

LANDMARKS IN THE ROMANIAN RELIGIOUS PRESS

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1. The printing press, discovered by Gutenberg, is an important invention for all the modern development of human civilization which will enter, starting from here, “under his sign adopting rhymes and expressions imposed by this invention. In these circumstances it is fully justified the interest which has been taken with the aim of knowing the origins and development of the art of printing”.¹ From now on, the printed book has become the oldest means of mass communication, “in which the messages are encrypted and can be manipulated, transcribed and decrypted by any person who knows the code, which means having the knowledge to read. Till the invention of printer, the book was made through manual work, piece by piece. Over the time we have a development of the: shape (roll, notebook, booklet, book), material (papyrus, parchment, paper) and the process of reproduction (manual transcription, manual printing, mechanic printing, offset, etc.)”.²

Mass-media, as we know it today, had his beginnings from middle of 19th century. The newspapers and the books published before this period where especially attributed to an elite. “Technologically speaking, the media informational channels were entrusted from the beginning under an authority tutelage, politically or religious. From the moment of his invention, the printing was used to promote the ideological ideas from that historical moment. First published materials of Gutenberg where limited at the multiplication of the Bible or, in principal, at the promotion of the religious information. From 1631, the moment of the appearance of the first hebdomadal in France, *La Gazette*, led by Théophraste Renaudot and of *Nouvelles ordinaires des divers endroites*, this were put under the direct

¹ DORU BADARA, *Tiparul românesc la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea și începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, Muzeul Brăilei, Ed. Istros, Brăila, 1998, p. 3.

² TEODOR MUCICA, MINODORA PEROVICI, *Universul mijloacelor audiovizuale*, Ed. Albatros, București, 1982, p. 19.

control of the cardinal Richelieu. The information represented not so much the official policy of the estate, the exterior conscience of the power, how much the personal and subjective desires of the leaders and also the daily activities of the prime-minister. In England, the editors and journalists were covered by a law from the 13th century when they were in offensive with the authorities. Further, in the time of Henric VIII was promulgated a list with the interdicted publications, according to the personal desire of king”.³ We also must know that, even if she didn’t had the principal please in the process of propagation of different information, “the manuscripts had remained very important in the age of the printing as books and radio were for the age of television”.⁴

The newspapers, who are addressing to the large public, appeared in the third decade of 19th century and their information was directed to the people from the high society. One of the principal reasons for which the rest of the population didn’t have the access to the information was the high costs for publication, transport and printing. Because the newspapers were printed in manual procedure and also the flyer sheet were printed in large intervals of time, was no desire to approve of the access of all population at such information. “In the first decade of 19th century, the newspapers tried harder to be in touch with the maritime program and news. The newspapers from New York started to send bouts in the welcome of the ships to get more news, at the end of 1829; more newspapers formed an association which used a speed boat to welcome the ships in the benefit of all members. But, only after the print of the 1 penny newspaper, was possible the competition to get more daily news, as principal formula in a commercial perspective, in press”.⁵ Therefore, in the fourth decade of the past century, through the phenomenon of „penny press” (cheap press), the audience grow in a very special way. The cheap press and the orientation conversion where the principal cause in the process of developing of this phenomenon. Moreover, the publications were principally directed through the commune people. “From the moment of appearance and imposition of mass-media, the beat of human activities in the communication domains was accelerated. At the end of 19th century, the level of technological development was much appreciated”.⁶

³ DORU POP, *Mass-media și democrația*, Antologie realizată și comentată de Doru Pop, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2001, p. 11.

⁴ ASA BRIGGS, Peter Burke, *Mass-media. O istorie socială. De la Gutenberg la internet*, Traducere de Constantin Lucian și Ioana Luca, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2005, p. 15.

⁵ DORU POP, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁶ LUCIAN CHIȘU, *Introducere în mass-media*, Ed. Fundației România de mâine, București, 2002, p. 18.

