



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

SCOSAAR

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*Anexa nr.6*

## **DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

**TITLE: THE PLACE OF ROMANIAN AMONG THE ROMANCE LANGUAGES. RELIGIOUS TERMINOLOGY, ECCLESIASTICAL LANGUAGE, SEMIOTICS, PAREMIOLOGY, AND GRAMMAR**

Habilitation Domain: **PHILOLOGY**

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The present habilitation thesis outlines my scientific contributions after the defense of my doctoral dissertation (2003), as well as the plans for the further development of my research. Therefore, I have structured here the main directions of research pursued over the last twenty years, focusing on the themes and domains I have explored in my activity at the “Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics, within the Department of Romance Studies, coordinated until 2022 by Ioana Vintilă-Rădulescu.

I began this overview with **religious terminology**, a field that first drew my attention during my doctoral studies (1997–2003). Part of the PhD dissertation was published in 2005 by Editura Academiei Române, under the title *Terminologia religioasă creștină în limba română* (*Christian Religious Terminology in the Romanian Language*). Four years ago, I decided to revisit the issue

of Romanian religious vocabulary, this time focusing exclusively on the inherited lexicon. This endeavour resulted in a manuscript, currently under revision, entitled *Vocabularul religios românesc moștenit: paralelisme vs. divergențe în arie romanică/The Inherited Romanian Religious Vocabulary: Parallels vs. Divergences in the Romance Area* (481 p.). As readily understandable, undertaking such research required updating the bibliography, which in turn allowed for a deeper analysis and more consistent, nuanced, and objective insights into both the similarities and divergences within the Romance area. In some cases, it was even necessary to redistribute the terms, taking into account the most recent developments in the field (see especially DÉRom). Another novelty, as compared to the 2005 study, consists in examining the delimited lexical inventory as reflected in modern ecclesiastical literature, as well as in paremiological literature, an operation carried out specifically for Romanian. From a forward-looking perspective, the issue of inherited religious vocabulary is likely to become more complex if the approach does not take solely a Romance language as the benchmark for analysis. This will have significant consequences, first and foremost at the level of the inventory, which will substantially increase; for example, the subclass of terms with wide diffusion across Romance will also include terms attested in many of the Romance languages, but absent in Romanian (see, in particular, the *panroman sauf roumain* subcategory).

The second domain discussed in this thesis is **grammar**, more precisely the **cognitive-functional grammar**, a subfield I have approached with special attention to the subclass of psychological verbs of wonder, see *Verbele psihologice: similitudini vs. divergențe în context romanic. 'A (se) mira' în română, franceză și spaniolă (Psychological Verbs: Similarities vs. Divergences in the Romance Context. 'A (se) mira' ('to wonder') in Romanian, French, and Spanish)*, București/Bucharest University Press, 2020, 360 p., a volume I authored within a research project I proposed in late 2016 at the Romance Studies Department of the Institute of Linguistics. The idea of pursuing such research arose from the observation that foreign-language literature on psychological verbs is particularly rich, whereas Romanian bibliography is comparatively limited. Moreover, the subclass of psychological verbs of wonder has not, to my knowledge, been the subject of any systematic study, either in Romanian or in other languages. Against this backdrop, the objective I set myself was to highlight the main defining features of the *active-transitive* pattern as opposed to the *passive-reflexive* pattern, as well as to identify aspects relevant for distinguishing between the languages/verbs included in the comparative-

contrastive study – a that is, to assess *the degree of continuity (unity) vs. discontinuity* across the Romance space. This research topic also invites further development: on the one hand, by expanding the comparative-contrastive framework to other Romance languages beyond Romanian, French, and Spanish; on the other hand, by broadening the discussion to encompass other verbs within the paradigm of wonder, such as the subclass of intrinsically intensive psychological verbs (e.g., *a se cruci* “be appalled”, *a epata* “to flaunt, to show off”, *a frapa* “to strike, to astonish”, *a (se) năuci* “to daze, to baffle”, *a sidera* “to amaze, to astonish”, etc.).

