

IOAN BOB'S DICTIONARY

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Ioan Bob (1739-1830), a controversial personality of his time¹ was elected Bishop of the Greek-Catholic Church at the Synod of Blaj in 12 August 1782. He began his studies at the Calvinist Gymnasiums in Ormuz, Ocna Dejului, Gyula, Csomafája and then he went to the Jesuit College in Cluj. He completed his theological studies at Tirnowia.²

In the spirit of the epoch in which he lived he took an active part in the national emancipation movement of Romanians in Transylvania. In 1783 he addressed a Memorandum to the Vienna Imperial Court in which he asked for a better endowing of the clergy and an increase in the number of schools³. He also participated in the editing of the *Supplex*.⁴ His writings are mainly centred round theological studies but he is also famous in the history of culture for his Romanian-Latin-Hungarian Dictionary.

In the Special Collection of Romanian Books in the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library there are four copies of the so-called "Bob's Dictionary", in two volumes, printed by Stephan Török from Cluj, at the printing press of the Reformed Church College in 1822-1823. Their origin is known: one of the copies was purchased by the Library and three are donations from the Grigore Crețu Library, V. Crișan and, respectively, the Academy Library in Bucharest. A full description of the dictionary appears in our Special Collections Catalogue⁵, but

¹ Păclișianu, Z, *Un vechiu proces literar (relațiile lui I. Bob cu S. Klein, Gh. Șincai and P. Maior)* (An Old Literary Trial. (The relations between I. Bob, S. Klein, Gh. Șincai and P. Maior), in: *Academia Română. Memoriile secțiunii istorice, seria III, Tom XVI, București, 1934/35, p.221-225; N. Lupu, Episcopul Ion Bob, Blaj, 1944, p.64.*

² T. Cipariu, *Acte și fragmente (Acts and Fragments)*, Blasiu, 1855, p.21-31.

³ I. Chindiș, *Un Supplex Libellus Valachorum inedit (An Unpublished Supplex Libellus Valachorum)*, in: *Manuscriptum*, 1980, nr.1, p.89-104; Idem, *Blajul luminist (The Illuminist Blaj)*, in: *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie, Cluj-Napoca, XXIII (1980), p.199-200.*

⁴ G. Barițiu, *Părți alese din istoria Transilvaniei pre două sute de ani în urmă (Details from the History of Transylvania Two Hundred Years Ago)*, vol.I, Sibiu, 1889, p.538-539.

⁵ I. Bîanu, N. Hodoș, *Bibliografia românească veche. 1508-1830*, vol. III, București, 1912, p.391; Elena Mosora, Doina Hanga, *Catalogul cărții vechi românești din colecțiile BCU "Lucian Blaga". 1561-1830*, Cluj, 1991, p.216-217; A Veress, *Bibliografia română-ungară (Romanian-Hungarian*

ther is some confusion about the authorship in the bibliographical description. Thus, the *Bibliografia românească veche (Old Romanian Bibliography)*⁶ and *Catalogul cărții vechi românești din colecțiile BCU "Lucian Blaga". 1561-1830 (The Catalogue of Old Romanian Books in the Collections of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library. 1561-1830)*⁷ attribute the editorship to him, but A. Veress⁸ does not mention him as author, and instead gives a bibliographic description under the title of the dictionary. Up until now the lexicographic studies dedicated to this dictionary have left this question open.⁹ Neither the title page, nor the preface signed by Bishop Bob proves that Ioan Bob is the author; on the contrary, it seems that it was a collective work: "For many troubles of more people were needed to compile this Lexicon(...)"¹⁰ We are inclined to think that Ioan Bob was responsible only for the edition of the dictionary and he was not the author.

