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# The Beginning of Liturgical Formation in Romania: The First Liturgical Manual in the Romanian Language<sup>1</sup>

While different political realities shaped the three Principalities (Moldova, Wallachia and Transylvania) that later formed Romania (1918), the spiritual unity of the Romanian people has been nourished since the Middle Ages by the Eastern Christian faith. Situated at the intersection of cultural and religious currents, Romanian spirituality has often interacted with that of the Ruthenian Slavs, Serbs or Bulgarians, Greeks, Hungarians, Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists. For this reason, the first Romanian literary productions were translations or adaptations that were always under the influence of or in opposition to these cultures and beliefs.

This study investigates, from a liturgical and doctrinal perspective, the first manual of liturgical training published in the Romanian language

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<sup>1</sup> Tekst pierwotnie opublikowany w "Polonia Sacra" 27 (2023) nr 3, s. 151–164.

at Iași (1697 AD) by Jeremiah Cacavelas: *Holy Teaching about the Holy and Divine Liturgy*. Considered by some specialists to be an adaptation of similar works by Simeon of Thessalonica or Nikolaos Bulgaris, the manual presents in the form of questions and answers the teaching and spiritual understanding of the Orthodox Church regarding the Holy Liturgy. The manual also explores other Orthodox Christian teachings regarding the church building, angels, the nature of Grace, liturgical vestments, feast days and so forth. Throughout the volume, Jeremiah Cacavelas does not avoid the divergent theological subjects between East and West concerning transubstantiation, Grace and so forth.

Either because of its didactic content, or because of the fame of Jeremiah Cacavelas, the manual became quite widespread in the Romanian Provinces; in some areas it was used until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 1. Romania — The 17<sup>th</sup> Century Geopolitical and Ecclesiastical Context

By the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Orthodox Christians experienced social difficulties throughout the Romanian Territories. While population majorities in all three Principalities embraced Orthodox Christianity, their political leadership and geopolitics context were often quite different. Wallachia, for example, being situated closer to Bulgaria and Constantinople, was inclined towards the Greek culture, while Moldavia was under the cultural and religious influence of Ruthenian Slavs.<sup>2</sup> Orthodox Romanians in Transylvania lived under foreign political leadership (mostly Hungarian Catholic or Protestant Calvinist); while they lived under significant confessional pressure,<sup>3</sup> staunch majorities remained faithful to the Orthodox

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2 V. Barbu, *Purgatoriul misionarilor. Contrareforma în țările române în secolul al XVII-lea*, București 2008, *passim*.

3 Among the most recent specialists who have studied confessional relations and interferences in Transylvania, apart from the representatives of the old historiography, which were ideologized and somewhat biased (A. Grama, I. Lupaș, M. Păcurariu), we note L. Nagy, *Reforma la români. Un fenomen de transfer cultural în secolele XVI–XVII*, Oradea 2021; B. Gudor, *Ortodoxia transilvăneană între tradiție și iluminism în imaginea notarului general reformat Peter Bod*

Church.<sup>4</sup> This context, however, triggered the translation of the Orthodox liturgical text into the vernacular.

The translation process was not uniform in the three provinces. It manifested progressively: first translated were collections of canons, followed by many homilies and the Holy Scriptures, then the liturgical rubrics and, finally, euchological liturgical texts.<sup>5</sup> In many ways, this process 'reformed' the Church, however, without changing its Eastern Orthodox theological doctrine.<sup>6</sup>

European movements triggered by the Renaissance, amplified by such religious reform, led to profound transformations in Romanian society. The onset of a new class of 'boyars' was accompanied by the development of national sentiment and, equally, by the creation of a social class of the 'cultural elite.'<sup>7</sup> The existence of this new cultural aristocracy, animated by a spirit of innovation, also influenced the ecclesial environment.

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(1712–1769) din Ighiu, in: *Credința și credințele românilor*, eds. A. Cristea, J. Nicolae, Alba Iulia 2011, p. 110–123; Ov. Ghitta, *Biserica Ortodoxă din Transilvania (secolul al XVI-lea — a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea)*, in: *Istoria Transilvaniei*, vol. 2: *De la 1541 până la 1711*, eds. I. A. Pop, T. Năgler, A. Magyari, Cluj–Napoca–Deva 2016, p. 263–276; A. Dumitran, *Religie ortodoxă — religie reformată. Ipostaze ale identității confesionale a românilor din Transilvania în secolele XVI–XVII*, Cluj–Napoca 2004; C. Streza, *Cult și Reformă liturgică în Biserica Ortodoxă a Transilvaniei în secolul al XVII-lea*, "Revista Teologică" 98 (2016) nr 4, p. 73–97; D. A. Vanca, *Paradigme liturgice în secolul 17. Ioan Zoba din Vinț și evoluția liturghiei românești*, Alba Iulia 2016.