Mass-media channels started to develop in the first part of the 20th century with the advent of electronic mass-media. “Between 1930-1970, thanks primarily to cultural industries; the mass-media system had known his most evident crystallization. First one, around the 1930’s, had two subdivisions: one of the mass-media and forms of the printing, the other one of the penetration in the communicational universe, entitled «audio-visual». The second stage, which reaches the tip of the upward curve in 1950’s, belongs to the film and television industry and the last one, which appears in 1970’s, is related to the revolutionary technic of multimedia. In this short time interval, mass-media enter in an accelerated upgrade process of development”.⁷

With the passing of time, the media started to be accessible for the entire society. The first role of the papers was to transform the events in news, but in time their lecture became an appreciative standard in a modern society. Today, the newspapers have a limited numbers of readers because of the permanent development of mass-media, as radio, television or internet. „Also new, the technological process is growing up, in the same time with the *Age of mass-media communication*. Movies, radio and more recent television, together with the numerous technological possibilities, appeared over the night. We are at the middle of a new era and at the start of transition through another one – the *Era of computers*”.⁸ Postmodernity opens a new perspective because manages and develops a culture of consummation, mass-media developing in the same time new needs, desires, aspirations and entertainment. Last but not least, the social change is promoted and sustained of the electronic network as alternatives and also new-media.

2. In Romania, the manuscripts are the second form of writing, after the lapidary writing (on stone). Ever since the 11th century, the writing process was realized in parchment and paper, these materials being imported from countries like Czech, Slovakia, Austria and Poland. Although there are some important researches in this field, it is very hard to mention the number of Slavic-Romanian manuscripts which we have had till today. “After the last evaluation, the number of Slavic manuscripts which we have in our country till now is around 2000 (in the Library of the Romanian Academy are around 800). Hundreds on other

⁷ IBIDEM, p. 20.

⁸ MELVIN L. DEFLEUR, SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH, *Teorii ale comunicării de masă*, Traducere de Ducu Harabagiu și Cătălina Harabagiu, Prefață de Melvin L. DeFleur și Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 1999, p. 52.

Slavic manuscripts are spread in the great libraries and museums from Moscow, Petersburg, Sofia, Holly Mountain and even in the West Europe (Vienne, Munich, Oxford, etc.). In the National Library from Sofia, named after the Saints Cyril and Methodius, the biggest part of Slavic Medio-Bulgarian manuscripts come from the Romanian Countries”.⁹

The first “Paper-mill” from Romania was founded in 1545, near Brasov, being made by German and Polish masters, with the involvement of John Benkner and John Fuchs. This paper was used in 16th century for the Slavic and Latin manuscripts. In the three Romanian countries, Transylvania, Moldavia and Valachia, it was used for a period of time the Latin kind of writing, especially for the public and particular documents. Moreover, “the writing and Latin culture became disciplines in the learning educational process from the monastic and urban schools, starting with 13th century, in Oradea and Alba Iulia”.¹⁰

The first religious prints in Romania are represented in the liturgical books, printed in 16th century by Makarios the monk, by Dimitri Liubavici, and by the deacon Coresi. The period of 1559-1615 is very prolific because of the pattern of deacon Coresi, who publish more than teen titles, all of the in the religious field. Therefore, the deacon Coresi “entered in the history of the Romanian people and in the memory of our Orthodox Church as one of the most important printer and editor, which our culture had. In his activity we underline two very important coordinates which characterize his long activity as printer and editor: he started the Romanian liturgical language and therefore contributed to the process of formation of the Romanian unitary language. Through all his efforts, Coresi is a true pioneer in the history of Romanian culture”.¹¹

These first prints, all with religious issues, underline that the Romanian monasteries were important cultural centers where they copied and published especially theological books. At the same time, the monasteries also housed monks from the Slavonic countries, refugees from the Turkish occupation. One of the main reason which brought the success of the typography in the Romanian Countries was the fact that this modality was cheaper than the process of manual copy of the manuscripts.

In the next period, the religious prints become more popular and so it appears another printed publication, outside the usual books. Therefore, “the first Calendar, printed in 1731, forerun the most popular

⁹ MIRCEA PĂCURARU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. I, Ed. IBMBOR, București, 1997, p. 416.

¹⁰ I. HANGIU, *Dicționarul presei literare românești 1790-1990. Ediția a II-a revizuită și completată*, Ed. Fundației Culturale Române, București, 1996, p. 17.

¹¹ MIRCEA PĂCURARU, *op. cit.*, p. 560.

publication from the 19th century, like *Albina românească* (*Romanian Bee*) of Gheorghe Asachi (Iasi, 1829), *Curierul românesc* (*The Romanian Courier*) of I. H. Rădulescu (Bucharest, 1829), or *Gazeta de Transilvania* (*Gazette of Transylvania*) of George Barițiu (Brasov, 1838)".¹² The years 1837-1838 represented the beginning of the written press in Transylvania, at Brasov. Together with the wealthy and powerful people who sustained the process of printing, we can mention the cultural preoccupation, especially from the time of deacon Coresi. This burgess class "favoured the publication of the first Romanian newspaper under the editorial coordination of Ion Barac, in 2 of January 1837, with the title *Foaia Duminicii* (*Sunday Sheet*). In the same year it was published also *Foaia de săptămână din Transilvania* (*Weekly Sheet from Transylvania*), but because didn't receive the authorization, it was closed after the first published numbers (3 and 10 of July 1837)".¹³

