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DEACON CORESI
A Monograph and an Anthology of Texts
The Summary of the Ph. D. Thesis

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– Summary –

Deacon Coresi's typographical activity symbolizes a special chapter for the Romanian cultural history.

The beginning of the Romanian literature is also marked by his activity of printing ecclesiastical books in Romanian, in Braşov. Thus, this language became a cultural one.

On one hand, Coresi's typographical activity belongs to the tradition of the Orthodox Church, by printing Slavonic books. On the other hand, he is also known for his innovating texts printed in Romanian, due to the Reformation which brought new religious denominations in Transylvania.

This activity is more complex as it may seem at a first sight, because of the various religions reflected in this debated literature.

The historical, religious, cultural and social circumstances are of a great importance. For example, understanding the European cultural context of the sixteenth century and its major changes caused in the Romanian culture makes discussing about Coresi's activity easier. Coresi was largely influenced by this political, religious and cultural European elements which led to printing religious books in Romanian.

Furthermore, Coresi is known for supporting the national spirit of unity and Braşov is perceived as an important centre of the Romanian culture at that time. This deacon's cultural deeds interacted with the Transylvanian Saxons' Humanist School and the elements included (the language, the patronage, the publishers, the printers, the spreading etc.) reflected the Romanians' unity of the time and their cultural interests.

The Reformation argued that all nations should know the Holy Scriptures in their own language. This determined the existence of both the Slavonic printed books and those printed in the national language, in parallel, in Europe. It is, thus, a certainty that knowing all about this European printing life reveals the true Romanian cultural phenomenon in Coresian times.

Consequently, this work is concerned with studying Coresi's activity, as an integral part of the European cultural context, both his printing in Romanian and that in Slavonic.

As a result, some actions similar to those of Coresi's in Braşov were taken into consideration, mostly those belonging to nations from the same religious and cultural area and endowed with religious texts printed in their native tongue. The issue studied here becomes a consequence of the whole European culture, more than just a local cultural phenomenon.

The monographic study is a critical examination of the Coresian bibliography and a revelation of some new original points of view concerning some discussed issues.

Structurally, the argumentation of placing Coresi's cultural printing activity from Braşov rightly (pages 3- 24) is followed by five chapters dealing with certain aspects of the deacon's life and printing activity.

Finally, there are the anthology of texts, the bibliography and the appendix.

Chapter I. Deacon Coresi's Biography

There are presented some biographic data, opinions about: his origins, his family, about him becoming a printer and his apprentices.

The study of the documents dated back to the sixteenth century reveals his Romanian origin. It is obvious, then, why he was so interested in printing the religious books in

Romanian: a tribute for his conationals, a fact acknowledged in the epilogue of his printed texts.

In the beginning of his activity Coresi worked in Târgoviște and then, until about 1583, in Brașov.

As a result of a rich cultural activity (1557- about 1583), Coresi had some apprentices, some of them having become his co- workers, like his son Șerban.

Chapter II. The European Cultural Context, a Former one to the Coresian Period

Imperatively, one should have some knowledge about the European printing and cultural activity previous to that of Coresi's. It is about a preliminary period, when Slavonic printing workshops appeared and developed, the author describing the craftsmen and their written products. Moreover, some publications from Târgoviște, belonging to the lords of Wallachia and dating back to 1508- 1547 and some Saxons' Humanist ones from Sibiu (1546- 1553) are presented here.

Chapter III. A Typographical and Cultural Activity, one Contemporaneous with Coresi

It is also very important that one should know some facts about the political, religious and cultural elements existing in Transylvania of those times, the elements which had been induced and encouraged by the European cultural and religious currents.

There were some other important printers, such as: scholar Călin, Lorinț and Șerban. These ones worked with Coresi. One should not forget Lavrentie, who printed only Slavonic books.

Chapter IV. Deacon Coresi's Printing Activity

This is the largest chapter of the work. The author presents Coresi's cultural activity and describes each of his printed works.

The first part of this chapter remembers some facts concerned with the printing activity, such as: Coresi deciding his residence in Brașov, the activity of the printing workshop, the publishers of the books, the origin of the printing house, Coresi's real quality as a translator etc. .

The second part of the chapter deals with Coresi's books. The following pieces of information about these books are added: the places where they are kept (Romania or abroad), the place and the date of their publication, the number of their pages, their sizes, the printing characteristics and the technique of ornamentation, the analysis of the paper used, the content of the work, the model of the book, the editor, the cultural factors that determined that certain book and the last, but not the least, the printer.

Chapter V. Coresi's Books: Their Distribution and Acceptance in Coresian and Post- Coresian Times

Due to the fact that it was an unprecedented Romanian cultural phenomenon, the printed books had been accepted differently from one time to another. For example, Coresi's printed works were reproduced and transformed in quite a small number, mostly in Transylvania, as a result of the political and religious circumstances which were arguing for serving God in Romanian.

Conclusions

Some conclusions have to be drawn so far.

Objectively, one should accept the fact that Coresi worked under the principles of the Reformation. Consequently, his activity reflects this Reformation adapted to the political, religious and cultural context in Transylvania. Furthermore, it is imperative to place Coresi in the European cultural and religious context of that time, too.

As a result, his work was easily understood abroad.

Coresi is a representative of the Slavonic culture, but also one of the cultural innovations that sustained the printing of native tongues.

Thanks to him, the Romanian language replaced the Slavonic one and became a cultural one. Expressing culture in native tongue was imperious then.

This contribution was so big, although Romanian culture consisted only of religious literature at those times. The transformation helped printed religious books being understood by more and more people, others than just the members of the administrative services and the ecclesiastical ones. And then, the texts having been printed were more than those written by hand.

This activity marks the beginning of the history of the Romanian literature.

An Anthology of Texts

The work itself is followed by some texts, consisting of fragments from Romanian and Slavonic (translated) printed books. They are classified like this: Romanian texts, Slavonic texts, texts belonging to a former period to the Coresian time, texts from Coresi's time and those of a post- Coresian period.

The Bibliography of the Work

The works mentioned are grouped as following: the Coresian printed works and their republication, the documentary sources, the general works and the special ones. All these groups follow the alphabetical criterion.

Appendix

There is some poetry dedicated to Coresi and mentioned here.

The author gathered some images that are representative for Coresi's printed texts and for their content, some examples which underline differences concerning certain types of letters used, the initials and the title pages used for decorating the books etc.

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