

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF WRITING AND PUBLICATION OF DIMITRIE CANTEMIR'S *HISTORY OF THE GROWTH AND DECAY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE*

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Abstract: *Dimitrie Cantemir’s work is, still, very little scrutinized. The present study is meant to bring to the attention of the research workers a lot of genuine records information from Russia and other countries, to a better understanding of the context in which Dimitrie Cantemir wrote some of his historical works.*

Keywords: *History of the Ottoman Empire, Descriptio Moldaviae, the Cantemirian historiography.*

First of all, I would like to mention the good thing that, the last years of Dimitrie Cantemir’s literary and scientific activity, and also life of the famous encyclopaedist and Prince of Moldavia, became special topic for numberless scientific papers of research workers in the different countries of the world.¹

Given the archaeological investigations made in various records and manuscript sections of libraries in the Russian Federation, Romania, the United States of America and Turkey several genuine documents have been found out and introduced in the scientific world, which have greatly contributed to the enlightening and settling the unknown pages of the biography and scientific inheritance of the great European thinker.

¹ Ecaterina Țarălungă. *Dimitrie Cantemir*. București, 1989; Dinastia Cantemireștelor. Secolele XVII-XVIII./ Coordonator și redactor științific acad. A. Eșanu. Chișinău, 2008; Klaus Bochmann, Vasile Dumbrava. *Dimitrie Cantemir: Fürst der Moldau, Gelehrter, Akteur der europäischen Kulturgeschichte*. Leipzig, 2008; Густерин П.В. Первый российский востоковед Дмитрий Кантемир. М., 2008; Ștefan Lemny. *Cantemireștii. Aventura europeană a unei familii princiare din secolul al XVIII*. București, 2010; Andrei Eșanu, Valentina Eșanu. *Moștenirea Culturală a Cantemireștilor*. Chișinău, 2010; Țvircun Victor. *File din istoria vieții și activității politice a lui Dimitrie Cantemir*. Chișinău, 2009; Цвиркун В.И. *Димитрие Кантемир. Страницы жизни в письмах и документах*. СПб., 2010 etc.

Yet, one should notice that despite the rich bibliography of the life, political and intellectual activity of the Moldavian Prince, several unsearched topics remained outside the attention of the Cantemirian specialists, of which the history of the works and publication of Dimitrie Cantemir's "History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire".

Among the first matters the research workers of Dimitrie Cantemir's faced was the identification of the writing time period. Up to now, in the Cantemirian historiography there have been various opinions in terms of the years the mentioned work was issued. P. Panaitescu, the well-known Romanian Cantemirian research worker, considered that "The History of the Ottoman Empire" was started in 1714 and finished not later than November 1716²; he noticed that in a letter addressed to the members of the Berlin Academy in 1714, Dimitrie Cantemir "was counting his works he could send to be published". He mentioned that Cantemir had a "synopsis of the Turkish history" which he wanted "to entitle *The Growth of the Ottoman Empire*" and which he was just having in his hand"³. P. Panaitescu drew the conclusion that "Cantemir had only a short version of the Turkish history, namely the first part, *The Growth of the Ottoman Empire*, as he had not written the second part of the decay"⁴ yet. With regard to determining the right date of ending that paper, P. Panaitescu considered that the last page of the Ottoman history was "the fight from Peterwaradin between the Austrians and the Turks, which took place in August, 3, 1716."⁵

The conclusion was that "as no other historic data is later mentioned in the "History" it meant that the mentioned work was finished after the written event".⁶ On the other hand, P. Panaitescu mentioned a fragment in Dimitrie Cantemir's book in which the author remarked that "while he was writing that, Nicolae Mavrocordat was the Prince of Wallachia, and his brother John the great *terziman* of the Empire."⁷ The period when both brothers had the mentioned position at same time, was between January and

² Panaitescu P.P., *Dimitrie Cantemir. Viața și opera*. București, 1958, p. 171.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ Dimitrie Cantemir, *Istoria Creșterii și descreșterii Imperiului Otoman*. Cit. după P. Panaitescu. Ibidem. p. 171.

November 1716. “Thus, said P. Panaitescu, the History of the Ottoman Empire was finished in 1716, after August but before November”.⁸

If we consider P. Panaitescu’s logics, one may conclude that the beginning of D. Cantemir’s work took place much before 1714. The historian contradicted himself. He also stated that the “History” was written parallel to “Descriptio Moldaviae, his other work”.⁹ It is hard to believe that a Moldavian Prince, preoccupied with settling family matters and new establishments¹⁰ could achieve such valuable and various historical works in terms of contents, at the same time, such as the “History of the Ottoman Empire” and “Descriptio Moldaviae”.

