The Institution of Literary Genre in Old Romanian Culture

The Slavonic Case

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I n order to delineate the corpus of texts that make up the old Romanian litera-
ture, literary historians have adopted the most diverse strategies. The difficulties
encountered in the process of recognition and acceptance of an old text as a liter-
ary text have contributed to the dismissal of an important segment of our old culture.
The issues of temporal, linguistic, aesthetic paradigm boundaries, etc. have been and
remain distinct research directions, often with common goals and purposes.

The existence of a cultural Slavonicism in the Romanian countries between the 13th
and the 17th centuries is unanimously accepted.[1] The use of the Slavonic language in aulic
and ecclesiastical contexts decisively[2] influenced the profile of Romanian literature in
the Middle Ages and in the early modern period, which included mainly religious, his-
toriographical, hagiographical and epistolographical texts. It is known that the share of
the former is overwhelming, a fact that can be explained first of all by the autocracy of
the Orthodox Church in the cultural, political and social sphere of Romanian society
in the temporal interval mentioned above. The extension of this literature in the ver-
nacular language was one of the decisive factors that facilitated the emergence and
standardization of the Romanian literary language. However, the writing in the Slavonic
language of *literatures* in the secular sphere is the decisive factor that contributed to
the creation of a radicular system of literary genres and species. Moreover, as Professor
Dan Horia Mazilu firmly stated, in the 15th and 16th centuries, Romanian literature
had already established, along Byzantine and post-Byzantine lines, a system of literary
genres.[3] The predominantly Slavonic garb of the Romanian writing does not prevent the
identification in the evolution of our literature of a period of Renaissance influence
that began with *Învăţăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie* (The teachings
of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosius) (about 1520) and ended with the treatise
Despre generozitate (On generosity) from the Slavonic *Triodul penticostar* (Pentecost tri-

odion, 1649), probably edited by Udrişte Năsturel.[4] The identification in this period of literary genres practiced as institutions (historiography, parenetics, epistolography) directed us to the following question: to what extent can these genres function as transfer factors of literary authority? In order to answer this question, we consider several levels, including: identifying the texts that we consider as belonging to the old literature (1), namely, the existence or absence of a flow that ensures the continuity of the stable literary species of medieval Europe written in the Slavonic language, and later in the vernacular language (2). We refer here to epistolography and parenetics, because in our country they reach artistic maturity in Slavonic (later also in Greek), and they also (re)assert themselves in rhetorically polished structures, a fact that may seem paradoxical for a vernacular language lacking the necessary time to refine its literary form.

1. From a methodological point of view, the descriptive and diagnostic delineations applied to what we call nowadays the *old Romanian literature* can be subsumed to the extension of what G. Genette understood by the field of conditional *literarity*[5] "as a result of an apparently constant, or perhaps growing, tendency of aesthetic recovery, which acts everywhere and brings to the credit of art much of what the action of time takes, namely truth or utility: that is why a text enters easier the field of literature than exits it."[6] In the old Romanian literature, the reception of texts as literary works was facilitated by the acceptance of the two regimes of literariness defined by Genette, *constitutive* and *conditional*.[7] The *constitutive* regime was revealed by the use of some *formulas*: "the characters have performances ordered by etiquette, . . . the texts move on predetermined paths. Writers create according to the requirements of the etiquette, the reality of their discourse is subordinated to the percept..."[8] Applied diachronically to our old literature, the *formulas* are identifiable in the hagiographic literature by the *lives of saints* species, in the religious literature by *homily, acathistus, bidding prayer* etc. Those that are on the path of becoming long-lasting genres are the historiographic, parenetic and epistolary literatures. Thus, the construction of works is subordinated to a *ceremony* that expands tradition into a space of accumulations aimed at diversification and evolution: "The congruence of new elements in narrative structures is facilitated by gender indistinctiveness. Historiography, popular books, verse chronicles, ceremonial literature, religious polemic works, hagiographies all use common schemes and elements, have a common root system."[9] The *conditional* regime allowed the aesthetic recovery of texts by detecting within them structures traditionally assimilated to literature. Thus, the corpora of the old literature, under the pressure of the *analytical models* specific to the literary works, were investigated in order to identify the *hero*,[10] *the motif and the literary topic, the trail,* etc. Through this functional approach, texts belonging to the most diverse species (see in particular the extensive investigations on folk books) have been acknowledged as literary texts.

