms. rom. nr: 3110, *Cazanie la morți*; 8. Ms. rom. nr: 5110, a doua parte a secolului al XVIII-lea: *Orație*

*adresată împărătesei Ecaterina a Rusiei*; 9. Ms. rom. nr: 5307, sec. XVIII (a doua jumătate); *Predică la cununie*; 10. Ms. rom. nr: 4388, sec. al XVIII-lea: *Cuvânt la lăsatul secului, seara după (șederea) la trapeză*.

**The XIX century:** 1. Ms. rom. nr: 3480, *Cuvânt rostit cu ocazia celei de a doua urcări pe tron a domnitorului fanariot Alexandru Ipsilanti*; 2. Ms. rom. nr: 3480, *Orație la urcarea pe tron a domnitorului fanariot Alexandru Ipsilanti*; 3. Ms. rom. nr: 3487, *Duminica Slăbănogului*; 4. Ms. rom. nr: 3487, *Cuvânt la Duminica Stâlpărilor*; 5. Ms. rom. nr: 5319, *Învățătură pentru tiutiu*; 6. Ms. rom. nr: 3480, *Cuvânt funebru rostit la pomenirea de 40 de zile a fiului domnitorului Constantin Ipsilanti, beizadea Iancu*<sup>6</sup>; 7. Ms. rom. nr: 4014: *Cuvânt la începutul anului școlar rostit de arhimandritul Iosif Naniescu, viitoul mitropolit al Moldovei, sfârșitul sec. XIX*, each transliterated manuscript is accompanied by a short commentary;

- the next chapter sheds light and describes the gradual transition to the literary Romanian language through the prism of manuscripts with sermons, emphasizing the style of sermons from that period;

- in the sixth chapter we tried to show what is the pastoral actuality of the manuscripts, as well as their features and specifics;

- and the last chapter presents a number of major themes extracted from the sermons of the 16th-19th centuries;

- in the conclusions we make a short presentation of the obtained results, we also mention the open problems and propose future research directions.

### **What did we get? Short presentation of the results**

Spoken with the aim of explaining the teaching of faith on Sundays and holidays, the sermons were also presented at important events in the lives of believers: baptism, wedding, funeral or important social events. In such circumstances, the sermon could be changed more or less linguistically, a fact determined by the talent of the preacher, but also according to the audience to whom the sermon was addressed. This made the homilies have: "the destiny of

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<sup>6</sup> This manuscript is presented and analyzed in detail at the end of this paper, in the *Case Study* section.

folklore creations"<sup>7</sup> in the content of which the authors could add or remove something, but without deviations from the Christian dogma.

From the speeches preserved in the manuscript and analyzed in our work, we deduce that at that time the sermon did not only accompany the services officiated on Sundays and holidays, but also other events imported from everyday life, as we mentioned above.

Then, as we can see from the scattered signatures at the end of the speeches, the sermon was not only delivered by priests, but also by singers or deacs, as they are called in Transylvania, as well as book-loving monks.

Also, for a large impact among the masses, the language in which the speeches were delivered was simple and neat, accessible to the listeners. The form in which they were made, and later preserved, these manuscripts betray the meticulousness and seriousness with which the preachers prepared before getting in the pulpit, a fact also deduced from the content of the sermons which are sprinkled, as is good, with quotations taken from the Holy Scripture and from the writings of the Holy Fathers, at the same time the practicality of the sermons of that time was not overlooked, so that it truly became a living teaching.

Through this, on the one hand, we can observe the preservation of the biblical-church style as a specific feature of the sermon, and on the other hand, the sermon was still popular, accessible and oriented to the masses.

### **Confirmation or denial of the announced theme. What did we manage to do from what we set out to do?**

The present work aimed to discover, present and analyze part of the manuscript sermons in the custody of the Library of the Romanian Academy. Through their research, we found out a wide spectrum of homiletic creations of different genres that were deciphered, and their research brought with it a vibrant message of our Orthodox living from long ago, we learned first of all how our ancestors spoke, we "spotted" the dawn of the written Romanian language and Romanian literature, being "announced and adorned with these indelible and unforgettable springs from the garden of Romanian culture"<sup>8</sup>. At the same time, we were able to follow the dynamics of manuscripts and old books in the territory of our

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<sup>7</sup> VASILE ȚĂRA, „Discursul religios, model și normă de exprimare îngrijită în epoca veche”, *Text și discurs religios*, nr. 1, Ed. Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 2009, p. 58.

