

The Creation and Evolution of the Ecclesiastic Domain in Moldavia (the 15th-18th centuries)

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The Metropolitan Seat of Suceava, the bishoprics of Roman, Rădăuți and later of Huși, and the monasteries of the Moldavian Country have enjoyed a particular attention from the scholars. However, the creation and evolution of the ecclesiastic domain at the East of the Carpathians have been only partially researched by now, in general works¹ regarding the Romanian medieval states' economic and social life. Thus, the greatest number of these articles has confined itself to the enumeration of a certain monastery's estates², without analyzing the manner in which these monastery domains were created and the social relationship that caused them or that were generated by them. Beside, several scholars have intended to argue their own opinions³ regarding their times' social realities by the appeal to history. Thus, in order to explain the agrarian question in Romania's modern period, the historians 'proved' that the 'feudal' property was created by the buying up of the free community's estates by the nobility and church. Finally, some other scholars have attempted to analyze the medieval social and economic phenomena in the light of the period when they lived and were educated and which they have had to/have wished to legitimate⁴. It is about the Marxist historiography, which has justified the existence

¹ See N. Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic al localităților și monumentelor medievale din Moldova*, Bucharest, 1974, *passim*.

² Arun Pumnul, *Privire rapede preste doua sute șese-dzeci și șapte den proprietățile așa numite moșii manăscirești, den carile s-au format mareșul fund relegiunariu al Bisericii dreptcredincioase răsăritene din Bucovina*, Cernăuți, 1865; Isidor Onciul, *Fondul religionariu gr. or. al Bucovinei. Substratul, formarea, desvoltarea, administrarea și starea lui de față*, "Candela", 1885; Em. Grigorovitz, *Dicționarul geografic al Bucovinei*, Bucharest, 1908; Dimitrie Dan, *Mănăstirea și comuna Putna. Cu două apendice*, Bucharest, 1905, p. 19-25 [hereafter: Dan, *Putna*]; idem, *Mănăstirea Sucevița. Cu anexe de documente ale Suceviței și Schitului celui Mare. Cu ilustrațiuni*, Bucharest, 1923, p. 107-118 [hereafter: Dan, *Sucevița*].

³ Radu Rosetti, *Pământul, sătenii și stăpânii în Moldova*, I: *De la origini până la 1837*, București, 1907, *passim*; Victor Slăvescu, *Istoricul Fondului bisericesc din Bucovina. Cu Prilejul lucrării d-lui I. Nistor*, "Economia Națională. Revista economică, statistică și financiară", XLII, 1921, no 8-9, p. 215-225.

⁴ V. Costăchel, P. P. Panaitescu and A. Cazacu, *Viața feudală în Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV-XVII)*, Bucharest, 1957; Barbu T. Cămpina, *Ideile călăuzitoare ale politicii lui Ștefan cel Mare*, "Studii, Revistă de Istorie", X, 1957, no 4, p. 57-66; Alexandru I. Gonța, *Satul în Moldova medievală. Instituțiile*, Bucharest, 1986; C. Cihodaru, *Forme de proprietate feudală în Moldova*, "Studii și Cercetări Științifice", VI, (1955), no 3-4, p. 1-30; idem, *Brașiștile și apariția rezervei senioriale în Moldova*, "Analele Științifice ale Universității «Al. I. Cuza»", new series, *Istorie*, III,

of the Communist political regime's existence through condemning all the forms of property, regarded as the origin of the social injustice, and inventing 'the feudal exploitation' and 'the class struggle' in Wallachia and Moldavia. It was thus a justification for the Communist collectivization, by substituting 'the private property' with 'the common property' over the earth and 'the means of production'. Moreover, according to the Marxist historians, the boyars and monasteries were blamable for 'the brutal exploitation of the masses' and for the decay of the cities⁵, because of the buying up of the earth inside of the boroughs.

The absence of a study purposely devoted to this matter has induced an incomplete and erroneous image of the political, social and religious life of Moldavia from the end of the 14th to the middle of the 18th century. For this reason, this article would emphasize the creation and evolution of the ecclesiastic domain by the setting up of the Phanariot regime.

