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AN ANCIENT APHORISM FROM IUSTINUS IN DEMETRII PRINCIPIS CANTEMYRII INCREMENTORUM ET DECREMENTORUM AULAE OTHMAN[N]ICAE HISTORIA

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Abstract: Dimitrie Cantemir, a scholar and a voivode of Moldavia, put himself on the map in the Europe of the 18th century, due to his paper on the history of the Ottoman Empire (Incrementorum et decrementorum Aulae Othman[n]icae historia), written in Latin. Although he wrote about the history, culture and civilization of an oriental empire, the scholar did not forget about the specificity of the public he addressed, formed of the intellectual European elite, consequently, when the analyzed topic asked for or even imposed it, he did not hesitate to provide referrences to the exempla selected from the Greek-Roman Antiquity. A reply, which contains an aphorism, said to belong to the Sultan Bayezid II in the chronicle dedicated to his reign, offers the author the occasion to provide further explanation as a note, by using a quotation from M. Iunianus Iustinus. Although he suggested that the emperor himself had made an allusion to the quote from Iustinus, we believe that this association is more likely to belong to the Romanian scholar.

Keywords: Dimitrie Cantemir, Iustinus, Ottoman Empire, Latin language, Bayezid II

Dimitrie Cantemir, the voivode of Moldavia and a humanist savant, has become known in the Europe of the 18th century especially due to his book about the history of the Ottoman Empire (Incrementorum et decrementorum Aulae Othman[n]icae historia), elaborated in Latin, around the year 1716, at the request of the Academy of Berlin[1]. An

[1] Though the paper was written in Latin, in Europe the English translation was diffused, unfortunately, made by Nicholas Tindal, with the title: The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire (London, 1734-1735 and 1756), after which other editions in different languages were created. The entire Latin text was published as it follows: Dimitrie Cantemir, Creșterile și descreșterile Imperiului Otoman. Textul original latin în forma finală revizuită de autor, the facsimile of the manuscript Lat-124 from Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MASS, with an introduction by Virgil Cândea, București, 1999, and in the critical

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impressive work, structured in three books, among which the first two refer to the birth and ascension of the Ottoman power, while the third – to its decadence, the chapters present the rulling periods of the sultans, following the order of succession to the throne. The work is extremely rich in information, not only historical, but also ethnographic, geographic, ethographic etc. Many of these piece of information are to be found in the ample notes and commentaries (Annotationes) which accompany every chapter[2]. If there are doubts regarding the quality and precision of the historical material, for the Romanian scholar wrote his work while he was exiled in Russia and did not have direct access to the Ottoman sources, being forced to count on the European sources and on the personal memory, information about the beliefs, habits, daily life of the Turks is credible and authentic, being based on the author's own observations.

Although he wrote about the history, culture and civilization of an oriental empire which had transmitted both fascination and fear to the entire Europe for some centuries, Cantemir did not forget about the specificity of the public he adressed, formed of the intellectual ellites of Europe, trying to keep the interest alive and to facilitate the understanding of some aspects specific to the Muslim world through explanations, commentaries and analogies with the aspects of the European culture and civilization. This is the reason why, when the treated topic allows it or even imposes it, he does not hesitate to make allusions to the exempla selected from the Greek-Roman antiquity that the author knew well enough from various sources, often not directly consulted, but through a medio- or Neo-Latin means. Among this sources is the epitome known as Historiae Philippicae, created by M. Iunianus Iustinus based on the histories of Pompeius Trogus, referred to by the scholar and

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edition Demetrii Principis Cantemirii Incrementorum et decrementorum Aulae Othman[n]icae sive Aliothman[n]icae historiae a prima gentis origine ad nostra usque tempora deductae libri tres, praefatus est Virgil Cândea, critice edidit Dan Sluşanschi, Timişoara, 2001 (reprinted in 2002). Recently, in 2015, a second critical edition appeared, edited by Octavian Gordon, Florentina Nicolae and Monica Vasileanu, accompanied by the translation in Romanian belonging to Ioana Costa, the introductory word signed by the academician Eugen Simion and the introductory study by Stefan Lemny. The examples in Latin that we will provide, accompanied by our translation, in this study, will be excerpted from the critical edition from 2002, with the indication of the book, chapter and the manuscript page. From now on, we will use the abbreviation IDAO for this work of Cantemir.

[2] Dimitrie Cantemir had spent almost 22 years of his lifetime as a hostage, having been sent by his father, the voivode of Moldavia, Constantin Cantemir, to Constantinople.

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even quoted[3]. It has no relevance whether at that time, when the history of the Ottomans, Cantemir had a Latin volume of Iustinus or he took fragments from a secondary source, writing in a time when the disclosure of the used sources was often neglected (Cantemir himself frequently ommitted to mention the name of the authors and the works used as sources, in most cases, he only wrote Turcae tradunt etc.), the correct quoting of some fragments (not only from Iustinus) deserves to be appreciated.

