

V. REVIEWS AND EVENTS

A Document-Book for the History of Romanian Culture and Language

SILVESTRO AMELIO

CONCIONES LATINAE MULDAVO

Introductory Studies, Text Edition and Glossary

By

GH. CHIVU and FLORENTINA NICOLAE

Publishing House of the Romanian Academy

Bucharest, 2023

Petre Gheorghe BÂRLEA

”Ovidius” University of Constanța

gbarlea@yahoo.fr

Abstract:

The book recently published by the Publishing House of the Romanian Academy is one of the touchstones that even the best professionals in the field often stumble upon. An *old text* edition, written between 1725 and 1736, in two languages with a difficult structure and, whatever may be said, *foreign to the author*, namely Christian Latin and Romanian spoken in Moldavia in an age of dramatic searches for literary forms, is not within everyone’s reach. On the other hand, it is a dogmatic text, with a lexico-semantic, grammatical and pragmatic-stylistic specificity that is difficult to penetrate and convey in the modern era.

Keywords:

Conciones, the homily, Christian Latin, Romanian spoken in Moldavia, linguistic and philological studies.

We shall nuance the latter idea and specify that the author would think in the Italian language of the 18th century, even though by his profession and his dual mission on earth – that of a priest and a preacher of his religion – Silvestro Aurelio was bound to know the sacred Latin language and to learn the language of the Christian community in Moldavia, where he had been sent by the Vatican between 1712 and 1722. Therefore, the editor is actually faced with three languages.

The proof of the various difficulties in carrying out such an edition lies in the fact that two previous attempts could not be completed.

a) First, there was an individual initiative of Prof. Dr Teresa Ferro, full professor at the University of Udine, Department of Romance Studies, Italy. Quite meritorious, in principle, this initiative, this attempt initiated as early as 1994 resulted in the volume entitled *I missionari cattolici in Moldavia. Studi storici e linguistici*, 2005, [Cluj-Napoca], Clusium Publishing House, in the annex of which *only the first of S. Aurelio's homilies was edited*. The book was translated into Romanian in 2006, at IDC Press, under the title *Misionarii catolici în Moldova*.

b) Another endeavour – collective, this time – belongs to scholars from Iași, theologians and philologists, who worked on Silvestro Aurelio's texts in the second decade of our century. In fact, there were two teams, one of which also included Prof. Teresa Ferro in the efforts of studying and editing the text in the Romanian space. The research had an odd result, to say the least: the volumes¹ resulting from the respective project(s?), financially supported by UEFISCDI, are not available to the interested public.

It is clear that such an attempt must be based on a collaboration of professionals in the sciences of language and those in the publishing industry.

¹ Constantin Răchită, Claudia Tărnauceanu, Dionisie Constantin Pârvuloiu, Laura Enache, *Conciones latinae-moldavo. Predici latine <în grai> moldav*, Iași: Editura Sapientia, 2017. Cf. *Conciones latinae-moldavo. Predici latine în grai moldav*. Vol. I. *Predicile 1-32*; Vol. II. *Predicile 33-56*; Vol. III. *Predicile 57-86*, Editor: Prof. univ. dr. Traian Diaconescu. Introductory study: Constantin Răchită, Radu Cucuteanu and Emanuel Grosu, Iași: Editura Sapientia, 2020.

The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy has once again proven its serious approach to fulfilling its mission on earth and has made a good team with the two editors.

This volume is due to people who have long honed their skills in this field – a field served by extremely few specialists, which is understandable, as such an endeavour proves to be as difficult and demanding as it is unimpressive outside the small circle of initiates.

a) The academician Gheorghe Chivu has published several editions of bilingual texts over time:

- In collaboration with a Latinist (as in the present case), the noteworthy professor Lucia Wald, he meticulously prepared and published *Institutiones Linguae Valahicae. Prima gramatică a limbii române, scrisă în limba latină (cca 1770)* at the Publishing House of the Romanian Academy in 2001.

- In 2008, the same Publishing House of the Romanian Academy released the famous *Anonymus Caransebisiensis, i.e. Dictionarium valahico-latinum – Primul dicționar al limbii române (1650)*, also a bilingual text.

- Prior to these, he was part of the editorial teams of essential volumes for old Romanian written culture, such as *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*. Text established and indexed by Gheorghe Chivu, Magdalena Georgescu, Magdalena Ioniță, Alexandru Mareș, and Alexandra Roman-Moraru. Introduction by Alexandru Mareș, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, 1979, as well as *Texte românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, 1982.

