

THE RELATIONSHIPS OF THE MOLDOVIAN RULERS WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE POPULATION OF SPACE

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Résumé. Les habitats de cette étude ont eu des maîtres importants autant comme position sociale que politique, fait qui représente une constante dans l'évolution de la propriété. Certains villages ont appartenu à d'importantes familles de boyards, comme les Hăbășescu, les Prăjescu et les Cantemir, d'autres à d'importants centres de l'orthodoxie, comme l'Evêché de Roman, le Monastère Trei Ierarhi et le Monastère Galata. Cela a eu un effet bénéfique pour les habitants de ces villages, les maîtres s'occupant de ce que leurs sujets bénéficient d'un traitement fiscal privilégié, de protection contre les abus, aspects ayant un rôle très important dans l'évolution démographique.

Keywords: *Moldavia, rulers, Catholic Church, Catholic population, settlements*

The “birth” of the medieval Moldavian state was a late and difficult one. The voivodes, who extended the principality by means of diplomacy, internally and externally, did not hesitate to declare war if need be.

As far as the international relationships were concerned, the Moldavian rulers tried to balance their policy towards the two Catholic kingdoms in the North and West of the country – namely, Hungary and Poland. The population was not large, especially to the East of the Prut. For this reason, for almost five centuries of existence of the Moldavian state within borders that became unstable in time, the rulers and the Moldavian gentry tried to appeal to people from neighbouring states by initially offering them certain economic facilities or adopting a tolerant attitude towards foreigners. Some of them, who were of Catholic religion, came to the East Carpathian space in search of a better life than the one they had had in Transylvania. Here, in some of the rural as well as urban settlements, they discovered other fellow Catholics, many of them descendants of the Hungarians and Germans who had settled down in the Carpathian, Subcarpathian and plateau villages even before the state foundation.

The Catholic Church tried to protect its followers by using mostly the influence of the Polish state on its Orthodox neighbour to the detriment of the Apostolic Hungarian state's influence. With the help of the priests, monks, missionaries and bishops, the Catholic Church managed to create bridges of communication with the ruler, thus intending to keep the believers within the Catholic faith and away from a possible conversion to the Orthodox religion through the proselyting activities of the local church, taking into consideration the fact that the Orthodox monasteries had been given possession of some of the villages.

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The estate of the Săbăoani - Berindești village was the property of the Neamț-Secu monastery. On May 12th, 1606, by royal charter issued at Iași, Ieremia Movila donated the Secu Monastery Săbăoani and Berindești, villages with water mills, populated by Hungarians, belonging to a small county of Roman, as a means of rewarding the monks for their prayers for the ruler's health. Further documents confirmed the donation, the monastery being their owner until the secularization of the monastery properties (1864).

The Catholic tradition about the building of the Church from Săbăoani records Margareta Mușata, the grandmother of Alexandru cel Bun as founder. This is the church located outside the village, on the upper terrace side slope of the Siret valley at the place called Berindești.

The village of Tămășeni was the property of the Galata monastery from Iași and was donated, together with other villages, to the monastery on 22nd February 1578 by Petru Șchiopul.

On 2nd May 1623, by royal charter issued at Iași, Ștefan Tomșa, the ruler of Moldavia, donated chancellor Lupu the village Agiudeni, on the Siret, in the county of Roman, according to the charters issued to their ancestors by the good and noble ruler, Alexandru cel Bun. In 1644, the estate of the Agiudeni village was donated to the school founded by Vasile Lupu at the Trei Sfetitele monastery from Iași. After the school ceased to function, it was taken over by the monastery with the same name.

The first mentioning of the village of Răchiteni was on 24th April 1520, in a charter issued by Ștefăniță Voievod. The charter confirms the division of certain properties, among which there was also Răchiteni village, between Cristea and his sister, Nastea, the wife of the High Steward Stârcea. Among further owners of the village there was also Marica, the wife of the former ruler Ioan Vodă cel Cumplit (1572-1574). And the trail of documents continues after 1600. Around 1640 Vasile Lupu donated the village to the monastery he had founded, the Trei Ierarhi monastery from Iași, which owned the village until the secularization of monastery estates.

We must also mention that the Trei Ierarhi monastery also owned the village of Fărcășeni. In time, the administration of the monastery must have brought Catholics from Răchiteni to Fărcășeni to work on the estate, so that in the latter half of the 18th century we find Catholics in Fărcășeni as well. They can be definitely considered as originating from Răchiteni.

In the old administrative territorial division, the village of Arini was also named "Unguri" (Hungarians) but the Catholics statistics constantly recorded the village under the name Găiceana. The name of Arini, which the place bears today, comes from a part of the village called "Arinoasa".

