**Philippians, 3, 8 in Romanian language: a case of primacy of norm**

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**Abstract**

In the present paper, the study of the variants given by the translators of the bible text into the Romanian language during the old age and contemporary to the verse under Philippians, 3, 8, which contains in the Greek version a rare word in the Bible (σκύβαλα), highlights the fact that the act of translation places the text on the path of a language, subjecting it to the state of the language at a given moment and to its evolution. At any moment, there is a formal adjustment, which follows what is considered to be correct or at least linguistically possible: first, it is that of the foreign text to the new language—Romanian; then, it is that of the Romanian text to the renewals of the Romanian language—adjustment that may ignore the original requirements, from a given moment in the history of producing and receiving that text in the Romanian language and culture; thus, the correctness of the text is controlled by the norm of the language and by the appearance of its semantic accuracy.

In the last sequence of Phil, 3, 8, the history of rendering the element of comparison in the Romanian language constitutes a very good case of primacy of the norm of the language over the originary content (in relation to the direct source text)—recoverable, but exclusively by metalinguistic means.

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1. **Introduction**

1.1. **A rare word in the Bible**

This paper is a study of the variants given by the translators of the bible text into the Romanian language during the old age and contemporary to a verse of the New Testament, which contains in the Greek version, a rare word in the Bible\(^1\) The term is σκύβαλον, τό, present in Philippians, 3, 8: “ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ ἡγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου, δι’ ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθην, καὶ ἡγοῦμαι σκύβαλα ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω” (BNT) [“Mai mult însă, eu pe toate le socotesc pagubă faţă de nepreţuitul preţ al cunoaşterii lui Hristos Isus, Domnul meu, de dragul Căruia m’am lăsat păgubit de toate şi le socotesc drept gunoaie pentru ca să-L cîştig pe Hristos”, Anania 2001].

The contexts σκύβαλον, τό is ascertained into in antique literature enable framing two sets of definitions to it:

- a) ‘what is thrown away, garbage, remains’ [Engl. refuse, offal, LIDDELL–SCOTT s.v.; Fr. débris jeté de côté, restes d’un repas, débris rejetés par la mer, BAILLY s.v.],
- b) ‘excrements’ [Engl. (human) excrement, dung, manure, LIDDELL–SCOTT s.v.; Fr. excrément, BAILLY s.v.].

In the Greek literature in its entirety, the term is rather rare, present somehow more frequently in non-literary documents. Lang (1995, p. 445–447) suggests that σκύβαλον was specific to the colloquial use, to the colloquial speech\(^2\); the Greek authors “hesitated” to use it (as it also turns out in looking up the word in the

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1 Email address: chiriladina@yahoo.com.
2 Besides the occurrence in Philippians, 3, 8, discussed here, there also exists the one in Sirah, 27, 4: ἐν σείσματι κοσκίνου διαμένει κοπρία ὡς σκύβαλα ἀνθρώπου ἐν λογισμῷ αὐτοῦ (LXT–LXX) [“Când sita cerne, în ea rămâne tărâța; aşa şi scăderile omului în ceea ce vorbeşte”, Anania 2001].
3 Cf. BAILLY, s.v., “familier”.

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As a taboo term in its synonymic series, from a lower register, the word σκόβαλον seems to be perceived as inadequate to the cult use and consequently strongly connotated when used (see Trudgill, 1981). Nevertheless, the observation is general in nature, and the question: To what extent is this vision justified on the term itself in a given text, such as the Pauline one, taking into account the historical and temporal context of its use? is completely relevant.

1.2. Pragmatic motivation

Undoubtedly, in some ancient texts around the time when the apostolic activity is recorded, σκόβαλον was used with its scatological meaning, in a way that follows the recipient’s disgust; still, in the same period, the use with a less aggressive meaning4 is recorded; therefore, on lexicological and lexicographic bases, it is unclear which of the groups of meanings assigned to the term should be activated when reading some text, be it in re-creation of the social, behavioural and linguistic behavioural realities of the 1st century.