There is another interesting fragment in P. Panaitescu’s statements with regard to dating the mentioned work. According to the Romanian historian, “The Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire” was written at the beginning of the Austrian – Turkish war, between 1716-1718, in which time “the Ex-Prince of Moldavia had unsuccessfully tried to attract the Russians in the war against the Empire in order to free his country”.¹¹

We cannot doubt Cantemir’s noble intention to contribute to his country freedom from the foreign yoke. Yet, it is unlikely that only through the scientific activity; a new war with the Ottoman Empire should have been possible for Russia, at the same time with the war with Sweden, which had been taking place for several years. Moreover, one should remark that between 1716-1718, the diplomatic missions of Russia and Sweden had been developing intense negotiations for peace on the Alland Islands. Dimitrie Cantemir could not have been aware about that.

⁸ P. Panaitescu. *Ibidem.* p. 171.

⁹ *Ibidem.* p. 149.

¹⁰ În anul 1715, în centrul moșiilor sale din regiunea Sevsk, în apropierea satului Gorbunovo, Dimitrie Cantemir a întemeiat un alt sat, căruia a dat denumirea Dmitrievka. După spusele feciorilor a lui D. Cantemir „părintele lor a întemeiat acest sat în calitate de proprie reședință pe locul gol, unde nu exista nici-o construcție, și l-o numit după numele său”. Alături de conacul a lui principe au fost construite mai multe case de locuit și pentru uz gospodăresc, a fost ridicată din piatră biserică Sf. Dumitru Salunski și plantat un parc. În a doua jum. a sec. XVIII satul Dmitrievka a obținut statutul de oraș. Astăzi este orașul Dmitrovsk din regiunea Oriol, Federația Rusă. - Романов В. Неделин В. Архитектурные древности Орловщины. Орел, 1998. с.174.

¹¹ Panaitescu P.P., *Dimitrie Cantemir. Viața și opera.* p. 175.

In addition, we consider that the Moldavian thinker hadn't finished his work with the events in August-September 1716 without reason, as the catastrophic defeat of the Ottoman army by Eugene of Savoy was the top moment of the Ottoman Empire loss.

Several decades after the issue of P. Panaitescu's monography, Ecaterina Țarălungă, another research worker of Dimitrie Cantemir's scientific inheritance, offered new data with regard to the "History of the Ottoman Empire". In her opinion, that work was achieved between 1716-1718¹². Unfortunately, the research worker brings new argument to support the rendered opinion.

The archeographic research made by the author of this publication in the Russian Federation, offers opportunities of scientific views with reference to the writing time of Cantemir's work, especially the year when it was finalized.

The experts studying the Russian history of literature and historic thinking during Peter's I time, noticed an important and genuine characteristic of this period, namely no work- no matter the field- could have ever been written, issued or sold without an order, surveyance or agreement of the monarch.¹³ Cantemir's works are no exception. More than that, the documents showed the fact that the above mentioned work was finalized at the end of 1718, and then it was sent to the College of Foreign Affairs, at the Russian monarch's order, to be translated from Latin into Russian.

The translation was done by Dimitrii Grozin, the College translator,¹⁴ who successfully finished it in 1719, when "it was handed to His Majesty".¹⁵

Cantemir's manuscript was sent to the College of Foreign Affairs to be translated, but it was not handed back to the author, as it remained in the records of that public institution.¹⁶ In addition, the Latin version circulated among the intellectual

¹² Ecaterina Țarălungă, *Dimitrie Cantemir*, București, 1989, p. 21.

¹³ Victor Țvircun, *Fiile din istoria vieții și activității politice a lui Dimitrie Cantemir*, Chișinău: „Cartdidact”, 2009, c. 56-57.

¹⁴ Trebuie menționat faptul că în unele cercetări traducerea lucrării lui D. Cantemir „*Istoria Creșterii și Descreșterii Curții Otomane*” i se atribuie în mod greșit secretarului domnitorului moldovean Ivan Ilinskii-Iaroslavțev. – Vezi: *Dinastia Cantemireștilor. Secolele XVII – XVIII*. Coordonator și redactor științific academician A. Eșanu. Chișinău, 2008, p. 503.

¹⁵ Цвиркун В.И. Димитрий Кантемир. Страницы жизни в письмах и документах... с. 77.

¹⁶ Până în prezent, toate eforturile cercetătorilor de a găsi această lucrare în variata rusă nu s-au cununat de un succes.

members of the Russian society, in several copies, much before the issue of the book in England.¹⁷

Mihail Shenda, the great learned writer, confirmed that in his work “about the state of the Russian education in 1725”, written in Sankt Petersburg, in the summer of the same year, but published one century after the author’s death.¹⁸ One cannot state any unknown data from the great thinker’s biography. Yet, the proofs and the notes of D. Cantemir’s contemporary with regard to the scientific activity of the Moldavian Prince and his contribution to the development of the Russian culture and historic thinking in the first quarter of the 18th century is worth paying attention.

