Adina CHIRILĂ
Universitatea de Vest din Timişoara, România

AN ASPECT OF THE GREEK INFLUENCE ON ANTIM IVIREANUL'S EARLY ACTIVITY IN WALLACHIA

1. Antim Ivireanul – who would eventually prove himself to be one of the most providential figures of the Romanian culture – had come to Wallachia from Constantinople (sometime between November 1688 and 1691) as a bright representative of the Greek culture at the end of the 17th century, to serve its immediate and long term interests. During his first years here, he used to work as a typographer of Greek texts, in the Constantin Brâncoveanu's court typography in Bucharest. Soon, he became attached to the idea of the Romanian being used in church instead of the Slavonic, and, after 1705, as the Bishop of Râmnic and, later, as the Metropolitan of Wallachia, he conducted his actions in order to accomplish that goal: he translated into Romanian and published the Orthodox church service books, he used Romanian to write his original ecclesiastical works, and he also preached in this vernacular language.

The whole process was dependent not only on the good intensions of a high clergyman, but also on the capacity of the Romanian language itself to express the complexity of the biblical message, as well as the specific concepts revolving around the Orthodox theology and spiritual practice. Antim Ivireanul was one of those who, during the 17th and the 18th centuries, contributed to the renewal and refining of the Romanian ecclesiastical discourse, by, on one hand, constantly using a very limpid syntax (that could originate in the laic language) and a diverse vocabulary, and, on the other hand, by turning to the Greek culture with regard to the richness of the ideas of theological and secular nature.

Antim wrote his first text in Romanian – the *Afterword* to the *Greek-Romanian Gospel* from 1693 – at a time when he was still in the process of learning the new language. One word that he used in the beginning of the text proves that the Greek culture and language were the most natural sources of inspiration and lexical borrowing for Antim Ivireanul, considering his life and cultural acquisition up to the moment of his arrival to Wallachia. The specified word is *corhor*, n.

2. After a brief construction through which the reader is greeted with a blessing, in the *Afterword* to the *Greek-Romanian Gospel* from 1693, there is a statement whose full understanding depends on the clarification of the opening sequence: "*Ca şi corhorul între alte verdéţe* (my emphasis), precum zice pilda, mă arătu şi eu, o iubiţi cetitori, cătră cei meşteri şi iscusiţi şi înţelepţi şi nevoitori tipografi, cu aciastă de bogoslovie cu patru strune şi cu toată alcătuirea de dulcele glas alăută, a ceii în trei staturi dumnezăiri, capul ceii fără prihană ai noastre credinţă, sfânta, zic şi dumnezăiasca *Evanghelie*.", a fragment containing a hitherto unknown *hapax legomenon*: *corhor*, n.

The dictionaries dedicated to the old literary language do not record the term. The DLR indicates its masculine gender and an uncertain meaning ("A vegetable?"), based on the quote from the above mentioned text (wrongly dated "1694" in the dictionary), taken from BIANU – HODOŞ, BRV I, 335[1]. No reference to the etymon. This is not, however, too difficult to find. Both A. BAILLY and LIDDELL – SCOTT 1901 recorded in Greek the existence of κόρχορος, -ον, meaning: "herbe sauvage que l'on mangeait comme _imper"[2] respectively "a wild plant of bitter taste"[3].

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The term is attested in several ancient texts, with different meanings. In *Naturalis historia*, Pliny the Elder writes: "**Corchorum Alexandrini** cibi herba est conuolutis foliis ad similitudinem mori, praecordiis, <ut> ferunt, utilis alopeciisque et lentigini." [*La corette* est une plante herbacée consommée par les Alexandrins. Ses feuilles sont enroulées comme celles du mûrier ; elle passe pour bonne pour l'épigastre, l'alopécie et le lentigo.] (H.N., XXI/183). The description leads to the identification of this plant with *the jute* (Ro. Iută), *Corchorus olitorius* L., "plante herbacée de 1m50 à 5m de haut" and "une des plantes potagères les plus communes des Égyptiens et des Syriens" .

