



TERRITORIAL DISMEMBERMENT AND ANNIHILATION OF THE STATEHOOD OF MOLDOVA: POLITICAL-DIPLOMATIC ASPECTS

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Abstract

Since the founding of the Moldovan state, it has been subjected to numerous armed raids. In the 14th-18th centuries, several neighboring countries had domination interests over Moldova. Our rulers, from the fifteenth century, were permanently forced to maneuver, concluding vassalage alliances with Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, the Ottoman Gate. After the death of Stephen the Great, starting with the year 1538, Moldova comes under Turkish political domination. The countries west of Moldova were now subject to the Ottoman Ports. The attempts of the Moldovan gentlemen during the sec. XVI-XVIII, to free Moldova from the Ottoman domination had no luck.

In the years 1775-1812 following the political-diplomatic confrontations between Turkey, Russia, Austria, France the state of Moldova is territorially dismantled. These processes created premises for the annihilation in the nineteenth century of Moldovan statehood.

Keywords: *Moldovan statehood, Moldovan statehood, modern stage, risk factors, consolidation, foreign domination, destructive politics.*

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Since the founding of the Moldovan state, it has been subjected to numerous armed raids. In the 14th-18th centuries, several neighboring countries had domination interests over Moldova. Our rulers, since the fifteenth century, were permanently forced to maneuver, concluding alliances with its vassals Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, and later



with the Ottoman Empire. After the death of Stephen the Great, since 1538, Moldova came under the Turkish political domination. The countries west of Moldova were now subject to the Ottoman Empire. The attempts of the Moldovan rulers during the XVI-XVIII centuries to free Moldova from the Ottoman domination have failed. At the beginning of the XVII century Moldova allied strategically with Poland, which fought with the Ottoman Empire for domination over Moldova. However, Moldova's attempts to weaken the Turkish yoke, with the help of Poland, have failed. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Moldovan boyars, have turned to Russia for help to free their country. Ever since the reign of Petru Rares, then of Gheorghe Stefan, and Dimitrie Cantemir Moldova made attempts to escape from the Ottoman rule with Russia's help.

In 1739, during peace negotiations, Russia asks Turkey to offer Moldova independence under Russian protectorate. In the peace treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji 1774, Russia and Turkey agreed restoring the rights of Moldovan boyars to elect rulers. The treaty also made the Ottoman Empire return territories part of *raias*. Although Turkey convened upon the stipulations of the Russo-Turkish treaties of this period (XVIII c.), it largely ignored their fulfillment.

In order to strengthen the alliance against Russia, Turkey signed on May 4, 1775 a treaty with Austria, giving it the right to annex the north of Moldavia - Bucovina.

The worst thing about this event from 1775, is that this territory separated from Moldova represented the place where the Moldovan state was born and strengthened. The Austrian Empire annexed a vast region that included: the Fortress of Moldova - Suceava, which is also the ancient capital of Moldova, its cultural and spiritual center; Putna Monastery – which houses the tombs of the glorious ruler Stephen the Great; Monasteries Voronet, Humor, Bogdana, Sucevita, Moldovita, Dragomirna; and territories surrounding the Moldova river including the first state administrative center Baia.

The Ottoman Empire gave out these lands to Austria illegally, without holding rights to them. Thus, the geostrategic interests of Austria and Turkey influenced the fate of Bucovina. German and Ukrainian settlers were brought there to influence the decrease of Moldovans. The Moldovan ruler Grigore Ghica III manifested great courage under these complicated conditions, having ruled the country in 1764-1767, then



in 1775-1777. In 1775, after the alliance of Turkey and the Austrian Empire, he vehemently opposes the plan to let Austrians annex the north of Moldova - Bucovina.

Towards the autumn of 1777, the ruler Grigore Ghica III is betrayed by the Ottoman Empire. Having been in close relations with Russian diplomats, he is dismissed from duty and beheaded because he campaigned for the unity and sovereignty of Moldova. Thus, Moldova being ripped apart by the Ottoman Empire and the Austrian Empire, in 1775 its ability to defend itself and maintain integrity reduced essentially. It is worth mentioning that, by the end of the eighteenth century, only one third of the territory from the east of Moldova, situated between the rivers Prut and Nistru - part of the Moldovan state - was inherited by the Moldavian ruler.

