

A Hand-Written Copy of the Work "Divan, or the Quarrel between the Wiseman and the World" (with Notes in Ottoman Turkish) in the National Archives of Romania *

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During the first decades of the 18th century Dimitrie Cantemir's works have come to wide circulation, throughout Europe due to their universal character, which made Cantemir an important forerunner of the Illuminist historiography. On the background of the crisis, it was striving to discern the deep meanings of history. That is why the Ottoman Empire's destiny was not the sole topic he focused upon. Cantemir gave a plausible description of the historical phenomena; he abandoned the apocalyptical chronology trying to systemize the origins and elements of the Romanian past for instance in *Descriptio Moldaviae* and Chronicle on the antiquity of the *Roman-Moldo Wallachians*. His conception is even more evident in his famous *Incrementa atque decrementa aulae othomanicae*, a work of exceptional value for the entire contemporary European historiography.

This history book written by the Moldavian prince represents a savant research, based on parallels, critics and interpretations and significates a non-typical moment for the European Illuminism of Eastern origin, since it compels the recognition of a name and a creation which equals the greatest intellectual productions of the continent. Prince's political thinking is "specific for the beginning of the century that had been born under the sign of a pre-Illuminist rationalism and ended under Romantic auspices"¹. We might consider that the 22 years he had spent in Constantinople favoured his mature understanding of the evolution and involution of the Ottoman Empire and, above all, created the conditions for him to meditate on the general problems of his era.

One of his editors, who is also an exegete of his work pointed out that "Cantemir is situated between the limits of a formal orthodoxy, capable of discouraging the Catholic purgatory (as in *Divan*) but which in the same time, is not following the eschatological ideals of the traditional doctrine. However, this attitude is not ostentatious. Cantemir himself might have not realized its consequences, precisely because he was ignoring the works of Dionysos the

* This paper was presented at the *Dimitrie Cantemir (Kantemiroglu), 1673-1723 Symposium*, Istanbul, 7th December 2006.

¹ Romul Munteanu, *Cultura europeană în epoca luminilor*, Bucharest, 1981, p. 50.

Areopagite, Gregory of Nissa, Gregory Palama or other representatives of the radical orthodoxy”².

Cantemir's works bring about a new ideative world; they start from biblical precepts and are centered upon the spiritual side, pointing out, in the same time the main features of the human behavior. The Greek scholar Ieremia Cacavela who guarantees for *Divan or the quarrel between the Wiseman and the world or the trial of the Soul against the Flesh*, is Cantemir's adviser “for the love of knowledge and wisdom”, and recommends him to the public for the authenticity of his spirit: “your wisdom will crown you and will inscribe your name in the book of its great heroes. May Lord give you a long life, you, long-expected jewel of the Orthodox Church. May you incessantly grow through wisdom, on your way up to God and to the use of the people. Amen”³.

This is the very essence of the *Divan*, Cantemir's efforts being concentrated mainly on the education of own people; the dialogue between the Wisdom and the World intends to identify the purpose of human existence, to put education into the service of Man's ideals, to enlighten the people by imposing not only the biblical precepts, but also the philosophical thought. The insistence in using various communication modalities make many of his concepts determine a love for knowledge and wisdom. Cantemir is not tributary to Orthodox reformism; he does not accept the mystic doctrine. This does not mean, however that he breaks off with the substance of Christian conception. Paying great attention to the situation of the Western Catholic society, the Romanian scholar comes close rather to Western rationalist orientations, without denying, however, the originality of the Oriental secular and religious spirit. Thus we may assert that in *Divan* Cantemir pleads for a West-East dialogue, for the purpose – pedagogically, very much alike Theophilos Corydaleu – to contribute to Moldavia's emancipation. Ieremia Cacavela praises his wonderful ideas and frame of mind, his “rhetorical” art, “the embellishment of the Moldavian language, his savant gift and skills of mind”⁴. Being written both in Romanian and Greek the work *Divan* addresses, with its philosophical and moral contents, both to the Romanian and Balcanic societies of the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century.

We shall not insist now on the contents and structure of the *Divan*, science along the years it represented the object of a great number of studies belonging to

² Virgil Căndea, *Studiu introductiv, Dimitrie Cantemir. Opere complete. Divanul*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1969, p. LIV.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 28-29.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

the Romanian as well as to Balcanic and Western historiography⁵. We shall concentrate rather upon to spreading out and circulation of ideas included in this work, underlining the peculiarities reflected by the hand-written copy of the *Divan* preserved into the deposits of the National Archives of Romania.

