

The doctoral thesis proposed for granting the title of doctor in philology is entitled *Molitfelnicele românești în raport cu originalele lor grecești. Studiu istoric, filologic și teologic* (*The Romanian Prayer-Books in rapport with their Greek Originals. Historical, Philological and Theological Study*). Its aim is a complete study on the philological, historical and theological level regarding the *Molitfelnic* (Prayer-Book).

The first chapter underlines the importance of this cult book in the history of the Church and of the Romanian literature. The Prayer-Book is the most important book of the priest and it has a crucial importance in the life of the Church. The revealed character of this liturgical book results from its content, which has solid biblical and patristic foundations.

The following chapter deals with the circulation of the numerous names that this liturgical book acquired in the Romanian culture. Throughout the history, the Prayer-Book has been known as *Trebnic*, *Molitvoslov*, *Molitvenic*, *Molitvelnic*, *Molitfelnic*, *Evhologhion*, *Evhologiu*. For that matter, this chapter includes a brief presentation of the names given to the Prayer-Book; explanations are also provided for the reason why the words *Molitvenic* and *Molitfelnic* were the ones used in the Romanian Principalities. The oldest form is *Molitvenic*; it was taken over even since the beginning of the Slavic influence in the Romanian Principalities. From the desire to eliminate the Slavic influence in the Romanian space, the word *Evhologhion* was introduced (due to the increase in the Greek influence), but people failed to understand it, unless it was accompanied by the word *Molitvenic*. For this reason, the old version *Molitvenic* prevailed and it was used in the 20th-century editions with the spelling *Molitfelnic*. There have been sporadic attempts to introduce the Russian word *Trebnik*, but it failed to impose and it was used only locally, under the influence of the great Russian tzardom; this made it unacceptable for the Romanians and they used the old version instead.

I have inventoried the editions and manuscripts of this liturgical book – Greek and Slavic, as well as Romanian – in order to identify, on one side, the influence of the originals and, on the other, the specificity of the Romanian translations. The editions which had as source the Greek text were considered normative. Hence, elucidating the issue of the originals became a *sine qua non* condition for understanding the way in which the text of the Prayer-Book was introduced in the Romanian Principalities.

The purpose of the third chapter is to present the manuscripts and editions of the Greek *Evhologhion*. A particular aspect of this research was that I have tried to treat the subject

exhaustively, considering the increased importance of the Greek sources upon the first Romanian editions. The author of this thesis had the chance to study the most recent scientific works regarding this theme; on this occasion, he realized that there was an intrinsic connection between the Greek manuscripts and the first Venetian editions. Without this integrating image, it is impossible to understand the history per se of the orthodox Church cult. The first Greek manuscript of the *Evhologhion* is the collection of prayers belonging to the bishop Serapion of Thmuis, which was in fact an *Archieraticon* and which represented a liturgy practiced in Egypt around the 4th century. The first collections more complex and closer to the meaning ascribed to the *Evhologhion* today emerged in the period of the Byzantine Empire. The prayer liturgy within the Prayer-Book evolved and developed following the thread of three great liturgical traditions: Constantinopolitan, Italian-Greek and Oriental. The oldest is the Constantinopolitan one, represented by Barberini manuscript (the 8th century).

The first printings of the Greek *Evhologhion* were done in Venice. The typographers had as basis a Greek manuscript of the 15th century, with an Oriental origin (the Sinai monastery). The Venetian editions were elaborated not scientifically, but by comparing several types of manuscripts, and they represented only the official liturgy, of the orthodox communities with Greek origin. The first critical edition appeared in 1647, a fruit of the efforts made by the Benedictine J. Goar. The weak aspect of this printing is the fact that its author uses exclusively manuscripts from the Italian-Greek traditions and, on many occasions, he does not identify the manuscripts correctly and he cites them in a wrong way.

A thoroughly elaborated edition is that of the Greek priest Papadopoulos, dating 1927, better than other Greek editions because it contains a very ample inventory of all the prayers, and their authors are ascribed accurately. There are no huge differences between manuscripts and editions; however, the printings failed to present a part of the liturgies that represented traditions belonging to the past of the Byzantine Empire. Concerning the liturgies of the Holy Sacraments and of certain more important non-sacramental ceremonials, they seem to have been preserved intact in both manuscripts and editions. Another difference resides in the augmentation of the number of indications within the *Typikon* and in the introduction of sections from other service books, as well as the Synaxarion per month, which was taken from the Book of Hours. It is worth underlining the extraordinary effort of the renowned Greek researcher in the field of liturgical theology, Ioannis Foundoulis, who printed as much as three volumes of prayers

extracted from the old Greek manuscripts. However, he admits that there is great need for a scientific research based on solid scientific criteria, by comparing the prayers bearing the same origin within various manuscripts, a project which has not been done. Thus, despite a couple of attempts to elaborate a complete critical edition of the Greek *Evhologhion*, to comprise the research of all the preserved manuscripts, this has not been achieved yet.