Characterising the remarkable Russian personalities during Peter the Great’s time, Mihail Shenda dedicated the following lines to Dimitrie Cantemir: “A cruel destiny took the genius author of the “History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire” away, but everything he did would not let him die, leaving him alive ever after his death. Moreover, he is worth rewarding, as passing over all the horrors of the Turkish oppression, he succeeded in winning the glory of an outstandingly intelligent Man. His works will always be full of value”.¹⁹

Given Antioch, Dimitrie Cantemir’s son efforts, the original text of the above mentioned work and its Russian translation were sent

¹⁷ La momentul actual sunt cunoscute două variante ale manuscrisului cercetării lui Dimitrie Cantemir „*Istoria Creșterii și Descreșterii Curții Otomane*” în limba latină. Unul dintre acestea se păstrează la Arhiva orientaliștilor de pe lângă filiala Sankt Petersburg a Institutului de Orientalistică a Academiei de Științe din Rusia. Ф.25. Оп.1. Д.1-6 (Primul volum este dedicat istoriei constituirii Imperiului Otoman între anii 1214/15 și 1672/73 – 238 foi; cel de al doilea volum constă din notele autorului referitoare la primul volum și trimiteri către numeroși autori orientali – 309 foi; al treilea volum conține istoria căderii Imperiului Otoman dintre anii 1672/73 și 1710/11 – 295 foi; al patrulea volum conține observații pe marginea volumului anterior cu enumerarea surselor – 292 foi). O altă variantă a lucrării lui D. Cantemir se păstrează în secția Manuscrise a bibliotecii Houghton de pe lângă Universitatea Harvard, SUA. – Vezi: Cădea Virgil, *The original manuscript of the History of the Ottoman Empire by Dimitrie Cantemir.* // in *Demetrius Cantemir. The Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire. Original latin text of the final cersion revised by the author / Dimitrie Cantemir, Creșterile și descreșterile Imperiului Otoman. Textul original latin în formă finală revizuită de autor.* Facsimil al manuscrisului latin – 124 din Biblioteca Houghton Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Editat de Cădea Virgil. București: Ed. “Roza Vânturilor”, 1999, P. LIX-CII.

¹⁸ Михаил Схенда. О состоянии просвещения в России в 1725 году. // *Сын Отечества.* № 1.

¹⁹ СПб., 1842.

at the end of the 18th century to the Academy of Sank Petersburg, namely in the publishing house of that institution, the issue of the first edition of that work in Russian was planned, by the help and consultancy of G. Baier, the well-known historian.²⁰

The latter played a special part in the destiny of the historical inheritance of D. Cantemir, his contribution to the writing and edition of the “History of Moldavian Prince Constantin Cantemir’s Life and Activity” being well known. A bit less is known about his work of publishing “The History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire”, a fundamental work of Dimitrie Cantemir. Meanwhile, the research of this matter enlightens the paternity of the manuscript found by academician V. Căndea.

By studying for several years in the University of the Sankt Petersburg Academy, Antioh Cantemir settled tight connections with its management and teachers, relations that he would keep for the rest of his life. He had close links with Christian-Friedrich Gross, a philosophy teacher²¹, Gottlieb (Teofil) Siegfried Bayer²², and I. D. Schumacher, a librarian²³. One should mention that

²⁰ Цвиркун В.И. Научные связи Антиоха Кантемира с Российской Академией Наук. // Вестник Славянского университета. Вып. 19. Кишинэу, 2011. с.155-160.

²¹ Pe parcursul deceniilor următoare, pe Antioh Cantemir și C. F. Gross îl legau nu doar interesele și relații pur științifice, ci și general-umane. Una dintre manifestările acestora a fost admiterea în calitate de secretar în componența unei misiuni diplomatice conduse de către A. Cantemir a nepotului lui Gorss, inițial în Anglia, apoi în Franța.