2. We consider that the *recovery* or the *assimilation* in the vernacular literature of some illustrious species written in Slavonic was done in two ways: one of them *direct,* the other *indirect*. The length of this process cannot be accurately estimated. We can establish a lower threshold (1521), identified in the Romanian epistolography: the formulation indi-

cates a long tradition involving the Slavonic language (see the initial and final formulas written in Slavonic), but the Romanian language was used in a smooth and coherent way. As a higher threshold, we refer to the printing of the *Biblia de la București* (The Bucharest Bible) (1688), recognized as a maturity exam of the Romanian literary language. After this moment, there are no *institutional* pressures recorded on the literary Romanian language. A synthetic look at the texts (copied or printed, translations or original) of the period we are referring to helps us identify the system of communication between the old literature in its Slavonic guise and the literature written in the vernacular language.

2.1. The direct manner involves the non-intermediated transposition, the takeover without other intermediaries, and is evident in manuscripts with interlinear writing, as it appears, for example, in *Psaltirea slavă* (The Slavic Psalter), copied by Ion Dobrul around 1457–1467, where verse 1 of Psalm 116 is rendered in Romanian[11] etc., and even later in the bilingual, trilingual etc. manuscripts or printings. The necessity of writing in Romanian as well as the drive to use the vernacular language in writing were discussed from different research perspectives, taking into account both the internal social-political and cultural factors (the so-called theory of internal drive) and the external ones (the theory of external influences, among them Bogomilism, Hussitism, Lutheranism). The unification and standardization of the Romanian language as a literary language only in the second half of the 17th century was seen by historians as a victory over the use of Slavonic language as a language of worship, but in fact the victory consisted in the formation of a unitary system capable to be recognized and accepted in writing in all the historical provinces inhabited by the Romanians.

The performance of the liturgical service in Romanian, using canonical texts of church reading, was introduced gradually, with parallel texts—see the *Evangheliar* (Gospel Book) in a bilingual Slavic-Romanian edition, edited between 1551 and 1553 by Filip Moldoveanu, *Psaltirea slavo-română* (The Slavic-Romanian Psalter), printed by Coresi in 1577—and partial translations—see, for example, the printing of the book *Svânta și dumnezăiasca Liturghie* (The holy and divine liturgy), drafted in Bucharest, in 1680, by Theodosius, the Metropolitan of Ungrovlachia, who preserved the Slavonic text and translated only the church formulary in Romanian, stating that "liturghiia toată a o prepune pre limba noastră și a o muta nice am vrut, nice am cutezat" (I have neither wished, nor dared to translate the entire liturgy and transpose it into our language). The fact that, until the beginning of the 19th century the *Cazania* (Book of sermons and homilies, 1643) edited by Varlaam was still used throughout the territory inhabited by the Romanians proves not only the immutability of the linguistic norms, but also their strong compatibility with the spirit of the language.

This manner of direct recovery is identified in texts that are not subject to the canonical and worship standards. Thus, in secular literature, we note that, until the standardization and unification of the Romanian literary language, considered by most linguists to be the publication of the *Bucharest Bible* (1688), there had been translated from Slavonic or Greek texts that consistently influenced the entire system of genres and literary species practiced in major cultures. It could be noticed that religious literature consisted mostly of translations. Texts from the most diverse registers, both canon-

ical (such as church readings, Christian doctrine, ecclesiastical law, exegesis and moral edification) and apocryphal (hagiographic and apocalyptic) were included here. Significantly, representative texts of civil law such as *Pravila lui Vasile Lupu* (The codex of Vasile Lupu, 1646) and *Îndreptarea legii* (The book of laws, Târgovişte, 1652) were translated. The same situation was found also in secular literature, likewise represented by translations. Popular books (*Alexandria, Floarea darurilor*/The flower of gifts, *Gromovnicul*, and also, after 1648, the novel *Varlaam şi Ioasaf* in Udrişte Năsturel's translation, etc.) are those that have reached us, being among the most popular ones. A particular feature related to the spread of these texts is their dissemination through the Miscellaneous Codices, the so-called *circulating libraries*. The thematic and stylistic amalgam of these Miscellanea, where these texts were copied fragmentarily or in full, proves the indiscriminate nature of reading (see *Codicele Bratul*, *Codicele Sturdzan*, *Codicele de la Ieud*, *Codicele Neagoean*, *Codicele Todorescu*, etc.).