4 The Enigma of this loyalty of Transylvanian Romanians towards the Orthodox Church, despite the proselytizing pressure endured, continues to challenge specialists even today. Explanations offered for such loyalty include trust in the Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities, antagonism towards the confession of the oppressive noble class, influence of monasticism (flourishing in the 17<sup>th</sup> century), the completely different language of the dominant upper class, and the lack of institutionalized education of Orthodox believers.

5 C. Streza, *Cult și Reformă liturgică*, p. 76.

6 P. Bruslanowski, *Curentul reformator din secolul al XVII și începutul românizării cultului BOR*, "TABOR" 1 (2007) nr 7, p. 41.

7 A. Dumitran, *Biserica românilor din Transilvania în prima jumătate a secolului XVII, între modelul protestant și necesitatea reformării*, in: *Istoria ca datorie. Omagiu academicianului Ioan-Aurel Pop, la împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani*, eds. I. Bolovan, Ov. Ghitta, Cluj–Napoca 2015, p. 559–570.

For instance, the famous Putna Monastery (Moldavia), between 1490–1585, had a school staffed with professors probably trained in the West — ‘ritorus et scolasticus.’ This school specialized in theological and humanist topics such as church law, astronomy’s implications for Paschal calculation, and church music. The education system was neither systematic nor large scale.<sup>8</sup> Theological education was no exception; it was organized with only a few disciplines in the curriculum: calligraphy, music, painting, and, at times, theological knowledge.<sup>9</sup> By the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (first in Transylvania), colleges — following the Western model — began to be established; from time-to-time professors from Western universities were invited to lecture. Still, we cannot yet speak of an organized educational system.

Under the rule of Constantin Mavrocordat (1710–1769) certain changes took place. He established a school for the training of Romanian clergy. Laws were promulgated requiring that clergy be well trained; bishops were no longer allowed to ordain priests who had not been trained in fundamental theological knowledge. Given such conditions, even older priests started to seek training for themselves. While some schools in Bucharest, Craiova, and Moldavia (such as the Putna Monastery in 1774) were organised according to a more scholastic system, the school Mavrocordat issued what we might today referred to as student ‘grade transcripts,’ which documented the disciplines studied and level of accomplishment.

Finally, in 1803, in Socola (Moldavia) the first formal school for theological training was established. Multiple schools, colleges, faculties emerged after this date in all the Romanian-inhabited territories; local rules required the use of well-trained teachers. However, the education models were now of Eastern inspiration, drawing insights from Moscow, St Petersburg,

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8 A letter dated 1234, addressed by Pope Gregory IX to King Bela IV of Hungary, mentioned that there were “itinerant teachers of various origins” in Moldova (cited by P. M. Bordeianu, P. Vladovschi, *Învățăământul românesc în date*, Iași 1979, p. 7).

9 Such schools operated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in all Romanian Principalities. (For that, see *Istoria învățăământului din România*, vol. 1, ed. by Șt. Pascu, București 1983; see also C. C. Giurescu, *Învățăământul în perioada trecerii spre feudalism și a feudalismului timpuriu*, in: *Istoria învățăământului din România. Compendiu*, eds. C. C. Giurescu, I. Ivanov, M. Constantinescu, C. Motaș, București 1971, p. 31–32.

Athens, Kiev, etc. Numerous graduates of the Romanian school were often sent to these schools.

By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, priests were being trained in monasteries and metropolitan centres, as well as ‘within the family,’ since many of the sons of parish priests and deacons were ordained as priests themselves to serve along with, or to function as successors of, their fathers. Works, such as *Holy Teaching about the Holy and Divine Liturgy*, supplemented theoretical education (or training), hence its central importance.

## 2. Holy Teaching of the Holy and Divine Liturgy

From a formal point of view, this volume is not really a liturgical handbook. However, it possesses all the characteristics of a systematic and methodical teaching strategy concerning fundamental theological knowledge and was probably used as an advanced theology handbook.

