



Paul Scarlat

Deacon Coresi. Personality at the Confluence of Cultures and Christian Confessions

Diakon Coresi. Osebnost ob sotočju kultur in krščanskih veroizpovedi

Summary: *The life and activity of Deacon Coresi generates a distinct phenomenon in the history of Romanian culture and literature, the subject that has been analysed by several categories of researchers from different research areas. The emergence of numerous studies of this character that comes from the church clergy has shown its importance for Romanian culture, which in turn is an integral part of a European culture. One of the aspects that can be distinguished from these studies is its exemplary ability to adapt to the socio-cultural context of the time and to achieve a close connection between cultures, languages and religions of its time, from the three Romanian Lands – Wallachia, Moldova and Transylvania. Deacon Coresi is known as the one who paved the way for introducing the Romanian language into liturgical worship through the books he penned. It is noteworthy that he published the first books in Romanian under the influence of the Reformation.*

Key words: *Coresi, Romanian, Orthodox, Lutheranism, typographer, literary language*

Povzetek: Življenje in delo diakona Coresija predstavljata poseben pojav v zgodovini romunske kulture in literature, ki so ga raziskovali strokovnjaki iz različnih raziskovalnih področij. Številnost študij, tudi teh, ki jih je napisala duhovščina, kaže na pomembnost tega pojava za romunsko kulturo, ki je tudi sestavni del evropske kulture. Eden skupnih vidikov teh študij, ki ga je mogoče izpostaviti, je sposobnost, da se ta pojav prilagodi družbenokulturnemu kontekstu časa in ustvari tesno povezavo med kulturami, jeziki in verami svojega časa iz treh romunskih dežel – Vlaške, Moldavije in Transilvanije. Diakon Coresi je znan kot tisti, ki je tlakoval pot uvedbi romunskega jezika v liturgično bogoslužje skozi knjige, ki jih je napisal. Pri tej dejavnosti je treba opozoriti, da je objavil prve knjige v romunščini pod vplivom reformacije.

Ključne besede: Coresi, romunščina, pravoslavni, luteranizem, tipograf, literarni jezik

Introduction: Political-confessional landmarks of the 16th century in the Romanian Lands

The sixteenth century, the one in which we find Deacon Coresi, is a particularly dynamic one in the Romanian Lands as well as in all of Eastern Europe. On the one hand, we can see the growth of Ottoman power which has had negative consequences on relations with the Romanian Lands. Until the middle of the sixteenth century, they enjoyed full autonomy in return for paying tribute, from this moment decay begins, amid the fall of Hungary and the expansion to the peak of the Ottoman Empire. Prior to this turn to the great powers of that time, the rulers of Wallachia were elected by the great landowners of the country, and afterwards they were appointed to Constantinople and considered simple Ottoman officials, not rulers of autonomous states. Moldova also becomes a tributary state of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century. In Transylvania, the situation is no different, because the prince was chosen based on the diet and then confirmed by the sultan, as Hungary was under Ottoman rule as early as 1526.

The confessional situation remains in the shadow of political uncertainties and oppressions. In particular, the Orthodox Metropolitan Church of Transylvania, established in the second half of the 14th century, continues to exist with new challenges. The Reformation movement initiated by Martin Luther (1483–1546) reaches these territories and in 1543 the Diet of Cluj proclaims the principle of religious freedom in Transylvania. Thus, at the Turda meeting in 1550, Lutheranism was recognized as a *religio recepta*, and in 1568 it was given the same status as Unity. Also during this period we discover an intensive proselytism among Orthodox Romanians under the direct involvement of the loan prince Sigismund Zapoya (Păcurariu 1992, 504–505) by: the appointment of Romanian Calvinists, the printing of Calvin books, various measures to limit the authority of the Orthodox Metropolitan and his priests.

Lutheranism is spreading rapidly between Transylvanian Saxons due to commercial links and the travelling merchants or the young people returning from German Universities. However, the circulation of Lutheran ideas, especially in the cities of Sibiu and Brasov, does not receive profound attention. Among those groups it is of remark that Johannes

Honterus of Braşov (1498–1549) is the one who establishes a printing house and edits Luther's works.