- Other editorial experiences are materialized in the volume *Codex Sturdzanus* – “Edition, introductory study, index, and glossary by Gheorghe Chivu”, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, 1993, the luxury edition of *Opere* by Ion Budai Deleanu, 2011, and the concrete contribution *Școala Ardeleană* – Text anthology compiled and coordinated by Eugen Pavel, vol. I-IV, Bucharest, The Romanian Academy, National Foundation for Science and Art, The National Museum of Romanian Literature, 2018. One should not forget the three volumes of academic

editions of George Coșbuc's writings (*Opere alese*, vol. IX, 1988, and *Opere*, vol. I and II, 2006, 2007), also not easy to editorially measure.

- If we add the concrete contribution, coordination and revision to the *Enciclopedia literaturii române vechi*, Bucharest, National Foundation for Science and Art, National Museum of Romanian Literature, 2018, 1040 pp., as well as the consistent collaboration with DGLR, we have the image of professionalism in the field.

Certainly, the theoretical studies on transliteration, source identification, reconstitution of paternity, dating and localization of old texts, in other words, linguistic and philological studies, should also be considered when undertaking such a difficult project, as the one we are discussing here.

b) Prof. Dr habil. Florentina Nicolae has her own experience in editing Latin or Latin-Romanian texts by Dimitrie Cantemir (1716-1730), including *Curanus*, *De antiquis et hodiernis Moldaviae nominibus*, *Historia Moldo-Vlachica*, *Descriptio antiqui et hodierni status Moldaviae*, *Vita Constantini Cantemyrii*, *cognomento Senis*, *Sacrosanctae scientiae indepingibilis imago*, *Compendiolum universae logices institutionis*, *De muro Caucaseo*, *Collectanea Orientalia*, *Institutio logices*, compendiums of logic, science, as well as *Incrementorum atque Decrementorum Aulae Othmanicae libri tres* – a total of four volumes of about 6,000 pages – in the elegant collection “Opere fundamentale”, commonly referred to as “*Plèiade* în versiune românească”, published under the auspices of FNSA and MNLR, between 2017 and 2020. He contributed to the editing of the works of Nicolaus Olahus. In addition to these, she was part of the team that translated and edited the three volumes of Saint Jeromes' Epistole 2013-2023, Bucharest, “Basilica” Publishing House of the Romanian Patriarchate, under the coordination of Cristina Halichias and Hieronymus Policarp Pârvuloiu, as well as the *Sinaxarul Bisericii din Constantinopol – luna Martie*, Iași, 2011, in collaboration with Ionuț Hulubeanu (coord.) and Ionuț Chircalan. In principle, Florentina Nicolae was responsible for establishing the text, editing, compiling the critical apparatus and the indices for these books.

Clearly, for Florentina Nicolae, *Conciones* also served as a source for theoretical studies, published in various periodicals and collective volumes from both the country and abroad.

With such experience, the two editors approached Silvestro Amelio's text long before proceeding to the realization of the edition we now have in bookstores and libraries. The contributions of Italian Catholic missionaries in the Romanian countries were highlighted by Professor Gh. Chivu as early as 1999, in a study published in the *Comunicările "Hyperion"*, no. 8/1999, pp. 129-136, which was later included in his book, *Vechi texte românești. Contribuții filologice și lingvistice*, 2015, Bucharest: Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, pp. 163-168. In 2006, the scholar would once again address the issue of the norms of old Romanian literature in the texts provided by the Italian missionaries, in a study published in Pitești, in the university periodical *Language and Literature – European Landmarks of Identity*, 2 (1), pp. 45-49. The general presentation *Misionarii italieni* appeared in the entry with the same title in the abovementioned *Enciclopedia literaturii române vechi*, 2018. Then, the academician Gh. Chivu increasingly focused on analysing the homilies of S. Amelio, cf. *Conciones Latinae Muldavo, un manuscris singulier du XVIII^e siècle*, an article published in the journal *Dacoromania*, new series, XXVI, no. 2/2021, pp. 148-159, at a time when the decision to make the current academic edition had most likely already been taken.

Prof. Dr habil. Florentina Nicolae, in turn, had already prepared, in 2020-2021, the study on the sources of the Latin text from *Conciones Latinae Muldavo*, as she presented it at a scientific event in Craiova, in 2020, and then published it under the title "*Conciones Latinae Muldavo*, by Silvestro Amelio. Observations on the Latin Version" in *Studii de onomastică și lexicologie (SCOL)*, XIV, no. 1-2, Craiova: Editura Universitaria, pp. 299-306. This text constitutes the "Introduction" with the subtitle "Considerations on the sources of the Latin text from *Conciones Latinae Muldavo*", in the volume presented here, pp. 7-12.