C. Suciuc has a unique opinion regarding the edition of the dictionary: he says that the dictionary was only a processing of of Körösi's lexicon.¹¹ This theory has not been supported by subsequent research.¹²

The lexicons edited by Fr. Pápai Páriz, A. Molnár and I. Márton¹³ were the sources used in the compilation of the dictionary. According to a letter written by Vlădica Bob to Ioan Lemeny, the Rector in Cluj, on 10 August 1816, the dictionary of Fr. Pápai Páriz was the prototype to be taken into consideration by Ioan Bob. However, Bob's dictionary was printed with much smaller letters.¹⁴ The publication of the dictionary was not without difficulties; Bishop Bob gives details of these several times. On 29 March 1819 he wrote to Rector Lemeny that the corpus of Latin letters and the new orthography without accents should be used in printing the dictionary.¹⁵ These options were in line with the tendencies of modernising the language which was a key issue according to Transylvanian Illuminists who considered the enrichment of the vocabulary¹⁶ of major

Bibliography), vol.II, *România în literatura ungară și ungarii în literatura română (1781-1838) (Romanians in Hungarian Literature and Hungarians in Romanian Literature)*, București, 1931, p.235.

⁶ I. BIANU, N. HODOȘ, *op. cit.*, p.391.

⁷ Elena Mosora, Doina Hanga, *op. cit.*, p.216.

⁸ A. Veress, *op. cit.*, p.235.

⁹ M. Seche, *Schiță de istorie a lexicografiei române (Sketch of the History of Romanian Lexicography)*, vol.I, București, 1966, p.28-29; Aurel Nicolescu, *Școala Ardeleană și limba română (The Transylvanian School and the Romanian Language)*, București, 1971, p.78.

¹⁰ Ioan Bob, *Cuvent Inuainta la Dictionariu (Foreword to the Dictionary)*, p.1.

¹¹ C. Suciuc, *Un filolog puțin cunoscut: Ștefan Körösi (Crișan) (An Unknown Man of Letters: Ștefan Körösi)*, in: *România literară*, 1930, nr.2, p.45 sqq.

¹² M. Seche, *op. cit.*, p.30.

¹³ M. Seche, *op. cit.*, p.29-30, A. Nicolescu, *op. cit.*, p.78.

¹⁴ *Hărții vechi (Old Maps)*, in: *Unirea*, Blaj, 1901, An XI, nr.33, p.271.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p.270.

¹⁶ A. Marino, *Les Lumières Roumaines et "l'illustration" de la langue*, in: *La culture Roumaine à l'époque des Lumières*, vol.I, Bucarest, 1982, p.305 sqq.

importance. In addition, the introduction of the Latin alphabet in schools and another desideratum of Transylvanian Illuminism, the re-assertion of the Latin language for the Romanian people was a principal aim.

"I had in mind to address this dictionary to schoolchildren who are compelled to enrich themselves in Latin and Hungarian language with Latin letters because they learn them at Schools, letters which were also used by Romanians until they turned to Cyrillic letters."¹⁷

Although the dictionary was intended for pupils, it had a large circulation in Romania as well as in libraries abroad. It was listed in special bibliographies.¹⁸

According to language historians¹⁹ this edition is remarkable because it was the first lexicographic work printed completely with Latin letters which preceded the *Lexiconul de la Buda*, although it surpassed it regarding the number of words (11000.) The presence of the Appendix on page 561-576 which contains "foreign words which entered the Romanian language, along with their Romanian meaning (...)"²⁰ signifies the inauguration of Purism in Romanian language²¹, because the words whose Romanian equivalents are given are of non-Latin origin.

Compiling vocabularies and dictionaries marked the activity of the representatives of Illuminism in Transylvania; they considered the cultivation of language an important aspect of the affirmation of national sentiment.²² This was a period of emulation in this field: Transylvanian Illuminists took over the initiative in lexicographic activity.

¹⁷ I. Bob, *loc.cit.*

¹⁸ I. Ch. Brunet, *Manuel che libraire et de l'amateur de livres*, vol.VI, Paris, 1860-1880, p.691.

¹⁹ L. Șăineanu, *Istoria filologiei române (The History of Romanian Philology)*, București, 1895, p.184; M. Seche, *op. cit.*, p. 29-30; A. Nicolescu, *op. cit.*, p. 78-79.

²⁰ *Dictionariu...*, vol.II, p.561.

²¹ See note 19.

²² A. Marino, *op. cit.*, p.317.