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DIMITRIE CANTEMIR – THE ECHO OF HIS LATIN WORKS AND ENCYCLOPAEDIC PERSONALITY OVER TIME

Abstract: This work develops the analysis of the way in which Dimitrie Cantermir's personality and works have been received over time.
The research of an entire group of Romanian and Russian literary critics and historians make analyses and detailed comments regarding the life and activity of the scholar, thinker, writer and statesman from the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century (T. S. Bayer, P. Pekarski, Grigore Tocilescu, Virgil Cândea, Al. Piru etc.). Ştefan Ciobanu describes Dimitrie Cantemir's life in Russia, but also his scientific and literary activity; P. P. Panaitescu analyses the historiographer's work and life, historical and bibliographical details; Dan Bădărău refers to prince's philosophical works, and Petru Vaida examines the relation of Cantemir's work to the classical antiquity.

Keywords: work, scholar, antiquity, philosophy, Dimitrie Cantemir.

The name of the great Romanian humanist Dimitrie Cantemir, son of the Moldavian ruler Constantin Cantemir, is well-known to Romanians.

An encyclopaedic personality of the Romanian and European culture, Dimitrie Cantemir succeeded in going through time by means of his Latin work. The momentousness of life and death, and also the great scholar's imposing personality raised the interest of the many Romanian and foreign researchers who were preoccupied with the biographic and bibliographic data of this great encyclopaedic spirit.

The legacy of Dimitrie Cantemir's works, as well as the history of his life, is found in a great measure in the libraries and archives from Moscow and Sankt-Petersburg. These works were of a special interest for the researchers from Romania (starting with the academician Grigore Tocilescu), the researchers from the Russian Federation and from the Republic of Moldavia, and also from many European countries.

Cantemir is the first messenger of the Latin classical spirit and of the Romanian culture in the European literary world at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century. Dimitrie Cantemir's work, his intellectual training, his attitudes and options belong to the ancient classicism:

„So, after getting into the live history of his time by intermediary of the illustrious writing of his younger contemporary writer, Voltaire (who recalls him in a consistent page in *Histoire de Charles XII* [*History of Charles VII*] and quotes him with significant praises in his historical chef d'oeuvre *Essai sur les moeurs [Essay on manners]*), after being the object of some new praises brought in the foreword of the three versions – English, German and French – of *The History of the Rise and Fall of the Ottoman Court*, after penetrating in all lexicons of the Great European musicians of the 18th century, after being imprinted in the memory of posterity by painters who preserved his portrait, and after the modern period accumulated a book shelf for us where the monographs and scholarly studies are close to his novels, „the

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seventh art", in its turn, paused in front of this great Romanian patriot and scholar of world value and glory"[1].

Advocate of the reform of Peter the Great in Russia, later on a supporter of progressive ideas, Dimitrie Cantemir recommends himself in his writings as a great passionate of the Greek-Latin antiquity. Cantemir's spiritual biography, mainly characterised by the attachment of calling a creative structure to the models of classical antiquity, is due to his intellectual education – training from the Cantemir house, performed with the Greek monk Ieremia Cacavales, and also due to the Constantinople Academy – harmonized to the ideals and convictions of his time, present also in the scholar's relationships with the great personalities of the Russian and European literary and political life.

The great scholar's figure equally occurs in literature and history. Cantemir remained in the memory of his followers due to his spiritual continuity of his literary incursions, his intuition and cultivation of what was specific to the Greek-Latin antique spirit and to the oriental, Romanian and Russian spirit.

The literary destiny of Dimitrie Cantemir's works was decided a long time after the death of the Moldavian ruler, due to his son, Antioh Cantemir, who was an ambassador in London and Paris. Antioh's wish to publish his father's writings was very big, that was why he made efforts to different publishers for their publication.

Antioh spent his childhood at his father's estates in Harkov, Kursk and Orlov, but he also travelled through Russia together with the tsar's army, receiving an exquisite education for the epoch of Peter the Great. An important part for Antioh's literary beginnings is granted to his father's private secretary, Ivan Ilinski. The professors from the Petersburg Academy also contributed to Antioh's literary and moral training.