Published in 1697, even though it was ‘signed’ by Jeremiah Cacavelas, what we really have here is a translation and interpretation of a Greek original. Romanian specialists do not agree about the source. For instance, Melchisedec Ștefănescu († 1892) concludes that it is drawn from the work of Simeon of Thessalonica,<sup>10</sup> while Gamaliil Vaida, the editor of the critical edition of 1998, considers the Catechism of Nikolaos Bulgaris to be its original source.<sup>11</sup> Professor Emilian Popescu, in turn, considers the quest for the source of the edition as incomplete and that a deeper analysis should be performed.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of its origins, in the Romanian Principalities, this volume remained for more than one and a half centuries the best ‘theological handbook’ for anyone who wished to know the fundamentals of Orthodox theology.<sup>13</sup>

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10 M. Ștefănescu, *Biblioteca Domnului Dimitrie Sturdza de la Miclăușeni*, “Revista de istorie, arheologie și filologie” 5 (1888) nr 3, p. 150–151.

11 G. Vaida, *Prefață*, in: *Învățătura sfântă, adecă a Dumnezeieștii Liturghii*, Cozia 1998, p. 5.

12 E. Popescu, *Studiu introductiv*, in: *Învățătura sfântă, adecă a Dumnezeieștii Liturghii*, Cozia 1998, p. 30.

13 Note, at that time, many were first encountering Calvinist and Catholic literature, which also led to the emergence of polemic literature against them. *Răspunsul la Catehismul calvinesc*,

The volume is crafted around an explanation of the Divine Liturgy and of the Sacraments, the structure and the hierarchy of the Church, eschatology, the Ecumenical Councils, and canonical law. Throughout, it is structured in terms of questions and answers. It uses a scholastic style but set within a structure that renders the book very useful for future priests. Many manuscript copies were identified immediately after the book was printed, which suggests both that the number of available printed copies was insufficient and that the book was a needed supplement for the education of the clergy. While the work is not particularly original, it is very well organized and highly scientific, accompanied by a large number of references. This, at times, makes it difficult to read and to be used by eastern Christians, which, at that time, knew neither the scholastic teaching system nor the best sources used in the West. Sometimes in a single phrase there are more than ten to twelve bibliographic references.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. Who was Jeremiah Cacavelas?

Cacavela was born in Crete in 1643 of Greek heritage and was most likely educated at schools in Europe. He was a monk at the monastery of Rethymnon, which is where he probably learned to read and write. Known in Moldavia as a 'monk and skillful teacher,' Cacavelas knew not only Greek and Romanian, but also Latin, Slavonic, Hebrew, German and Italian, which he learned during his years in London, Cambridge, Leipzig, and Vienna, where he studied theology, philosophy and medicine. He arrived in Wallachia before 1686; a year later he became abbot of the Monastery of Păvliceni on the banks of the River Olt. Thanks to his rich knowledge of theology, he was involved in three public debates during his stay in England (1667): *Dissertation on the Five Differences between the Greek and Roman Churches*;

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by Metropolitan Varlaam (Iași 1645), or *Tomul bucuriei* by bishop Antim the Iberian (Râmnic 1705), a collection of anti-Catholic texts, are two examples that illustrate the intellectual and religious environment.

<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, the theological explanations for bread and wine in the Eucharist in *Învățătura sfântă, adică a Dumnezeieștii Liturghii*, Cozia 1998, p. 88–89.

*Dissertation on Unleavened Bread; Exposition on the Dogmas of the Eastern Church*,<sup>15</sup> and in the Romanian lands on two occasions — at Sibiu, with Isaac Zabanius — *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son* (1678), and at Braşov, with Martin Albright, director of the Lutheran College in the city (1687). In 1688, he could be found in Moldova as a teacher of the sons of the ruler Constantin Antioh Cantemir, among whom the best known is Dimitrie Cantemir. But his pedagogical skills led even other sons of boyars to learn Greek, Latin and Italian.<sup>16</sup>

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Cacavelas does not tell us who authored the *Holy Teaching of the Sacred and Divine Liturgy*, which he translated but, based on Father Gamaliil Vaida's arguments (see above), I have compared the Romanian translation (Cozia, 1989) with the work of Nikolaos Bulgaris (English edition, London 1893.)<sup>17</sup> After this process, my conclusion is that the work is an interpretative translation, and in some places an adaptation of the text, appropriate to the socio-economic conditions of 17<sup>th</sup> century Moldavia. For example, the last part is more of a summary and in some places the Greek words necessary for semantic explanations are omitted (for example, 'mystery' and 'ordination'), probably due to the lack of necessary typographical material. For accuracy of scientific analysis, future study will have to compare more closely the Greek original with the Romanian edition.