In this case, the assignment of the accurate reading of a word needs to be substantiated on the reading assigned to the text that includes that word, hermeneutics having to resort to rhetorical and doctrinal arguments.

The verse we are referring to is part of a polemic that has been repeatedly argued by Paul5. In Romans (2, 25–29), for example, as in Philippians (3, 1–9), the superiority of the new covenant (by faith in Jesus Christ) is argued, over the old covenant (by observing all rules), to acquire “peace with God” (Rom, 5, 1). But while the persuasion in Romans is based on logos (resort to rational arguments), in Philippians the persuasion through ethos (Paul—a fully justified Jew by law—invokes his personal experience as testimony) and persuasion through pathos (through emotional appeals) are dominant.

Among the linguistic means used in the discursive construction of emotions, Plantin (2004) also mentions “emotional statements” or, more accurately, as the author’s explanations indicate, “statements with emotional value” (emotional sentences, p. 268)—which take the place, in speech, of the emotional lexicon itself and which, from a linguistic point of view, make the connection between an individual and an emotional term. In other words, there are situations where the emotional discourse is defined by a linguistic material whose emotional component is triggered by analogy (Plantin, 2004, p. 269). In the passage from Phil, 3, 1–9, this aspect of the persuasive approach is represented by three discursive sequences: two in v. 2: Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας [“Păziți-vă de câini!”, Anania 2001], βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν [“Păziți-vă de ’m prej urul tăierii!”, Anania 2001] and one in v. 8: δι᾽ ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐξημιώθην, καὶ ἕγομαι σκόβαλα [“de dragul Căruia m’am lăsat păgubit de toate și le socotesc drept gunoaie”, Anania 2001].

The (metaphorical) depreciating value of the first two terms mentioned, κύων, κυνός, ὁ and κατατομή, ἡ, ἡ, in the context of Phil, 3, 2, is usually highlighted (in Greek dictionaries, in the lexicographic papers dedicated to the New Testament language, in the comments to modern translations—for example, regarding us, in the notes of the Anania 2001 version of the Bible):

κύων: a particularly bad person, perhaps specifically one who ridicules what is holy – ‘bad person, dog’ (...) ‘pervert’ (LOUW–NIDA s.v.); a term of reproach for persons regarded as unholy and impure (FRIBERG s.v.); of male sacred prostitutes (LIDDELL–SCOTT s.v.) etc.;

κατατομή: to mutilate by severe cutting” (LOUW–NIDA s.v.); strictly cutting into, as hacking or chopping up (sacrificial) meat (FRIBERG s.v.); “Between this term (katatome) and that of

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5Cf. the statistics offered by PDL for a more reduced corpus [online].

4The use in both ways is documented in depth by lexicologist and lexicographs; see the above quoted dictionaries, s.v.

5See reference to Phil, 3, 1: “...Ca să vă scriu aceleaşi lucruri (s.n.), mie nu-mi este greu, iar voulă vă este întărire” (Anania 2001), “posibilă aluzie la o epistolă care nu s’â păstrat” (idem, note a).
the next verse (peritomé) there is a sarcastic word game by which Paul associates the Jewish circumcision (more precisely, that of the Judaizers) with the bodily self-mutilation of the pagan orgiastic rituals" (Anania 2001, Phil, 3, 2, note b) etc.

The joining of the two terms and choosing them for the designation of some persons who, practicing circumcision as part of a millenary sanctification ritual, had, until recently, been in the absolute right and proper canon, had to shock, to arouse a definitive reaction of rejection. After Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, the practice of circumcision had become not only superfluous, but also offensive, proving the inability of the “Judaizers” to understand the absolute sacrifice of Christ for the redemption of the soul.