An equally important aspect is the study of the Slavonic sources, mostly because the Romanian Church was influenced since the beginning by the Slavic peoples. The fourth chapter focuses on underlining the way in which the liturgical texts were introduced among the Slavic peoples, on looking for a possible explanation of the way in which the traditional Slavic liturgy was diversified and, not least, the way in which the Slavic tradition imposed as liturgical norm for a few hundred years in the Romanian Principalities.

The Slavonic Prayer-Book has Greek origins. The first Slavonic manuscripts of the Prayer-Book are translations made after the Constantinopolitan Greek codices. The liturgy taken over by the Slavs is diversified and two great traditions of presenting the Prayer-Book emerge: the Southern Slavic and the Russian one. Each of them will add liturgical pieces adequate to the zone and living standards within those localities. The Southern Slavic tradition will also be embraced by the Romanian Church and it will be present in the first Prayer-Books, both Slavonic and Romanian, printed for the Romanians.

In general, this liturgy had a conservatory character and it kept many of the old prayers. The Russian Slavic tradition was divided into two great categories: the Ukrainian type and the Muscovite type. The Ukrainian type seems to have been the oldest, considering that the Metropolitan church of Kiev is several centuries old. These two great families separated in 1596, when the Union of Brest-Litovsk took place and the Greco-Catholic Church emerged. The reform of the patriarch Nikon in the years 1655-1656 deepened the separation. The Ukrainian liturgy became a hybrid, by taking over many influences from the Occidental cult. This characteristic is visible for the first time in the *Trebnic* of Petru Movilă (Kiev, 1646). However, he does maintain a balance when it comes to taking over liturgies not specific to the Orthodox Church.

Starting with 1700, numerous elements were taken over from the Occidental liturgy, reason for which it suffered a forced Latinization. Taken over elements without any logic or liturgical fundament is still an issue to this day. The Muscovite or synodal liturgy largely

borrowed the Greek liturgy, as it was presented in the Greek *Evhologhion* of Venice, since 1602. This is why, starting with the second half of the 17th century, no great differences could be identified between the two types of Prayer-Books. However, the Muscovite liturgy assimilated Movilă's *Trebnic*, by taking over many Occidental religious services. This occurred within the limits of the Orthodox doctrine, and the Romanian Church was the recipient of a special influence of the Muscovite liturgy. Many of the Romanian editions of the Prayer-Book in the 18-20th centuries completed the catalogue of prayers with pieces of the Russian *Trebnici*, which were imperious under the new historical circumstances.

The next chapter includes a minute research of the most significant editions of the Romanian Prayer-Book and a clarification of the exact number of editions. The philological research done in this direction thus far failed to bring exact and sufficient data regarding this aspect.

In the context of the research concerning the Coresi Prayer-Book, the issue of the canonicity of this book emerged; more precisely, the criteria that such a book has to meet in order to be normative for the cult of the Orthodox Church. As for the Romanian Prayer-Books, it is worth mentioning that there is not even one very old manuscript for this cult book.

The manuscripts are relatively contemporary to the printings. An inventory elaborated showed a number of 69 editions of the Romanian Prayer-Book. Except for the first Prayer-Book, the one of the deacon Coresi (1567), all the others follow the liturgical line of the Orthodox Church. Because of the Slavonic current, still strongly settled in the 17th century, the first editions are dominated by the tradition of the Slavonic Prayer-Book, present in the following printings: *Molitvenic de-nțăles* (1681), *Molitvănic* (1689), *Evhologhion* (1699). It is worth underlining that these editions do not have an exclusively Slavonic source, as many of the prayers are Greek. The Metropolitan Antim imposed exclusively the Greek sources for the 1706 edition of his *Evhologhion*. It is obvious that he did care about the local traditions, considering that he let the priests decide on performing or not certain religious services. The 62 subsequent editions took over Antim's *Evhologhion* as a foundation, to which they added or from which they eliminated certain services. These interferences were taken over from the Prayer-Books with Slavonic sources, preceding Antim's, or simply translating after contemporary Slavic sources. Only the 1908 edition, printed in Chișinău, has an exclusive Slavonic origin; all the rest

maintained the norm established by Antim, to which they made certain completions depending on life circumstances and realities.

The identification of numerous mistakes and low points in the editions of the Romanian Prayer-Books leads to a very important issue regarding the cult books of the Church, that is the concept of *diortosire* (correcting) of the liturgical books. The correction of the Prayer-Book text – elaborated after the remarkable translations by Dosoftei or Antim Ivireanul – had as purpose to keep a translational and lexicological line as close as possible to the tradition inherited since time immemorial. Unfortunately, this phenomenon was understood and practiced in a wrong way, because there were no precise criteria regarding the manner of revising the books. This is why it is crucial to outline and systematize the way in which the correction of the ecclesiastical books was done, in both the Greek and the Romanian tradition.