One reply, reproduced indirectly, attributed to the sultan Bayezid II and included in the text of the chronicle dedicated to the reign of this emperor, offers to the author the occasion to provide further explanation in Annotationes and, in the same time, a completion, by using a fragment from Historiae Philippicae[4]. Having been forced by his son, the future sultan Selim I, to abdicate, Bayezid II expressed his refusal to stay in Constantinople (which had become Istambul during the time of his predecessor) using a paremiological expression: Selim patrem precatur, ut in Novo remaneat Palatio, se enim novo imperio, et Veteri Palatio contentum fore. Pater ulterius instat, addens 'duos gladios eadem vagina capi non posse'. – IDAO, II, II, 117 – "Selim asks his father to stay in the new palace, for he will be happy with the new reign, but with the old palace. The father insists more on <going>, adding that 'two swords cannot fit into the same scabbard'". The proverb, 'duos gladios eadem vagina capi non posse', is meant to concisely, suggestively and powerfully characterize the situation in which the former emperor was, undelining the necessity of self-exile[5]. Its presence in the text is not surprising. The Romanian scholar usually introduces proverbs in the text, some of them

[3] The ancient writer abbreviated the work (from which the title was borrowed), which was lost, unfortunately, created in the 1st century by Pompeius Trogus, called by Iustinus vir priscae eloquentiae (Praefatio 1, in M. Iuniani Iustini Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi, edidit Otto Seel, Stuttgart, 1985, p. 1).

[4] Despite the scientific character of the work, following the good humanist tradition, Cantemir frequently uses the reproduction, in oratio recta sau obliqua, of dialogues, discourses and even of the letters of the characters, in order to make the historian discourse more expressive and even authentic.

[5] Agiemin Baubec mentioned it among the Turkish proverbs that he gathered (in the volume Proverbe turceşti, Cuvînt înainte by A. Baubec and N. Constantinescu, Bucureşti, 1972, p. 104), including it in the contextual field of "measure". The proverb is to be found also in the Romanian paremiology, with the following completion: "It is impossible for two swords to be placed in the same scabbard and for two kings to rule the same poor country" (Proverbe româneşti, anthology, established text, glossary, thematic index, postface and bibliography by George Muntean, Bucureşti, 1984, p. 207). Moreover, an interpolation in Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei de la Aron Vodă încoace of Miron Costin mentions „Ten dervishes will sit on a carpet, but two rulers in a country, never, says a Turkish proverb" (v. Miron Costin, Opere, Bucureşti, 1958, p. 367).

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offered explicitly as examples of the oriental wealth of proverbs, others exploited for their expressive virtues and their figurative force, envisaging the elicitation of a specific reaction from the reader. In this situation, Cantemir considers it is necessary to offer, in a note, a completion and, in the same time, a clarification of the sultan's reply, using a quotation from Iustinus, which contains an aphorism expressing the same idea, and suggesting that the association with the ancient fragment was done by the emperor himself: Allusisse videtur ad Alexandri M(agni) dictum: 'non posse mundum duobus Solibus regi, nec orbem summa duo Regna, salvo terrarum statu, habere' Iustin(us). Lib(ro) II[6]. Cap(ite) 12[7]– IDAO, Ann. II, II, 138 – "It seems that an allusion was made to the words of Alexander the Great: 'that the universe cannot be governed by two suns and the entire world cannot have two rulers without breaking the status of the lands', Iustinus, in Book 11, chapter 12"[8].

[6] It was a mistaken referrence to a quotation from Iustinus (Iustin(us). Lib(ro) II. Cap(ite) 12 – IDAO, Ann. II, II, 138 (ξ)) from the critical edition IDAO (2002), which does not belong to the author, but it is due to an error of desktop publishing (a dreadful confusion between the Arabian number 11 and the Roman one II). The accession of the facsimile of the manuscript Lat-124 published in 1999 is enough in order to settle this issue. Unfortunately, the error was also perpetuated in the Romanian translation, made by Dan Sluşanschi, published under the title Istoria creşterilor şi a descreşterilor curţii Othman[n]ice sau Aliothman[n]ice de la primul început al neamului, adusă până în vremurile noastre, în trei cărţi (vol. I, Bucureşti, 2012, p. 251).