During the middle ages, the Church in the Romanian Principalities enjoyed a special attention on the part of the clergy, but also of the princes, boyars and free holders. All these beneficients endowed Christ's Houses with cult objects – relics, *odăjdii* [= clergy vestment], airs, liturgical books, crosses, icons, silver ware, bells, candlesticks, chandeliers, wine, frankincense, oil, and so on –, money, animals and especially estates. Some of the monasteries also received partial or total privileges from the central power, for the wealth that represented the monastic synod's domain. All these donations and privileges for *res ecclesia* caused the specific features of each monastic domain.

In the Romanian medieval space, the Church's domain was created and developed especially because of the donations offered by the great founders.

1957, 1-2, p. 27-54; D. Ciurea, *Precizări în problema evoluției marii proprietăți feudale în Moldova în secolele XVII-XVIII*, "Studii, Revista de Istorie", 22, 1969, no 1, p. 3-19; N. Corivan, I. Grămadă, *Despre gospodăria feudală în Moldova în prima jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea pe marginea «Catastihului de samile tuturor manastirilor de taradin leat 7250 până la leat 7251»*, "Studii si Materiale de Istorie Medie", V, 1962, p. 257-277; A. V. Boldur, *Biserica în timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare. Cu prilejul împlinirii a 460 de ani de la moartea marelui voievod*, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", LXXXII, 1964, no 7-8, p. 717-729; V. Mihordea, *Relațiile agrare din secolul al XVIII-lea în Moldova*, Bucharest, 1968; N. Grigoraș, *Instituțiile feudale din Moldova*, Bucharest, 1971; idem, *Imunitățile și privilegiile fiscale în Moldova (de la începutul statului până la mijlocul secolului al XVIII)*, "Revista de Istorie", 1974, no 1, p. 55-77; Ștefan Ștefănescu, *Relațiile sociale în raport cu proprietatea funciară în țările române în sec. XII-XVI*, in *Stat, societate, națiune. Interpretări istorice* (ed. by Nicolae Edroiu, Aurel Raduțiu, Pompiliu Teodor), Cluj-Napoca, 1982, p. 161-172; Pavel Blaj, Ioan Iosep, *Contribuții la cunoașterea braniștilor din Bucovina*, "Suceava", XVII-XVIII-XIX, 1990-1991-1992, p. 90-104.

⁵ N. Grigoraș, *Din raporturile târgurilor moldovenești cu mănăstirile în epoca fanariotă*, "Studii și cercetări istorice. Buletin al Institutului de Istorie Națională «A.D. Xenopol»", X, 1941, no 1, p. 15-26; idem, *Proprietatea funciară și imobiliară a meseriașilor, negustorilor, boierilor și mănăstirilor din orașele moldovenești. Regimul și rolul ei (sec. XV-XVIII)*, "Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie «A.D. Xenopol»", VII, 1970, p. 83-105; idem, *Proprietatea funciară a orașelor moldovenești în timpul orânduirii feudale și evoluția ei*, "Studii și Cercetări Științifice. Seria Istorie", XII, 1961, no 2, p. 213-232.

Indifferent whether the princes, boyars or hierarchs raised or renewed a foundation, they also had to assure it with the means of its durability and of the accomplishing of the purpose for which it had been raised⁶.

The development of the ecclesiastic domain occurred also because of the tiny founders' and benefactors' donations. These latter were the princes or the princesses, boyars and/or their women, monks and priests, free holders and even the serfs of the monasteries. However, the tiny founders were usually relatives or friends of the great founders⁷.

Many of the tiny founders were also hierarchs or monks responsible with the *metanie* [= rosary] in the monastery that they endowed⁸. By such donations, they respected the Byzantine monastic canons⁹, offering their own *ocină* [= inherited land] to the monastic community that they belonged.

The most of the donations of the founders and benefactors originated in their right earnings¹⁰: inheritances, purchases, or exchanges. Then, the donations offered to the churches by the princes from the *ocine* of the princely domain belong to the same category¹¹. Nevertheless, it seems that these donations were temporary, being guaranteed only during the lifetime of the merciful prince, although the latter required their successors to do not injure his donation and made imprecations for this. The fact that the founder prince urged his successor on the see of Moldavia to confirm the donation almost in all the acts of donation and mercy proves that only these ones had the right and possibility to injure these princely acts concluded by their ancestors. It was for this reason that the Moldavian monks were constrained to demand for successive confirmations from the founder's immediate successors¹². By this kind of confirmations, the first founder's donation was sanctioned by tradition and oldness, so that the other princes did not dare to injure the ancestors' acts of mercy in order to do not fall under the founders' curse.