Scarlet Callimachi, Voivode, by a charter issued on 8th November 1817, granted Costachi Sturza, governor of bailiffs, the privilege to bring from abroad 80 bondsmen, being exempted from all sorts of taxes paid by the rest of the population. Around 1820, Costache Callimachi actually brought them from Transylvania to his estate, Găiceana, Tecuci county, in the village later called "Unguri" ("Hungarians").

Bălușești, a village which is part of the commune Icușești, has one of its sectors inhabited by Catholics since 1854. Back then, it was part of the estate of the well-known German writer Wilhelm von Kotzebue, the Russian consul in Moldavia, with 35 Catholic families that came from Săbăoani and five more families from Barticești.

Chiperești is an old Catholic colony which no longer exists today, but where there used to be a cloth factory in the settlement with the same name, located on the right bank of the Bahlui river, at the confluence with the Jijia river, settlement located today in Țuțora

commune, Iași county. The ruler Grigore Ghica the IIIrd (1764-1767) wanted to start a cloth factory in Moldavia and through the head of the guild from Cernăuți, he invited the inhabitants of Filipeni and Zaleszczyki to come and work in the factory he was going to open. He asked for 100 workers, offering them complete religious liberty (they were Protestants) and the right to build their own church by the charter issued on 23rd August 1766. The colony built their church but they had difficulty in finding a pastor. For this reason, the head of the colony, Kuglar, native of Silezia, converted to Catholicism with his entire family in the year 1768 and asked the Franciscan monks from Iassy for religious guidance for their colony. When all seemed to work just fine, the Russian –Turkish war broke out and the royal factory from Chiperești was destroyed; a part of the colonists were made redundant and being given a small amount of money for their trip, they went to Muntenia.

Efemeridele Cîbinului records that, in 1420, the Hussites, driven away from Hungary and Bohemia by King Sigismund Ist, crossed the mountains to Moldavia. While the Germans settled in Baia and Cotnari, the Hungarians settled in Valea Seacă, Fărăoani and Bacău. The Hussites were followed by Protestants, strongly supported by the ruler Iacob Eraclide Despotul, but were driven away by the ruler Petru Șchiopul by special decree in 1588 and 1589. What happened at Cotnari and in the entire Moldavia is quite unique in the history of Protestantism, as they were systematically restricted in their activities and later, totally driven away, which had never happened before anywhere else – on the contrary, once they settled in a place they could not be driven away.

As for the large, Gothic church from Cotnari, the Catholic tradition claims that this building was erected, together with many others from Moldavia, by Margareta Mușata, the grandmother of Alexandru cel Bun.

Around 1600, the estate of the village of Fărăoani was owned by the descendants of the two noble families – Goia and Teleagă. The large number of the descendants of these families, especially Goia, can be used as proof of the very old existence of the village. Truthfully speaking, the two noble families were not of the same rank, the Goias being of nobler birth, but both of them owned the entire village. On 24th March 1615, the whole village was bought by the ruler Ștefan Tomșa from the descendants of these families and donated to the Solca monastery, founded by him. The village remained in the possession of the monastery until the occupation of Bukovina by the Austrians in 1775 and later, at the beginning of the 19th century, it was sold to the Chancellor Nicolae Ruset.

The hard times, the lack of a Catholic community in the city as well and the shortage of missionaries led in Galați to the loss of the old place of the Catholic church, of the cemetery and of the priest's house from Piața Veche, occupied by the neighbouring Orthodox monks. A new stage of the Catholic life in Galați started with the re-opening of trade on the Danube as a result of the peace treaty from Kuciuk-Kainardji in 1774 and later, of the final peace treaty from Adrianopole in 1829. After 1830, many consulates opened in Galați, thus increasing the number of Catholics. On 7th June 1839, the ruler of Moldavia, Mihai Sturza, through one of the charity organizations from Galați, donated the place to the possessions where the church and the annexes are located today.

The village of Iugani is very old, being recorded on 29th April 1520 as the possession of Grâncovici, the Chief Magistrate of Hotin, and his nephews, Ion and Iurie. On 30th July 1581, Iugani, together with other villages, was confirmed as the possession of Marica, the daughter of Lupu Huru and wife of Ioan Vodă Cel Cumplit. A series of further documents record the passing of the village to Marica's grandchildren, its division among her descendents and then, even the selling of a part of the village, so as, in the end, the villages of Iugani and Răchiteni ended up in the possession of the ruler. Around the beginning of 1640,

Vasile Lupu donated these villages to his newly-built monastery Trei Ierarhi from Iași, by a charter issued around 1640.

