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BYZANTINE CHANT IN THE ROMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES

DURING THE PHANARIOT PERIOD (1711 – 1821)

Following the attempt of the Moldavian Prince Dimitrie Cantemir to end the Turkish reign through an alliance with Peter the Great, and his defeat in 1711, the Turks decided not to grant the reign of Moldavia and Wallachia to a Romanian Prince, but to a Greek one who came from Phanar – the famous neighbourhood in Constantinople – whom they would permanently be able to supervise. The chosen one was Nicholas Mavrocordato, son of the Great Dragoman of the Sublime Porte¹ Alexander Mavrocordato, and together with his election Phanariot reigns began in two of the three Romanian provinces: Moldavia and Wallachia or Ouggro-Wallachia, as it used to be called. The third, Transylvania, was part of the Austrian-Hungarian empire until 1918.

For more than a century, more exactly from 1711 in Moldavia and from 1714 in Wallachia and until the year of the Balkan revolution, in 1821, the Princes of the two Romanian provinces were assigned directly by the Turks on the shores of the Bosphorus.² Thus, during 1711 – 1821, thirty-one Phanariot Princes, from eleven families, were to be on the two countries' thrones on seventy-five occasions.³

The present study aims at an analysis of the musical-ecclesiastical phenomenon in the two Romanian provinces, Wallachia and Moldavia, during 1711 – 1821, in order to emphasize the following elements:

Liturgical languages in Wallachia and Moldavia.

Byzantine Musical Education in the Romanian Principalities.

The idea of canonicity in Romanian music of Byzantine tradition.

LITURGICAL LANGUAGES IN WALLACHIA AND MOLDAVIA

The Romanians' attachment to Byzantine culture and ritual intensified with the foundations of the Ouggro-Wallachian Metropolitan seat in the year 1359 and the Moldo-Wallachian in 1393. Together with these two there was also born a special relationship with the Patriarchate, which led to the arrival in the

1 That is to say, interpretar-in-chief and acting permanent head of the Foreign Ministry.

2 Giurăscu, C. Constantin & Dinu C. Giurăscu, *Istoria românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri până astăzi, Caracterizarea epocii fanarioților*, Editura Albatros, p. 448.

3 Djuvara, Neagu, *Între Orient și Occident. Țările Române la începutul epocii moderne (1800 – 1848)*, București (1995), Ed. Humanitas, p. 32.

Romanian Principalities not only of bishops or metropolitans, as it is the case of the first Metropolitan of Wallachia, Hyacintus Critobulus (1359 – 1372) who came directly from Constantinople, but also a number of psaltēs, teachers and scholars.

The Romanian Church's dependence on the Ecumenical Patriarchate and their mutual support would become stronger once direct connections with the Orthodox East were established through the dedication of the first Romanian monasteries to the church of Hagia Sofia in Constantinople at the end of the 14th century (1391), or to Mount Athos.⁴ This would be intensified once the Turks conquered the Byzantium in 1453.⁵

Regarding liturgical languages in the two Romanian Principalities, it should be mentioned that, until the middle of the 17th century, the Romanian Orthodox Church used the Slavonic language both as liturgical and state language⁶ (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Rom. MS 1790,
dated 1661, Wallachia
Library of Romanian Academy,
Bucharest

4 One of the most important papers on this subject is “Le Mont Athos et les Roumains. Recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIVe siècle à 1654” by Petre Ș. Năsturel, in: *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, Roma, no. 227 (1986).

5 *Ibid.*

6 Ciobanu, Gheorghe, “Raportul dintre muzica liturgică românească și muzica bizantină”, in: *Studii de Etnomuzicologie și Bizantinologie*, vol. II (thereafter SEB II), București (1979), Ed. Muzicală, p. 263.