Countless wars waged by Russia against the Ottoman Empire in the XVIII c. created premises for the liberation of Moldova. Much of the Moldavian boyars and the clergy have either officially or secretly, gotten Moldova closer to Russia.

In 1802, Russia, exerting diplomatic pressure on Turkey, got the right to make Moldova a protectorate of Russia. Moldova's rulers could not be appointed or changed without Russia's consent. Soon however, these provisions are violated and 1806 begins with yet another Russo-Turkish War, which got France interested in its proportions and outcome. Between 1806-1812, Moldova was de facto ruled by the Russian Tsar. The Moldovan historian Manolake Draghici wrote about these events: "... Russians ... they did not want to miss the opportunity and sent an army to fight with Turkey, violating the principalities and appointing a military ruler in Moldova." [1, p. 74 -75].

In May 1812, Russia, under the threat of a military attack from France, signed the Treaty of Peace with Turkey in Bucharest. Thus, following the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812, the historical Moldova was torn apart. Western Moldova, situated between the Carpathians and the Prut, remained under the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire, while Eastern Moldova - "the largest and most fertile part" [2, p. 61] of Moldova, called later "Bessarabia", was under the protectorate of the Russian Empire.

The division of Moldova between these two colonial empires led to a territorial and national tragedy, Moldova being an undivided country from 1359 until 1812. The events of 1812 caused a major loss of statehood of the historical Moldova in the following decades. The consequences of tearing Moldova apart would be felt later on. However, in 1812, a



sense of hope started developing. Concerning those events M. Draghici states, “taking place at first in the city known Esii (Peace of Bucharest), the souls of the faithful and true patriots of Moldova were filled with incredible joy for this crowning glory of Russia, the orthodox, protective kingdom...during those times a great number of written complaints were sent to the Ottoman Empire by the boyars, who deplored the fact that Bessarabia was taken by the Russians, but nothing could be changed... “[1, p. 93]. As stated by Nicolae Iorga in 1912, especially complained the “the boyars who had no ideals and feelings for the country and the nation ... they felt sorry that they had lost the biggest part of Moldova, with rich fields and pastures for cattle...” [3, p. 53].

After 1812 Western Moldova, i.e. the dismembered Principality of Moldova remained under the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire. Being pressured by Russia, the Ottoman Empire suppresses the Phanariot regime after 1822. During this period local rulers were elected. During the reign of Ioan Sandu Sturza, boyars of the first, second, and third states advocated the reformation and modernization of the political and administrative systems of Moldova. The equerry Ionica Tautul, under the Turkish military occupation, announces a Constitution of Carvunari to proclaim the fundamental rights throughout Moldova - borrowing slogans from the French Revolution.

In 1829 Russia and Turkey signed the Treaty of Adrianople, which expanded autonomy in Moldavia and Wallachia. Russia’s role in the principalities increases. Under General P. Kiselev, four Moldavian boyars create the Organic Regulation of Moldova, which can be described as a constitution of the Principality of Moldavia.

According to the Regulation, the executive power rests with a ruler chosen for life, aided by an Administrative Council. The ruler had the right to issue bills. *Adunarea Obsteasca* – similar to a Parliament, had the right to pass laws, which were then approved by the Ruler. The Organic Regulation proclaims the Moldovan language as the official language of the Principality of Moldavia.

The ruler Mihail Sturdza (1834-1848), modernized Moldova by reforming the judiciary system according to the French model. Although Moldova regained its previous autonomy, the Ottoman and Russian oppression have not weakened. The ideas of social freedom and nationality spread by European revolutionaries infiltrate Moldova.



Moldovan society before 1848 lamented the loss of Eastern Moldova (Bessarabia) from 1812. But some Moldavian and Wallachian intellectuals after 1848 propagated the idea of creating a unique state of “Romanians” - Romania. It should be noted that after 1848, although the unionist movement in Moldova had supporters among intellectuals, the movement was stronger in Wallachia. Large numbers of Moldovan intellectuals and peasants understood that Moldova, having remained without Bessarabia and Bukovina, in an eventual union with Wallachia, could become an annex to it. After 1852, a special interest from France, Prussia, Russia to unite the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, has outlined. The heads of these countries, primarily of France, were aware that “Moldova can be more easily drawn into an action against the union, because it knew it had to make rather large sacrifices on the altar of unification, even sacrifice the very being of State” [18, p. 257]. Napoleon III of France was informed that Muntenia wanted the union at all costs, because “Muntenia would only get benefits from the union” [4, p. 257].