The homilies - *conciones*, i.e., the explanatory sermons on passages from the *Bible* (from various places in the *OT* and the *NT*, but especially from

the four *Gospels*), are, according to Florentina Nicolae's research, taken from three older texts. It is basically the homiletic works – uneven in length, but all in common circulation in the Western Church – of three Western authors of sermons, whom Amelio a Foggia transcribed as such or paraphrased, without mentioning them (the author of the study claims that he “quoted” them).

1. The French scholastic theologian and philosopher Radulfus Ardens (1140-1200) – the author of the homiliary *In epistulas et evangelia Dominicalia homiliae*, with editions whose attested antiquity goes back as far as 1564 (a version available in vol. 155 of the *Patrologia Latina*), the one used by Amelio dating from 1586, according to modern research. The Romanian editor compared this text with that of the 1604 edition, cf. “Introduction”, pp. 8-9.

2. The French Dominican Archbishop Petrus Paludanus (1277-1342), with *Sermanes sive Ennerationes, in Evangelia. De tempore ac Sanctorum festis, qui Thesaurus Novus, vulgo vocantur*, the edition used by the researcher being that issued in Cologne, in 1602.

3. The Spanish Dominican theologian Ludovicus Granatensis (1504-1588), with *Conciones quae praecipuis Sanctorum festis in Ecclesia habentur, de Festo Sancti Andreae, usque ad festum Beatae Mariae Magdalenae*, Antwerp, 1614 – the edition used by Florentina Nicolae.

While Silvestrio Aurelio a Foggia, a Franciscan monk, carried out Benedictine activity, working for over 12 years on a text of over 900 pages (916 pages of manuscript), the two editors of the text published in Bucharest have exerted no less energy in recent years to present texts from three centuries ago to the general public.

If we refer only to the Latin part of the entire, extremely complex text, we notice the following layers:

1. Two original Latin texts, i.e., the two dedications written by Silvestro Amelio in his own Latin, namely the Christian Latin of the 18th century: *Ad lectores (To the readers)*, p. 33, and *Reverendissimo Patri Vincentio Mariae de Comitibus... (To the head of the Order of Friars Minor*

Conventual of the Franciscan Order, Minister Vincentius Maria de Comitibus), pp. 33-34.

2. Eighty-six homilies in the Christian Latin of the 12th-16th centuries, in three different redactions, belonging to the three sources identified by Florentina Nicolae in her work as an editor, sources not declared by Amelio, as mentioned, but used extensively through full or partial takeover, through paraphrasing etc., as we have shown:

a) one from the homiliary of Radulfus Ardens, *In epistolas et evangelia Dominicalia homiliae*, preserved in manuscripts from the late decades of the 12th century, republished at least six times between 1561 and 1604, but available to Amelio a Foggia in a version after 1571 (cf. *Conciones...* 2023, “Introduction”, p. 9);

b) a second one, due to Petrus Paludanus, *Sermones sive Enarrationes in Evangelia. De tempore ac Sanctorum Festis, qui Thesaurus Novus, vulgo vacantur*, in the Christian Latin from the late 13th century and the early 14th century, consulted by the Romanian editor in the Cologne edition, 1602, but with several earlier re-editions.

c) a third source is the writing of the Spaniard Ludovicus Granatensis (we have taken, as in cases b) and c), the Latinized names of the authors of the homilies), *Conciones quae de praecipuis Sanctorum festis in Ecclesia habentur, a Festo Sancti Andreae, usque ad Festum Beatae Mariae Magdalенаe*, from the 16th century, consulted for the present study in the Antwerp edition, 1614 – this one with older redactions as well, of course.

The editor’s research went into the depth of these texts. Two series of facts should be mentioned from the introductory text, among many others:

a) Sometimes, one and the same Amelian homily from 1725-1737 compiles two different sources. Florentina Nicolae puts the texts in parallel and notes, for example, that the sermon *Feria secunda Pentecostes. Enarratio II* is taken fragmentarily, with its title and bibliographic references, from Pierre la Palude, while the part of the conclusions is taken from the text *In die Sancto Pentecostes*, Raoul Ardent’s homily. Then, in the following sermon,

Feria Tertia Post Pentecostes, S. Amelio uses the Paludan text, from where he had left off in the previous sermon.