#### 4. Who was Nikolaos Bulgaris?

As far as is known, Bulgaris was born on the island of Corfu (Kerkira) in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. He was educated in Italy and received a doctorate in philosophy and medicine from the University of Padua. Back home, he devoted

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15 E. Popescu, *Studiu introductiv*, p. 26.

16 Apud T. Simedrea, *Însemnări pe o veche carte românească*, "Mitropolia Olteniei Journal"

17 (1956) nr 1-3, p. 99-106.

17 N. Bulgaris, *The Holy Catechism*, transl. from Greek by E. Daniel, London 1893.

himself to the study of patristic theology, acquiring a wealth of knowledge. He was a connoisseur of music; he is known to have composed a canon in Italian for the Mass of the transfer of the relics of St Spyridon.<sup>18</sup> *Holy Teaching of the Sacred and Divine Liturgy* seems to have been written at the request of his brother, who was a clerical representative (perhaps the dean) of the Venetian government of Corfu, for the instruction and examination of future clerics.

The importance of this work as a ‘missionary tool’ for the use of priests and lay faithful throughout the Orthodox world is also suggested by the fact that it enjoyed several editions in Greek and at least one edition in English (London, 1893), the edition that I have been able to study. In Romanian, the 1697 edition was republished in 1999 in transliteration, the original text being in Cyrillic letters.

In what follows, all bibliographic references will refer to 1893 English version, which will be simply cited as: *Bulgaris 1893*.

## 5. Contents of the book

Of considerable size (285 pages), as noted, the work is written in the form of questions and answers. The table of contents reveals the author regarding the most important elements of the Orthodox Christian faith, with a significant emphasis on the Holy and Divine Liturgy. The largest chapter, devoted to the Divine Liturgy, begins with some questions designed to clarify the teaching on the number, character and substance of the Sacraments. Bulgaris, while having received Western scholastic training, is well versed in Eastern patristic literature (often quoting from Maxim, Germanus, John Chrysostom, John Damascene, etc.) However, he prefers Western explanations, perhaps because he found their format more logical: matter, form, proximate cause/effect-final cause, etc.:

“A Mystery, write the Schoolmen in the 4<sup>th</sup> part of the ‘Holy Theology,’ is a sign perceptible to the senses, by similarity suggestive, in rite significant, and by consecration containing the

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<sup>18</sup> P. Comnenus, *History of the Gymnasium of Padua*, p. 317, cited by N. Vulgaris, *The Holy Catechism*, Londra 1893, p. XVII.



invisible grace.” or “A Mystery is a sign, as has been said, perceptible to the senses, containing God’s invisible grace, purposely arranged for the salvation of men, significant by divine ordinance.” And in the 2<sup>nd</sup> book of ‘Christian Doctrine’ (Ch. I.) [...] in a couple of words Augustine says [...] “A Mystery is a visible sign of an invisible grace” (*Bulgaris 1893*, p. 3–4).

Similarly, speaking of the Sacrament of Confession, the author takes up the same logical structure of the path of confession as the eight circumstances of sin:

There are eight circumstances which any one confessing ought necessarily to make clear in the case of every deadly sin to his spiritual father; since there are eight matters which considerably change and aggravate the sin: 1. What sin he committed; 2. with what person; 3. by what means; 4. how often; 5. in what place; 6. for what purpose; 7. how; 8. when. “This part of the work is perhaps the one that suffered the greatest influence from scholastic theology, reasonably also because his mind — accustomed to sequence and rational logic — found stronger arguments in scholastic literature” (*Bulgaris 1893*, p. 15).

Then, he explains the general matters of the Eastern Church’s ritual, listing and summarizing the seven ecclesiastical Lauds, which he justifies by quoting from *the Constitutions of the Apostles*. The basic hymnographic pieces of the ritual structure are then presented (Psalms, Lectures, Troparia, Canons, Canons, Sinaxarion, Irmos, Ikos, Kontakion, Dismissal, Megaly-naria, etc.) The author provides both semantic and theological explanations for each of these elements.