We find out the most important data about the Cantemirs from Bayer's bibliography[2]. Dimitrie Cantemir bequeaths his fortune „to the best in intellect and science, not before he/she accomplish his knowledge abroad"[3].

Bayer said that, from the prince Cantemir's children, Antioh had inherited from his father the love for sciences and letters, but also the interest for philosophy, history, law, science and painting. Antioh continued his training during the campaign carried by Dimitrie Cantemir in Persia. The biographer informs us about this journey: "Besides the continuous reading, the counties through which they passed stood for a forever-open book where he (Antioh) would see the customs and morals of the peoples, the commerce and the agricultural products that his father used to explain to him in their conversations"[4].

The researchers demonstrated a particular interest for the correspondence between Marian and Antioh Cantemir, correspondence found in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents– Российскийгосударственныйархивдревнихактов (known under the name of RGADA- РГАДА), belonging to quota 1374. These letters were written in Russian, Italian, French, sometimes a letter being written in two languages). "The reading of the letters reveals writing skills to both brothers, interesting procedures of allegoric type, probably inspired from their father's *Hieroglyphic History*. There are notifications about influential persons of that

[1]Dan Zamfirescu, *Contribuţii la istoria literaturii române vechi* [*Contributions to the history of old Romanian literature*], Editura ştiinţifică şi enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1981, p. 172-173.
[2]Th. Bayer, *История о жизни и делах молдавского господаря князя Константина Кантемира*, Moscova, 1783.
[3]Th. Bayer, *op. cit., Testamentul lui D. Cantemir* [*D. Cantemir's Will*], p. 306-310, annex to the text, the Cantemirs' family tree.
[4]Th. Bayer, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

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time, about palace events, in conventional names and attributes, adding an enigmatic and mysterious savour of a "coded" communication to the text"[5].

In the study *Princess Maria Cantemir*[6], L. N. Maikov makes a complex portrait of Maria Cantemir, presenting the intellectual affinities of the two brothers: "Princess Maria loved books very much and knew their significance; she would read the most serious books, from ecclesiastic literature until historical and scientific compositions, not avoiding the ancient and new beautiful literature, especially"[7]. Then Maikov also mentions the literary inclination and preoccupations of the two brothers: "Their tastes were completely the same; Maria was an educated woman and loved literature; Antioh often wrote to her and received letters from her in Greek, Italian and French"[8].

The two children of the ruler, Maria and Antioh Cantemir succeeded in carrying forward the reputation that their father had acquired on the realm of world culture. Antioh is one of the great classical Russian poets who left behind an indisputable work, and Maria proved a real literary talent. At that time, Antioh enjoyed a career of diplomat, being the Russian ambassador to London and Paris. He is a supporter of the evolution of man, in general, and of the love for culture and science. Antioh Cantemir has also the merit of being the publisher of some of his father's writings.

The printing of Dimitrie Cantemir's works made a sinuous road, but along with the translation and publishing of these writings, Cantemir succeeds in going down to posterity to the full.

The literary criticism about Dimitrie Cantemir is very rich, showing a permanent interest for author and his works, being a live presence in the literary criticism and history. Most of the works dedicated to Cantemir shows the biographic data of the great humanist writer and of the Cantemir family, his literary and diplomatic activity in Russia, his conception about world and art, the relationships between Dimitrie Cantemir and the literary and diplomatic universe of that time, the ways of interception of the Greek-Latin classical literature in Cantemir's writing.

The image that is dwelling to posterity shows basically two aspects of Dimitrie Cantemir's personality: Cantemir – the man of letters and Cantemir – the diplomat. The two images were many times inseparable, complementing each other and serving as an argument for the other. These aspects make a single image, each of them being a perfect match for the other.

Dimitrie Cantemir has the merits of being a great philosopher, having good knowledge of the human psychology, a subtle verse maker in pencilling the words, a great painter of urban agglomerations, masterly depicting the places and people that made an impression on him. By the intermediary of the Hieroglyphic History, the scholar presents the phenomenon of his age, bearing the gift of observation: he catches gestures, facts, people, that he masterly presents, so that, when reading, you can picture the insinuators, the whisperers and the traitors, you can hear their voice, live those historical encounters together with the characters. By a blissful intuition, Cantemir succeeds in connecting his writings to real life. His work is full of human significations and should be printed in gold letters even at present.