From the same Petrus Paludanus, the homily *De Corpore Christi. Ennaratio I* is also used, again in a fragmented manner, retitled by Amelio as *In Festo Corporis Christi*. This time, however, without the bibliographic references of the Spanish homiliary, as well as without the introduction and conclusion of the sermon dedicated to the Feast of Corpus Christi from the Roman Catholic calendar. In general, the editor notes that the excerpts from Radulfus Ardens are more scrupulous than those from Petrus Paludanus – the latter being reduced to two homilies, used in three texts by Silvestro Amelio, cf. “Introduction”, pp. 11-12.

b) At other times, in the texts used as sources, the old authors had inserted quotes from secular texts – literary, historical, philosophical. Silvestro Amelio seems not to recognize them and takes them as they are, without any additional explanation, as would have been appropriate in an age, however, much more evolved than that of his models from several centuries before. For example, Florentina Nicolae observes that in the sermon *Dominica Prima Adventus Domini* – one of those in which the translation into Moldavian Romanian follows after each Latin sentence, resulting in an extremely difficult text, there is an uncanonical reference. More precisely, Radulfus Ardens writes:

De primo dicit Poeta: “Quod caret alterna requie durabile non est” ‘Of the first the Poet says: *That which lacks its alternations of repose will not endure*’ (p. 35, in the current edition, *Conciones...*, 2023).

Silvestro Amelio takes it without any concern for the identification of the poet or the canonicity of the quotation. However, the Romanian editors establish the truth: the quote is from the Latin poet, the pagan polytheist Publius Ovidius Naso, *Heroides*, IV, v. 89, cf. Fl. Nicolae, “Introduction” to *Conciones...*, 2023, p. 10.

In the same sermon, the excerpt from Ardens goes as follows:

“*Unde Augustinus: Age paenitentiam dum sanus, et securus es: quia paenitentiam egisti, dum peccare potuisti: si vero vis agere paenitentiam, cum iam peccare non potes, peccata te dimiserunt, non tu illa.*”

The Italian missionary does not give the due reference to the author cited. The text published now by the Romanian Academy printing house specifies, on p. 36, n. 18, that this is a sentence written by Aurelius Augustinus in *Sermo*, 393, from the work *De paenitentibus*, consulted in the collection “*Patrologia Latina*”, vol. 38, tome V, part II, Paris, 1865, p. 1712, cf. p. 10, n. 9 in the volume discussed here. In fact, the two authors have quoted the Augustinian text in a truncated form, which in its entirety reads as follows:

“*Age poenitentiam, dum sanus es. Si enim agis veram poenitentiam, dum sanus es, et invenerit te novissimus dies, curre ut reconcilieris: si sic agis, securus es. Quare securus es? Quia egisti poenitentiam eo tempore, quo et peccare potuisti. Si autem tunc vis agere poenitentiam ipsam, quando jam peccare non potes; peccata te dimiserunt, non tu illa.*”

The passages marked by us have either been ignored or slightly altered by R. Ardens and, after him, by S. Amelio, without losing the essence of the original message, obviously.

c) In other places, references are missing, as noted by Fl. Nicolae, both from the source text and the target text. This is the case of a quote from Publilius Syrus (85-43 BC), taken in *Quarta Dominica Adventus Domini*, p. 59 and n. 135, in *Conciones...*, 2023:

Dabo tibi magnum imperium: impera tibi! “I will give you a great command: command yourself!” Publius Syrus, *Sententiae*.

The apothegm is followed by another (*Vis multos regere? Rege te ipsum!* “Do you want to rule many? Rule yourself!”), and then by Solomon’s proverb 16:32 from the Old Testament, “Proverbs”: “Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.”

The same happens with the insertion of a quote from a *philosophus* in the text of the sermon *Dominica infra octavam Nativitatis Domini*:

“*Et phylosophus: ‘Non te moveat dicentis auctoritatis, nec quis, sed quid dicat, intendito’*” ‘Do not be impressed by the authority of a saying; do not be interested in *who*, but in *what* it says!’

The references are usually made to Seneca, considered the “philosopher” by definition in that particular sermon. The work *De quatuor virtutibus cardinalis* is attributed to him. In fact, Fl. Nicolae reminds us, the text from which the quote was taken is *Formula honestae vitae*, belonging to the philosopher Martin de Braga, cf. p. 10, n. 10, from the “Introduction” to *Conciones...*, 2023.