Socio-political dynamics are reflected in the religious movements of the time. The three new Protestant denominations influence the course of traditional Christian Churches – Catholic and Orthodox. In 1556 the Catholic diocese of Alba-Iulia was abolished and a few years later its assets were secularized. Subsequently, the other Catholic bishops (in Oradea and Cenad) and all the monasteries are abolished. The political instability that is transmitted in the change of the princes' residence also impresses upon the rulers of the Orthodox Church (Feleac Monastery – Cluj, Prislop Monastery – Hunedoara, Geoagiu and Lancram – Alba Iulia).

I made this brief introduction to the Romanian space to see the difficult context in which a personality aims at achieving uniformity and unity of the Romanian people. It was rightly said that Deacon Coresi had direct and controversial interaction with the Reformation, but it is difficult to answer to what point this confession was in front of the Orthodox ancient faith:

»He was, [...] the witness of the religious unrest which meddled in the lives of all Transylvanian nationalities leaving them shattered. He had to know the Protestant proselytism and those who opposed them; he was in touch with the Saxon officials of Braşov and the Romanians from Şchei, seated outside the fortress. Yet he was the partisan of ideas of Reform or their enemy, he was a fighter for 'keeping the people's rights to remain in his beliefs' or kept away from those who were fighting such a fight – here are questions that cannot be given, at this time, precise answers.«
(Gheţie 1967, 232)

Developing printing establishments and releasing books into the national language is a complex phenomenon that far exceeds linguistic utility. Political and nationalist rationales are associated with literary and typographical activity to try to delimit the identity of a nation.

1. Biographical Elements

There are very few things known about the origins and the beginnings of Deacon Coresi. Opinions about his origins differ, being considered

Greek (Iorga 1902, 20) or Romanian (Nicolaescu 1909). Historian Ovid Densușianu stated at the end of the 19th century that Coresi came from a Greek family based in Wallachia. His arguments were mainly based on the fact that the printer signed his books Coresie, the last phoneme being specific to all Greek nouns (such as Athanasios; Atanasie, Dionysos; Dionisie) and the existence of a famed family on the island of Chios from Greece. However, there are historical sources that mention the existence of families with this name in Wallachia. Ion Gheție considers him authentically Romanian because »this name derives from the Latin names Nicolas (Nicholas), Necora, Nicor, Nicoară, Nicoreș, Nicoresi, Nicoreasă, Coresi, Coresie, Coreasă etc., some of the names that have been found today as toponyms« (Gheție and Mareș 1994, 18).

Coresi, originally from the village of Cucuteni, Dâmbovița county, marries Diica Jeleaza and has three sons (Nicolaescu 1909, 266). He started typographical activity in Târgoviște (Vedinaș 1985, 12) as an apprentice of the printing house Dimitrie Liubavici, who had come to Wallachia in 1544 and had set up a private printing house specifically in the Slavic language, not of his ruler or of the Church (Păcurariu 1992, 540–541). The deacon's title comes from the fact that he was also a minister of the church, as well as close to the Bishop, which was indirectly recorded in Brasov documents of December 12, 1573: »the deacon of the Bishop, the typographer (hence Coresi), together with 4 people« arrived in Brasov »[a]nd there remain 5 days for negotiations« (Nicolaescu 1909, 266). This is Coresi's first confluence with the Slavic and Orthodox world.

A second confluence for the printer is with the spirit of the west, which was then in Transylvania. His arrival in Brasov, has been extensively discussed in specialized literature. Until recently, it was believed that it had arrived in 1559, before June 12, when publication of the *Romanian Catechism* began, while now opinions have changed with the discovery of the Little Octoechos of Brașov, the work attributed to printer Coresi (Huttmann and Binder 1969). However, he returned to Târgoviște on June 14, 1557 to print in Slavonic the *Pentecostal Triode*, which he concluded on June 30, 1558. Vasile Olteanu puts forward the idea that it would have been difficult to move the typography between Brașov and Târgoviște within such a short period of time, Coresi would have remained in Brasov and would have printed this book for Wallachian ruler Nicolae Pătrașcu (Oltean 2003, 64).