They also analyse some contents aspects of the Cantemir's work, its part in that period, some esteemed literary critics and historians: Dimitri Nicolae Bantâş-Kamenski, T. S. Bayer, I. I. Şimko, P. P. Pekarski, L. N. Maikov, Aleksandr Kociubinski, B. P. Şeremetiev, I.

[5] Cornelia Cîrstea, *Antioh Cantemir*, Editura Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1984, p. 124.
[6] L. N. Maikov, *Княжна Мария Кантемир*, în *Русская старина,* SPb, 1897, p. 89-91.
[7] *Ibidem,* p. 90.
[8] L. N. Maikov, *op. cit.,* p. 90.

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I. Golikov, V. A. Stoiunin, I. Cistovici, P. Morozov, Mitropolitul Evgheni, prince A. B. Lobanov-Rostovski, P. M. Glagolev, Serghei Soloviev, I. Izvekov.

In their subsequent studies, all these Russian historians and philologists paid particular attention to Dimitrie Cantemir's character, training and activity.

A Professor of the Russian Science Academy, Theophilus Siegfried Bayer makes in Latin and Russian the summary of Dimitrie Cantemir's work, *Story about the life and deeds of the Moldavian ruler*, bringing valuable information about the Cantemirs. In this complex work, the publisher completely reproduces Dimitrie Cantemir's foreword to the piece of writing *Chronicle of ancient times of the Romanian-Moldavian-Wallachian* in Latin and Russian, from *De vita et rebus gestis Constantini Cantemyrii principis Moldavie* in Latin with a Russian parallel text. The most important parts of this work are: *The Genealogy of Cantemir princes* (where we find accurate and well-documented information regarding the Cantemirs), and *Information on the boyars and officers who came to Russia in 1711 together with the Moldavian ruler, Prince Dimitrie Cantemir*.

In the *Dictionary of famous people of the Russian country*[9], Nicolae Bantâş-Kamenski's son, Dimitri, had intuited the moralistic vein of Antioh Cantemir's satires, and his father's encyclopaedic personality, offering valuable information on Antioh[10] and Dimitrie Cantemir[11] writings.

A great researcher of the Russian cultural life, P. Pekarski, presents the most valuable information about the great scholar's works written in Russian, *The system of Mahommedan Religion*. In the 1st volume, Pekarski publishes also a few of Dimitrie Cantemir's letters to Peter the Great. In the monograph of the Russian researcher, we find some important data regarding Cantemir's children.

Serghei Soloviev, in the *History of Russia*[12], in the second chapter of the 16th volume, "tells us about the Russian-Turkish war in 1711 and the relationships of Dimitrie Cantemir to Peter the Great. He insists on the alliance conditions of Cantemir with Peter the Great"[13].

In V. Stoiunin study[14], we meet some outstanding notations regarding ANtioh Cantemir, and also information regarding Dimitrie Cantemir, the starting point being Bayer and Bantâş-Kamenski's works. V. Stoiunin's study offers a rich bibliography regarding Antioh Cantemir.

P. Morozov[15] makes short references to the work *Loca obscura in Catechisi* written by Dimitrie Cantemir, and I. Izvekov[16] is the first to state that this work belongs to Cantemir.

Relying upon the Romanian chronicles, Aleksandr Kociubinski[17] presents the situation when the Russian-Turkis war started.

I. I. Şimko[18] makes reference to Dimitrie Cantemir's children, publishing the long time correspondence between Maria and Antioh Cantemir.