The content of the third term, σκύβαλον, o, τό, from v. 8, must be referred to the content of the first two discussed. The image at the end of v. 8 represents the climax of Paul’s diatribe against the claim of justification by deeds (performing rituals, observing the complex Old Testament law, etc.), as opposed to justification by faith. In the context of the controversy with the Judaizing adversaries, the persuasive speech addressed to the unstable church in Philippi ensures its efficiency by using a shocking term, all the more expressive as it is taken from the colloquial, harsh and repulsive speech, which renders not only the idea of worthlessness, but especially that of disgust. In the context of Phil, 3, 8, the discussed word thus accepts the scatological meaning and the vulgar hue. This idea is also supported by what is not yet the text that contains it: that is, sacred writing, with an assigned sober and formal nature—which are nothing but cultural engravings, eminently subsequent to the production of the text.

2. Philippians, 3, 8, Romanian versions

2.1. From Sl. qìgòû to Rom. gunoi

In the face of this textual reality, the translation starts and develops in various ways, depending on the weight of some factors that relate to a) the translator’s comprehension abilities and thus his need to express the content understood, b) the possibilities of the target language, c) the cultural accumulations (along with the natural prejudices!) regarding the reception and transmission of the text and last but not least, d) the distance—in terms of interlinguistic linking—between the primordial source and, in fact, the direct source-text of a translation (successive translations produce semantic changes, and the quality of a translation is judged by the reference to its direct source).

At the beginning of the 16th century, the translator of the text that gets to be printed by Coresi in Brașov, in 1567, as Lucrul apostolesc is not put in the situation, not even theoretical, to refer to a Romanian formal-textual tradition, its reflection of honour of the sacredness of the text through the preservation of the form not being in this point of the translation other than the one which usually requires in this time, the translation “in letter”. Thus, he is based on what he understands and on the liberty to operate with the elements of the Romanian language, insofar as he allowed by the debt felt towards his source text. In the place concerned (Phil, 3, 8), the product is this: “Că aceea toată o țin pagubă cătră pre cinstita cunoscuta lu Hristos Isus Domnului mieu. Derept aceea acealea toate le-am socotit pagubă și mie o țin ca u‹n› gunoi să fie” (CA, s.n., A.C.), in relation to an original whose identity—Slavonic or German—is (no longer) sure.

The topic of the models of the Coresian Apostle was reopened by Costinescu (1980), after a period of consensus that admitted exclusively the existence of some Slavonic versions at the base of the Romanian sources of printing. The researcher brought into question a German source-text (i.e. Luther’s Bible—145), which would justify the translator’s language choices and numerous

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6From here, the pragmatic nature of the letter: “Paul’s intention was obviously to imbue his letters with power (s.n., A.C.) to convince and to persuade through the use of rhetorical rules, but without taking on the role of a sophist or a philosopher” (Dormeyer, 2004, p. 70).
passages, “unexplainable by the Slavonic versions reflected by the rest of the text (ms. sl. BARS 21 and 435)” (Costinescu, 1980, p. 129). The fragment we are studying in this paper (i.e. Phil, 3, 8) does not appear among those discussed by Mariana Costinescu and which, subjected to the comparative linguistic analysis, shows greater closeness of the Coresian printed text to the German version especially in the part corresponding to the letters (idem, p. [135] and [136]); it is possible that the researcher omitted it by chance (she did not envisage, in fact, an exhaustive approach, and “[e]xamples [...] that illustrate the dependence of the Coresian version of the Apostle on Luther’s German text can multiply”, idem, p. [134]), as well as it is possible to have considered that the linguistic peculiarities could function as evidence of the “deviations” from the Slavonic archetype, respectively of the “closeness” to the German one, are not as eloquent as in other cases (see p. 129–[135]). Applying the analytical model of the researcher from Bucharest, observing the three variants in parallel,

Că aceea toată o țin pagubă cătră pre cinstita cunoscuta lu Hristos Isus Domnului mie. Derept aceea aceale toate le-am socotit pagubă și mie o țin ca u›n› gunoi să fie (ca),

Denn ich achte es alles für Schaden gegen die überschwengliche Erkenntnis Christi Jesu, meines Herrn, um welches willen ich alles habe für Schaden gerechnet und achte es für Dreck, auf daß ich Christum gewinne (l45),

it is found that, strictly at the lexical-semantic level, the translator’s linguistic options (or of the reviser of the text, before printing) are at equal distance from both possible archetypes, the text requesting no other material than the one that could be customarily Romanian in the middle of the 16th century.