It should be noted that the “national party” in Moldova, strangely enough, was not concerned with the issue of reunification of the Moldovan territory divided after the annexation of Bessarabia to Russia in 1812. In the leaflets, unionists mentioned absolutely no aspirations of returning Western Moldova (Principality of Moldova), Eastern Moldova (Bessarabia) and Northern Moldavia (Bucovina) to their homeland Moldova. In fact, unionists indirectly served the geopolitical goals of France, Russia, Prussia. The aim of these countries was creating a “barrier” against the Ottoman Empire, which was Romania.

In a letter to N. Vogoride, the *Caimacam* of Moldova, his brother-in-law writes with indignation about the “national party”: “driven by materialistic interests and rewards, they are so corrupt that they help transform their homeland, Moldova, into a mere annex to Wallachia and erase it from the map of nations that govern themselves. Under the pretext of creating a unified Romania, they want to reduce Moldova and Moldovans to the situation of Ireland and the Irish without thinking of the present and future generations ... The unionist party can be called the national party of Wallachia, which aspires to enlarge its territory but, because of this, in Moldova it can be merely called an anti-national party” [5, p. 88].

Russia, as demonstrated by documents from archives, prepared a methodical unification of Moldavia (without Bessarabia) with the



Romanian country, including this clause (a. 1829) in the text of the Organic Regulation. After 1848, France wanted to create Romania and have it as an ally against Turkey.

In July 1857 elections took place in the ad hoc Assembly of Moldova. A few months before the election “the situation in Moldova is generally more tense than in Wallachia” [19, p. 87] due to disputes between unionists and anti-unionists. Among the population, when it comes to the Union “there is little concern” [5, p. 87] - many foreign observers admitted then. Unionists, feeling that they will lose elections, boycotted them. Thus, during the ad hoc Assembly of Moldova, an overwhelming majority of anti-unionists was elected. However, France did not recognize the elections and urged the Ottoman Empire to repeat them. The *Caimacam* N. Vogoride, pressured from the outside, sides with the unionists, acting in elections “in favor of the Union with as much diligence as he resisted it” [5, p. 166] in the previous elections. At the repeated elections in the ad-hoc Assembly of Moldova, after 2 months, the Unionists were defeated.

The general situation after the elections was described by the Ambassador of Belgium to Iasi: “... among the 80 members considered to be in favor of the Union, there are many who had been elected at the annual elections and then claimed to be separatists. Such revival of the majority ... should not be surprising, when the ruler himself gives such a powerful example of radical and rapid change of opinion... Moldovan unionists were forced to be selected to join the program of Wallachian clubs ... “ [5, p. 171].

On 7/19 October 1857, the Ad Hoc Assembly of Moldova decides “the Union of principalities into a single state named Romania.” [5, p.188]. On 8/20 October 1857 the Ad Hoc Assembly of Wallachia also decides “the Union of the countries Romania and Moldova into one state under one government” [5, p. 189].

The provisions of these articles from the Assemblies decisions reveal well-known things. Moldovans from the East of Prut believed that, together with Wallachians, they established a new state, Romania. Wallachians, who historically identified themselves as Romanians, didn't consider Romania a new state, but their ancestral land, which now unites with Moldova ... to continue to be Romania. “In that era the name “Romania” was used sometimes in a narrow sense instead of “Wallachia” [5, p. 189] - even Romanian authors admit it when explaining this subject.

Contemporary “pro-Romanian” historians, praising the creation of the



national state of Romania, claim that in 1859 it was not two sovereign states that united, but rather “two historical Romanian regions”. Kogalniceanu himself proves these statements false. This active promoter of the Union, in his speech at the ad hoc Assembly of Moldova on 7/19 October 1857, immediately after the victory of unionists, said indisputable truths: “the principalities will be considered sovereign states by the European powers, and several treaties signed with the rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia will serve as proof... because they have reserved all rights of sovereignty and, in particular, the right to an autonomous government, the right to a legislation, meaning a true and indisputable autonomy ... Therefore, they did not submit to any foreign legislative power” [5, p. 185].