Another particularity of this period, up to the moment of the unification of the literary language, is the activity of printing presses, closely related to the cultural development manifested through prints. We notice the almost simultaneous appearance of the first Romanian books in Wallachia (*Pravila de la Govora*/The Codex of Govora, 1640), Transylvania (*Evanghelia cu învăţătură*/The Gospel with teachings, 1641) and Moldavia (Varlaam's *Cazania*, 1643).

An important element, the refining of the language, is obvious in the case of the literary species not covered by translations. Texts belonging to polemical literature begin to appear (see Varlaam, *Răspuns împotriva Catehismusului calvinesc*/A response against Calvinist Catechism, 1645). Lyrical structures of smaller of greater importance are found both in the religious and the profane register: see Dosoftei's *Psalms* (*Psaltirea în versuri*/Verse psalter, 1673), but also verses covering philosophical (Miron Costin's *Viiaţa lumii*/The life of the world), political, social or historical topics: Mihai Halici junior's *Oda* (Ode, 1674), Franck von Franckenstein' *Epigrams* (1679), or *Domnii Ţării Moldovei* (The rulers of Moldavia) by Dosoftei (after 1686). However, it should be noted here that the first philosophical text written in Romanian is the translation of the treatise *Despre raţiunea dominantă* (On dominant reason), published in the *Bucharest Bible* as the *Fourth Book of the Maccabees*, whose style is influenced, to a large extent, by folk books. Historiographical literature, starting with Grigore Ureche's *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei* (Chronicle of Moldavia), the first chronicle in Romanian, opens the long list of similar texts written by Miron Costin, Vasile Damian, Teodosie Dubău and others. There were also attempts to create a scholarly literature, such as the Slavonic-Romanian lexicons—Mardarie Cozianul's *Lexicon* (1649), Mihai's *Lexicon* (1671)—or various textbooks—see *Geografia Ardealului* (Geography of Transylvania), edited between 1640 and 1660.

2.2. The indirect recovery method involves the cultivation of certain genres and literary species with a long tradition in medieval Europe. Old Romanian literature written in Slavonic allowed, based on the principle of communicating vessels, the development of a literature in the vernacular language capable of taking over long-lasting genres. Among these we can mention hagiography, parenetics, epistolography etc. For reasons directly related to the space granted to this article, I will only refer here to the latter, parenetics and epistolography, which had a productive presence in Romanian culture, the for-

mer as link with the 'mirror of princes' literature, the latter as the practice of epistolary writing in an original manner that goes beyond the utilitarian condition.

2.2.1. Parenetic literature has in *The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab* a splendid connection to European literature. Assimilated to the category called *Mirror of Princes* (*Specula principum, Fürstenspiegel*), *The Teachings* inaugurates an illustrious literary genre exemplified by original texts, translations or adaptations—see Matthew of Myra, *Sfaturi către Alexandru Iliaş* (Advice to Alexandru Iliaş, c. 1616–1618); Petru Movilă, *Sfaturi* (Advice), addressed to Moses, his brother, ascended to the throne of Moldova in 1631, contained in the preface to *Triodul ales* (Selected triodion, Kiev, 1631); Antim Ivireanul, *Sfătuiri creștine politice către . . . domnul domn Ioan Ștefan Cantacuzino* (Political Christian counsel to . . . Voivode Ioan Ştefan Cantacuzino) (Bucharest, 1715); Nicolae Mavrocordat, *Sfătuirile . . . date fiului său domnului domn Constantin Nicolae voievod, mai înainte de a fi domn, în anul mântuirii 1725* (Counsel . . . given to his son, Voivode Constantin Nicolae, before becoming a ruler, in the year of our Lord 1725) (in Greek), *Ceasornicul domnilor* (The clock of rulers, by Antonio de Guevara, translated by Nicolae Costin); *Capetele* (The heads) attributed to Basil I the Macedonian, and others. Thus, the structures of the forms of political power assert themselves, in their evolution from theocracy to monarchy, from unwritten law based on custom to legal norms that are based on erudite foundations.

