CONFLUENCES

THE BEHAVIOURAL NORM A EUROPEAN INSTITUTION

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Abstract:

The article is a review of several types of European human models for the purpose of identifying a common standard of behaviour, namely, measure, temper, moderation.

The European model of behaviour is based on the formative principle of moderation.

Measure and moderation have been, in the European space, over the centuries, the defining features of the ideal of man, of the human model of a certain era or of a certain society.

Beyond the "shell's transformations", European behaviour remains true to the founding and formative principle of Christian moderation, measure and morals, while man's aspirations remain almost the same, even if aspects have changed.

Keywords:

Behaviour, European, norm, moderation, moral, Christian, the Middle Ages, model.

There is something that dies in us, as there is something that survives. Same with Europe. Despite wars, fanaticism, nationalism, it kept its *faith*, a constant feeling in which pain and pleasure are dominated by a rational heart. Obviously, the faith is the faith in love, love of the neighbour, the love of beauty, good and truth, the love of life. The European space is definitely marked since the beginnings by rationalism and philosophy, by the desire for harmony and balance, in a word, by the ideal of perfection. In the pursuit of perfection, man takes the same paths: philosophy, religion, norm of behaviour. Convention or not, the norm of behaviour represented for the

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European man a possibility of overcoming the human faith, but also a "key", "a solution for achieving efficiency[1] in modern times.

Regardless of the function that the behaviour standard has assumed in a certain period of European cultural history, it is a constant of the European behaviour based on politeness, seriousness, measure, temperance, *moderation*. Through *measure, temperance, moderation*, we find ourselves within the European tradition. Let us examine the great books on behaviour (books of wisdom) and the practical handbooks about moderation.

European par excellence, the rhetoric was born in Sicily in the 5th century BC. By being formalized in Greece by the Sophists - from Gorgias to Socrates and especially to Aristotle, through its Latin institution: Cicero and Quintilian, through its transmission during the Middle Ages, through its flourishing during the Renaissance, the art of persuading has accompanied the whole development of modern Europe. St. Augustine and Erasmus were great Europeans and, at the same time, eminent professors of rhetoric. Until recently, only a man filled with rhetoric in general and with behavioural rhetoric in particular could be considered European.

In *On Duties* (XXVII), Cicero included among the components of a beautiful conduct the temperance, the modesty, the complete silence of the soul's disturbances, and the measure of deeds. Following tradition, over centuries, Pico della Mirandola, in his book *On the Dignity of Man*, proposed the following precept, "nothing too much" (again, the appeal to moderation). Therefore, the European model of behaviour is based on the formative principle of moderation. The measure, the moderation has been, over the centuries, the defining features of man's ideal, of the human model of a certain era or of a particular society. The Middle Ages had the knight and the saint as a model, the latter soon becoming under the impact of Scholasticism, the wise. These two models are at the origins of European civilization, which has inspired itself from the experience of Antiquity where the Greek philosopher appeared, and they return, under various shapes, along the stages covered by the culture of the old continent or, as Johan Huizinga handsomely says, in *The Twilight of the Middle Ages*,

[1] Antoaneta Tănăsescu, 2003, p. 34.

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> *"In the course of the successive transformations of the ideal, a cover has stood out each time, which had become a lie"*[2]*. The wise and the knight appeared in the Byzantine*[3] *civilization and the Western Middle Ages, so that they would return during Renaissance and afterwards under new shapes.*

During Renaissance, the knight appears constantly in the royal courts and at the papal court that seeks to gather in itself the temporal and spiritual power. In the court of the duke of Urbino, Rafael and Castiglione work together. The knight, who has strayed through the world to establish justice with his sword, becomes a parody subject in the writings of Pulci and Boiardo. In *The Book of the Courtier*, Baldassare Castiglione insists on the need to acquire beautiful manners, part taken over from the knight, part subordinated to that human "virtue":

> "*Courtier – an eternal human hope toward a perfectly balanced man model, mastering his feelings and his destiny, who has shaped his life taking into account measure in all his actions"*[4].

The courtier visited all European societies, recommending the virtue and the *thinking* necessary to the man around the prince with powers, greater or lesser, on the life of his servants. He has transformed into *honnête homme* and in *gentleman* under the impulse of changes occurred in the social structure. L'honnête homme becomes the prototype of the classic, scholar, skillful man who masters the art of conversation and the art of living.

> "*Classicism is, in general, an ideal of life, that of a well-educated man, who is constantly guided by reason, measure, self-control*"[5].