²² Bayer, Gottlieb (Teofil) Siegfried (1694 - 1738), istoric și filolog. Absolvent al Universității din Königsberg. A posedat opt limbi antice și orientale, în același timp cunoștea greaca, latina, arameica și araba. În anul 1725, la propunerea lui H.Goldbah a fost invitat să conducă catedra antichității și a limbilor orientale în cadrul nou-createi Academii de la Sankt-Petersburg. A fost primul istoric din Rusia pentru care activitățile științifice au constituit principalul domeniu al activității profesionale. A atras asupra sa atenția lui Teofan Procopvici, care l-a invitat pe Bayer să predea în primul seminar rus, deschis în propria casă. Din anul 1727 a fost numit inspector al gimnaziului de pe lângă Academia de Științe din Sankt Petersburg. A participat la elaborarea proiectelor Cartei Academiei, militând pentru apropierea sistemului de organizare și activitate a Academiei de cel al universităților germane. În anul 1737, din cauza unui conflict cu I. D. Schumacher, ia decizia să se întoarcă în Prusia, înaintându-și demisia. Se îmbolnăvește de febră și moare în anul 1738. – Vezi: Большая Российская Энциклопедия. Т.2. М., 2005. с. 658.

²³ Schumacher Johann Daniel, consilier de stat și bibliotecar al Academiei de Științe din Sankt Petersburg (s-a născut la 5 septembrie 1690 în or. Colmar, Alsacia – a decedat la 3 iulie 1761). A absolvit Universitatea din Strasbourg. În

when at the beginning of 1728, the Emperor's Court, the monarchs doctor and L. Blumentrost, the first president of the Academy had moved to Moscow, "all the mandates and running of the Academy of Science were given to librarian I. D. Schumacher".²⁴

Between 1728-1730, Antioh Cantemir in his position of an officer of the Preobrajenski elite regiment was in Moscow doing his responsibilities at the Lefortovo Palace, where young Emperor Peter II stopped. At that time, the most intense correspondence between A. Cantemir and the Academy at its top took place, with regard also to the publication of his father's manuscript.²⁵

In his letter addressed to I. D. Schumacher on the 24th of February 1729, he wrote the following words to the Academy librarian: "I think that it is my duty to thank you kindly from all my heart for your efforts to publish the books written through the endeavour of my father, God remember him forever. This book might not carry in it too much wisdom, but it contains events about countries far away from us. I hope many of you would wish to get it. Following your advice, I talked to Mr. Plumendrost (L. Blumentrost, as indicated in the text – the author's note) about the book and he should to be very pleased with it".²⁶

In the same letter, and wishing to give more substance and scientific importance to his father's work, he wrote that "in my father's paper there are no mistakes to stop its presentation to the academic world", and he announced I.D. Schumacher that he "would ask Mr. Bayer (knowing he is a good connoisseur of the history of antiquity and oriental times) to read it through and, when he finds it proper, to feel free to add notes, to perfect it, and if he wishes and he considers to add data, significance, indexes and others the way he would think as necessary".²⁷ Antioh also informs the Academy librarian about the necessity of editing the

anul 1714 vine în Rusia, unde a intrat în serviciul medicului țarului, Areskin, în calitate de secretar pentru corespondența internațională. După moartea lui Areskin în anul 1719 rămâne să lucreze pentru Blumentrost, noul medic al lui Petru I. De la data înființării Academiei de Științe și până în 1758, a ocupat funcția de bibliotecar, conducând practice administrația acesteia. – Vezi.: РБС. Т. Шебанов – Шютц. М., 1999. с. 534-536.

²⁴ Леонов В.П. Судьба библиотеки в России. СПб., 2001. с.136.

²⁵ Цвиркун В.И. Научные связи Антиоха Кантемира с Российской Академией Наук. // Вестник Славянского Университета. Вып. 19. Кишинэу, 2011. с. 156-158.

²⁶ Ibidem, pag. 159.

²⁷ Ibidem.

mentioned work with a dedication written by Mr. Bayer and addressed to the Emperor”.²⁸

These documents prove not only the strong connections between A. Cantemir and the academic historian, but also the fact that in his eyes professor G. Bayer was the only authority in the academic world able to correct, to complete and to “perfect” the works of his father. We think that G. Bayer answered Antioh’s wish – as it happened with “The History of Life and Work of Constantin Cantemir” and with “The Description of the Caucazian Wall”²⁹ and he minutely scrutinized the manuscript sent by Ivan Ilinski-Iaroslaveț in 1729.

Thus, one can consider that V. Cândea, the well-known historian and academician might have not discovered Dimitrie Cantemir’s original text, but only one of its variant written by the hand of G. Bayer, another eminent historian of the 18th century.

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ În anul 1726, sub redacția profesorului G. Bayer, în primul număr al revistei periodice a nou-createi Academii de Științe din Sankt Petersburg, a fost publicată lucrarea lui D. Cantemir „De muro Caucaseo”, scrisă de către acesta în timpul campaniei Persiene din anul 1722 – Vezi: Comentarii Academiae Scientiarum Imperialis Petropolitanae. Vol. I. St.Petersburg, 1726, p. 425-463.