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[9]Dimitri Bantâş-Kamenski, *Словарь достопамятныхъ людей русской земли*, partea a III-a, Moscova, 1836.
[10]*Ibidem, Кантемирь, князь Антиох Дмитриевичь,* p. 8-34.
[11]*Ibidem, Кантемирь, князь Дмитрий Константиновичь,* p. 34-42.
[12]Serghei Soloviev, *История Россий*, Moscova, 1866, vol. 16, p. 72-94.
[13] Ştefan Ciobanu, *Dimitrie Cantemir în Rusia,* Bucureşti, Editura Elion, 2000, p. 105.
[14]V. Stoiunin, *Князь Антиохъ Кантемирь. Сочинения, письма и переводы князя Антиоха Дмитриевича Кантемира*, ediția P. A. Efremov, St. Petersburg,1867, vol. I, p. XI-CXIII.
[15]P. Morozov, *Феофан Прокоповичь, как писатель, Журналь Министерства Народного Просвещения,*1880, p. 299-300.
[16]I. Izvekov, *Один из малоизвестных литературных противников Феофана Прокоповича, Заря,* 1870, p. 1-9.
[17]Aleksandr Kociubinski, Сношения *России при Петр I-мь с южными славянами и румынами,* Moscova, 1872, p. 41-58.

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Dimitrie Cantemir developed spiritually reading Greek and Latin authors, and by the contents loaded with moralistic dicta he gets even more closely to classicism.

The common substance of his works (either "pictorial", or "philosophical") is determined by the author's humanistic conception on the human and social material that he establishes in literary representations. In his early works, we notice a particular interest in philosophy, and also in the study of sciences, love for the world wisdom and concern for morals.

Some studies present the comparison between Cantemir and the models taken from the ancient or European literature, and also the depiction of characters and manners. The presence of antiquity and of human nature in Dimitrie Cantemir's works, is a principle of classical art, to which the authors remains faithful. The scholar's conception also relates to the conception of the times when he lived and wrote.

Another feature of the humanist trend is the appreciation that Cantemir shows to the human being as an earth-born existence, conception on philosophy as a science of the truth.

The literary criticism on Dimitrie Cantemir contains a significant material in the Romanian publications, including many studies, articles and notes. We will present further on, as a result of the above-mentioned intention, the ways of penetrating the conscience of the Romanian history and literary criticism of Dimitrie Cantemir's Latin works. In the middle of preoccupations of the Romanian historians and philologists, there was the importance granted to the life and activity of the scholar, thinker, writer and statesman from the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century. Among them, there are: academician Gr. Tocilescu, Ştefan Ciobanu, A. Bistriţeanu, Nicolae Iorga, T. Burada, P. P. Panaitescu, Giorge Pascu, Perpessicius, Dragoş Protopopescu, Al. Rosetti, I. Verdeş, G. Vâlsan, Gheorghe Adamescu, Dan Bădărău, G. Călinescu, Virgil Cândea, Gheorghe Cardaş, Doina Curticăpeanu, Ovid Densusianu, Adrian Fochi, Ştefan Giosu, Em. Grigoraş, I. D. Lăudat, Constantin Măciucă, Al. Piru, Ion Rotaru, Paul Simionescu, G. Sion, Elvira Sorohan, Manuela Tănăsescu, Petru Vaida, Ecaterina Ţarălungă, Monica Joiţa, I. Minea, Şerban Cioculescu, Dragoş Moldovanu, Dan Horia Mazilu, Adriana Babeţi, Claudia Tărnăuceanu.

The following monographic works are to be noted: Ştefan Ciobanu, *Dimitrie Cantemir in Russia*, P. P. Panaitescu, *Dimitrie Cantemir. Life and work*, Scarlat Callimachi, Vladimir Block, Elena Georgescu-Ionescu, *Dimitrie Cantemir. Life and work in images*, Dan Bădărău, *Dimitrie Cantemir's Philosophy*, Petru Vaida, *Dimiirie Cantemir and the Humanism.*

Ştefan Ciobanu presents Dimitrie Cantemir's life in Russia and his scientific and literary activity, too. Furthermore, we find out information regarding Dimitrie Cantemir's death, and also a detailed presentation of his followers. An important place in the Russian cultural life is occupied by Antioh, the younger son of the Moldavian ruler. In the *Annex* to this work, we find sixty-two documents: letters, petitions, memoires, and also Cantemir's will.