It is certain that between 1559 and 1560 he was definitively established in Braşov, where he was given the opportunity to print not only in the Slavonic language, but also in Romanian, which was impossible at the time in Wallachia because of the opposition by the Orthodox Metropolitan Church. It is not well known whether the choice of Braşov is by choice or necessity. It was said that his arrival was caused by an alleged persecution by the Wallachian ruler Mircea Ciobanul, but the claim is not supported. At the same time, his arrival was not sustained by the desire to make himself available to the Lutherans to assist in persuading Romanians to change their confession, as long as he printed the same content in the language of Orthodoxy until then, that is, in Slavonic, but also in the Romanian language. He arrived in Braşov, city of the lead preacher of the Reformation, Johannes Honterus, who himself had a printing house, with the consent of Pătraşcu the Good (1554–1557) (Niculescu 2004–2005, 46), and here he also met Hans Benkner, Lutheran Mayor of the city, who owned a paper mill. It seems that it is time for both sides to find a useful collaboration: Coresi, the Orthodox cleric, was important to the Lutherans because of his typographical abilities, the proximity to the metropolitan of the capital city, but also his *extra-muros* ties to the Orthodox Romanian community Schei. All these elements are considered useful for the propaganda of Lutheranism. On the other hand, Coresi finds in Braşov extremely favourable working conditions and benefits from the economic protectorate of the leaders. Braşov was the best place for printing: there was a high technical base here, there was a mill that produced quality paper and, last but not least, Coresi received financial support from the Saxon rulers.

Another reason for moving to Braşov is that he wanted to publish in Romanian, and this city offered these conditions. Transylvania already had several Romanian translations of the Bible, and the Slavic language was not so present in the Church as it was in Moldavia or Wallachia (Păcurariu, 550). Therefore, it is difficult to conceive and understand the work of the Deacon Coresi, if we do not know that Braşov through its geographical position on the border between the three Romanian lands was “the most important centre for the exchange of ideas, exchanges of spiritual products, exchanges of all kinds Commodities and the crossing of creative currents of the century between the three provinces inhabited by Romanians“ (Cândea 1962a, 116).

In this context, of maximum cultural freedom in the Romanian lands and under the influence of western cultural avant-garde (Rosetti 1961), deacon Coresi can manifest his liberal spirit with which he was endowed. In descriptions by some researchers who have dealt with the biography of this subject, he appears to be a radical, even progressive spirit for the times in which he lived (Cândea 1962b, 328). The opening towards the Romanian language offered by Braşov was totally opposed to the conservative spirit of the Church, which rigorously maintained the Slavonic language in worship and did not allow the translation of books into other languages.

Virgil Molin deconstructs the idea that, being paid by the leaders of the Lutheran movement, he would have received assistance from disciples with Lutheran vision, in the sense of censorship, charged with translation and typography (Molin 1959b, 637). Moreover, one thing to keep in mind is that he will have his own printing house in Brasov. He is not simply an employee of Johannes Honterus and then Valentin Wagner, but he is supposed to have had a workshop somewhere outside the city of Braşov in the Romanian district of Schei. For this purpose, he seems to be in touch with Laurentiu Fronius, who was part of a large family of merchants from Braşov, from whom he borrows a large sum of money and which will see him judged for his inability to return the amount due (Molin 1959a, 319). In this workshop he does not bring Cyrillic words from the typography in Târgovişte, instead he makes new ones.

