

ABSTRACT OF THE HABILITATION THESIS

Associate Professor Laurențiu Florentin Moț, PhD

Teaching, administrative-educational and research activity is one of the activities that reward you the most. This is part of that kind of pursuit that always forces you to develop intellectually, but also relationally and professionally. There are naturally also the dangers of self-sufficiency and satisfaction which stops growth, of collegial envy, or that of assuming too many responsibilities, but they are not insurmountable. On the contrary, now, about 13 years after I started my teaching and research career, I realize that the wish for progress will always set desirable targets for you ahead, achievements that are unique in their own right and that are leading the way for those who follow you. Sometimes you will have to bring down the engines, for the sake of balanced development, but as the maturation sets in these challenges are better managed. Comparison with others is good as long as it tests your own opinions and skills, but it is not healthy if it is meant to answer Jesus' disciples' question "Who is the greatest?" Each one is called for something unique, even when two are working in the same field or department. The New Testament quickly teaches that Jesus did not attend school, but through the education He imparted to His disciples, he made them look as if they were schooled. This is one of the wonders of theological education.

The pages below represent my habilitation thesis in which are captured the scientific, professional and academic activities that followed the completion of doctoral studies. This report is also followed by a brief overview of the development prospects as a researcher. Although my habilitation is, in this case, a necessary step for accessing the university full professorship stage, so not the purpose as such, I note that I have already been part of doctoral coordination committees, both in national and in international contexts. Assisting PhD students in their research process is a secondary desideratum, but special in its character. The most core part of the coordination activity is that by teaching others, you are teaching yourself and that is something worth pursuing.

After graduating from the faculty of Adventist pastoral theology in 2002, I began, in parallel, pastoral work and master's courses with Andrews University in the United States. Both

lasted 6 years. The master's program was a summer one, and I completed the courses in three years. The remaining three were put aside for the preparation of the master's thesis. I resumed my master's thesis after eight years, and in 2017 it went out under the title *Angels and Beasts: The Relationship Between the Four Living Creatures and the Four Riders in Revelation 6:1-8* (Wipf&Stock). In 2008, after being ordained as a pastor (a condition of teaching in the Adventist Church), I was called upon to join the staff of teachers at the then Adventist Theological Institute (now Adventus University), which brought up my referral for PhD studies two years after that. Between 2010-2014, I went through my PhD studies at AIIAS (Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies), where I completed the program with the dissertation entitled *Morphological and Syntactical Irregularities in the Book of Revelation*. This became the title of a monograph published in 2015 by Brill publishing house. It was the first conclusive proof for me that, although I live in Romania and coming from a minority church, with the inherent limitations from here, one can still enter the circles of theological specialists.

Following what I have published or presented since 2007 to the present, one can immediately see three main areas: the Johannine Apocalypse, the Greek language of the New Testament (linguistics, lexicography) and eschatology. The doctoral dissertation deals precisely with the linguistic irregularities in the book of Revelation. The subject attracted me by the fact that it is characterized by interdisciplinarity and by the fact that it deals with the Greek language, with the familiarity of which come many benefits in biblical studies. My preoccupation with the linguistic area, although initially steeped on the last book of the Bible, allowed me to cross with many other literatures, biblical or extra-canonical. Familiarity with Greek sometimes helped me to intuit and then demonstrate things contrary to what was believed in the literature. An example is that linguistic shortcomings in the NT are only rarely caused by the authors' mother tongue. Most of the time, they are caused by the acquisition level of the language in which the NT was written. Also through the study of the language I managed to draw up a series of lexicographical studies that showed that the translations or interpretations we are used to are not always the best. In this respect, I was very happy to be co-opted in the review team of Dumitru Cornilescu bible translation, a special group, with people who knew well not only the biblical languages, but also the Romanian language, because yes, in the translation studies you need to know the target language, not only the source one. About Greek I wrote linguistic, lexicographical, and didactic

studies. Although I taught Greek only at an advanced level (PhD) I was also concerned with the didactic aspect of languages, so-called, dead.

As for the book of Revelation, it is clearly seen, first through the two books already published (as well as through two other books that are in progress), and then from many published articles, that it is a passion. Although I come from a historical tradition of interpreting revelation, I am more attentive to the meaning of language and symbols than to their historical application. The advantage of studying Revelation is that, given its leaning towards OT and the apocalyptic genre, I became familiar with many other portions of the biblical canon or genre literature. So I remain an interdisciplinary researcher and I'm looking to see what areas the biblical language I am studying sends me to. I'm obviously familiar with the best reviews and the latest studies in Revelation, and through what I've written I've covered pretty much all the large portions of the book. That is why I was saying in the research plans that what I would be interested in now are no longer the parts, but the whole. That is how it is that I have been working for a couple of years on an academic commentary, although it will address the general public.

The concern for eschatology can be seen clearly from the number of articles on the approach and delay of the Parousia. This is the main aspect of the eschatology for which I have spent time and energy. The subject quickly intrigues because the promise of a close eschaton is very widespread in the New Testament, but the passage of time stands against it and one does not know what to believe. From theologians to the simple believers, this tension is not easily manageable. Sometimes radical solutions were come up: Jesus and the apostles were wrong, the Church is to blame that the end was delayed. Other times, unsatisfactory explanations were proposed: it was not the cosmic end that was near, but the spiritual coming of Jesus, or the judgment on ancient Israel, etc. Neither the systematics could perform better. From consistent eschatology, one would switch to the inaugurated one, then to the existential one, to the politicized one and to the one called "already and not yet". But none seem to satisfy all the questions, all the quests. What I propose is present but poorly represented in the specialized literature, namely a certain conditionality that the sovereignty of God has placed over the end of history. Hence a series of practical implications (spiritual and missionary) of which the most important is that the one to be hastened is the self, not the end, not the Church, not God.

As for future activities, I plan to work out a monograph on the time of the end, a commentary on the book of Revelation and others. I would also add here that research must always be negotiated in relation to teaching and administrative activity. After all, in a university there is a need not only for authors, but also for living epistles, the apostle Paul affirms. In the classroom, in the rector's office or somewhere else, I am needed as a man, as a teacher, as an administrator, therefore, I keep the research activity as the passion in the shadows, the force that drives me without the others necessarily knowing. The happiest case is, of course, the one in which the research gathers colleagues, students, and the projects bear more signatures. This, too is on the list of priorities.