After its first edition, of 1698, brought about into the princely printing house in Iași, the *Divan*, the work of an only 25 years old prince rejoiced, despite the difficulties derived from its complicated style, a wide circulation in the Romanian circles, but also beyond the Carpathian-Danubian area. The 17 hand-written copies⁶ of Cantemir's work which circulated during the whole 18th century, up to the 4th decade of 19th century are a proof in this respect.

This "republication" of the *Divan* by hand-writing, which started even from the 18th century, was determined on one side by the scarcity of printed book and on the other side by the increasing price growing interest of the readers and the book's penetration to ever larger social categories. V. Căndea names this type of distribution "a popular circulation of *Divan*"⁷.

The 17 hand-written copies of the *Divan*⁸ come 6 from Moldavia, 4 from Walachia and 7 from Transylvania. Its intense circulation in Moldavia is justified by the origins of the author. It is a fact that Dimitrie Cantemir himself offered a number of copies of the book printed in Iași in 1698. In this respect we have as evidence the copy which belonged to the treasurer Ștefan Luca who was to become Dimitrie Cantemir's faithful counselor in which position he would be sent to conclude, on behalf of the Prince, the alliance treaty with tzar Peter I, at Lutzk, in 1711. With a beautiful handwriting "vtori (the second) logofăt Luca" notes that: "This book is a gift offered to me from the books that have been written by His Highness Dimitrie vodă (Prince Dimitrie) va dni (in the days) of prince Ion Antioh Cantemir, văleat (in the year) 7208 (1699) September 1st"⁹.

⁵ On the studies of *Divan* belonging the Romanian, Balkanic and Western historiography see: *Divanul (1698-1998). Bibliografie*, Iași, 1998, 38 p.

⁶ On the analysis of this hand-written copies of *Divan* and their circulation see Virgil Căndea, *op.cit.*, Bucharest, 1974, pp. 77-81. On the same topic see also: Aurora Ilieș and Marieta Adam, *Date noi despre circulația și cititorii operei lui Dimitrie Cantemir «Divanul sau gălceava înțeleptului cu lumea»*, in „*Studii. Revistă de Istorie*”, tom 26, 1973, 5, pp. 999-1023.

⁷ Virgil Căndea, *op.cit.*, Bucharest, 1974, p. 80.

⁸ Romanian Academy Library, mss. rom. nr. 1329, 1417, 1267, 6005, 2507, 1524, 5566, 758, 1698, 2379, 3170, 1555; Central University Library, mss. rom. 11121, National Archives of Romania, mss. 805. cf. Virgil Căndea, *op.cit.*, *Introducere*, pp. LXXXVI-XC. See also: Aurora Ilieș and Marieta Adam, *op.cit.*, p. 1000.

⁹ Central University Library, *Carte veche rară*, 110, p. 1.

However, considering their anteriority, we must notice that the first hand-written copy comes from Transylvania, being dated 1703¹⁰, therefore at only 5 years distance from its printing. Actually it's also Transylvania where the greatest number of hand-written copies circulated, as we have already mentioned. If we take into account the period they spreaded in, we shall notice that these hand-written copies appear in Transylvania immediately after the persistent urge to unite with the Church of Rome. That is why Cantemir's work served as moral support for the Romanians in these moments of distress. This also might explain the ardor in copying it, in having it at hand, in using it as a school text-book¹¹.

The sinuous, uncertain route taken by most of the *Divan*'s copies makes it difficult to draw a precise map of their circulation.

The hand-written copy preserved in the Romanian National Archives was issued by the hieromonk Ghenadie at the Episcopal Office of Roman (a town in Northern Moldavia), at the beginning of January 1816, as shown in the Romanian note inserted in the final part of the manuscript: "This *Divan* of the world has been written by me, humble and miserable servant of God Ghenadie, hieromonk, confessor and assessor of the Holly Episcopal Office in Roman, to the repose and final of this vile and deceiving life." January the 2nd, 1816"¹². This hand written copy was donated to the National Archives in 1946 by Professor Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, at that time Director of this institution. Within its 159 leaves the clerk included the unabridged text in Romanian of *Divan*. To this at the beginning of the manuscript Ghenadie added 6 leaves (two of which are empty) in which, leaving away the three forewords of the princes edition, he draws a brief collection of adages extracted from the first book of the *Divan*, grouped under the eloquent title "Examples written here in short"¹³. Hieromonk Ghenadie's preoccupation for a proper understanding of the text makes him to add, at the end of the "Examples", a list of abbreviation he had used "so that the reader should understand what they mean"¹⁴; these abbreviations are actually easy to detect, since within the text they are written in cinnabar. Also in cinnabar are written the words on which the clerk had "doubts"¹⁵ preferring to render them in their Greek form. It is however worth mentioning that these "Greek variants" are written with Cyrillic letters¹⁶. Actually it is main peculiarity of this hand written copy of Cantemir's work this usage of the Cyrillic alphabet in rendering

¹⁰ Mircea Avram, *Cartea românească manuscrisă*, Sibiu, 1970, p. 15.