On the other hand, Theophrastos writes in *Περὶ φυτῶν ἱστορία·* ˝καὶ ἕτερα δε πλείω τούτων ἐν οἷς καὶ παροιμιαξόμενός ἐστι διὰ πικρότητα **κόρχορος** ἔχων τὸ φύλλον ὠκιμῶδες˝ […et encore bon nombre de ces herbes parmi lesquelles se trouve même *le mouron*, d'une amerture proverbiale, qui a la feuille du basilic] (*H.P.*, VII.7.2). The description indicates a variety of *pimpernel* (Fr. Mouron-des-champs, pimprenelle, Ro. Scânteiuță), *Anagallis arvensis* L., a wild vegetable, bitter and toxic, which can be eaten only boiled[4] a species inferior to that of garden vegetables, from a nutritional point of view.

Pliny the Elder also speaks about *Anagallis*, describing its curative properties and stating: "Anagallida aliqui *acorum* uocant" [Quelques-uns donnent à l'anagallis le nom d'*acorum*] (HN, XXV/144). According to Ermolao Barbaro, the synonym *acorum* (ἄκορον) is incorrect; in his commentary on Pliny's, he makes it clear that it is, in fact, *corchoron*[5].

The use of pimpernel in human nutrition, in humble circumstances, is mentioned in the Greek culture by Aristophanes, in Σφηκέσ, see 237-240, where he tells the story of a few hungry soldiers who were trying to prepare something to eat for themselves: "κᾆτα περιπατοῦντε νύκτωρ τῆς ἀρτοπώλιδος λαθόντ' ἐκλέψαμεν τὸν ὅλμον, κᾆθ' ἥψομεν τοῦ **κορκόρου** κατασχίσαντες αὐτόν." […puis, rôdant une nuit, nous volâmes à la boulangère son mortier ; puis nous fîmes cuire de la *pimprenelle* (s.n.), après en avoir fait du petit bois.] [6].

Therefore, the Greek term denominates two distinct extralinguistic realities (see the different aspect of leaves and the different height of the stems). Because they share the sign of [+ edible], the two plants can be confused, sometimes even in the explanatory notes of the texts that refer to them. In Pliny the Elder's comment upon the lat. *Corchorus*, *-um*, gr. κόρκορος, -ον, κόρχορος, -ον, "jute", in *HN*, XXI/183, it is stated that the plant is "Citée comme comestible par Théophraste, *H.P.* VII.9.2."[7]; but the latter author actually mentions the other plant.

3. In the *Afterword* from 1693, the mentioned plant is the *pimpernel*, Ro. *Scânteiuță, Anagallis arvensis* L., and we can infer this from the mentioning of the source that inspired Antim in the construction of the analogy: "după cuvântul *pildei* (my emphasis)" [according to the *parable*]. It is not about any of the biblical parables; nowhere in *the Old* or *the New Testament* are mentioned any of the two plant species that may be designated by the Greek κόρχορος, -ον, among other plants with which they could be related in any way[8].

"The parable" envisaged is considered a Greek idiom (evoked by Theophrastos in his description of the plant: "d'une amerture *proverbiale*", my emphasis, see above), namely: κόρχορος ἐν λαχάνοις, „Corchorus inter olera". This is recorded by Suidas, s.v. κόρχορος, with the following explanation, which we render in the Latin version: "Dicitur autem proverbium hoc de hominibus nullius pretii et contemptis, at majores honores affectantibus, quam pro dignitate et meritis suis."[9]

Antim Ivireanul definitely knew this Greek expression (which applied to common people, lacking any merits, who were aspiring to honors they did not deserve) and he translated it into Romanian, with the linguistic means at his disposal back then. The first

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term of the paremiologic structure, for which he did not know a Romanian equivalent, is taken from the Greek version, adapted morphologically, without the foreign ending –ος[10]. For the second term, λαχάνοις, the equivalent found was *verdéțe* "vegetables, greens" (*verdeață* < *verde* + *-eață*, DLR), also present with this meaning in Dosoftei's works (*V.S.* dec. 206v[11]).

With a Latin aspect, the term rendered into Romanian by Antim Ivireanul through *corhor* has an entry in Teodor Corbea's *Dictiones latinae cum valachica interpretatione*: "*corchoron*, g.n. et *corchorus*, g.m., iarbă ochiul-găinii[12]" (CORBEA, p. 132). Even if we would accept the idea that Corbea's dictionary was written before 1693[13], it is unlikely for Antim to have known it, although the relations between the Bishop Mitrofan (who requested and paid for the creation of the dictionary) and Antim Ivireanul were well-known. We believe that Teodor Corbea's work had no role whatsoever in the emergence of the word in Antim's works, especially because he had a good knowledge of Greek, not of Latin.