[7] Formulated almost identical, the phrase also appears at Rufus Curtius: De rebus gestis Alexandi Magni, regis Macedonum : Ceterum nec mundus duobus solibus potest regi, nec duo summa regna salvo statu terrarum potest habere (Quinti Curtii Rufi De rebus gestis Alexandri Magni libri supersites ex editione Frid. Schmieder, cum supplementis, notis et interpretatione in usum Delphini, variis lectionibus, notis variorum, recensu editionum et codicum et indice locupletissimo accurate recensiti, Liber IV, 11, 22, Londini, 1825, p. 307). The author was probably inspired by the same source as Pompeius Trogus, abbreviated by Iustinus (W. W. Tarn, Alexander the Great, volume II, Sources and Studies, Cambridge, 2002, p. 80). The same idea is transmitted by the historian Diodorus Siculus in Book XVII, 54, 5, of the universal history Diodorus Siculus. Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes with an English Translation by C. H. Oldfather. Vol. 4-8. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, Ltd. 1989 (http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0060.tlg001.perseus-eng1:17.54.5). Cantemir does not allude to these two works which he seems not to have known.

[8] About the occurence of some versions of this aphorism, both in Romanian and in Turkish and in other languages, see Viorica Dinescu, La contribution de Démètre Cantemir à la parémiologie turque, în Dacoromania. Jahrbuch für östlich Latinität, herausgegeben von Paul Miron, 2/1974, Freiburg, München, p. 356, n. 48 şi n. 49.

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If the reply attributed to the sultan is inspired, we're convinced, by the used Turkish sources[9], it is difficult to appreciate if the explanation, containing a clear referrence to Iustinus, existed in any of the sources that Cantemir used. Of course, the education of the sultan would have allowed him to make allusions to ancient events. Cantemir himself characterized him, based on the testimonies of the Turkish historians (si Turcarum historicis habenda est fides) as the biggest protector of the scholars (summusque eruditorum fautor), underlining the fact that "he himself was skilled at so many things, which made an educated individual to be considered by one's fellow citizen not only a ruller of the state, but also a prince of of learning" (ipse adeo omnium rerum, quae eruditum hominem constituunt, fuit peritus, ut a suis popularibus non Imperii solum, sed et doctrinae Princeps haberetur – IDAO, II, II, 119-120).

The personality of Alexander the Great has always casted a specific spell both during the Antiquity and the epochs that followed, both in Europe and in the Asian territories conquested by him, it was created and spead a real myth of the hero conqueror of the world. It is normal for the Ottoman sultans, motivated by the ambition of conquerors, to have been familiarized with the image of the Greek hero and with the ancient works which present history, either directly or indirectly, through the means of translations, summaries. Despite all these, we cannot have any certainty that Bayezid would have known the writing of Iustinus and that he would have been influenced by it in this situation. We believe that it is safer to think that this association belonged to Cantemir itself, and the Romanian scholar inserted it in order to offer a piece of explanation to the European public who knew Latin and had a serious classic culture. We do not exclude the possibility that the analogy was first made by the

[9] For example, the Turkish historian Hoca Sadettin Effendi, mentioned by Cantemir in Praefatio (IDAO, Praef., 16), in the chronicle Tâcü't-Tevârih (ed. Ismet Parmaksioğlu, Ankara, 1999, p. 148), justifying the decision of Selim I of killing their brothers and their sons, being linked to the proverb, showing that neither people nor soldiers will find their peace with two sultans in the country, just like two swords which do not fit in a scabbard and two lions in a cage. The reply which Cantemir attributed to sultan Bayezid II was later taken from the English translation of Cantemir's work and reproduced in the works of some European historians who wrote about the Ottoman Empire (e. g. F. A. Neale, Islamism: Its Rise and its Progress or the Present and Past Condition of the Turks, vol. II, London, 1854, p. 113; The Modern Part of an Universal History from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time, compiled from original authors by the authors of the ancient part, vol. X, London, MDCCLXXXI, p. 17).

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Turkish scholars and that it was diffused in the Ottoman intellectual environments, where he could have been taken by Cantemir[10].

Except for the intention of informing people on historical events, the insertion of the sultan's reply reproduced indirectly in the text of the Ottoman history (addens 'duos gladios eadem vagina capi non posse'), and also of the ancient quotation represents, in fact, a rhetorical procedure largely spread in the humanist historiography. The appeal to metaphoric expressivity (found in the sayings presented in the two replies), envisages the underlining of the encapsulated idea, the process of informing, the catching of the benevolent reader (benevoli Lectoris) and one's relaxation.

Even if they are not always in accordance with the historical truth, interesting details, completed and clarified by referrences to literary sources, inculcate Cantemir's text with expressiveness and flavour, offering a pleasant and instructive reading even to the modern reader.

[10] Cf. Viorica Dinescu, op. cit., p. 136: „Le proverbe pourrait constituer un exemple concluant pour l'absorbtion de certains aphorismes (facilité tant par la profonde verité, ayant une grande force de généralisation qu'ils renferment, que par une personalité du premier ordre, passée, elle-même, dans la légende)".[The proverb could constitute an eloquent example for the absorption of specific quotations (facilitated so much by the deep truth, having a great generalizing force that they englobe in a character of great force that has become a legend. – our translation].

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