By the year 1564 the Lutheran Saxons split from the Calvinists of Hungary, and with this began the decline of the Saxon Lutheran proselytism, largely due to economic difficulties. It is the moment when Coresi begins a collaboration with the Calvinists of Hungary, namely the noble Hungarian Forró Miklos de Haporton (Foro Miclaus as named by Coresi), who ordered the printing of the *Commentary on the Gospels* (*Evangheliu cu tâlc*) in 1564, named by the philologists *Sermons I* (*Caşania I*) or *The meaning of the Gospels* and the so-called *Book of Prayers* (*Molitvenic*) appear with it. There is the assumption that these books would have been published in Cluj or Aiud, the main Calvinist centres.

After printing these books with Calvinist influences, Coresi opens a new chapter in his life and work, as he becomes an editor in his own right. From this moment, he focuses on the printing of books in Slavonic,

according to Wallachian requirements; the maintenance of this language in the Orthodox faith was seen as a form of defence of Orthodoxy in the face of Protestantism that demanded the introduction of the national language into worship. However, remarkably, he also produces three Orthodox books in Romanian: *Psalter (Psaltire)* and the *Missal (Liturghier)* in 1570 and the *Commentary on the Gospels (Evanghelia cu învățătură)* in 1580–1581.

The *Book of Gospel (Evangheliarul)* of 1583 records the last testimony of the presence of Deacon Coresi in Brasov. It is the year when it is supposed that he retires to Târgoviște and dies (Câdea 1962b, 329). His typographical activity was continued by many descendants, among them: Deacon Călin, who prints a *Book of Gospels* in Slavonic in 1565, Deacon Lorinț, who prints an *Octoechos (Octoih)* between 1577–1578, a *Psalter* in 1578, and a *small Octoechos* in 1578, all in Slavonic, his son, Șerban Coresi, who prints *The Old Testament (Palia de la Orăștie)* between 1581–1582 and the Slavic *Missal (Liturghier)* in Brașov in 1587, Deacons Tudor, Mănăilă, Marian and others.

2. Typographical activity

The first book printed in Brasov in 1556–1557 was a Slavonic Octoechos. During his work, he printed approximately 35 book titles, printed in hundreds of copies and spread across all the Romanian lands. Coresi's prints spread over a very large geographical area to Romanians and others besides. For example, the book *The Christian Inquiry (Întrebare creștinească)* and the *Holy Father's Rule (Pravila Sfinților Părinți)* were found in Ieud – Maramureș, the *Gospel* from 1560–1561 at the Ciolanu Monastery – Buzau, the *Psalter* of 1570 in Bistrița Olteană, another in Lazuri – Bihor. On the other hand, the Slavonic prints were used not only in the churches of the three Romanian countries, but also in neighbouring Slavic language Orthodox churches, as evidenced by some copies found in various libraries and monasteries abroad. In other words, Coresi performed a Romanian and Slavic Orthodox service everywhere.

We do not propose here an analysis of them, but we find it useful to arrange them in order to see the way multi-confessionalism works: after the small *Octoechos* in Slavonic (1556–1557) printed in Brașov, follows *Triodion – Pentecostarion* in Slavonic (1557–1558) in Târgoviște and the

following titles in Brasov: *Catechism* in Romanian (1559) (1561), *Old Testament* in Romanian (1561) (1570), *Gospel* in Romanian (1561–1562), *Gospel* in Slavonic (1562), *Epistle Book (Apostol)* in Romanian (1563) (1566), *Book of Prayers (Molitfelnic)* in Romanian (1564) (1567), *Semons* in Romanian (1568), *Gospel* in Slavonic (1564–1566), *Octoechos* in Slavonic (1567), *Liturgy* in Slavonic (1567–1568), *Psalter* in Slavonic (1568), *Psalter* in Romance (1568), *Missal* in Slavonic (1568–1570) (1588), *Sbornik I* in Slavonic (1569), *Sbornik II* in Slavonic (1569), *Missal* in Romanian (1570), *Psalter* in Romanian (1570), *Psalter* in Slavonic (1574), *Psalter* in Slavonic (1574) (1576), *Octoechos I* in Slavonic (1574) (1577), *Psalter* in Romanian and Slavonic (1577), *Psalter* in Slavonic (1577), *Triodion* in Slavonic (1578–1579), *Octoechos* in Slavonic (1578), *Gospel* in Slavonic (1579). He then prints a *Sbornik* in Slavonic (1580) in Sas-Sebeş and the last books will also be published in Braşov: *Semons II* in Romanian (1580–1581), *Gospel* in Slavonic (1583), *Missal* in Slavonic (1588), *Psalter* in Romanian and Slavonic (1588), and *Psalter* in Slavonic (1588).