An element that however seems to have some weight in supporting Mariana Costinescu’s idea, at least in the sense of collating the Romanian version on the basis of a German version as well. It is a matter of composition of the Romanian text, which makes use of the equivalent of a ține, for Sl. вълкнити (влъкнати), Lat. ‘putare’ (MIKLOSICH s.v.) and/or Germ. achten, according to the explicit structure of the Lutheran version: thus, the repetition of the verb a ține in “...toată o țin pagubă [...] și o țin că u›n› gunoi să fie...” corresponds to the repetition present in Germ. “...ich achte es alles für Schaden [...] und achte es für Dreck...”, versus to the situation in the Slavonic text, where the verb of the ‘assumed knowledge’ is noted only once, in the first sequence of the quote: “...влъкнати въ̀ка тъ̀мета бы́тт [... ] и м̀на “о́мёть бы́тт...”; on the other hand, the dative regime of this verb “added” in the Romanian text—“... mie (o țin) ca u›n› gunoi...”—clearly indicates the influence of the Slavonic construction: “м̀на “о́мёты””.

The form u‹n› gunoi translates the pl. Ac., омёты, from ms. sl. BARS 21 (Sl. омёть, m. pl. омёти ‘σκύβαλα, σκύβαλη’ stercora, MIKLOSICH s.v.), the word being itself an old Slavic loan: гнёзд, m. ‘γνήσιο’ putrefactio ‘γάφρ’ρου’ κόπρος, ’κόπρια’ stercus (MIKLOSICH s.v.), quite well represented in the 16th century Romanian texts. The contexts it is used in—apart from that of Coresi’s Lucrua apostolesc—undoubtedly indicate it as a synonym of омёть, with a clear (or, in some cases, at least very likely) scatological and

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7Here, we express our gratitude towards Mr. Gh. Chivu, Univ. Professor, who facilitated our access to the Slavonic text; and towards Mr. Richard Sârbu, Univ. Professor, who supported our grammatical analysis of the fragment.
8We specify that the text ms. BARS 435 was not accessible to us; according to the corresponding text in the “Црквенославенски Bible [online].
9We admit that should one refer the Romanian text to more than one source-language, i.e. to German besides Slavonic, one shall rely on Mariana Costinescu’s observations (see Moldovanu, 2009, p. 106, who considers that the researcher from Bucharest “definitely demonstrated”—s.n., A.C.—the dependence of a part of the Coresian Apostle to Luther’s Bible”), and not on those presented by us.
scabrous meaning, which would correspond to the second set of definitions (see above) of Gr. σκῠβᾰλον, τό:

Zise cătră viiariul: “Iată, trei ani de cînd vii, caut rod la smochinul acesta și nu aflu. Taie-l, amu; drep ce și pămîntul deșcartă?” El răspunse, zise lui: “Doamne, lasă-l și în cest an, pînă o voi săpa împrejur și-i voi băga gunoi; și de, amu, va face rod, iară de nu, întru venire tāia-veri ia” (ct), Așa, amu, toți de nu să va lepăda de toată avuțiia lui, nu poate fi mie ucenic. Bună sare; de se va sara împuți, cu ce o veri săra? Nece în pămînt, nece în gunoi treabnică iaste, afară să o vărși. Cine are urechi de ascultare să auză! (ct);