¹¹ Aurora Ilieș, Marieta Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 1015.

¹² National Central Historical Archives of Romania, mss. 805, f. 159.

¹³ *Ibidem*, f. III

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, f. V.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 1.

¹⁶ See annexe 2.

different fragments written in various languages: Greek¹⁷, Turkish¹⁸ and even a Yiddish dialect¹⁹.

The presence of some passages with religious references written in Turkish with Cyrillic letters might indicate, on one side hieromonk's intention to address to the members of Orthodox, Turkish-speaking communities, on the other side that the area this copy of *Divan* was supposed to circulate in was very large.

This modality of rendering the phonemes of one language by using the graphemes of another one was well known and present in the Romanian Principalities. We have to mention that up 1816, the year when this hand-written copy of the *Divan* was issued, within the Balcanic area a large series of *karamanli* books²⁰ had been into circulation. They are texts written in Turkish, with the Greek alphabet. Up to this date only in Bucharest had been printed 3 *karamanli* books (1701, 1768)²¹.

The Turkish notes written with Cyrillic letters present on the last leaf of the hand-written copy of the *Divan* preserved in the Romanian National Archives – very much alike other texts in Turkish rendered in alphabets other than the Arabian one that circulated on the Romanian Principalities' territory mainly starting with the second half of the 18th century – may be included into what W. Haffening named "*Transkriptionstexte*"²². Starting from 1941 this term designates Turkish texts written in alphabets other than the Arabian one and after World War II they very much arose the interest of scientists, both historians and linguists.

In what concerns the fragment in Turkish we are discussing about, though the Cyrillic alphabet is quite improper in rendering Turkish phonetic system and many words are written together, in an random choice, which bring about several deciphering difficulties, we were eventually able to reconstitute it; it is the following:

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 159.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 161.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, f. I and 162.

²⁰ On the *karamanli* printings see Evanghelia Balta, *Karamanlidika. Bibliographie analytique*. Vol. I, II, Athens, 1987; vol III, Athens, 1997. On the documents writing in *karamanli* script in the National Archives of Romania see: Claudiu-Victor Turcitu, *Considerations sur les documents karamanlis des archives roumaines. Greek-Romanian Relations. Interculturalism and National Identity*, Athens, 2004, pp. 225-229.

²¹ C. C. Giurescu, *Livres turcs imprimés à Bucarest*, in „Revista Istorică Română”, 15 (1945), p. 276.

²² See: Haffening W., *Die türkischen Transkriptionstexte des Barthlomaeus Georgievits aus des Jahren (1544-1548)*, Leipzig, 1941.

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19. "ol günün birinci ki Cuma' a ertesinin aḥşamısı idi, ve kapılar kapalı iken, ol gireki havari onlar cem oldular Yahudileri korkusundan, geldi Isa ve ortalarına anlara dedi Selam sizlere.

20. ve bunu didikte ellerini ve eḡesini gösterdi anlaraö sayırtlar Rabbi' yi gördüklerine.

21. Isa yine didi anlara: Selam sizlere, nasıl ki Peder beni irsal itti, ben de irsal iderim sizlere.

22. Ve bunu didikte üfledi ve der anlara: alınız Ruh-ul-kudus!

23. Hangileri günahlarını aff' idersiniz, aff oluna ve hangilerin pay idersiniz, pay oluna.

24. Ve ana Toma ki on ikilerinden birisi idi, ki anı İkiz derler değildi anlar ile ol vakıt ki geldi Isus.

25. Derler idi lakin sayır, sayıtlar ana: Rabbi' yi gördük ve ol didi anlara: eğer ellerindeki mukların resmini görmesem ve parmağımı mukların resmine komasam ve elimi eğesine komasam inan getirem”.