One by one, all the vestments of the Eastern Church are explained for all the clerical levels, with theological interpretations, associations, and allegories given concerning the life and passion of Christ, based on the works of well-known Fathers. Some liturgical raiment, while mentioned (*Bulgaris 1893*, 36–44) are overlooked: the mitre, the engolpion, the bishop’s crosier, the dichiri-trichiri, and the mantle. However, he does not forget to explain the significance of the chalice, the disk, and the covers. In contrast, the antimimension is associated with the bishop’s vestments, most likely because of the relationship with the authority of the bishop.

Rare information is also found, such as regarding the first use of bells in the Byzantine world:

Bells were but just introduced into Constantinople about 865 A. D., when the serene government of Venice sent twelve as a present to our Emperor Michael, and he set them in Aghia Sophia. And thus, from that time onward so noble and glorious a custom was established throughout the Holy Eastern Church, and multiplied. Our authorities have named the bells, Bells of Convention, so says George Pachy — meres, and Holy Bells. “For at midnight the holy bell will rouse thee”, wrote Michael the Stammerer to Constantine Monomachus (*Bulgaris* 1893, p. 47–48).

## 6. Bulgaris’ Explanation of the Holy Liturgy

For teaching purposes, *Bulgaris* divides the Liturgy into three parts: the ‘Prothesis,’ the ‘Liturgy of the Catechumens’ and the ‘Liturgy of the Faithful.’ Each part is explained in turn. From the internal information, it is clear that *Bulgaris* is quite familiar with the Anaphors of the Eastern Church (Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, James the Great, Cyril, Mark, the liturgies of the Ethiopians, Matthew, Dionysius the Areopagite (?), St Peter, etc.) but, according to the explanations of the time, he believes that the present version of the Holy Liturgy is the result of abbreviation due to the weakening of faith (Proclus of Constantinople).

The author adopts an exaggerated allegorical view, similar to a type of explanation frequently used by Simeon of Thessalonica. For example, in explaining the Holy Lamb, he insists much on the details of Christ’s face in the Lamb — identifying it with the core of the bread, while the crust, with the sign of the cross, is identified as the back of Christ on which He bore the Cross of suffering (the seal of the cross).

Particularly noteworthy is the insertion on the unleavened vs. leavened bread dispute. He is well grounded in the theology of the time; he knows the Eastern Church’s option for leavened bread and quotes the opinions on the matter from the Western theologians Giovanni Bona, Thomas Aquinas and Suarius [=Joseph Marie de Suarès (1599–1677)] (*Bulgaris* 1893, p. 54–55), whose works he knows and from which he quotes with great precision.

The scholarly accuracy for the time is remarkable as the author, for example, explains the Byzantine liturgical practice when several loaves/disks and chalices were brought to the altar:

And the Evangelist Mark in his Holy Liturgy: “Send down on us and on these loaves and on these cups Thine All-holy Spirit to hallow them and consecrate them, as being the Almighty God” since in those days the priest used to offer as many loaves and as many cups as would suffice to distribute to the clergy and the people (*Bulgaris 1893*, p. 65–66).

Placing explanations of the ‘geography’ of the sacred space of a typical Byzantine church before the theological explanations of the content of the Mass demonstrates *Bulgaris*’ superior understanding of the Divine Liturgy, sacred space, liturgical functions, and the efficacy of sacramental works. Thus, known elements (the semantron, bell, pronaos, naos, sanctuary and altar table) but also lesser understood elements such as the synthron, solea, bema, the beautiful doors and the kingly doors (unlike contemporary rubrics which, with notable exceptions, are confused in Romania with altar doors) are explained and historically argued.

Explanations regarding the history and meaning of the Holy Liturgy are followed by some useful knowledge for any practicing Christian, such as explanations regarding the theological virtues (faith, hope, love), good deeds, the ten commandments, Church commandments, deeds of corporal mercy, virtues, sins and a chapter dedicated to the Holy Spirit, all of them presented with precise bibliographic references, inspired by western catechisms.

As can be easily observed, even today, the theological manuals and common catechisms of the Romanian Orthodox Church generally keep the same structure and order of material.