Undoubtedly, Moldova was still a state in 1859. The Unionists, who had the majority in the ad-hoc Assemblies of Moldova and Wallachia, in 1859, proclaimed the Union of the Principalities, choosing Alexandru Ioan Cuza to lead the country. The state capital after 1862 became the wallachian city Bucharest.

Soon, warming the provisions of the Paris Conference (August 19, 1858), on equality for the prerogatives, the Wallachian political circles have given the power of Moldovan sovereigns. Mix in conditions of internal affliction of Moldovans, when caring for others may be important to the Moldovan cultural fund the Wallachian (Romanian) norms regarding political, social, cultural life.

The dismissal in 1866 of the Romanian throne of Moldovan Alexander I. Cuza, the political dictatorship and spirituality of Wallachia made dissatisfaction with the 1859-union become general in Moldova, it was the culmination of the rebellion against the returnees, the resurrection of the Turk, a Prussian gentleman of foreign faith.

This uprising of Moldovans against the Union with Wallachia, called by some historians the Separatist Movement of Moldovans from 1866, is described by Romanian historian I. Lupash: “Some of the Moldovans were fighting against the foreign lord, grouping around the boyar Nicolae Roznovanu, under whose leadership a Separatist Committee had been formed ...

The Roznovians succeeded in attracting him on their part and also Metropolitan Calinic Miculescu. On the first Sunday of April 1866, the Cathedral of the Metropolitan Cathedral was crowded, after the commission of the divine service, the metropolitan went out in front of the hardened crowd, starting to the Administrative Palace, where the members of the



lieutenant were at that time. Before leaving, Teodor Boldur-Latsescu in the court of the metropolis spoke a fiery speech about the rights of Moldova, urging the crowd to follow Metropolitan Cathedral. The sound of the bells started to tinkle, but in the Square in the palace the crowd was stopped by a wallachian regiment, who were not afraid of standing in front the cross carried by the metropolitan... One of the soldiers did not hesitate to answer with the bayonet, crossing the ruins of the metropolis, injuring it... The angry crowd, began to attack the soldiers with stones, was were pushed back to the court of the Metropolis. The embalming held until two in the afternoon, giving the Moldovan capital a sad appearance, sprinkled with blood stream ..., Professor N. Iorga, doing reminiscent of the bloody clash from Iashi, he translates it as follows: "... If he went to the procession left from the Metropolis, after the old tradition, with the swan in the forefront and a real fight with the army, with that mountain regiment, which used the weapon and shed a lot of blood, was for the dethronement of Voda Cuza, who was for Moldova sacrificed a pride and comfort ... " [4, pp. 288-290]. In December 1866 a lawsuit against separatist leaders is being tried in Iasi (Anti-union). Teodor Boldur-Lățescu, being asked what his nationality is, replied: "I am Moldovan" [6, p. 206].

After the annexation of Eastern Moldova - Bessarabia to the Russian Empire, the land is administered on the basis of a special law called "Regulation on the establishment of the provisional administration of Bessarabia", which entered into force in 1813. From an administrative-territorial aspect, Eastern Moldova in the years 1812- 1828 had become an integral region with autonomy status: it had departments, the High Council, its financial-economic service. Chancellery official language was Moldovian, the region retained its historic national emblem - the head of Bull.

As the Moldovan historian wrote Ia.Grosul, "... the main direction of the politics of tsarism in the occupation of the land remained the preceding and common for all national peripheries - the gradual liquidation of local particularities and the introduction, as in other regions, of the general-imperial forms of administration, of the general-Russian legislation" [7, p. 136].

In Moldova between Prut and Dniester, after 1812, the class of large landowners is divided into two groups: one Russian and another - Moldovan, which was in accordance with the old laws of Moldova. A conflict between Moldovan boyars and the Russian administration started in 1814, when



Russian governor I. Harting forced the introduction of Russian legislation in Bessarabia. With the support of Metropolitan G. Bănulescu-Bodoni, the boyars address the emperor Alexander I a complaint and insist that they must have a Moldovan governor and officials who know the customs of the Moldovan people. Pointing out that not even the Turks, four centuries ago were involved in the laws that Moldova had, they argued: “For four centuries Moldova has been governed by its laws and regulations... There are no old Moldovan customs and permanent rules? Don’t we have the code of Vasile Voivod (Lupu)?” [8, p. 282].