<Translation into Romanian>

19. „Deci fiind seară în ziua aceea într-una din sâmbete, și ușile fiind încuete, unde erau ucenicii adunați pentru frica Iudeilor, venit-a Iisus și a strătat înmijloc și a zis lor: Pace vouă.

20. Și aceste zicând, a arătat lor mâinile și coasta sa. Și s-au bucurat ucenicii văzând pre Domnul.

21. Deci, a zis lor Iisus iarăși: Pace vouă: precum m-a trimis pre mine Tatăl, și eu trimit pre voi.

22. Și acestea zicând, a suflat și a zis lor: Luați Duh Sfânt!

23. Căroră veți ierta păcatele, se vor ierta lor, și căroră le veți ținea, vor fi ținute.

24. Iar Toma, unul din cei doisprezece, care se zice Geamăn, nu era cu dânșii când a venit Iisus.

25. Deci au zis lui ceilalți ucenici: Am văzut pre Domnul. Iar el le-a zis lor: De nu voiu vedea în mâinile lui semnul cuielor și de nu voiu pune degetul meu în semnul cuielor și de nu voiu pune mâna mea în coasta lui nu voiu crede”.

We have also succeeded in identifying it, as representing the excerpts numbered from 19 to 25 (inclusively) from the 20th pat of John's Gospel. It relates the moment when after Jesus was killed Apostle Thomas asks for and receives the proof of His Resurrection.

Therefore it represents a text with religious content, probably written in Turkish to make Orthodox knowledge to Turkish speaking individuals. It is also very suitable specimen which reveals the pronunciation particularities of the Turkish spoken by a non-Turkish.

To conclude, the fact that the hand-written copy of *Divan* deposited in the National Archives reproduces the entire text includes this copy within the “scholar circulation” of the *Divan*. It's also worth mentioning that, contrary to the general tendency, manifested along the centuries that had made readers and clerk to pay greater attention to the first book, due probably to its vivid dialogue, rendered into a familiar language, (the dialogue between the Wiseman and the World), the author of this copy, Ghenadie advised in 1816 “to read mainly book 2 up to the end, since you will find out much beauty so that to put your life in order”²³.

²³ Central Historical National Archives of Romania , mss. 805, f. VI.

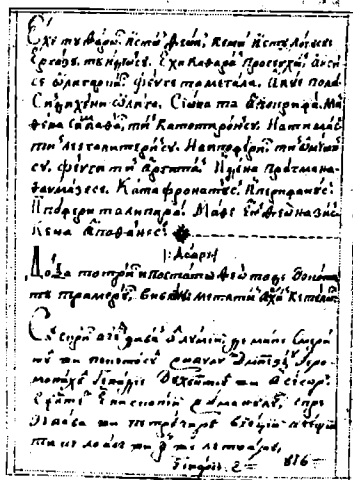
ANNEX 1

**The allegory “The Wiseman and the World”-
miniature on the hand-written copy of *Divan*
in the National Archives of Romania**



ANNEX 2

<Translation of the text from Greek with Cyrillic letters into Greek>



„Έχε το θαρρος εις τον Θεον, και μη εις του λογου σου. Εργασου το ιδιον σου.

Έχε καθαρον προσευχην. Ας εισαι ολιγαρκής. Φευγε τα μεγαλα.

Ακου πολλά, συστυχαίνε ολιγά. Σιωπά τα απόκρυφα.

Μάθε να συμπαθάς τον κατώτερον σου. Να τιμάς τον μεγαλύτερόν σου. Να υποφέρης τον ομοιόν σου.

Φέυγε την αργήταν. Ουδενά πράγμα να θαυμάζεσαι. Καταφρόνα τους υπερηφανούς.

Υπόφερε τα λυπηρά. Μάθε εν

Θεώ να ζής και να αποθάνης.

Δόξα του τρισυποστατω Θεω, τω Δεδώκοτι του τριμερούς μετά την αρχήν και τέλος.”

<Translation into Romanian>

“Crede în Dumnezeu, nu te crede pre tine. Fă cele de hirise. Curate îți varsă rugile. Cu cele puține te slujește. De cele multe fugi. Multe ascultă. Grăiaște puținele. Taci cele tăinuite. Învață-te celor mici. Cruță, adecă faci-ți-să milă. Celui mai mare urmează. Poartă-te cu cei deopotrivă.

Ridică zăbăvile, adecă nu fii lenș. Nemică te mira. Probăzește pe cel mândru.

Liapădă cele rele. Învață-te lui Dumnezeu a trăi. Învață-te a muri”.