Another area of research is **paremiology** (Romanian and Romance), with a focus on phrasic patterns incorporating religious terms. The volume *Proverbe cu termeni religioși în română și spaniolă (Proverbs with Religious Terms in Romanian and Spanish)*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 2025, 778 p., was elaborated (between 2021 and 2024) within a research project I proposed in late 2020 at the Romance Studies Department of the Institute of Linguistics in Bucharest. The impetus for such a study was the observation that both in Romanian and in international literature, religious paremiology has been underexplored. Furthermore, although contrastive paremiological studies in the Romance area are well represented in international literature, they tend to privilege Western Romance languages, with Romanian only occasionally included in the contrastive paradigm. Romanian studies, by contrast, are almost exclusively focused on the Romanian language. Among the original contributions of this volume – absent from the available references – I would emphasize: the distinctive analysis of paremiological units based on religious terms, as opposed to other types of multiword structures; the analysis of phrasic variation in relation to *transparent* variation as well as to *opaque* variation; the identification and definition of an phrasic relation *intermediate* between phrasic variation and phrasic synonymy; the introduction of a *restricted* vs. *broad* understanding of paremiological synonymy/heteronymy. As for potential further developments, I would note that the comparative-contrastive analysis of religious-based paremiological patterns in Chapter 5 (*A Possible Contrastive Approach to Paremiological Patterns with Religious Terms in Romanian and Spanish*) could be more in depth pursued, building on the inventories and detailed analyses provided in Chapters 3 and 4, by incorporating additional interlinguistic correspondences. Likewise, a broader comparative perspective would be desirable, one that includes proverbial patterns with religious terms from other Romance idioms beyond Romanian and Spanish.

My engagement with **ecclesiastical language** (*Limbajul bisericesc actual între tradiție și modernitate. Literatura didactică și literatura beletristică/Current Ecclesiastical Language between Tradition and Modernity. Didactic Literature and Artistic Literature*, București, Editura Universității din București, 2017, 410 p.) was supported by the observation that, at that time, substantial works dealing with different types of religious writing were scarce in Romanian bibliography. The field was generally limited to brief articles addressing specific issues or to monographs focused on a single type of religious text (e.g., prayers or sermons). The investigation involved a dual line of research – lexical-semantic and grammatical – starting from the premise that the differences between secular and ecclesiastical language are not limited exclusively to terminological aspects. The study I undertook strongly confirmed this reality; moreover, the results of the research supported the definition of (contemporary) ecclesiastical language as an *independent literary variant* (a claim particularly valid with respect to Orthodox ecclesiastical literature), in contrast to other perspectives according to which ecclesiastical language has been treated merely as a *style* (biblical or liturgical). The issue of the *tradition–innovation relationship* in contemporary ecclesiastical literature could also be examined with reference to other types of religious writing not considered in the 2017 volume – for instance, *liturgical* texts. Likewise, a study based on *more recent* editions of the religious genres analyzed in *Ecclesiastical Language 2017* would also be of great interest. This research topic is also open to further development through a more *complex, contrastive approach* within the Romance area, allowing conservative vs. innovative phenomena to be traced in parallel in Romanian and other Romance languages. In this context, we cannot ignore the fact that Romanian is the only Romance language spoken by a predominantly Orthodox Neo-Latin people.

Finally, the last field addressed in this thesis is **semiotics**, in particular the *semiotics of Romanian religious discourse*. The idea of elaborating a study dedicated to the semiotic approach to religious discourse (*Semiotica discursului religios. Probleme de poetică, stilistică și retorică/The Semiotics of Religious Discourse. Issues of Poetics, Stylistics and Rhetoric*, București, Editura Universității din București, 2016, 504 p.) emerged in a context where, after 1989, the studies in the field were largely philological or rhetoric-oriented. This investigation draws on a representative text from the didactic and scientific cultural sphere – namely, the Orthodox Christian Catechism – as well as on two types of writings illustrative of the “aesthetic textual code”: the psalmic poem and the Christian prayer. This choice reflects the aims pursued

in the research: a) to define a *scientific* style/discourse vs. a *literary* style/discourse within the boundaries of religious discourse, while also distinguishing them from the secular discursive domain; and b) to formulate observations on the particular ways in which the relationship between these two discursive-stylistic domains (scientific and literary) is established within both the religious and the secular spheres.