Alexander I, in the rescript of April 1, 1816, informs Metropolitan G. Bănulescu-Bodoni that, given the numerous abuses that occurred in Bessarabia, he wants to give this province an administration in harmony with his morals, customs and laws, which gives the annexed land the use of local laws and customs. According to *the Arrangement of the bishopric forming of Bessarabia in 1818*, the acts, the administrative, devices, fiscal, criminal and instructional affairs were done in Russian and Moldovan, in compliance with the Russian laws and with the preservation of the rights and customs of the land regarding private property. The civil and judicial actions were initially performed in the Russian and Moldavian languages and were judged on the basis of the laws and customs of Moldova.

The regulation of social-administrative relations, in harmony with the laws of historical Moldova, also contributed to the establishment of social categories - ranks. A notification issued in 1819 stated that the boyar ranks confirmed in 1734 by the ruler of Moldova Nicolae Mavrocordat were recognized. But in February 1828 a new Settlement for the administration of Bessarabia was adopted, which introduced the Russian laws and fiscal system, the liquidation of the last signs of autonomy of the county, considerably reducing the scope of the use of the Moldovan language in institutions. The judicial system in the county continued to use Andronachi Donici’s law collection published in 1814 in Iasi. Reprinting, in 1858, the law book of Andronachi Donici with the title “Abbreviating collection of the royal laws ... extracted and regulated by the logothete Andronachi Donici”, C. Negruzzi notes: “Donici’s collection is now the compass of the judges in Besarabia; it is no less necessary for us (West Moldova - Aut.) and would occupy a very honorable place on the table of any court ...” [9, p. 6].

Various aspects of the Moldovan legislation, including agrarian,



were exposed in the collection of *Bridges for the duties under which the masters of the peasants or the land workers in the Bessarabia Oblast are subjected and the rights they have ... in 1819, more in 16 days, due to the settlements of Moldova*. This *Bridges for the duties* is, in fact, the first attempt to systematize and codify the norms of the old Moldovan law. It is significant that it was made in Moldova between the Dniester and Prut, confirming the continuity of the community and from a legislative and judicial point of view [10, pages 150-172]. The summary update of this information confirms the conclusion of the Moldavian scientist D. Grama: “Despite the tendency of Russian Tsarism to completely replace the local law with the Russian one, the local realities were such that the Romanians (!) From the east of Prut managed to impose on the Czarist government the use in the courts of Bessarabia of at least some of the sources of the civil law of the Principality of Moldova. Thanks to this fact, throughout the Russian occupation, in the judicial courts of the region, the *Hexabibl* of Armenopol, the Bishop of Mavrocordat of 1785, the *Comprehensive Assembly from the books of the rightful rulers of Andronachi Donici continued to be applied*” [11, p. 94].

This old truth was mentioned in the 1950s by the historian Iachim Grosul: “... Under the conditions of joining Russia, Bessarabia was not guaranteed autonomous rights, like Finland, well. However, it should be emphasized that those modest beginnings of autonomy, offered in 1812-1818 and set out in the Regulation of 1813, in the Settlement of 1818, had a positive significance for the economic development of the land, its population ” [7 , p. 202, 210].

Commenting on the Moldovan-Russian relations from the earliest times until 1918, the lawyer D. Grama emphasizes: “It is worth mentioning the contribution of Russia to the return of the historical territories of Moldova, co-occupied by Turks in the 15th-18th centuries. By the decision of Emperor Alexander I in May 1807 the territories of the Bender, Akkerman, Chilia and Hotin districts were passed under the direct control of the Moldavian Divan. Thus, Russia honored the commitments made to the State of Moldova by the governments of the countries Alexei Mihailovici in 1656, Peter I in 1711 ... “ [12, p.63].

