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Maria Ştefănescu: *Dicţionar român-englez de termeni religioşi creştini (Romanian-English dictionary of religious terms)*

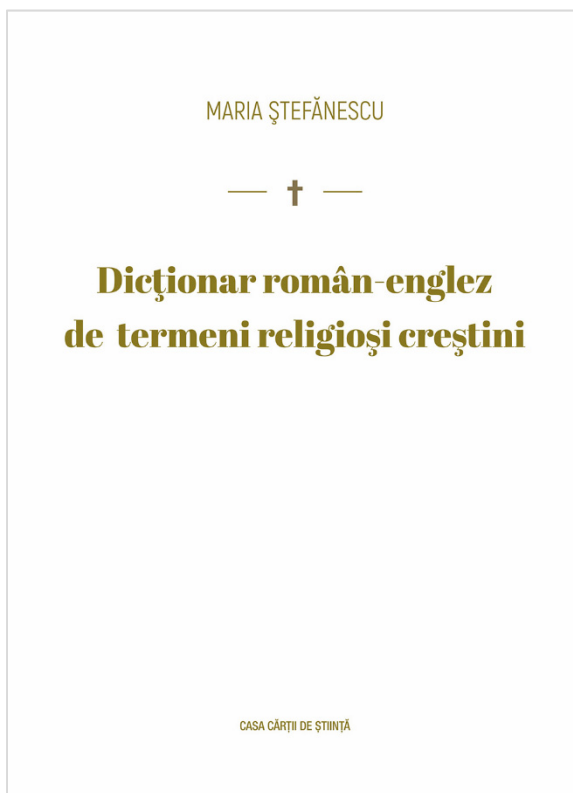
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When one starts learning a new language, everything is new for them just like for a newborn. If the chosen language is English, then there is a kind of head start as a lot of English terms leaked into our everyday language. But irrespective of the language we learn, a learner's best friend is the dictionary. Since words in English generally have several meanings, and what is more they can be perverted with all kinds of prepositions and other dreadful-nesses, words can mean lots of things.

A dictionary is indispensable for understanding English words and texts. Flipping the pages of a dictionary to understand a text or being unable to find the proper meaning can render reading awfully difficult. That is why it is important to choose a good dictionary.

Most certainly many of us, theologians experienced situations in which we were not familiar with an English word, and took a comprehensive Hungarian-English or Romanian-English dictionary or accessed an online dictionary, we looked up the term and got a long list for the word we were



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looking for, and had no idea which one to pick. It often happened that when we opened the dictionary we got even more stuck in our message than before we opened it. We realised that the given term could have been theologically correct but on jargon level in the given denomination it did not reflect either dogmatically, or liturgically or church infrastructure-wise the idea we wished to convey. And often we asked our colleagues help in despair.

Lecturer Maria Ștefănescu in her Romanian-English Dictionary of Religious Terms aims to overcome this problem. Ștefănescu is the beloved English teacher of the Faculties of Theology who has become popular with her full devotion, outstanding teaching abilities, love for people and ecumenical openness.

Maria Ștefănescu has invested a great deal of energy and precise work in this volume with the aim to facilitate communication in English for theologians. She grasps the so very diverse, apparently subtle expressions that are yet so different in meaning and connotations.

She has researched the context and the meaning of the given terms used in Orthodox, Roman-Catholic and Reformed texts. She has discussed with the professors of each denomination for the accurate translation of the terms.

I would summarise the outstanding features of Maria Ștefănescu's dictionary in the following lines:

- She strives for comprehensiveness in listing the terminologies and entries. She defines the words in an accurate manner. She also touches upon the denominational differences if there are any in usage.
- She gives examples of use. This is necessary even in the case of simpler words, and what is more, it is of the utmost importance to give one or two sample sentences as examples in case of more complicated words (bearing the meaning). She pays attention to her students helping them by formulating whole sentences bearing the new terminology, so that they could use it more easily and there are fewer chances to forget it.
- The dictionary also includes idioms. The words in idioms have a different meaning than if they were simply used one after the other. E.g. "ceas" means „hour". And she conjugates it in the idiom: "Slujba ceasurilor/Ceasurile liturgice=the Hours." "Ceasul întâi = Prime", "Ceasul al treilea=Terce", etc, and she also explains separately the idiom "Ceasuri Împărătești" = „Royal Hours", mentioning between brackets that this phrase appears in the Greek-Catholic and Orthodox religious language. She does not omit under this entry the "Ceasuri Pascale=Paschal Hours" phrase either, mentioning that this also occurs in the terminology of the aforementioned two churches. (p. 53)

Maria Ștefănescu's dictionary contains important Romanian and English religious terminology especially in the field of liturgy, ritualistic objects and apparel, spiritual life, sacraments, church hierarchy and administration, monastic life as well as religious art.

The dictionary fills up a gap, and a counterpart would be necessary for every language, including Hungarian.

I strongly recommend Maria Ștefănescu's dictionary to all Romanian speakers, so that, thanks to it, that they could word their ideas and communicate even more accurately in English.