The history of the religious journalism in Romania, before 1989, can be divided in two historical steps: before the communist period and in the time of the atheistic communist regime. If before and in the time of the interbelic period existed many religious newspapers and theological review, and also many parochial journals, in the time of the communist regime the religious writing was restricted to some Eparchial magazines, which were broadcast only in the ecclesiastical background (metropolitan centers and the magazines from the Romanian Patriarchy for the diaspora).

In the communist period, the Romanian Orthodox Church lived through the Holy Liturgy, through his martyrs from prisons, and also through the religious newspaper and magazine, which were most of the time illegal from a part of the communist regime. "In the Church had some uncertain possibility to officiate the religious services and also to publish a lot of theological and missionary books, this has done by the wisdom and diplomacy of the Orthodox clergy. They realized to do something in the legal ecclesiastic context, without the contradiction of the state laws. Moreover, the legislation of the Romanian Orthodox Church was elaborated in conformity with the canonical disposition of the Universal Orthodox Church, adapted to the new conditions in which must function the Church".¹⁴

¹² GEORGETA RĂDUICĂ, NICOLIN RĂDUICĂ, *Calendare și almanahuri românești (1731-1918)*. *Dicționar bibliografic*, București, 1981, p. 5.

¹³ IOAN CHIRILĂ, *Presa religioasă din Transilvania sec XIX-XX. (relatarea Marii Uniri – cu accent major pe Telegraful român)*, în vol.: *Tradiții ale presei religioase din România*, Coordonatori: Carmen Țărgorean, Ilie Rad, Ed. Presa universitară clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, p. 50.

¹⁴ LILIANA NACLAD, *Discursul religios în mass-media. Cazul României postdecembriste*, Prefață de Manuela Cernat, Institutul European, Iași, 2013, p. 24.

In the relationship between Church and the atheistic communist state, the Church resisted through a moderate opposition, developing a strategy of self-adaptation to times. “Because the Kingdom of Christ has a spiritual and eschatological nature, the Orthodox Church didn’t have a dispute with some kind of ideology of political regime or system, whatever it was. Certainly, the social structures and political orders of the time aren’t an indifferent matter for the Church because he has always been preoccupied with the wellbeing of humans, with priority care for his spiritual mission”.¹⁵ Therefore, the editorial publications (books or periodic) played the role of transmission of the religious teachings and of the activities of the Church towards the laic society.

Among the religious publication post 1989, with a great impact on audience, we can remember: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română (Romanian Orthodox Church)* – was published for the first time at the beginning of 19th century, having the purpose to inform the clergy and the believers about the activity of the Romanian Orthodox Council. The role of the periodic was to popularize the theological culture through treated and historical articles, studies and researches on moral, biblical exegesis, liturgical, apologetic and Romanian spirituality issues, also through the presentation of the needs and necessities of the clergy, through the publishing of some homilies and translations and through the presentation of the activities from the other Orthodox Churches; *Ortodoxia (Orthodoxy)* – is a trimestral periodic published under the edifice of the Romanian Patriarchate, starting with 1949, from 2009 in a new series; *Studii teologice (Theological Studies)* – the periodic of all theological faculties from all the Romanian Patriarchate with a trimestral apparition, starting with 1929; *Chemarea credinței (The Calling of Faith)* – is a periodic also sustained by the Romanian Patriarchate, destined especial to the children and Christian family; *Telegraful Român (Romanian Telegraph)* – this publication of Archdiocese of Sibiu is the oldest one, with uninterrupted appearance in Transylvania, from 1853;¹⁶ *Revista Teologică (Theological Review)* – is a scientific publication of Archdiocese of Sibiu, having uninterrupted appearance from 1907. The main topic of this periodic is: biblical study, systematic and liturgical theology. It is a trimestral publication; *Teologie și viață (Theology and life)* – is the periodic of the Archdiocese of Iasi, with trimestral periodicity; *Altarul Banatului (The Altar of Banat)* – it was initially

¹⁵ ANTONIE, Mitropolit al Transilvaniei, „Documentaire: Eglise et Etat en Roumanie”, in: *Nouvelles de l’Eglise Orthodoxe Roumanie*, XIX, 1989, 5, p. 12.