The documents, the testimonies of the time, show us that after 1812, from a political and religious point of view, the Moldovans between Prut and Dniester turned to Russia and its monarch, seeing in it “the



aid of orthodoxy, the savior of Europe and all Christianity”. But “the awareness that Moldova is their homeland, that they form a distinct nation, with their own language, is manifesting itself so strongly” [13, p. 195]. This reality has been confirmed by various Moldovan scientists, including Al. Boldur, St. Ciobanu, N. Popovschi, I. Macovei etc.

A comprehensive characteristic Moldavian people from Bessarabia is L. Boga, director of the State Archives in Chisinau, noted: “The testimonies time that those remaining Bessarabia there is a luminous awareness of a motherland- Moldova, a people - Moldovan, a nation - Moldovan, a nation - Moldovan, and above all - a Moldovan language “ [13, p. 197].

The analyzed documentary material shows us that Russia was forced to admit for “Bessarabia” certain deviations from the general rule of colonization, which were expressed by:

- the completion of the historical territory of Moldova between Prut and Dniester;

- The establishment and affirmation of the supreme structure of the organization of the church life in Eastern Moldova;

- The Metropolis of Chisinau and Hotin - as a spiritual force for the protection of the national-state identity of the Moldovans;

- widely applying the traditional Moldovan legal norms throughout the period of annexation of Moldova between Prut and Dniester;

- preserving the traditional administrative-territorial structure throughout Moldova - the lands;

- preserving and use in East Moldova, between Prut and Dniester, of the national-state emblems of the whole Moldova - the Moldovan language, the coat of arms with the bison head. Thus, after 1812 in Bessarabia the Moldovan national-state idea “did not die completely, because old letters and testimonies remained” [14, p. 61].

As the academic H. Corbu also points out, although “the Tsarist administration has carried out a systematic and relentless policy of eradicating ethnic and historical memory..., the population between Prut and Dniester has resisted all the plagues, coming to the end of over one hundred. Years of social and national oppression with a slightly altered language and coherent and well-structured spiritual traditions... that demonstrate the viability and resilience of this people in the historical retrospective” [15].

The respective opinions confirm the conclusion of the Moldovan lawyer and historian Al. Boldur, that Moldova between Prut and Dniester “has



many very specific features ... The history of the Bessarabian past under the Russians should never forget that Bessarabia has kept its unique ethnic, social-political and legal appearance with a national aspect” [16, p. 267].

It is worth mentioning that, despite the disappearance of the statehood of historical Moldova, despite the social, economic and political oppressions, in Bessarabia the faith in the Moldovan State, the Moldovan national-state consciousness have been maintained and continued. As a result, in Bessarabia, the first signs of a Moldovan national movement appear especially in the second half of the 19th century, whose aims are the national-political autonomy of the land, the revival of Moldovan statehood.

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The regulation of social-administrative relations, in harmony with the laws of historical Moldova, also contributed to the establishment of social categories - ranks. A notification issued in 1819 stated that the boyar ranks confirmed in 1734 by the ruler of Moldova Nicolae Mavrocordat were recognized. But in February 1828 a new Settlement for the administration of Bessarabia was adopted, which introduced the Russian laws and fiscal system, the liquidation of the last signs of autonomy of the county, considerably reducing the scope of the use of the Moldovan language in institutions. The judicial system in the county continued to use Andronachi Donici’s law collection published in 1814 in Iasi. Reprinting, in 1858, the law book of Andronachi Donici with the title “Abbreviating collection of the royal laws ... extracted and regulated by the logothete Andronachi Donici”, C. Negruzzi notes: “Donici’s collection is now the compass of the judges in Besarabia; it is no less necessary for us (West Moldova - Aut.) and would occupy a very honorable place on the table of any court ... “ [9, p. 6].

Various aspects of the Moldovan legislation, including agrarian, were exposed in the collection of *Bridges for the duties under which the*



masters of the peasants or the land workers in the Bessarabia Oblast are subjected and the rights they have ... in 1819, more in 16 days, due to the settlements of Moldova. This *Bridges for the duties* is, in fact, the first attempt to systematize and codify the norms of the old Moldovan law. It is significant that it was made in Moldova between the Dniester and Prut, confirming the continuity of the community and from a legislative and judicial point of view [10, pages 150-172]. The summary update of this information confirms the conclusion of the Moldavian scientist D. Grama: “Despite the tendency of Russian Tsarism to completely replace the local law with the Russian one, the local realities were such that the Romanians (!) From the east of Prut managed to impose on the Czarist government the use in the courts of Bessarabia of at least some of the sources of the civil law of the Principality of Moldova. Thanks to this fact, throughout the Russian occupation, in the judicial courts of the region, the *Hexabibl* of Armenopol, the Bishop of Mavrocordat of 1785, the *Comprehensive Assembly from the books of the rightful rulers of Andronachi Donici* continued to be applied [11, p. 94].