In the second half of the seventeenth century, l'honnête homme was a true model. Obviously, he was supposed to be good, virtuous, right, but first there was appearance and behaviour. *L'honnête homme* was supposed to know the art of conversation and, not least, the art of make himself pleased in society, "l'honnête homme" is happy to be in the company of others and seeks it with pleasure"[6]. Both Cástiglione's century and the classic one transforms behaviour into art.

[2] Johan Huizinga, 1970, p. 165.
[3] Alexandru Duțu, 1974, p. 135.
[4] Paul Zumthor, 1983, p. 580.
[5] Jean Carpentier, François. Lebrun, 1997, p. 256.
[6] Paul Hazard, 1973, p. 325.

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At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a set of rules ends and others apply. At the beginning of the century, appears a new model of humanity that is inspired also by the knight, the courtier and the "honnête homme": *the English bourgeois type - the gentleman*, a human model described by Pope, Addison, Chesterfield. Their works spread rapidly across the continent in the second half of the eighteenth century. The success of the model described by *The Spectator* indicates that he was liked by groups from European societies in the eighteenth century. Two human qualities are often referred to, social decency and mental discipline.[7]. All writers who have contributed to the enforcing of this model, especially Chesterfield through the writings addressed to his son, talk about a "*good common sense*", the "common sense" being a way of thinking and expressing yourself, which is politeness. A true gentleman must attend a chosen society that he has to study and imitate in order to make himself be liked. "Remember that habit is more important than reason and conform to the law of society" - Lord Chesterfield does not forget to advise his son, who he was educating for his diplomatic career. We also find here the same element that struck us in the world of *l'honnête homme*: the theatricalisation of life. The gentleman is more attentive to imitation than to the depths of life, and cherishes more the background, the tact, the elegance than the inner energies. Moving from one human type to another we see that a layer disappears, that a dream dies, that the ideal moves away from Heaven and becomes closer to the Earth.

The modern European man represented by the entrepreneur, the businessman falls in its turn within the tradition, the continuity (which Huizinga spoke about in the "*The Twilight of the Middle Ages"*) of European behaviour. Their textbooks foresee the "topos" specific to European space, namely: temperance, measure, deprivation, prudence. The distinction between modern and old textbooks on behaviour is the pragmatism that they impose on behaviour and the promise of obtaining unlimited happiness. Here's what Dale Carnegie says in the preface to his book, "*The Art of Succeeding in Life":* "The rules I have stated here are not mere theories, assumptions. They produce immediate results. They're magical "[8]. Carnegie does not intend to teach young people the art of conversing as it was understood in the 18th century French reception rooms, but the art of expressing oneself more clearly, with more power in both commercial talks as well in public speeches. Other authors also (Delafras *How I Conquered*

[7] Alexandru Duțu, 1972, p. 214.
[8] Dale Carnegie, 1994, p. 8.

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Life, 1939; Herbert Newton Casson *Success and Happiness*, 1939) contributed to the enforcement of the new man.

Modern times lean towards the supremacy of the deed, as if it were, the only one able to ensure success in life, prosperity, and even happiness. Their prerogatives are boldness, easiness in facing the danger and in dealing with any situation of life; the risk for achieving the desired goal, but also the measure, temperance, prudence. "That is why I strictly respected the wise laws of prudence (Delafras), and Dale Carnegie said, "In order to forgive one needs nobility and self-control."

In the Romanian medieval space, the place of crystallization of behavioural models are, of course, the princely courts. The two elites of society were gathering around the prince: the religious elite and the secular elite.

The society of the Romanian Middle Ages, structured as a pyramid, was headed by the *Voivode* who embodied the conception on world of the whole collectivity, its "mental scheme" (Alexandru Duţu).

As a monarchic and humanity model at the same time, the *voivode* had to sum up multiple qualities: wisdom, prudence, precaution, temperance, modesty.

In Romanian literature, the founding principles of the European model of behaviour (politeness, measure, temperance, modesty) can be found in the textbooks on behaviour written by the voivodes for the crown princes.

The first writing of this kind is *The teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosius*. It inaugurates a tradition that will be continued during the times of Matei Basarab, Constantin Brâncoveanu and Nicolae Mavrocordat.