Unora le va fi fața ca țărâna pămîntului, alții ca tina spurcată din uliță, alții ca gunoiul (CTod; see also CST),

Și potrebiară-se în Indor și fură ca gunoiul pămîntului. (CPS–R; see also PH, PS, PV),

Nu osîndireți să nu osîndiți fiți; cu ce judecată judeca-vreți, judeca-să-va voao, și cu ce măsură măsura-vreți, măsura-se-va voao. Ce vezi gunoiul în ochiul fratelui tău, vîrghiia în ochiul tău nu simți, sau cum grăești fratelui tău “Lasă-mă să iau gonoiul den ochiul tău și ia tu vîrghie din ochiul tău” . Fațarnice, ‹i›è mainte vîrghie den ochiul tău și atunce veri vedea a lua gunoiul din ochiul fratelui tău. (CB),

Domnul mesereaște și bogățeaște, și smereaște și rădică. Înalță de pămînt measerul, și den gunoi rădică mișelul, să puie el cu tarii oamenilor și scaun slăvit să dea lui (cps–r; see also PS, PV, EP); cf. gunoiște (Sl. ғınwît ‘fimetum’, MIKLOSICH 2, s.v.), gunosi (Sl. ғıııqɛı c# ‘abominari’, MIKLOSICH 2; ‘a se scîrbi’, Rosetti, 1978, p. 594):

In the 16th century the Romanian word does not know the plural form; therefore, the use in Phil, 3, 8 of a singular where the Slavonic source text presents a plural does not belong to the translator’s choice (which may be—possibly in the particular case of CA—guided by the existence of a singulare tantum in the German model L45, i.e. Dreck), as long as the Romanian language itself does not practice a plural form that takes the noun out of the category of matter names singularia tantum. When it does appear, however, it stimulates the semantic nuance of the word, reaching (in addition to what was allowed by the singular gunoi), a result that coincides with the content of the first set of definitions for the Gr. σκῠβᾰλον, τό, used properly and figuratively:

canoanele 85 [...] poruncim și noi să să ție întărite și adevărate, însă fără de poslaniile și răspunsurile lui Climent, că într-acelea multe taini, zizanii și gunoae de sminteală au băgat zlocestivii (p 1652);

Pre unii omora la casa lui și le ascundea trupurile în gunoaie (CM);

Iar dorobanții să bucura, și-îi călea cu picioarele și-și bătea joc de trupurile lor. Şi nici la biserică nu-i lăsa să îngroape, ci afară prin gunoaie (IȚR);

într-a-nchis să îndrătățească Ierusalimului, care le-au zidit Noemiia, în urma mutării de la Vavilon: poarta împăraților, a preoților, a boiarilor celor de cinste, a no rodului, a prorocilor și poarta pre care scotea din cetate gunoaele, precum să vede într-a-nchis (AI/O);

or from the following century,

Încă și dîu afără pricini se întâmplă din lovitură, din răcaclă, sau din arsură capului sau din niscâ prafu, sau spurcăciune, sau gunoiul10 care întră în urechi. Dar uneori și făr <ă> nicio îngrădire sau mișcare, singure urlă și țiuescure urechile (MD, I).

10 According to “trupul să încălzeaște și să aprinde, gădilire sau mușcare nu sămâne la pântece, nu iaste atâta lipsită de pohta mâncărui bolnavu. Gunoiul lui iaste albu, mai vârtos, turburatu” (MD, II; s.n., A.C.), where the same form contextually presents a more obvious scatological content.
2.2. From the Gr. σκύβαλα to Rom. gunoaie

As language provides a complete paradigm, the translator can formally “emend” the Romanian versions of the previous era, all the more morphologically justified that the source text he works upon is Greek, and he makes use of a plural in that particular place: σκύβαλα, in καὶ ἡγοῦμαι σκύβαλα, in congruence with πάντα..., used twice in the previous fragments of the verse: see