However, for *The Teachings* here, in order to illustrate the topic of this article, we will only consider the sources used in the making of this first corpus of recommendations addressed to a prince and their evolution in our old culture. The case of popular books is representative. It is known that Neagoe's *Teachings* included parables and episodes from *Barlaam and Josaphat* (there are three interpretations in Romanian of this ascetic novel, by Udrişte Năsturel, c. 1649, Vlad Boţulescu, 1764 and Samuil Micu, before 1782; it should be also said that the oldest reference to this novel is in Slavic Ms. 132 BAR/Romanian Academy Library, copied at Neamţ Monastery and dating from the 15th century), from *Fiziologul* (The physiologist) (the oldest manuscript that reached us belongs to Costea Dascălul from Şcheii Braşovului and was copied in the last decade of the 17th century), from *Floarea darurilor* (one of the popular books with a large printed and manuscript circulation; the first Romanian translation, made between 1592 and 1604 on the basis of a Greek original introduced through a South Slavic intermediary, is in Rom. Ms. 4620 BAR, and the first printing in 1700 at Snagov Monastery was done by Antim Ivireanul; between the 17th and the 19th centuries the book enjoyed a large circulation in all Romanian provinces: 36 manuscripts, some of them Slavic-Romanian, and five printed editions, the last one printed in 1864). These texts would be found among the preferences of readers in olden times, a fact proven by their circulation in manuscript and printed forms.

Did *The Teachings* thus open a reading horizon and shape the taste for a particular literature? Or were they proving the existence of an already strong tradition, both in terms of the medieval individual's readings and his ability to select and adapt to the high style? If we take into consideration the effort of connecting with the spirit of the century in which they were composed and then translated, we will see that *The Teachings* prove, in the era of cultural bilingualism, the ability of cultural elites to gather in the fabric of a text all that helps in the training of an enlightened monk (lecturer): biblical

literature, patristics, folk books, rules of social, political and cultural ceremony. The 17th century, when the Romanian translation of this text was made, was one of recovery, because, let us not forget, the Romanian chronicles in Slavonic were also translated at that time. Commissioned for Voivode Matei Basarab, the translation of *The Teachings* was probably done by a close relative, possibly by Udrişte Năsturel (according to Gheorghe Mihăilă, an expert in Slavic studies). It is certain that the Romanian version is preserved in three manuscripts, all with a fascinating history, because they come from princely libraries. Thus, the oldest, prior to 1716, belonged to Ştefan Cantacuzino (Rom. Ms. 109 BAR, Cluj branch). A second was made in 1727, in summary form, at the request of Nicolae Mavrocordat (Rom. Ms. 1062 BAR). This one, by contamination with Rom. Ms. 3488 BAR, produced, at the beginning of the 19th century, the third variant, preserved in Rom. Ms. 3402, 2714 and 1069 BAR.

2.2.2 As far as our epistolary practice is concerned, we have shown in an earlier work[12] that it has a long tradition. This is proven first of all by the unity of diplomatic formulas in circulation in our cultural space. We have explained the recourse to the same epistolary formulas by the use of Slavic-Romanian and later Greek textbooks—see *Bracheia methodos pôs dei epistolên* (A short method on how a letter should be composed) (Venice, 1666); *Peri epistolikôn typôn* (About epistolary methods) of the Greek scholar Theophilus Corydaleus—used on a constant basis in our old schools and monasteries: "The steady gestures with which they are made—in a strict dependence on the established protocol—the charters issued by the voievodal chancelleries, the other papers and documents from the immense medieval Romanian *diplomatarium*, prove the level of education of the authors. The same constraint of the formulation—the obvious result of a systematic skill—is also felt in the preserved epistles."[13] However, beyond the substantial diplomatic treasure, in our old literature there is a distinct way to use the epistle: to insert it into the structure of other texts. This way of capitalizing on the epistolary text is accomplished according to the rules of verisimilitude, established since the Roman-Byzantine era. It is worth mentioning here Eusebius of Caesarea, who replaced the fictional rhetorical speeches "with excerpts from documents of the era: decrees, acts of law, letters, etc."[14]

In *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei*, Grigore Ureche recorded the existence of several documents without reproducing any of them. However, in the commentary nearly always accompanying the epistolary exchange, the chronicler captured the conflicts in which illustrious correspondents were involved. Miron Costin, in *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei de la Aron vodă încoace* (Chronicle of Moldova since the reign of Voivode Aron), reproduces for the first time an in-extenso epistle and makes a catalogue of the documents that circulated in the era: deeds of confirmation, letters demonstrating the duplicitous attitude of the issuer, compromising letters, letters of denunciation, oath, letters mistakenly fallen into the hands of the enemy, etc. The epistolary account is subordinated to the temptation to disclose the deeds that lead to an outcome most often anticipated by the chronicler. In Neculce's work, the epistles inserted in the *Letopisets* lead to a joke or a comment. They are subordinated to the investigation of the Moldavian-Wallachian morals through sensational accounts, terrible treasons, magnificent plots, the most diverse revelations (even the technique of de-sealing/re-sealing letters is presented), etc. In the Wallachian chronicles, epistolary insertion into the epic corpus is required by *an event*.