<sup>8</sup> FLORIAN DUDAȘ, *Manuscrisele românești din bisericile Bihorului*, Ed. Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române, Oradea, 1985, p. 7.

country, as well as the understanding of some nuances of life, of living with one's neighbor in a Christian community.

On the other hand, the manuscripts proved to be a veritable documentary support. The sermons in the manuscript open to us a world that we can think is lost, a world that belonged to people who loved beauty, loved culture and, last but not least, loved faith.

By analyzing the old sermons, I also discovered the important role that Romanian Orthodox clergy, monks and believers played in the gradual imposition of the language of the people in the Church long before the metropolitans of the Romanian Countries encouraged and supported the translation of the Holy Scripture, of Kazania and cult books in Romanian for everyone's understanding, also giving us details about the evolution of the language, about the parentage of the manuscripts or aesthetic and technical details, so that in the end, all in one place, it represents a new step in understanding the spiritual and national unity of the Romanian nation.

### **Original and novel aspects**

The novelties that this work carries with it in support of the Romanian Homiletics are the following:

- first of all, bringing to the fore through the transliteration and analysis of less used sources in the study of Homiletics;
- their selective presentation by following their construction, the way the ideas are argued, as well as emphasizing the stylistic elements;
- thirdly, we can talk about the valorization of a heritage by bringing it into contemporaneity, a heritage that reveals to us a common feature of the sermons from that time, namely the fact that the sermons of those ages, in addition to providing us with important details about social life, about the mentality of the era, about people, places and things, about morals, etc., but especially the fact that the sermons followed not only a moral dimension, but also a dogmatic, liturgical, historical one, details that reveal to us the zeal and diligence of the ministers of those times.

From this point of view, manuscripts with sermons become important historical sources for those who would like to know something about the life of Romanians from the



16th to the 19th centuries<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, it should be mentioned that the present study seeks to identify sermons and speeches hidden under the fog of time, to put in relation to the teaching of the Church and the current language. We can affirm that the goal pursued by the authors of the sermons of the ages we are dealing with was not to achieve a formal beauty, but to convince the souls of those who listened to them. Therefore, we have the opportunity to witness a wonderful historical and spiritual process through which the intertwining of the Romanian ethos with the divine, of the treasury of divine revelation with valuable elements of the Romanian space is completed. The preaching of those ages managed to produce an organic and concrete connection of the evangelical teachings with the life of the Romanian believers of that period.

### **Open and unsolved problems, directions of future research**

Many manuscripts, regrettably, will not be able to be fully researched due to the advanced state of deterioration, as a result of the ravages of time that have left their natural mark. The volume of religious and homiletic manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Academy is a colossal one, therefore, as it appears from what was stated in the introduction, we intended to make only a selective presentation of manuscripts with sermons.

In the future, studies grouped by centuries, homiletic genres, historical regions or authors can be carried out; starting from the 18th-19th centuries we find authors from whom numerous manuscripts have reached us. Here are some such examples: Melchisedec Ștefănescu, bishop of Roman, from whom the Library of the Romanian Academy inherited 47 Romanian manuscripts, bishop Dionisie Romano of Buzău, from whom 54 manuscripts have reached us, Iosif Naniescu, metropolitan of Moldavia, who donate 184 Romanian manuscripts to the Academy, Archimandrite Theoctist Scriban, Nicolae Roiu<sup>10</sup>, Ghenadie Enăceanu and the examples could go on.