The advice for my son Constantine was written by Nicolae Mavrocordat - the first Phanariot prince in 1725, when young Constantin was 14 years old. These teachings were discovered by Constantin Erbiceanu and published in the Archives of the Scientific and Literary Society in Iasi, in Romanian translation, with the following title: "Advice of the Blessed Prince Mr. Nicolae Alexandru voivode Mavrocordat given to his son Mr. Constantin Nicolae voivode, before being a prince, in the year of salvation 1725"[9]

The text encompasses teachings on moral and religious life, on private life, on the economy of the Princely House, on relations with foreign princes, on state administration and on its relations with neighbouring states and especially with the Ottoman Empire.

To begin with, the *Advice* refer, like all the books on behaviour, to divinity, bowing before the divine being a necessary condition in the life of any individual, especially that of a crown prince. "Know how to make the

[9] Nicolae Cartojan, 1933, p. 324.

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distinction between the Fear of God and the foundation of happiness, "Without the help of God, all things are vain."[10].

Placed at the head of the small manual on behaviour, these tips synthesize the mentality of medieval man whose life always stood under the sign of the "divine judgement", faith being for the old Romanians the only promise in achieving happiness.

The following tips are about politeness, temperance, moderation - the founding and normative principles of the European model of behaviour - as Antoaneta Tănăsescu shows in the book "*Strategies of European Behavior*". Temperance is a virtue, and the model has to keep it in all aspects of life: "The vain grandness, the many garments, the many jewels, the many horses, the edifices must be absent."[11]

As far as the people around him are concerned, the father recommends his son to be close to them, not to distance himself from them: *"Know the merits and defects of those who would serve you, especially of the gentlemen, the magnates, the local boyars and the customs".* Prudence should be directed not only on the earthly boyars, but also on Phanariots. Although surprising, such a recommendation proves the Phanariot ruler's perspicacity: "Have few policemen, few Phanariots."

If the first part of the paraenetic writing gives a tender, gentle impression, in the second part the tone becomes commanding, rigorous, the teachings turning into rules: "Few meals", "Few amusements," Do not waste", "Do not Drink," "Few hunts and not in distant places."

The always recommended measure, which Neagoe Basarab invoked just as often in *Neagoe Basarab's Teachings to his son Theodosius*, especially for the many hours that the banquets of religious feasts lasted or the victory of a messenger:

"...and you should still drink, to what extent, so that your mind to overcome the wine, and the wine not to overcome the mind."[12].

Mavrocordat's writing is not unique in his era. Such teachings for descendants (also in Greek) have also written by: Azaria Tzigala for Mihai Kacovita's offsprings, and the cupbearer Mikhail Fotino, who composed some teachings for his son[13].

By writing these advice, Nicolae Mavrocordat fulfills a very old, Bessarabian "habit" of the country, taken from the old Byzantines.

[10] Dan Horia Mazilu, 2003, p. 463.
[11] *Ibidem*.
[12] *Ibidem*.
[13] Dan Horia Mazilu, 1998, p. 318.

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Teachings to princes or future princes bloomed in the era of the Byzantine Empire's expansion, when the Empire's borders stretched over Asia Minor to the Euphrates, so that the possession of such vast territories required a true "art." In this context, the main preoccupation of emperors was to ensure a good education of the crown princes that had to preserve the prestige of Byzantium. From these concerns, the literature on the moral and political education treaties of the future emperors or princes flourished. Such writings are quite a few in Byzantine literature, being made up of kings and laymen or clergymen to guide the crown princes:

> *"Agapet's paraenetic chapters toward Emperor Justinian, The teachings of Basil the Macedonian (867-886) toward his son Leon, The Book of Photius (9th century) toward Tsar Slavi, The royal teachings of Theophilactus (11th century) and The teachings of Manuel Paleologus toward his son (1417). These teachings were also imitated by Slavic and the Teachings of Vladimir Monomah, or the book known as Domostroi, are obvious reflexes of the Byzantine literature*"[14].

The monarch was "God-anointed" according to the Byzantine theory, a representative of the Almighty, Master of Heaven, and he had to have multiple qualities such as: wisdom, prudence, providence, temperance, modesty, all synthesizing a ruler model acting in pursuit of diplomatic prevention of military conflicts.

Certainly, the writer prince Nicolae Mavrocordat read from the works of the Byzantine writers, for his dream, as of any young Phanariote, was to reach on one of the thrones of the Romanian Principalities:

> „*... the dream of young Phanariots was how to reach the Wallachian or Moldavian throne and were preparing since school for this ambitious career, studying with diligence those authors who wrote about the rulers' duties. The contents of the school notebooks that have been preserved until today prove the above. The most frequently interpreted authors are Isocrates (The paraenetic speech to Nicocles), The Speech to Demonic, Sinesia (About the Way to Rule), Agapet (Paraenetic Chapters), Teofilactus (The Royal Teaching), etc.*"[15]

Mitrofan Grigoras mentions the Wise Scholar Voivode, in a Greek-written chronicle, edited for the first time by the famous Byzantinologist D.