## Conclusions

1. This work helped fill a void in the education of the clergy of the Orthodox Church and the author is an Orthodox Christian. However, the handbook was printed during a time when the polemics against Western theology intensified.
2. The author did not have an ecumenical vision, but rather a scientific one; for him the argument was more important than an ‘ideological’ refutation of the provenance of the argument.
3. The handbook was quite difficult to follow and, therefore, its use was somewhat limited. The 2nd edition appeared only in 1999.

4. There is a significant need for deeper analysis of the text to observe if and how this volume influenced Orthodox theology in Romania.

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## Abstract

### *The Beginning of Liturgical Training in Romania: The First Liturgical Manual in the Romanian Language*

While different political realities shaped the three Principalities (Moldova, Wallachia and Transylvania) that later formed Romania (1918), the spiritual unity of the Romanian people has been nourished since the Middle Ages by the Eastern Christian faith. Situated at the intersection of cultural and religious currents, Romanian spirituality has often interacted with that of the Ruthenian Slavs, Serbs or Bulgarians, Greeks, Hungarians, Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists. For this reason, the first Romanian literary works were translations or adaptations that were always under the influence of or produced in opposition to these cultures and beliefs. This study investigates, from a liturgical and doctrinal perspective, the first manual of liturgical training, published in the Romanian language at Iași (1697) translated by Jeremiah Cacavelas: *Holy Teaching about the Holy and Divine Liturgy*. Considered by some specialists to be an adaptation of similar works by Simeon of Thessalonica or Nikolaos Bulgaris, the manual presents in the form of questions and answers the teaching and spiritual understanding of the Orthodox Church regarding the Holy Liturgy. The manual also explores other Orthodox Christian teachings regarding the church building, angels, the nature of Grace, liturgical vestments, feast days and so forth. Throughout the volume, Jeremiah Cacavelas does not avoid controversial theological subjects that divide the East and West concerning transubstantiation, the nature of Grace and so forth. Cacavela's manual became quite widespread in the Romanian Provinces; in some areas it was used until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Keywords:** liturgical instruction, Romanian Orthodox Church, Jeremiah Cacavelas, Nikolaos Bulgaris

## Abstrakt

### *Początki formacji liturgicznej w Rumunii: pierwszy podręcznik liturgiczny w języku rumuńskim*

W czasie, gdy odmienne realia polityczne kształtowały trzy Księstwa (Mołdawię, Wołoszczyznę i Siedmiogród), które później utworzyły Rumunię (1918), duchową jedność narodu rumuńskiego już od średniowiecza zapewniało chrześcijaństwo wschodnie. Duchowość rumuńska, rozwijająca się w środowisku, w którym krzyżowały się różne prądy kulturowe i religijne, często wchodziła w interakcje z duchowością ruskich Słowian, Serbów czy Bułgarów, Greków, Węgrów, katolików, luteranów i kalwinistów. Z tego powodu pierwszymi rumuńskimi dziełami literackimi były tłumaczenia lub adaptacje, które ulegały wpływowi tych kultur lub były tworzone w opozycji do nich. W niniejszym opracowaniu z liturgicznego i doktrynalnego punktu widzenia zbadano pierwszy podręcznik liturgiki, opublikowany w języku rumuńskim w Jassach (1697) w tłumaczeniu Jeremiasa Cacavelasa *Święte nauczanie o Świętej i Boskiej Liturgii*. Podręcznik ten, uważany przez niektórych specjalistów za adaptację podobnych dzieł Symeona z Tesaloniki czy Nikolaosa Bułgarisa, przedstawia w formie pytań i odpowiedzi nauczanie Cerkwi prawosławnej o Bożej Liturgii, uwypuklając zwłaszcza jej duchowe rozumienie. Podręcznik omawia również budowę cerkwi, szaty liturgiczne, święta, a także inne aspekty prawosławnego nauczania dotyczące aniołów, natury łaski i tak dalej. Cacavelas nie unika kontrowersyjnych tematów teologicznych, które dzielą Wschód i Zachód, jak na przykład problem przeistoczenia, natura łaski i inne. Podręcznik Cacavelasa był powszechnie stosowany we wszystkich prowincjach rumuńskich, na niektórych obszarach używano go aż do XIX wieku.

**Słowa kluczowe:** instrukcja liturgiczna, Rumuński Kościół Prawosławny, Jeremias Cacavelas, Nikolaos Bulgaris