¹⁶ MIRCEA PĂCURARIU, *op. cit.*, p. 99, 312.

printed at Tipografia Diecezană of Caransebes, founded in 1885 by the bishop Ioan Popasu, with six numbers per year.

We must not forget *Lumina (The Light)* publications – *Ziarul Lumina (The Light Newspaper)*, *Lumina de Duminică (The Light of Sunday)* and *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei (The Messenger of Orthodoxy)* – incorporated in the Basilica Media Center of the Romanian Patriarchate, founded in 27 of October 2007.

The first number of the periodic *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei (The Messenger of Orthodoxy)*¹⁷ was published on Friday, 29 of December 1989, having four pages. A very important place had the Message of subscription of the Holy Council of the Romanian Orthodox Church for the new political organization of Romania. In this context, we can find here the urge for unity and also the Christmas greetings of the Patriarch Teoctist (in the section entitled: “The national Church, beside the people”). Also, we can find in these periodic articles regarding the sacrifice of Romanian heroes (“Their memory from generation to generation”), literal and historical compositions (as: “The liberty – communion of renaissance”). Officially, this project was adopted by the Holy Council, in the period of 17/18 January 1990, square his official name. For a year, this periodic was named *Vestitorul (The Messenger)*. Starting from 15 of May 1993 was established the title which is available till today: *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei (The Messenger of Orthodoxy)*. From 1993 was created an editorship specially dedicated the activities for children in the media department of the Romanian Patriarchy, under the name of *Chemarea Credenței (The Calling of Faith)*. From 2008, *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei* became a part of *Lumina* periodics, as integrated part of the *Basilica Mass-media Center* of the Romanian Patriarchy. On this occasion was inaugurated a new series which, starting with the number 415 on January 2008, became a monthly magazine containing religious news from Romanian Patriarchy. In December 2014, in the context of the anniversary of quarter of century from the first published number, was realized two DVD’s which contain the digital archive of the magazine, for the period of 1989-2014 and it also was launched a website.

*Ziarul Lumina (The Light Newspaper)*¹⁸ is a daily publication of the Romanian Patriarchy which appeared for the first time in Moldavia, at Iasi, on 7 of February 2005, having the name of *Lumina (The Light)*. In this Christian daily periodic are published the actual news, documentary

¹⁷ <https://vestitorulortodoxiei.ro/istoric/> (access: 10.03.2018).

¹⁸ <http://ziarullumina.ro/> (access: 10.03.2018).

on diverse theme, laical or religious, interview with personalities from the Church and society, and also reportages from the space of the religious life, local events, national and international, economical and financial news, diverse editorials and opinion texts. From 16 of October 2005 it was published without interruption the weekly periodic *Lumina de Duminică* (*The Light of Sunday*). From 2008, *Ziarul Lumina* (*The Light Newspaper*) became a part of *Basilica Mass-media Center* of the Romanian Patriarchy. The regional pages of the periodic (for Moldavia, Transylvania, Oltenia and Banat) contain: Religious Actuality, Social Actuality, Philanthropy of the Church, Reportages, Documentary, Education, Culture, Memory of the Church, Interview, Editorial, Technology, Religion and Science, Patristic, Church and Society, Diaspora, etc.

In 2018, the third periodical publication (the daily *Ziarul Lumina*, weekly *Lumina de Duminică* and the magazine of religious information *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*) continued the activity of media service of the Church in the context of the Romanian Unification Centenary. Therefore, in this year had been published many historical documentaries and unpublished materials about the contribution of the Romanian Orthodox Church at the Great Unification and where realized journalistic portraits of some important personalities who were implied in this historical event from 1918 of Romania.

In these conditions, having a monthly print of 22.400 exemplars, *Ziarul Lumina* (*The Light Newspaper*) is on the third place in the general statistic of the mass-media printed publication from Romania.¹⁹ “In a time with many shortcomings regarding the knowing of the orthodox values, *Ziarul Lumina* (*The Light Newspaper*) and *Lumina de Duminică* (*The Light of Sunday*) work to transmit to the Romanian society from today the light of faith and of the Christian spiritual life as agent of hope and communication in society. The publications *Lumina* (*The Light*) give testimony about the light of faith and of good deeds from the life of the Orthodox Romanian dioceses, from the parishes, monasteries and many ecclesiastical institutions”.²⁰

The written media from Craiova has also had a very old and complex history. We must remember that, in the European context, the Romanian media is somehow in retard: the first publication it appeared at Anver, in 1605. In Craiova, the first media publication is the periodic

¹⁹ <https://basilica.ro/catedrala-nationala-si-lucrarea-sociala-sinteza-activitatilor-bisericii-ortodoxe-romane-in-anul-2018/> (access: 10.03.2018).