It becomes commonplace for the wandering boyars to be betrayed by their correspondence, for the ascension or descent from the throne to be announced by documents, for the changes in neighboring countries to be communicated by *letter* or, most interestingly, for the encomium, which is written by each of the chroniclers, to find irrefutable resources in the charters employed by the two rulers to forgive, reign, and administer the wealth of the country. The epistles occupy a privileged space in the important reigns, as through them the rulers were discredited, defeated or victorious, etc. Frequently, they amplify the narrative, diversify the perspectives and announce new projects at the epic level (a military incursion or a refusal to pay the tribute) that trigger reading expectations. The epistolary insertion in the literary works drew, to a large extent, on the rhetorical code. It is worth mentioning that "some popular novels served in the Romanian Middle Ages as texts for acquiring the writing and reading skills."[15] This pedagogical perspective can also be supported by the fact that, in the popular books, there are extensive epistles (which develop as narrative micro-structures), with all the traditional Slavic-Romanian formulas. However, it is imprudent to attribute the status of *hypotext* to those folk books in which epistolography seemed "to be a favored occupation" (see for example *Alexandria*).

To illustrate such practice raised to the level of *ars epistolaria*, we refer to the first Romanian allegorical novel written by Prince Dimitrie Cantemir at the beginning of the 18th century: *Istoria ieroglifică* (Hieroglyphic history). There are 16 epistles inserted here. These appear as narrative microstructures indicating the course of events, which aim to clarify the relationships between characters, to plan some actions and/or reveal others already secretly performed. The epistolary insertion is justified both in a narrative and a rhetorical manner. The epistles help reveal the meaning of the rhetoric skill, because by refining a form, the author reveals the desired significations, altering the perception of some of their characters or actions. The prince sought, as in all his work, to *refine* the language and use it in rhetorical structures that would allow the revelation of the hidden hieroglyph, since: "nu atâta cursul istoriii în minte mi-au fost, pre cât spre deprinderea ritoricească nevoindu-mă, la simcea groasă ca aceasta, prea aspră piatră multă şi îndelungată ascuţitură să fie am socotit" (I focused less on the actual events as they unfolded and more on the rhetorical skill itself, seeking to diligently polish this rough stone).

In conclusion, the epistolary insertion can be read transversely by setting fiction in the wake of the historiographical and normative literatures (epistolary textbooks). The presence of epistles in works that enjoyed a long life appears as a proof of belonging to a common thematic ensemble. As a matter of fact, the unity of text editing contributed to their undifferentiated reception. This is also demonstrated by the corpora of thematically mixed texts which circulated together in the so-called "circulating library" (Dan Horia Mazilu) or "portable libraries" (Alexandru Duţu): "The existence of such composite copies also suggests that the mentality of the 17th and 18th centuries did not distinguish between types and categories of texts, did not imply a 'canon,' did not feature classification criteria implicitly in the memory, but instead put together different fragments depending on individual interest, on certain personal preferences."[16]

The adoption of epistolary formulas in historiography and in fiction (folk books, religious novels, etc.) helped establish this form of communication in writing the vernac-

ular language and, implicitly, proved the indirect transfer of a species written in the Slavonic language, and then, with great skill, in Romanian.

THE PRACTICE in Slavonic language of some literary species connected to the fixed literary genres of medieval Europe was one of the factors that contributed to their emergence in Romanian language in refined artistic forms, able to overcome the utilitarian primacy and to meet the aesthetic criteria of the era. Undoubtedly, the ancient Slavonic literature provided a certain heritage for the subsequent epochs which transferred it from the European Middle Ages towards the early Romanian modernity. Among the merits of these Slavonic texts, we recall that, directly or indirectly, they constituted structures identified as literary by reference to the root system of genres and species practiced by us. By doing so, they were able to convey artistic information and to prepare, to a great extent, both the generic matrix used in the vernacular language and the reading taste for certain categories of texts. Let us not ignore the fact that fragments from the books of the European Middle Ages, melted, after the practice of those times, in the corpus of some vernacular texts, would later on be found translated in-extenso or partially in Romanian anthologies or in reputable editions.

Cultural Slavonicism mediated, in the field of literature, the adoption, based on the capacity of the age, of some literary institutions that formed the basis of Romanian writing. The process of linguistic and institutional standardization imposed by the rigors of the Romanian language practice in church, etc. took place concurrently with the production of an original literature, capable of borrowing, transforming and creating artistic structures.