This old truth was mentioned in the 1950s by the historian Iachim Grosul: “... Under the conditions of joining Russia, Bessarabia was not guaranteed autonomous rights, like Finland, well. However, it should be emphasized that those modest beginnings of autonomy, offered in 1812-1818 and set out in the Regulation of 1813, in the Settlement of 1818, had a positive significance for the economic development of the land, its population ” [7 , p. 202, 210].

Commenting on the Moldovan-Russian relations from the earliest times until 1918, the lawyer D. Grama emphasizes: “It is worth mentioning the contribution of Russia to the return of the historical territories of Moldova, co-occupied by Turks in the 15th-18th centuries. By the decision of Emperor Alexander I in May 1807 the territories of the Bender, Akkerman, Chilia and Hotin districts were passed under the direct control of the Moldavian Divan. Thus, Russia honored the commitments made to the State of Moldova by the governments of the countries Alexei Mihailovici in 1656, Peter I in 1711 ...” [12, p.63].

The documents, the testimonies of the time, show us that after 1812, from a political and religious point of view, the Moldovans between Prut and Dniester turned to Russia and its monarch, seeing in it “the aid of orthodoxy, the savior of Europe and all Christianity”. But “the



awareness that Moldova is their homeland, that they form a distinct nation, with their own language, is manifesting itself so strongly” [13, p. 195]. This reality has been confirmed by various Moldovan scientists, including Al. Boldur, St. Ciobanu, N. Popovschi, I. Macovei etc.

A comprehensive characteristic Moldavian people from Bessarabia is L. Boga, director of the State Archives in Chisinau, noted: “The testimonies time that those remaining Bessarabia there is a luminous awareness of a motherland- Moldova, a people - Moldovan, a nation - Moldovan, a nation - Moldovan, and above all - a Moldovan language” [13, p. 197].

The analyzed documentary material shows us that Russia was forced to admit for “Bessarabia” certain deviations from the general rule of colonization, which were expressed by:

- the completion of the historical territory of Moldova between Prut and Dniester;

- the establishment and affirmation of the supreme structure of the organization of the church life in Eastern Moldova;

- The Metropolis of Chisinau and Hotin - as a spiritual force for the protection of the national-state identity of the Moldovans;

- widely applying the traditional Moldovan legal norms throughout the period of annexation of Moldova between Prut and Dniester;

- preserving the traditional administrative-territorial structure throughout Moldova - the lands;

- preserving and use in East Moldova, between Prut and Dniester, of the national-state emblems of the whole Moldova - the Moldovan language, the coat of arms with the bison head. Thus, after 1812 in Bessarabia the Moldovan national-state idea “did not die completely, because old letters and testimonies remained” [14, p. 61].

As the academic H. Corbu also points out, although “the Tsarist administration has carried out a systematic and relentless policy of eradicating ethnic and historical memory..., the population between Prut and Dniester has resisted all the plagues, coming to the end of over one hundred. Years of social and national oppression with a slightly altered language and coherent and well-structured spiritual traditions ... that demonstrate the viability and resilience of this people in the historical retrospective” [15].

The respective opinions confirm the conclusion of the Moldovan lawyer and historian Al. Boldur, that Moldova between Prut and Dniester “has many very specific features ... The history of the Bessarabian



past under the Russians should never forget that Bessarabia has kept its unique ethnic, social-political and legal appearance with a national aspect” [16, p. 267].

It is worth mentioning that, despite the disappearance of the statehood of historical Moldova, despite the social, economic and political oppressions, in Bessarabia the faith in the Moldovan State, the Moldovan national-state consciousness have been maintained and continued. As a result, in Bessarabia, the first signs of a Moldovan national movement appear especially in the second half of the 19th century, whose aims are the national-political autonomy of the land, the revival of Moldovan statehood.

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