The meaning that the expression κόρχορος ἐν λαχάνοις has in Greek serves, "in a psychologically determined moment"[14], Antim Ivireanul's purpose in constructing the rhetorical sequence of modesty. In terms of intentionality, the fragment quoted in the beginning of our study is equivalent to those segments from the exordium of sermons which contain affected modesty and self-effacement – common *captatio benevolentiae* techniques and of enhancement of the interdiscursive referent[15] (in this case, the *book* itself, *the Gospel*). The clearly stated difference between *I* [***corhorul***] and "*cei meşteri şi iscusiți şi înțelepți şi nevoitori tipografi*" [**alte verdéțe**], is similar, for example, with the one between *the orator* inevitably present in the congregation, among the parishioners, and the ideal represented by *scholars*, *rhetors* and by "[*cei*] *ce sînt desăvârşit întru bunătăți*", from *Cuvânt de învățătură la streteniia Domnului _impern Iisus Hristos* (AI, O, 20).

The expression *ca şi corhorul între alte verdeațe* was not preserved in the Romanian paremiologic thesaurus. In order to render in an expressive manner the same communication situation, our common language has the structure *ca băşina-porcului pe lângă trandafir* whose components are also taken from the world of the plants: "o flóare prósta şi puturósă"[16], a field mushroom from the fam. *Lycoperdaceae* L., and a garden flower from the fam. *Rosaceae* L. It was recorded by the magistrate Iordache Golescu in the chapter *Similarities* in his collection of "pilde povățuirĭ I cuvinte adevîrate" (ZANNE, I, p. XXX) and quoted by ZANNE, I/449, p. 118: "Ca beşina-porcului pî lângă trandafir"[17], with the following explanation: "ce-va prost pe lângă un lucru de preț, urîtul pe lângă cel frumos, s.c.l." (sic).

We record, in the end, that in other popular cultures κόρχορος ἐν λαχάνοις has as equivalents expressions involving terms from other semantic fields than the vegetal one, but which develop the same antithetical connotations: "worthless, insignificant, devoid of any merits", as compared to "brilliant, valuable, prestigious". In English, for example, there are two synonymous idioms, the Greek equivalents of the sequence in question: *a tailor*[18] *among kings* (LIDDELL – SCOTT [s.a.], s.v. κόρχορος, -ὁ) and *the dawcock* (sau *jackdaw*[19] *sits among the doctors* (NARES, *A Glossary*, p. 134).

In conclusion, *corhor*, s.m., is a borrowing from Greek, with an etymon we are sure of: κόρχορος, -ον. Apart from the paremiologic structure in which it occurs, *corhor* means "_impernel", Ro. "scânteiuță"[20], and can work, theoretically, in free combinations of words, as a synonym for the Romanian term. Under no circumstance do we talk about "*mohor*", such as Gabriel Ştrempel states (AI, O, 457). By contrast, in a context that requires the use the idea contained by the Greek paremiologic sequence κόρχορος ἐν λαχάνοις, the Greek word we have referred to cannot be rendered by his Romanian denotative counterpart.

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The figurative meaning that *corhor* receives in the expression built by Antim Ivireanul is that of "ordinary man, devoid of any merits". The inclusion of the term *corhor* in a dictionary dedicated to the old literary language will have to record, in a differentiated manner, the two meanings, the literal and the figurative one.

The Greek expression is substituted in Romanian by an idiom, recorded for the first time no later than the early 19th century, and, in its structure, the Gr. κόρχορος, -ον occurs with its equivalent, the name of another plant, the two extralinguistic realities having in common the sign [+ uncultivated, wild]. Being charged with the same connotation ("humble, insignificant"), *corhor* in *ca şi corhorul între alte verdeaţe* is synonymous with *băşina-porcului* in the Romanian proverb.

Antim applies a literal translation to a unitary structure determined by specific factors of foreign culture and civilization, and the expression on the Romanian field resulting from this solution of equivalence is an opaque one. Deciphering the text in Romanian in which it occurs is incomplete without having knowledge of the Greek idiom in the original version and the communicative behavior in which it operates.