There are some observations in regards to these prints. First of all, their number is not fixed, as the history of Coresian printing shows. The beginning of this, on which there is information recorded in David Corbea's book, *Izvodul pentru cărțile ce se află în zvănta bisericii la Șcheii Braşovului* (Corbea 1980), is not definitive, just as the last pieces discovered at the end of the nineteenth century, do not represent the end. As Otilia Rus stated, »the identification of new Coresian publication is a permanent activity, researchers of this period showing a special interest in each new copy discovered« (Urs 2012, 58).

It is noted that Deacon Coresi published in Slavic and Romanian. However, he also published bilingually, such as the Slavonic-Romanian *Psalter* of 1577. The attempt to translate and print such a book constitutes in the fact that Romanians were sceptical of cult books translated into their native language and printed in predominantly Protestant cities. It should be recalled that at that time, the Orthodox Church services were performed in the Slavonic language, and therefore Coresi, in order to remove any fear that foreign teachings would have slipped into their pages, knowing that the Lutheran and Calvinist reformers in Transylvania were trying to attract Romanians to their faith, leaves both variants, in parallel. However, the continuation of publishing in the Slavonic langu-

age can also hide the »thought of moving towards an undoing in young Southern Slavs« (Molin 1959a, 311).

Besides attention to the language, the books printed by him also place an emphasis on aesthetics (Erich 2006). For example, the *Sermons* of 1581, the last book printed by Coresi, a purely Orthodox book translated from a Slavonic text of the Greek Homilies written by the Ecumenical Patriarch Ioan Calecas (1334–1347), yet made at the expense of the mayor of Braşov, Lucas Hirscher, is one of the most beautiful copies made by Coresi: *in folio* format, with mirrored pages of 225/195 mm, titles built following wood carved clichés and bearing the engraving of Lukas Mirscher's coat of arms.

Coresi's prints, which appeared predominantly in Brasov between 1556 and 1583 under the influential waves of Lutheran and Calvinistic religious reform spreading in Transylvania, are true »monuments« of ancient Romanian language, important also for the introductions written by him, in which he raises for the first time, with determination and clarity, the problem of introducing the Romanian language into the religious cult. Coresi's prints used the language of Wallachia and South Eastern Transylvania, and were of great importance for the evolution and unification of the Romanian language, underlying the formation of the Romanian literary language, because the *Octoechos*, the *Gospels*, and the *Epistle Book*, reached all corners of Wallachia, despite the fact that some were Protestant, unorthodox.

3. Confessional Influences

As for the relationship he had with the Lutheran Church in Romania, researchers have issued various theories, which are often contradictory. One extreme presents Coresi as a great defender of the Romanian historical belief in the dangers of the new Protestant confessions. Under these conditions, he becomes a skilled fighter, as researcher P. P. Panaitescu says:

»Coresi was not a man lacking conviction; on the contrary, he fought to preserve the people's rights to maintain their beliefs, to read in his language, but against the propaganda imposed by foreigners. When asked to publish the books of this propaganda, he resisted, modified the proposed texts, as he and his people thought best. Then opponents tried

to obey him, setting up rival companies, competition, but they did not succeed. The printing deacon also made sacrifices for his Romanian book spread; he remained indebted but did not give up and went on to promote the Romanian movement of writing in Romanian.« (1965, 163)

Therefore, the immediate questions that arise are whether »Coresi worked or not for the Lutherans Saxons in Braşov and later for the Calvinists led by Gh. de Sângeordz and P. Tordaşi« (Gheţie 1967, 232), starting from the idea that he owned his typographical press, documented in a deacon's minutes from June 19, 1570, and in what form does this collaboration work if it exists: does he claim proselytism, or is it just an economic interest?