Various other details in the text reflect the seriousness of the present edition. The mistakes taken by Amelio from Ardens’ text and attributed to “obedience to the source” by the editor are pointed out. Thus, there is a marginal referral to *Psalm 15*, instead of *Proverbs 15:15* (*Secura mens... quasi iuge convivium* “All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.”); a wrong transcription of a phrase with the same explanation: *beatus est*, instead of *beatus vir*, as it correctly appears in *Psalm 39*; a change in the case regime *Heu me!*, instead of *Heu mihi!* (in *Psalm 119*) and so on.

There are omissions of lexemes, such as *impudicitia*, from the enumeration of sins in the *Epistle to the Galatians*, or, on the contrary, insertions in the text. An example is the inclusion of the repeated grammatical subject *Jesus*, where the Latin text from the *Gospel of Matthew* did not have it. Ardens took it upon himself to introduce it in order to clarify the sermon in front of all kinds of parishioners, but the Latin of the *Vulgate* allowed, like classical Latin, the avoidance of the subject in subordinate clauses or even in the following sentences, since it was stated once at the beginning of the paragraph:

Cum appropinquassent [Jesus] Hyerosolymis et venissent Bethphage ad Montem Oliveti... “When they drew near Jerusalem and reached Bethany near the Mount of Olives, [Jesus sent two disciples...]”. This is, as we can easily see, a quote from the well-known verses dedicated to the Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, on Palm Sunday, cf. Luke, 119, 29-48.

As can be seen in the text published now by the editors Chivu and Nicolae, and as Fl. Nicolae observes, Amelio da Foggia took over the insertion.

In other parts, only the Italian author of homilies is wrong. Thus, he confuses the Arabic numeral 111 from a reference by Ardens, with Roman III, erroneously noting, therefore, *Psalm III*, where it was actually *Psalm 111*, more precisely Ps. 11:4:

Exortum est, inquit, in tenebris lumen rectis corde, misericors et miserator Dominus “Unto the true of heart a light is risen up in darkness. The Lord is merciful, and compassionate, and just”.

At other times, he wrongly transcribes *totius* as *patius*; he refers to *John 30*, instead of *Job 30*, and so on.

All this shows how important the work of editors is – all the more so, as the texts are not only very old and very different, in their dogmatic unity, but also subject to translations into different languages and mentalities.

3. The third form of Latin used in the *Homilies* of Silvestro Amelio a Foggia is the *biblical Latin of the Vulgate*, in its versions from different centuries of evolution. There are several hundred quotes from the *Old Testament* (especially from *Psalms* and *Proverbs*, as seen) and from the *New Testament* (especially from the *Holy Gospels*), which add up to the 86 sermons².

One might have expected the source for the quotes to be the *Sistine-Clementine Bible*, 1592, with corrected reprints immediately following in 1593 and 1598, which made the version issued under Pope Clement VIII a “textus receptus” of the Roman Catholic Church. However, the editors of Silvestro Amelio’s book point out that he took the sermons with all the respective quotes, which means that very old editions of the *Biblia Vulgata* were used, namely, from the periods 1100-1200 for the texts of Radulfus Ardens (the majority, i.e. 61 homilies); 1275-1350 for the texts of Petrus

² In the short sermons, such as that of addition, *Sequentia Sancti Evangelii secundum Lucam, Lucae 2*, (p. 71, in *Conciones...*, 2023), of about eight lines, there are one or two references to the biblical text, the first being that in the title. However, in long sermons, such as the Christmas one, from midnight (*In Natali Domini, Lectio Isaiae prophetae...*), of almost seven pages (pp. 64-70), we counted 28 references to the biblical text.

Paludanus (for only three homilies); and 1500-1580 for the texts of Ludovicus Granatensis (used in 22 homilies in S. Amelio's collection).

However, collating all three types of Latin texts – 1) Amelio's dedications; 2) the homilies taken from the three sources (i.e., from three different epochs); 3) the pre-Clementine Vulgate Bible – is made by reference to more recent editions, in principle, from around the year 1600, for the taken writings, that is, those under 2) and 3).

What emerges from the textual analyses deserves the full attention of a modern informed reader. The particular interest of Romanian philologists is especially directed towards the Latin text equivalences in the Moldavian subdialect of 300 years ago. The great challenge of this book arises from here. And, if only the Latin infrastructure of the text could raise so many issues, such as those merely suggested above, one can imagine what the Romanian part of the full text consists of..

This will be discussed on another occasion. In the meantime, aware that in the case of academic works, generalizing epithetical appreciations are unnecessary, for a simple descriptive-objective presentation can take the place of any labelling, we might add, nonetheless, that such a document-book is also a monument-book.