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Notes

1. See Ioan-Aurel Pop, "Slavonismul cultural," in *Enciclopedia literaturii române vechi*, gen. ed. Eugen Simion (Bucharest: Editura Muzeul Naţional al Literaturii Române, 2018), 835–841.
2. Ibid., 840: "Much has been written about Orthodoxy and cultural Slavonicity as factors that allegedly slowed down and even prevented for centuries the progress of the Romanians according to the successful model (Catholic and Protestant), that separated Romanian culture from its natural Roman roots and prevented the synchronization of the Romanian civilization with the Western one. The assertion, beyond all the risks it entails, is non-historical. History has the essential role of reconstituting the past, that is, of rebuilding the revolutionary societies as they were, and not as they could or should have been, according to some people's imagination. The Romanians did not adopt the Byzantine (Byzantine-Slavic) religious model and cultural Slavonicism because they were forced to do so by decisions taken by external power factors but because they were geographically located in regions where these phenomena prevailed, on the one hand, and because these facts of faith and culture were better suited to their way of life, to their stage of organization, to their agrarian-pastoral way of life."
3. Dan Horia Mazilu, *Recitind literatura română veche: Partea I: Privire generală* (Bucharest: Editura Universităţii Bucureşti, 1994), 89.
4. Ibid., 92.
5. Gérard Genette, *Introducere în arhitext: Ficţiune şi dicţiune*, transl. and foreword by Ion Pop (Bucharest: Univers, 1994), 86–87.

6. Ibid., 104.
7. For an extended analysis, see also Laura Bădescu, *Literatura română veche: Repere semnificative* (Piteşti, 2004), 7–17.
8. Mazilu, 81.
9. Mihai Moraru, *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* (Bucharest: Editura Fundaţiei Culturale Române, 1997), 65.
10. For example, Elvira Sorohan in *Introducere în istoria literaturii române* (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Al. I. Cuza," 1997) established some fundamental dimensions of the medieval hero model. Thus, the feudal imaginary of the 14th century and of the first decades of the next century was dominated by the model of the *voivode founding a country*. A legendary figure, he is a kind of priest of the symbolic hunting ritual. This is how Miron Costin tells that Dragoş, miraculously guided by wild aurochs, reconquers the country of Moldavia after recognizing it as an ancestral land. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the *hero*, defender of his country, characterized by *sapientia et fortitudo*, emerged as a dominant figure. At that time, the inhabitants of these places were involved in violent warlike actions that did not allow for cultural reflection. As far as books are concerned, this is the time of the monks. The boyars, no matter how educated and prepared to write, were involved in heroic acts together with the ruler. The first original chronicles remain entirely anonymous. The book is an exception and a sacred object. The 17th century imposed another model, that of the *monarch as a protector of culture*, this model being doubled by another, that of the scholar, boyar or clergyman, lawmaker, chronicler, writer of original books about the history of the origins. This was due to the fact that social life began to be ruled by written laws, which shows the emergence of books from anonymity.
11. See Ştefan Munteanu and Vasile D. Ţâra, *Istoria limbii române literare: Privire generală*, rev. and expanded edition (Bucharest: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1983), 55.
12. See Laura Bădescu, *"... şi au scris carte": Eseu asupra epistolei medievale în literatura română* (Bucharest: Ars Docendi, 2003).
13. Mazilu, 99.
14. Andrei Cornea, *Mentalităţi culturale şi forme artistice în epoca romano-bizantină (300–800)* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1984), 135.
15. Dan Simonescu, *Romanul popular în literatura română medievală* (Bucharest: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică 1965), 63.
16. Mircea Vasilescu, *"Iubite cetitoriule...": Lectură, public şi comunicare în cultura română veche* (Piteşti–Bucharest–Braşov–Cluj-Napoca: Paralela 45, 2001), 72.

Abstract
The Institution of Literary Genre in Old Romanian Culture: The Slavonic Case

In this article we consider a seemingly peripheral fact that has largely remained outside the interest of literary historians: the Slavic roots of Romanian literature. To what extent have the texts written in the Slavonic language exerted modeling pressures—in terms of formulation, literary species and genres practiced—on the old Romanian literature? Can cultural bilingualism be referred to as a factor of evolution or, on the contrary, as a factor of stagnation in old Romanian literature?

Keywords