A rich and beautiful presentation of Dimitrie Cantemir's life and work is made by the historian and Slavist Petre P. Panaitescu who portrays Dimitrie Cantemir as a complex personality. Within the author's preoccupations, there was Dimitrie Cantemir's life and work, with historical and bibliographical details. In his study, Panaitescu tried to make an interpretation of the political activity of Prince Cantemir and of his writings, relating his work to the life and the social and economic circumstances when the great scholar lived. This study dedicated to Cantemir was considered a real exegetic monument where the author underlines the encyclopaedic personality of the great scholar, being regarded within the context of the

[18]I. I. Şimko, Новыя данныя к биографии *Князя Антиоха Дмитриевича Кантемира и его ближаищихь родственниковь огородичной*, *Журналь Министерства Народного Просвещения,* 1891, aprilie, p. 352-425; iunie, p. 252-333.

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period he belonged to: humanist, Renaissance man and predecessor of the Transylvanian School [Şcoala Ardeleană].

Scarlat Callimachi, Vladimir Block, Elena Georgescu-Ionescu, in *Dimitrie Cantemir. The Life and Work in Images*, bring homage to the great scholar. In the album, we are presented for the first time, based on a rich and diverse graphical material – portraits, engravings, plates, maps and drawings -, the life, activity and the entire work of the great scholar Dimitrie Cantemir.

Dan Bădărău, in the work *Dimitrie Cantemir's Philosophy*, refers to the life of the philosopher prince, as it mirrors the practical needs that made Cantemir be more and more interested in political tasks and concerns regarding the life and historical conditions where our people lived. Dimitrie Cantemir is seen as a bright-spirited and open-minded man, a universal spirit, a representative example of the reasonableness of the people where he grew.

Petru Vaida, in *Dimitrie Cantemir and the Humanism*, examines the relation of Cantemir's work to classical antiquity. The author refers to Cantemir's classicism which was not purely formal, Jesuit-type, limited to the cultivation of classical languages and to the ornamentation of writings with quotations from Antique authors and mythological allusions, but it involved modification of the conception on the world in a certain extent. Petru Vaida also notices the astounding contrast existing between the intransigent condemnation of the Antique civilisation in his youth work *Sacrosanctae* and its praise in the *History of the Ottoman Empire* and in the *Chronicle of ancient times of the Romanian-Moldavian-Wallachian.*

The assessment of Dimitrie Cantemir's works within the general context of the literature at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century was to be achieved in the research of a whole group of Romanian and Russian literary critics and historians from the 19th and 20th centuries.

The United Nation Organisation for Education, Science and Culture showed a particular interest in Dimitrie Cantemir's personality and work. Thus, the great scientist Dimitrie Cantemir is among the few world scholars who was included twice in the U.N.E.S.C.O calendar of world anniversaries – in 1973 at the tercentenary of his birth and in 1999, at the tercentenary of his first work, *The Assembly or the wise man's quarrel to the world or the judgement of the soul with the body* [*Divanul sau gâlceava înţeleptului cu lumea sau giudeţul sufletului cu trupul*].

Another important event took place at the European Parliament in December 2010 in Brussels. The generic title of this event was *Dimitrie Cantemir: Homo Europaeus*. On the occasion of this event, within the premises of the European Parliament, they exposed the bust of the great scholar Dimitrie Cantemir.

Within the Romanian Spiritual Centre, it took place the opening of the Romanian book library bearing the name of *Dimitrie Cantemir*. This event took place in Brussels on October 9th, 2012.

Dimitrie Cantemir's activity also reflects in the Soviet-Moldavian art. His bust created by the sculptor N. Gorenyshev was installed in 1957 in Chişinău, on the Aleea Clasicilor street in A.S. Puşkin park. In 1973, the "Moldova-film" studio launched the film "Dimitrie Cantemir" (V. Ioviţă is the author of the script).

At Dimitrie Cantemir, we notice the wish to promote culture, the refinement of his intellectual training, his diplomatic skill, the way in which he was received and how the contemporary world has received him, his posterity in the Romanian and Russian literature, all these representing the interest for the great scholar's writings, appeared during three centuries.

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