On the other hand, many researchers are inclined to see a close connection between Coresi's work and the Lutheran influences found in his works. For example, Romanian philologist Ion Gheţie states that the emergence of cult books in the 16th century, under the domination of Transylvanian Protestant confessions, is impossible without changes in content. Thus, the print work »can not be separated, at least in a certain period, from the Protestant proselytism by the Saxon officials of the city, headed by Mayor Lukas Hirscher [...]. We only want to show that the translation of books of worship such as the *Octoechos* or the *Book of Prayers* can not be conceived in the sixteenth century, apart from patronized movements or at least influenced by the Reform.« (Gheţie 1975, 614) The same author moves forward and maintains that the *Catechism* sustains the Protestant Reform in Transylvania:

»This Catechism, with an indisputable Protestant orientation, is printed by Coresi in the same year or the beginning of the next. The connection between the Reform movement and this catechism is obvious. It can not be dissociated from the Protestant propaganda or the printing of the Gospel of 1561, which contemporary Saxon information tells us was translated by Coresi and Deacon Tudor at the initiative of J. Benkner.« (Gheţie 1967, 232)

There is also a moderate opinion that links between Coresi and the Lutheran Church were exclusively commercial, without theological influences:

»Conclusive proof in this sense is the 1588 *Gospel* sponsored by the Lutheran Lucas Hirscher: in the introduction his own confession is attacked, and in 1582 he also wrote that 'it sells very well' in Moldova and Wallachia. Unlike the Hungarian Calvinists, the Lutheran Saxons never pursued the conversion of the Romanians to Lutheranism.« (Păcurariu 1992, 551)

Yet as early as 1558, when Deacon Coresi and his apprentice Oprea settled in Brasov, they entered the payroll of the Protestant Saxons and in 1559 they printed their first work »commissioned« by the Lutheran ecclesiastical authorities, titled *The Christian Inquiry*. They are paid by the Senate and the mayor of the city. It was said that »the print was, in fact, a Lutheran catechism, intended to be read in Wallachian churches and schools. For those adhering to Luther's Reformation, a well-trained Orthodox was a virtual Protestant« (Niculescu 2004–2005, 46). An interesting detail Alexandru Niculescu emphasizes is that Coresi's precision in the introduction of the text (Some good Christians counted and produced a book from Serbian into Romanian) reveals a hidden strategy of Lutheran proselytism (Niculescu 2004–2005, 47). More specifically, the Catechism was not a translation of a Hungarian or German original, as was normal (Câdea 1962b, 331), but a translation from »Serbian language« – that is Slavonic. This is only possible in the northern part of Moldova, from the Slavonic manuscripts, influenced by refugees from Hussites in Moldova, in the Trotuş Valley, in the 15th century.

The Calvinist influence in the two books commissioned by the noble Hungarian Forró Miklos – the *Gospel* and *Book of Prayers (Molitfelnic)*, is even greater. In fact, the texts are a mixture of Protestant and Orthodox teachings. On the one hand, we find here attacks against Orthodoxy, such as banning the cult of saints, honouring icons, church hierarchy, cult of the dead; but at the same time the Calvinist doctrine and the Lutheran doctrine contradict it with quotations from the writings of the Eastern Fathers being introduced. The books include typical Calvinistic teachings (predestination, *sola fide*, etc.), to which a violent critique of the clergy adds (Păcurariu 1992, 553). The book added at the end, often called *Molitfelnic*, is only a book of songs and Calvinist sermons, which, according to the tradition of this confession, was reduced from seven to three (Baptism, Wedding and Communion).