In Siret, apart from the Szeklars and the Polish, there were also many Catholic Armenians. They were subjected to offence and persecution, ever since the time of Gheorghe Duca-Vodă. Under the leadership of the Bishop Menas, the Armenians crossed the mountains to Transylvania, where Mihai Apafi Ist offered them the possibility to found two important cities: Armenopolis – Gherla and Elisabethopolis - Ibașfalău - Dumbrăveni, both populated by Catholic Armenians.

Coming from the centre of the Balkans, the Abbot of Nona, Alexandru Komulovic, sent as an apostolic messenger to supervise counter reform measures, wrote to the cardinal of San Georgio, in Warsaw, on 10th January 1598 that he had already kept council in Iași to impose the measures taken by the Tridentine Council and that these measures had been applied by Petru Șchiopul, the ruler, by royal decree so as the Church from Roman, Piatra and all the Hungarian villages were taken from Protestants and given back to the Catholic Church. The trend was set by those from Cotnari, who were considered as patrons of all the Catholics from Moldavia.

During his visit of Moldavia in 1646, the Bishop Marcu Bandulovic (Marco Bandini) mentions that in three cities from Moldavia, Bacău, Huși and Trotuș, Catholics and Orthodoxes ruled the city alternatively. This must not come as a surprise, as the formation of the feudal state of Moldavia was nothing else than the occupation of the territory by the “bravemen” that came from Maramureș.

There was also the superposition of the new state organization over the already existing one of the local feudalists. And, for a better co-operation, each organization would take the lead in turn, the old one as a result of its previous existence and the new one - the leaders – as a result of the political power they held in the country.

In Moldavia, the Apostolic mission *De Propaganda Fide Congregation*, which had been founded 20 years before and was formed of conventual Italian Franciscans, had the right to monopoly over the missionary activities in this region. The policy of “monastic colonialism” - an obvious tendency in most missions of the *Propaganda* - supported by the conventual Minorites, had little chance of success before the Jesuits supported by Poland, the rightful owner of *de jus patrone* right over the Moldavian Catholic Church.

The relationships between the Moldavian rulers and the Jesuits date back ever since the latter half of the 16th century, more exactly since 1588, when at the call and with the agreement of the ruler Petru Șchiopul, the first mission arrived in Moldavia, led by Stanislas Warszewicki, the rector of the Jesuit college from Vilna and two other monks.

The political and personal interests of Petru Șchiopul, closely connected to the Catholic kingdom of Poland, had a decisive role in taking this decision. The ruler was supported in his initiative of reviving the Catholic structures in Moldavia by Bartolomeo Brutti, one of the most influential boyars from the Court in Iași owing to his connections in Istanbul. But the Jesuit project came to a halt once Petru Șchiopul was removed from the throne and would only be resumed 50 years later, during the reign of Vasile Lupu. Yet, the Jesuit mission of 1588 will emphasize the manner in which the Company understood to act in the Moldavian space. Poland’s influence (together with that of the Ottoman suzerain power) was overwhelming in the way rulers treated their relationships with the Jesuits and the Company members tried to use this influence as efficiently as possible to obtain maximum of advantages in Moldavia.

The ruler pursued a policy of balance between the two competing religious orders, adapting its decision according to the current political reasons, the influence of some

important persons at court (the royal secretaries or the pro - Jesuit boyars) or the personal sympathy towards the Company's activity.

The general tendency was that of favouring the conventual Franciscan missionaries with the pastoral and ecclesiastical activities (religious guidance for the parishioners, parish control) and the Jesuits with the educational and cultural ones (the foundation of schools and colleges or didactic activities for which the Jesuits were highly appreciated and well-known in Europe).

Apart from that, the rulers were aware of the arguments brought forth regarding the necessity of maintaining the natural hierarchical order in the Catholic Diocese of Bacău (1607- 1818) and that is why they avoided granting the Jesuits legal status outside the Apostolic authority, the effects of such measures being easy to understand.

Despite the different social roles they played, a certain solidarity forms between the ruler and the peasants; their relationship makes their destinies become interwoven as the hardships of the peasants become those of the ruler, too, and the former's financial difficulties will become the latter's difficulties as well. On the same thought, the existence of a well-populated village is conditioned by the protection of a powerful ruler. The moment when, due to successive divisions, the number of the owners of the village grows and their social status is insignificant, the village will depopulate, its inhabitants being attracted by the protection a strong master can offer, that is, if the village is not bought entirely by a different master.

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