In the context of presenting the Romanian tradition regarding the correction of the religious texts, I have briefly discussed the confessional issue within the editions of the Prayer-Book. The main subject, in this sense, was the case of Greco-Catholics, who introduced in the Prayer-Book certain distinct marks with a Latinizing character, which distinguished them from the Orthodox. From the desire to be different from the Orthodox Church, the Greco-Catholic translators adopted formulas such as *God, have mercy on us*, instead of *God, have pity* or *The Holy Spirit*, instead of *The Holy Ghost*. This is the theme debated in the fifth chapter.

The edition of the Metropolitan Antim was elaborated with professionalism and it constituted a norm for the subsequent printings. However, in time, many lexicological and grammar mishaps emerged. The authors of the correction did not know Greek, reason for which the current text of the Prayer-Book contains numerous errors. Hence, it is imperious to underline the translation issues in order to understand the way in which this ecclesiastical text was introduced in the Romanian Principalities. The sixth chapter treats the issue of the translation errors within the editions of the Romanian Prayer-Book, with permanent references to the Greek text, in order to avoid potential misunderstandings of the liturgical text in question.

The Romanian Prayer-Books contain many translation errors. It is almost impossible to understand how such errors could be made in the Romanian text; this is why it is necessary to consult systematically the Greek originals used by the translators. The editions of the Greek *Evhologhion* from Venice contained many grammar and sentence logic errors, which were taken over and multiplied by the Romanian translators.

We can talk, practically, about just one translation of the Prayer-Book, belonging to the Metropolitan Antim Ivireanul. The following centuries brought along another concept to define the translational issue, meaning *diortosirea* (the correction). However, there were no clear principles to guide these corrections. The habit was to take the previous edition, to change a few words in order to make the text more accessible to the clerics and to the believers, and then the material resulted was sent to print. Given the low intellectual training of the first reviewers, it was impossible to verify the old editions by comparing them with the Greek originals, and the errors present in Antim's Prayer-Book were taken over without any prior consideration. Highly cultivated people took part in this endeavour, too, such as Veniamin Costake, Melchisedec Ștefănescu, but they did not dare to change Antim's text, because of the cultural tradition or inheritance taken over from their forefathers. Under these circumstances, one had to keep even the errors. Of course, there were also good corrections, such as those of the priest N. M. Popescu but, because there was not enough information available, the old translation errors were taken over as such.

The first step in the correction of the liturgical texts had to be the consultation of Antim's edition. This allowed the identification of the errors within the Greek edition, which could then be corrected. The translation errors within the Romanian *Evhologhion* originate in the following cultural weak points: the wrong original, the translator's lack of attention and the incompetence of the reviewers. A future edition of the Prayer-Book will have to contain a very serious critical study. This study will have to be a minute research of all the Greek manuscripts. The next phase will concern a correction of the religious services based on these manuscripts, their translation into Romanian and the elaboration of an edition with a high quality critical apparatus, convincing enough to be received in the cult.

The last chapter of the thesis comprised a theological approach of the Prayer-Book on four levels: liturgical, dogmatic, biblical and patristic. Gradually, because of the theological scholasticism, of the dissociation of the theological study into several branches or disciplines, the integrating and wholesome image of theology was lost. The last chapter proposes to restore this initial unity, by presenting the Prayer-Book as a living image of the faith dogmas, as a testimony over the centuries and as an *experiere* (experience) of the words within the Scriptures, as a continuation – until the end of time – of the faith and spirit of the Holy Fathers, writers and experimenters of the seven Holy Sacraments and of the ecclesiastical non-sacramental

ceremonials. The theme proposed refers to the Orthodox angelology within the Prayer-Book, with permanent references to the Greek original, in order to make the exposition as reliable as possible.

The Prayer-Book has a very well elaborated theological basis. The dogmas of the Orthodox Church are founded on the cult and there is interdependence between *lex credendi* and *lex orandi*. A particular role in the humans' salvation is that of the holy angles. The Orthodox teaching on the angels is not a theoretical truth; on the contrary, it is a lived truth, experienced through the cult. The *Evhologhion*, the Payer-Book of the Church par excellence, is full of mentions regarding the presence and the work of the holy angels in important moments in the life of the Christian. The chosen prayers, meaning the liturgies of the Church regarding the circumstances of the Baptism, contain numerous passages with precise reference to the bands of angels and to their work in God's plan for humans' salvation. A particular note of the Orthodox angelology – revealed in the present study – is the fact that all prayers have a Scriptural fundament and that they were written within the Church of Christ, benefitting from a permanent guidance from the Holy Spirit. This liturgical book – the Prayer-Book – has an essential importance for the moral and spiritual life of the Romanian people. In the past, the book made the subject of numerous controversies related to the contents, to the content of the services, to their expressiveness on a theological level, and mostly on a literary and linguistic level. This research aims to provide a complete image (as much as possible), similar to a monograph, with the precise purpose of drawing attention on a philological weakness which has been perpetuated from generation to generation, and of providing possible corrections of these serious flaws. At the same time, the end is to show that it is imminent to revise completely this collection of liturgical texts based on solid scientific criteria.