²⁰ †DANIEL Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, „Ziarul Lumina – ani de lucrare misionară”, în *Comuniune și Înnoire Misionară. Lucrarea Bisericii în societate în anul 2013*, Ed. BASILICA a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2014, p. 77.

Mozaicul (The Mosaic), edited by Constantin Lecca. First issue is in 1838. From this periodic, passing through the principal publication from Dolj District, as *Ramuri (Branches)*, *Arhivele Olteniei (Oltenia's Archive)*, *Scrisul Românesc (Romanian Writing)*, etc., the written media from Craiova made his presence felt in the Romanian cultural background. The periodic and the religious newspapers appeared also starting with the 20th century. Some of these are published till today, others closed their activity after some numbers.

In the periodic with theological profile, which appeared starting with the 20th century in Oltenia, some of the recently published, we can remember: *Sfânta Mitropolie a Olteniei, Râmnicului și Severinului (The Holly Metropolis of Oltenia)*; *Anuarul Seminarului Teologic „Sfântul Grigorie Decapolitul” din Craiova (The Yearbook of the Theological Seminary of Craiova)*; *Buletinul Arhiepiscopiei Craiovei (The Bulletin of Archdiocese of Craiova)*; *Buletinul Centrului pentru dialog între știință și teologie Craiova (The Bulletin of the Center for dialogue between science and theology of Craiova)*; *Calendarul creștinismului (Christian Calendar)*; *Calendarul „Lumina creștină” (The Calendar “Christian Light”)*; *Cetatea creștină (Christian Fortress)*; *Ecce Homo*; *Femeia ortodoxă (The Orthodox Woman)*; *Glasul femeii ortodoxe (The Voice of Orthodox Woman)*; *Îndrumătorul eparhial (Diocesan Guide)*; *Înnoire (Renewal)*; *Lumina creștină (Christian Light)*; *Luminătorul creștin (Christian Illuminator)*; *Renașterea (Renaissance)*; *Revista de istorie bisericească (The Periodic of Ecclesiastical History)*; *Mitropolia Olteniei (Metropole of Oltenia)*, etc. *Mitropolia Olteniei (Metropole of Oltenia)* is the official periodic of the Archdiocese of Craiova, the Archdiocese of Ramnic, of the Diocese Severin and Strehaia, of the Diocese Slatina and Romanati, and of the Faculty of Theology of Craiova. His first appearance was in 1950, in the same time with the reactivation of the Metropole of Oltenia.

3. The Church must (and can) use the mass-media in the support of his pastoral activities. Therefore, the Church fulfills his pastoral activity in a media world on which she must take into account more and more. The frequent conflicts between the secular mass-media and the Church underline the problematic of actuality. In this concern, media criticized the old and outdated position of the Church in society and the Church criticized the superficiality with which the media treated for instance the problematic of the human person.

One reason for which the Church showed repulsion towards some communication modalities was the language used by the secular channels

of television and also the deformation of the reality in favour of the sensational. From the Christian point of view, the message must cover the minds and also the heart, meaning the entire man created by God from body and soul. At the same time, it must be treated some theme of actuality and general interest because the Christian teaching must have a clear meaning for everyone. The Christian journalist must respond at the demands which are dedicated to the virtues and Christian values as: the truth of faith, the dignity of human person, the sacred character of family, etc.

ABSTRACT:

Nowadays, mass-media represents a support for the Church in his process of communication with his believers. *The liturgical and also the dogmatic message can reach easiest to the one who are far from the ecclesiastical and liturgical communion. In this case, we can say that the Church is very present in the life of the people and also much implicated in the modern society. For the Christians the communications (having here the mass-media channels) become communion because it represents the mission of the Church in the process of teaching and confessing the truth of the Gospel. We can say that the Church must use the modern channels of communication in media because she has the possibility and power to transform them after the words of the Holy Scriptures.*

In this regard, in the periodic and religious newspapers from our country, besides the period in which they appeared or the area in which they were distributed, there were published pages of great interest for the believers, written both by great theologians of the Church and also by the cultural personalities with love for the Christian values and faith. At the same time, alongside the theological issues, there existed also memorable pages about the architectural monuments and about the priests and believers which confessed the Orthodox faith in different periods of the history of the Church.

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