[14] D. Russo, 1939, p. 532.
[15] *Ibidem*.

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Russo in *Greco-Romanian History Studies* (Posthumous Works) 10 NUL II: 10 NUL II:

> *"But after the empire has killed Stephen Cantacuzino by hanging, 20 months after his appointment as a prince, the empire moves the wise Prince Nicolae from the seat of Moldavia to that of Wallachia in 1716 to 30 of January, in the day, I say, in which he entered Bucharest and sat on the throne. "*[16]

The image of the wise monarch is also found in the *Chronicle about Nicolae Mavrocordat*, written by Radu Popescu, who became a High Steward and High Councilor, in 1716, that is, during the first reign of Nicolae in Wallachia. As Radu Popescu describes him, Mavrocordat becomes "a solar embodiment, a voivode with exemplary conduct, perfect from any angle he would have been analyzed."[17]

The eulogy is directed first and foremost on the scholar Mavrocordat, but also on the politician, administrator and "man", of an infinite wisdom: "But His Lordship, with the wisdom of His Lordship and with the impulsion he had from God [...][18]

The measure, a constant of European behaviour also characterizes the scholar voivode, wisdom and measure in deed, being practically synonymous:

"But the country, as it was said above, was in good condition due to the good administration by His Lordship."[19]

Among the qualities of the Prince, the compassion toward the people is also mentioned, manifested especially in the moments of crisis triggered by natural calamities, such as famine and plague ("... that they sent during the famine to take flour from the Turks"). Faith in God helps him find the solution for banishing the plague:

> *"And for the disease of the plague, the Prince has made an act of kindness, seeing that the disease has spread all over the country, so that a multitude of people die, he sent people to Sfethagora, to bring some relics of saints, who they have heard that are very useful for this disease, which by bringing them and having a church service with them, a great miracle was noticed*

[16] D. Russo, idem, p. 441.
[17] Dan Horia Mazilu, 2000, p. 54.
[18] *Cronicari Munteni*, 1968, p. 154.
[19] *Ibidem*, p. 174.

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everywhere, the plague disappeared and people rejoiced, giving thanks to God. "[20]

The courtier chronicler does not hesitate to praise and wonder at the Prince's qualities and deeds made for the "common good", facts that are (some of them) true cultural programs:

"To mention all the good qualities that the Prince possessed, the habit of relating history does not allow me, for I would be suspected of "colachiie" (untranslatable word), which in romanian it means "ciocotnicie"(servile), this is why I silently skip them, only this much I say, that all the deeds were made with justice, with mercy, easily forgiving and in fear of God. Which all these I saw with my eyes, if I keep my silence over them, the stones will cry. "[21]

Radu Popescu's chronicle of Nicolae Mavrocordat builds an ideal, encomiastic, verisimilous image when referring to the scholar and wise Mavrocordat, but unlikely in relation to the attributes of the Greek (he was accused of killing Metropolitan Antim and his brother John Mavrocordat).

From the desire to be a "country man figure" and to build an image - that of a monarchic model and model of humanity, the wise Prince will put two other scholars at work to relate his Moldavian reigns, that is Nicolae Costin (for the first reign in Moldova 1709-1711) and Axinte Uricariul (for the second reign 1711-1715, in Moldavia).

When writing the story of the first reign in Moldavia, *The Chronicle of Moldavi*a (1709-1711), of course, at the order of the Phanariot eager to be glorified and legitimated, Nicolae Costin, the second son of chronicler Miron Costin, was already a writer. He had done the translation from Latin of the *The Diall of Princes* book of 16th Century great writer Antonio de Guevara, bishop of Cadix and preacher of Carol Quintul, and wrote the *Chronicle of Moldavia from the building of the world until 1601*.

Nicolae Costin's translation played an important role in the epoch, especially for Phanariot princes willing to rule Moldavia or Wallachia because, in this romantic life of Marcus Aurelius, Guevara introduced chapters of advice on education and leadership (the first part contains the norms that the prince must follow in life so that his life and deeds are in accordance with a good Christian, and in the third part, the writer shows how a prince should behave in order to represent, through his own life, a model of dignity and virtue before his subjects.