4. Development of Romanian culture – linguistic unity

In the difficult context generated by the Slavisation of European East and the chaos caused by migrants who have gradually spread across the entire Balkan region, Coresi's contribution to Romanian culture is invaluable. In the face of the danger of the disappearance of popular language, Coresi offers a reference in the formation of the Romanian language by establishing the literary language of his translations. Coresi is the pioneer of a tradition of translation of religious texts, which later became a literary chronicle for Grigore Ureche, Miron Costin, Ion Neculce. Thus, his publications are considered a fundamental reference in the history of the Romanian language:

»His work had very important consequences, because it gave a strong impetus to the nationalization of our culture. From the mighty struggle with the ruling streams coming from the Orient, the two western streams, represented by the Hussite movement and the Transylvanian prints, made the Romanian language winner victorious. The source from which literature continues to be consumed remains the same in the courtyard of the church, but its water flows clear and refreshing, making the plains through which it flows fertile inclusively for other literary genres.« (Pușcariu 1921, 74)

The work that Coresi submits is complex and profound. Romanian philologists have discovered in his works the existence of linguistic elements that are not exclusively monastic, that is to say the grain in the words of the printer. For example, the *Sermons II* contains elements from Banat and Hunedoara, specific to the areas of Transylvania, Banat and Bucovina. Even though Coresi is not the exclusive translator of the work, being assisted by non-Wallachian translators, such as priests Iane and Mihai from Scheii of Brașov (Panaitescu 1965, 145–146), Coresi still plays a great role in correction, change, adaptation, modernization of the language and to standardize it for the spoken word of the times. For this reason, Coresi's personality is distinguished by this linguistic synthesis of the various verbal forms in the Romanian Lands, which leads to the uniformity of the Romanian literary language:

»His foremost merit is to be mixed with the attempts of his predecessors and contemporary contemporaries of literature in the national language. He thus fulfils the role of the sum of his efforts and aspirations,

and his work on the synthesis of initiatives started from various regions of the Romanian territory. Procopovici was right when he claimed that the deacon Coresi is a collective name, which, we add, covers the most important of the early epochs of Romanian writing.« (Gheţie and Mareş 1994, 380)

For printing books in Romanian, Coresi used text preserved in the manuscript. It is appreciated that he has put into circulation Romanian texts, which he corrected, modified, replacing archaisms and regionalisms with expressions and words from Wallachia and South-Eastern Transylvania. The merit is to have contributed to the unification of the Romanian literary language everywhere.

Another interesting and perhaps courageous thesis claims that Coresi's works support Lutheran proselytism and direct changes to the texts. Thus, the frequent use of Christian terms, through partial substitutions of Israel's name with the Christian form, is observed in the plural. Alexandru Niculescu argues that there are two hypotheses, both reserved, about these changes: either they were elaborated by the Moldovan translators of the Hussite texts, or they were even made in Braşov by the Lutherans and given to Coresi for publication (Niculescu 2004–2005, 49–51). This change seems to be in line with the vision of Lutheranism, because it also uses these words predominantly. The reason for using the Christian word would be precisely to avoid accusations of non-Christian heresy.

Based on what has been written so far, there is a close collaboration between Deacon Coresi and the two new Protestant denominations in Transylvania – Lutheranism and Calvinism. Yet, beyond the financial and professional benefits, is there a motivation that leads an Orthodox cleric to the proselytism of the Reform? My opinion is that Deacon Coresi was a visionary and, beyond printing books, he sought a greater purpose that of unifying the Romanian people through language. Coresi's work was in the service of his Orthodox people through the Church because »the conscience of the national unity was strengthened, especially by the translation and printing of the Romanian books in the Romanian language for the 'entire Romanian family', thus laying the foundations of the Romanian literary language, which further strengthened the collective conscience of unity in all Romanians. The Church

has given books of service and teaching in the language of the people.« (Daniel 2016, 10) And we must not forget that the first manuscripts and prints in Romanian are used in the Church. Coresi intuited the wishes of Protestantism to propagate in Romanian and built on these resources a plan of national linguistic unity. Coresi goes to Brasov to take advantage of the political power in the hands of the Lutherans and then of the Calvinists, and from here he will print with the support and blessing of all three Romanian Lands. The purpose of printing books in Romanian to be read by all Romanians is clearly underlined by the Romanian church historian, Păcurariu:

»In the epistle of the Slavonic Octoechos, printed in Braşov between June 12, 1556 and January 14, 1557 'by the command of Hanis Begner, Braşov Mayor'. In the same epilogue, the Rulers of the three Romanian countries were mentioned: Ioan Sigismund and Isabella Zapolya in Transylvania, Pătraşcu the Good of Wallachia and Alexandru Lăpuşneanu of Moldova, and on the cover, the book had the coat of arms of Wallachia. From this epilogue, it is clear that the aim pursued by the two printers, but especially by the editor Hans Benkner, the judges or the mayor of Brasov, was that the work was received by Romanians everywhere.« (Păcurariu 1992, 549)

Having the advantage of using coercive measures, Calvinists impose a cultural reform in Transylvania with remarkable results (e.g. writing in Latin letters, Romanian language in Romanian schools). Coresi seems to make this »compromise« for a noble purpose, to introduce Romanian into institutions so that all the people can unite by the use of one language. Calvinism »it must be recognized, contributed, to a great extent, to the introduction of the Romanian language into the church and school« (Niculescu 2003, 225) with the help of Coresi.

Conclusion

The close link between the Protestant reform and the discovery of this typography is reflected in the Romanian space as well. Shortly after Johannes Gensfleisch-Gutenberg (died in 1468) and the printing of the Bible in 1455, the monk Macarie, in 1508, published in Târgovişte the first Liturgy in the Orthodox Churches in Slavonic, the *official* language used in the Church, then the Octoechos in 1510, and the Gospels in

1512. It is followed by printers Dimitrie Liubavici who is printing in Târgoviște in Slavonic and Filip Moldoveanul who publishes in Romanian in Sibiu. Tradition is continued by a character who will formulate and spread literary language in Romanian territories and beyond. Coresi, as he is at the centre of discussion here, prints in Brasov the oldest and most extensive writings in Romanian.

German reformers, especially Luther, were preoccupied with translation of the Latin and Hebrew religious texts into national languages. Moreover, the Protestant denominations were the obligated to spread Christian teachings in the national language. The interest and the priority to transform the books into instruments for every believer, to be read, but especially understood, are missions that Romanian printers have undertaken. Deacon Coresi says in the preface of the *Gospels* of 1561 that he translates this book »to understand the Romanian priests and to teach Romanians what Christians are« and in the pages of introduction in the *Missal* and *Psalter* of 1570, says: »Most languages have the word of God in their language ... «, and since Romanians do not have this, it is desirable that »in the church, five words with meanings of mine to be spoken ... than the darkness of words misunderstood in other languages«.

A comparison opens between Martin Luther and Deacon Coresi, maintaining the proportions of the two. In 1534, Luther finalized the translation of the Hebrew Bible, and this helped establish the standard form of the German written language. The text is remarkable in style, musicality and a balanced vocabulary, intended for reading by ordinary people. This version of the Bible was accepted very soon throughout Germany. The printer Coresi seems to have the same goals. Although he is not the translator of the texts he publishes, his concern for the language is seen in the work to correct, change, adapt or modernize the language and to make it uniform, to become comprehensible and useful to those who spoke the language of those times. He uses older texts, preserved in the manuscript that he directed, corrected, changed, by replacing numerous archaisms and regionalisms with expressions and words from Wallachia and Transylvania. This fact leads to the unification and uniformity of the Romanian literary language and its work becomes normative for the history of the Romanian language that will follow. To all of this it can be added that, as the Luther Bible had widespread reach due to transla-

tion, linguistic quality and printing, and Coresi's books, following these more coordinated three, enjoyed great success, being received in all The Romanian Lands.

Thus, it is clear from the above that history records an interesting and unexpected episode: in the 16th century Transylvanian and Lutheran propaganda, we find an Orthodox cleric, close to the hierarchs, who benefits from close, special ties with the Protestant side as well as the Orthodox one. This leads me to call him a multi-confessional subject. Deacon Coresi is an example of ecumenical dialogue and service.

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