I also noticed that the two studies by A. I. Yatsimirski "Slavianskie i russkie rukopisi rumânskih bibliotek" ("Slavianskie i russkie rukopisi rumynskih bibliotek") and the volume published in 1906 "Iz istorii slavianskoi pismennosti v Moldavii i Valahii", Saint Petersburg ("Из истории славянской письменности в Молдавии и Валахии XV – XVII вв."), contain details about Romanian manuscripts in general and several hundred Slavo-Romanian and Slavic manuscripts are presented, some of them at the beginning of the century. XX, as the

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<sup>9</sup> ANTONIE PLĂMĂDEALĂ, *Preotul în Biserică, în lume, acasă*, Tiparul Tipografiei Eparhiale, Sibiu, 1996, p. 263.

<sup>10</sup> We have a few sermons from him, but we don't know if he was a monk, cleric or layman.

author himself writes, in the custody of the Library of the Romanian Academy, at the National Museum of Antiquities<sup>11</sup>, at the Neamț Monastery, but especially in museums and libraries outside the country. We learn from the content of those works that old Romanian manuscripts (15th-16th centuries) were then, but we believe that even at the present time, in the custody of the Moscow Academy, the Rumeantevsky Museum, at the Synodal Library in Moscow, in the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, as well as on the shelves of some private collections<sup>12</sup>. Many manuscripts contain parables, lives of saints, words of teaching, speeches, but also cauldrons or сказаний, which are still waiting to be researched<sup>13</sup>.

Also here, it should be mentioned that it would be auspicious to place the Romanian manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Academy in an easily accessible digital format, even for a fee, a fact that would considerably ease the work of researchers, since at present the manuscript fund is addresses only those who physically go to the Library.

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The sermons presented and analyzed in our research contain all the features that allow them to be identified as authentically religious texts, marked by a special specificity: first of all, we notice that the religious discourse of those times represents, at first glance, a sequence of sentences and statements, which are linked together by a common idea and which ends with a semantic epilogue, and secondly, the sermons are marked by a functional dominant, which aims to produce an effect on the listeners. Beyond these observations it must be said that the sermons in the manuscript represent an important homiletic heritage, composed of sermons on Sundays and holidays, as well as on various important occasions. In most of them, they start from the interpretation of the holy texts, which are placed in a "relationship of complementarity with the liturgical and patristic thesaurus"<sup>14</sup> and are characterized by

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<sup>11</sup> At that time it was a museum in Bucharest, and today it is a section of the Institute of Archeology "Vasile Pârvan".

<sup>12</sup> An extensive study of the Slavic-Romanian codices from the XIII-XVIII, these monuments of ancient Romanian culture, which "migrated" abroad during the XIX and XX centuries, are offered to us by Mr. Academician ANDREI EȘANU in the study: „Dispersarea patrimoniului de carte veche românească (sec. XIX-XX). Colecții și colecționari din străinătate”, *Magazin bibliologic*, 1-4( 2014), pp. 43-49.

<sup>13</sup>In relation to these manuscripts, Mr. GABRIEL ȘTREMPEL in the *Afterword* to the IVth volume of the *Catalogului de manuscrise românești*, on pages 482-483, mentions a sad and serious incident, he says that Ion Bianu resorted to mechanical stamping of each sheet , since during the research carried out by I.A. Yatsimirski "pages were stolen from certain volumes".

<sup>14</sup> MAXIM MORARIU, „Pr. Constantin Necula, Întru Adormire lumea nu ai părăsit... Meditații în Postul Adormirii Maicii Domnului”, *B.O.R.*, 2(2022), p. 388.

simplicity, accessibility and, in most cases, by the fact that they are not voluminous and all contain arguments from biblical texts.

Their diversity lies in the fact that they are not the same in terms of quality. This is how it happens that while some seem downright school exercises in the interpretation of Holy Scripture, others, through their depth, clear accents and power of expression, manage to reach an elevated level, rich in theological content.

Thus, we can affirm that: the manuscripts with sermons, due to their large number, their uniqueness, the form in which they were preserved, still remain a "raw" material, almost unstudied, however, the thematic sphere on their side broadens, naturally, as research progresses, which always raises new questions. The phenomenon of religious discourse was and remains complex and multilateral, this is why we believe that an interdisciplinary approach is needed for its research.

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