B 1688: Ce pentru aceaea și gîndesc toate pagubă a fi, pentru cea ce covîrșește a științii lui Hristos Isus, Domnului mieu, pentru care de toate m-am păgubit și le gîndesc gunoaie a fi, ca pre Hristos să dobîndesc

B 1795: Iară mai virtos le socotesc să-și fie toate pagubă, pentru înălțimea cunoștinții lui Hristos Isus, Domnului mieu, pentru Carele de toate m-am păgubit și le socotesc gunoaie, ca să dobîndesc pre Hristos

Regardless of the understanding that the translator, judging the context in Phil, 3, has towards that word, the rendering in the Romanian language is more inclined to take the form of pl. gunoaie in the targeted place, thus establishing a discursive-formal tradition whose hermeneutic force remains dependent on the life of the language (see Darmesteter, 2015), i.e. on the semantic modulations of the word.

2.3. The impossible emendation

In the common use, the denotative evolution of the noun gunoi, pl. gunoaie is sufficiently restrained so that it does not necessary to require a review of the biblical text in terms of form: the general message is preserved, the receiver is satisfied. Nevertheless, the modern translator or reviewer of the writing may feel a loss in terms of symbolizing force, which he may want to minimize by some approach. However, its diversity and efficiency prove to be rigorously controlled from several directions, which mutually reinforce themselves and which are essentially language-related. By the culturally acquired quality, the sacralised text rejects linguistic innovations coming from a powerfully vulgarized register, which means that, despite the fact that the language itself could offer multiple solutions for rendering the concerned notion ab initio, the translator—aiming at reaching a canonical text—does not have access to them. On the other hand, the involvement of the singular form, as it is proceeded to, for example, in

Cornilescu 1921: Ba încă, și acum privesc toate aceste lucruri ca o pierdere, față de prețul nespus de mare al cunoașterii lui Hristos Isus, Domnului mieu. Pentru el am percut toate și le socotesc ca

11 According to the situation regarding NT 1648, which guides the translator towards selecting a Latin-origin term in Phil, 3, 8: “Ce iată le socotiiu a fi pagubă. Pentru înălțimea cunoștinței a lui Hristos Isus Domnului mieu, pentru carele de toate mă păgubit și le socotiiu toate a fi stercure, ca să dobîndescu pre Hristos”, according to Vul: “verumtamen existimo omnia detrimentum esse propter eminentem scientiam Iesu Christi Domini mei propter quem omnia detrimentum feci et arbitror ut stercora ut Christum lucri faciam” (s.n., A.C.).

12 See loc. cit. in, e.g., b 1914: “Iar mai virtos le și socotesc toate pagubă a fi pentru covîrșirea cunoștinței lui Hristos Isus Domnului mieu, pentru carele de toate le socotesc ca un gunoi, ca să cîștig pe Hristos;

13 Perhaps stimulated by some versions that accept a term/construction with a more powerful connotation: Engl. dongue, dung (GNV, ETH, KJV, NET, K21, DRA etc.), dog dung (MSG), crap (AYB); Germ. Kot (Luo). Cf. Fr. boue (LSG, NEG), ordure (TOB), bon à être mis au rebut (BDS); Engl. rubbish (NKJV, NIV etc.), useless rubbish (PHILLIPS), garbage (TEV, NJB etc.), dirt (WE), worthless trash (NCV), refuse (YLT, ASV); all consulted at bibleworks.com.
Philippians, 3, 8 in Romanian language: a case of primacy of norm