NOTES

[1] The source is wrongly indicated in DLR s.v. *corhor*: **VB**. (sic) I 335; cf. DLR, Tom II, fasc. I, *Bibliography*, s.v. **BV**.
[2] BAILLY, s.v. κόρχορος, -ον.
[3] LIDDELL – SCOTT 1901, s.v. κόρχορος, -ὁ.
[4] See Théophraste, IV, *Commentaire* VII.7., p. 127.
[5] *Hermolai Barbai Castigationes Plinianae*, Romae, 1492, *apud* Jacques André, *Commentaire* la Pline l'Ancien, *H.N.*, XXV, p. 156.
[6] Aristophane, *Les Guêpes*, p. 27-28. Cf. En.: "Here we are, what's left of us, / The recruits who at Byzantium served – hep, two, three, four – / Pacing our posts, you and I. Remember how we slipped into the door / Of the bakery woman, stole her trough, and split it for kindling / To stew our **greens**?], *The Complete Plays of Aristophanes*, Bantam Books, New York, [s.a.], p. 150.
[7] See Jacques André, *Commentaire* of Pline l'Ancien, *H.N.*, XXI, p. 160.
[8] Cf. *The parable of the mustard seed* (Matthew 13:31-32): "The kingdom of heaven is like *a mustard seed*, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is *the smallest of all seeds*, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." (my emphasis); etc.
[9] SUIDAS, II, p. 353.
[10] Cf. *nomothetis* (< gr. <≡:≡2Ξ9Ο.) „legislator", *paretisis* (< gr. Β∀Δ∀∴9Ο4Φ) „resignation", *zilotis* (< gr. .08Τ9ΖΦ) „law maker" – words that had been borrowed by Antim Ivireanul and used by him in Romanian contexts, without being morphologically adapted; cf. Chirilă 2004, *passim*
[11] „Şi să ţânea sătul cu hrana verdeţelor fără nice o hertură, nice pită", *V.S.*, p. 183.
[12] The meaning translates one of the Hungarian names of the plant, *tyuk szemfü*, which is registered in BORZA s.v. *Anagallis arvensis*.
[13] Cf. Alin-Mihai Gherman, *Cuvânt înainte*, CORBEA, p. VII.
[14] Iordan 1975, p. 267, *my translation*.
[15] Cătănescu, 2010, p. 188.
[16] ZANNE, I, p. 298, note 1.
[17] See also „Pune flórea trandafirului cu bîşina-porcului", ZANNE, I/1207, p. 298.
[18] Cu precizarea „often implying disparagement and ridicule", în LITTLE et al. [s.a.], II, s.v. *tailor*.
]19] With the explanation „*fig*. A simpleton", in *idem*, I, s.v. *daw*.
]20] See other denominations in BORZA, s.v. *anagallis arvensis*.

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RÉSUMÉ

UN ASPECT DE L'INFLUENCE GRECQUE SUR L'ACTIVITÉ PRÉCOCE D'ANTIM IVIREANUL DANS LES PAYS ROUMAINS

Prenant en considération sa vie et ses acquisitions culturelles jusqu'à l'âge de quarante ans, lorsqu'il arrive aux Pays Roumains, on pourrait dire que, pour Antim Ivireanul, qui écrivait en roumain, la culture et la langue grecque ont toujours constitué la source la plus naturelle d'inspiration et d'emprunt lexical. Dans sa postface à *l'Evangile gréco-roumaine*, Bucureşti, 1693, il y a un énoncé que l'on n'arrive pas à comprendre sans l'éclaircissement total de la séquence du début: *comme le corhor parmi d'autres verdures*; le fragment contient un terme dont le sens n'a pas encore été precisé, ni l'éthymon indiqué: *corhor*, s.m. Le terme est d'origine grecque, κόρχορος, -ον "herbe sauvage que l'on mangeait comme légume" (BAILLY), *Anagallis arvensis*, L. (fr. *pimprenelle*). Toutefois, Antim n'utilise pas le mot avec son sens dénotatif. Dans le texte, *corhor* apparaît en tant que premier élément d'une expression qui représente la structure idiomatique grecque κόρχορος ἐν λαχάνοις, „Corchorus inter olera", qui s'applique aux êtres humains ordinaires, dépourvus de mérites, qui aspirent à des choses impropres à leur statut. La structure née dans la langue roumaine est ainsi utilisée par Antim pour construire la séquence rhétorique de la modestie.
Mots clé: *influence grecque, langue littéraire, expression idiomatique*, *corhor*, *affectation de la modestie.*

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