[20] *Ibidem*, pp.163-164.
[21] *Ibidem*.

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It is very possible for Nicholas Mavrocordat to have read Guevara's book and might even have been inspiration for him in writing the *Teachings* for the child Constantine, who will follow him to the reign, but also for the other works of a philosophical-moral character: *About duties*, printed in 1719, the opera being written in 1716, when he was captive in Sibiu and the philosophical novel *The Respites of Filotheu*, published in 1800, in Vienna.

The translator of *The Diall*, will relate the Greek's reign very thoroughly, but without adopting an excessive laudatory attitude, *Nicolae Mavrocordat's Chronicle* is not an encomium:

> *"The Phanariot is not monumentalized, the eulogy has no hagiographic elements, nothing excessive, that is, it stays between those parameters of normality that are free of antipathy."*[22]

The portrait is an objective one, among the qualities, the chronicler also mentioning:

> *"He was an honourable man, both in philosophy and history, and in others that a gentleman should know, he was thoroughly educated: he knew a few languages... and a God's man, he protected strongly the church; tempered as regards food and drink; he was merciful toward the holy churches and impoverished monasteries; he was merciful to the poor, and to the widows. If he was hot-tempered, and especially to those who knew they were spending the treasury's money, and to those who mistreated and troubled the poor, and to whom disobeyed the commandments. He was without hesitation and vigil at the affairs of the country; ready and did everything in his power to fulfill the royal commandments. "*[23]

After the death of Nicolae Costin, in 1712, Axinte Uricariul was appointed by the prince to write the official chronicle of Moldova - *Second Reign of Nicolai Alexandru Vodă*, valet 7720.[24]

For the writing of the chronicle, Axinte Uricariul studied Costin's writings, the notes and correspondence of the prince[25], testimonies of some boyars, news from official acts, "journalists" and "opinions".[26]

[22] Dan Horia Mazilu, 2000, p. 180.
[23] N. Cartojan, 1996, p. 304.
[24] Axinte Uricariul, 1994, p. 231.
[25] Ioan Ștefan Petre, 1944, pp.177-179.
[26] N. Iorga, 1969, p. 118.

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As Nicolae Costin, Axinte Uricariul will also insist during his chronicle on the moral qualities of the voivode: good householder, good administrator, making annual revisions to the treasury:

> *"They called all the boyars into the big house, and bringing the treasury registers, they showed them how many taxes and how many royal incomes they gathered at the treasury that year."*[27]

The chronicler also informs us that during the second reign in Moldova (1711-1715), the Phanariot instituted free education with four teachers, one of old Greek, one of modern Greek, one Slovenian and the fourth of Romanian language and that he set up the printing house at Saint Sava ("so they sent to bring Greek and Slovenian mark-ink craftsman and made good homes at St. Sava and they set up the printing there ").[28]

The Phanariot's image, as it emerges from Axinte's chronicle, boring, full with insignificant details, is that of the wise scholar for whom the fate of the country is above all personal interest or ambition.

Without realizing, the Wise Scholar follows the example of Brâncoveanu (who will ask Radu Greceanu to write his deeds) and his predecessors - Petru Rareș, Alexandru Lăpușneanu, Petru Șchiopul (whose reigns will be related by the chroniclers monks: Macarie, Eftimie and Azarie).

In his effort join the lineage of the country princes, Mavrocordat follows another monarchic model, the one proposed by Brâncoveanu, the creator of a true "cultural monarchy" (N. Iorga)

At the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Romanian society was dominated by two cultural models (which established cultural monarchies), Constantin Brâncoveanu and Nicolae Mavrocordat.

They are intelligent, wise monarchs who draw in their court many Romanian and foreign scholars, gathered in real Republic of the letters. Moreover, they are able to gather around them the collectivity's ideals and to have as Al. Duțu says " glowing force, both in space and over time."

The cultural model is defined in relation to other models, which it considers "foreign", but which allow us to identify the forms of universality.

In the Western Middle Ages, we find the model of the knight, warrior and that of the wise. They are at the origins of European civilization (inspired by the experience of Antiquity) and come back, under various faces, along the stages covered by the culture of our continent.

The brief analysis of some of the human models of European culture shows that, despite the metamorphoses suffered throughout history, European

[27] Axinte Uricariul, *Ibidem*.
[28] *Ibidem*.

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behaviour remains true to several founding and formative principles: temperance, moderation and Christian morality, and that man's aspirations have remained almost the same, even is aspects have changed.

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