NT Cat: ba, mai mult, de acum consider că toate sunt o pierdere în comparație cu superioritatea cunoașterii lui Cristos Isus Domnul meu. De dragul lui am pierdut toate și le consider gunoi ca să-l câștig pe Cristos

and

FIDELA: Da, în adevăr, și socotesc toate lucrurile pierdere, din cauza măreției cunoașterii lui Cristos Isus, Domnul meu, pentru care am suferit pierderea a toate și le socotesc a fi gunoi, ca să câștig pe Cristos

seems to have been considered an alternative solution of textual emendation (probably even to a greater extent in the case of the Catholic one and of the second Protestant version mentioned14), but the effort appears to be free: in the case of gunoi, neither of the numerical forms of the noun has developed over time any peculiar semantics from the other one15, therefore the singular does not escape the semantics acquired by the word by the common use become prototypical; and the possible opening16 towards the old semantics, which kept its prototypical nature at the regional level17, ‘manure’ does not occur automatically, in the absence of other elements of the same nature (i.e. regional) or of some co-textual, and guiding ones. And relying, eventually, on the euphemistic reading of gunoi—this time, in the perspective of a contemporary urbanized perception—would turn things to the point which would have been wanted to be overcome, for such a linguistic approach mitigates the effect.

The fulfilment of the pragmatics of the text—should it be seen as a necessity—remains to be realized at a metalinguistic level, within some type of paratext18.

3. Conclusions

The act of translation (understanding by this inclusively the mere intention of its translation) places the text on the path of a language, subjecting it to the state of the language at a given moment and to its evolution (obtained in various ways, thanks to its natural plasticity as means of communication of some individuals driven by various needs). At any moment, there is a formal adjustment, which follows what is considered to be correct or at least linguistically possible: first, it is that of the foreign text to the new language—Romanian (itself, possibly open to adjustment, by loan, to the requirements of the content of the text); then, it is that of the Romanian text to the renewals of the Romanian language—adjustment that may ignore the original requirements, from a given moment in the history of producing and receiving that text in the Romanian language and culture; thus, the correctness of the text is controlled by the norm of the language and by the appearance of its semantic accuracy.

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14Translation that declares that it follows the principle of formal equivalence and that it has as sources the Masoretic Text and the “Greek family of the Receptus Text for NT” (see the Preface to FIDELA), but which is quite powerfully influenced by Occidental vernacular traditions.

15As it is in the situation of the singularia tantum matter names nouns in the contemporary language, where the plural implies a change of meaning: făină vs. făinuri ‘types of flour’, carne vs. cărnuri ‘types of meat’; versus the situation in the old age, where plurals such as foameți (see Frâncu, 2009, p. 29), singuri ot cănii, cărnuri (see Chirilă, 2013, p. 158–161) could mean exactly ‘several specimens of the same kind’, plurality of objects of the same kind.

16Concerned, perhaps by the inarticulate form of the noun, in “le socotesc a fi gunoi”, FIDELA, and “le consider gunoi”, NT Cat; s.n., A.C.

17See the observation in Frățilă (2005), p. 172 and 176: “în graiul de pe valea inferioară a Târnavelor există o serie de termeni care formează arii lexicale în sudul și centrul Transilvaniei, deosebind graiul de aici de cel muntean, dar și de alte graiuri din Transilvania”, among which “Gunoi ‘bălegar’ cuprinde Transilvania de centru și sud, sud-vestul Crișanei”.

18For example, in Indicele at MLĐ, XXIV, p. 860, it is mentioned regarding the meaning, s.v. gunoi: “[...] ’Mist’: ‘fumier, fumure’”. Also, indirectly: amongs the editor-translator’s (Fecioru, 2016, p. 179) at his translation from Clement Alexandrinul, Pedagogul. Book II, it appears one which actually points towards the “optimal” reading of the fragment under Phil, 3, 8; thus, at “Aș vrea ca bogații să socotescă toată viața aurul ca demn numai pentru excremente”, Fecioru creates note 178: “Cf. Filipeni 3, 8”. Etc.
In the last sequence of Phil, 3, 8, the history of rendering the element of comparison in the Romanian language constitutes a very good case of primacy of the norm of the language over the original content (in relation to the direct source text) – recoverable, but exclusively by metalinguistic means.

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