⁶ Arcadie M. Bodale, *Contribuții la istoria domeniului mănăstirii Putna de la constituirea sa până la reformele lui Constantin Mavrocordat (1466-1542)*, excerpt from "Caiete critice", new series, 6-7 (16-17), 2000-2001, p. 131-162 [hereafter: Bodale, *Contribuții*]; idem, *Semnificațiile actelor ctitoricești de pe Valea Suceviței*, "Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A.D. Xenopol"", XXXVII (2000), p. 37-50 [hereafter: Bodale, *Semnificațiile*].

⁷ Bodale, *Contribuții*; idem, *Semnificațiile*.

⁸ Bodale, *Semnificațiile*.

⁹ Nicodem Milaș, *Dreptul Bisericesc Oriental*, Bucharest, 1915, p. 547-553.

¹⁰ *Pomelnicul <mănăstirii Sucevița> no. 740 II ex 1863*, p. IIIv, în Dan, *Sucevița*, p. 182 [hereafter: *Pomelnic*].

¹¹ Bodale, *Contribuții*; idem, *Semnificațiile*.

¹² See *Documenta Romaniae Historica, A., Moldova* [hereafter: *DRH. A.*], III, Bucharest, 1980 (ed. by C. Cihodaru, I. Caproșu, N. Ciocan), p. 508-509, no 285; Mihai Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenesti de la Ștefăniță voievod (1517-1527)*, Iași, 1943, p. 243-245, no 48; *Moldova în Epoca Feudalismului, II: Documente slavo-românești (veacurile XV-XVI)* (ed. by D. M. Dragnev, A. N. Nikitici, L. I. Svetlicina, P. V. Sovietov; editor-in-chief L. V. Cerepnin), Chișinău, 1978, p. 264-265, no 83 [hereafter: *MEF*].

Then, the successive confirmations for an *ocină* or a privilege always conceal the fact that the right of possession over them was contested by other owners or by the princely servants, who many times violated them. This thing was also proved by the final formula of the charter that confirmed the monastery's possession over the estate or over a certain right of exemption or judging over its people. These formulae usually include interdictions over those that could injure the right acquired by the monastery through the princely mercy in the princely domain, the most common being: "[...] *Și altul să nu se amestece înaintea cărții domniei mele [...]* / And nobody would involve against my princely book"¹³. Sometimes these injuries of the monks' rights are also demonstrated by the penalties included in the charters against those that would involve in the monastery's possessions and would disregard the princely confirmation charter, such as "[...] *cine ar începe sfada sau pâra [...]* acela să plătească zavesca [...]" / he who would start the quarrel or the denunciation [...] would pay the *zavesca* [= fine]"¹⁴, "*vor fi de mare pedeapsa de la domnia mea* / they would be under great penalty from my princely dignity", "*vor da gloaba domniei mele* / they would give *gloabă* [= fine] to my princely dignity"¹⁵.

Sometimes, their rivals canceled this kind of donations from the princely domain offered by several princes when they the throne, in order to annul the memory of their enemies. We mention here the case of the monastery of Greci, which Prince Alexandru Lăpușeanu had endowed with the villages of Nicorești and Selicicani. However, by perpetrating a "secularization" *avant la lettre* of some of the Church's goods, Ion Vodă did not recognize the legitimacy of the donation acts done by his uncle, under the circumstances that the latter had been his rival for the throne of Moldavia. Thus, this prince confiscated the above-mentioned villages, probably restoring them to the princely courts that they had belonged to. However, Ion Vodă's successor, that is Petru Șchiopul, restored the village of Nicorești to the monks of Sfântul Nicolae de la Greci, and Iancu Sasu (1579-1582) confirmed them the village retroceded by his predecessor and restored the village of Selicicani on Bașeu¹⁶. Afterwards, invoking the heritage of the founder position from his father, Aron vodă (1591-1592; 1592-1595), rebuilt Sfântul Nicolae Monastery and endowed it with the villages of Averești and Rânzești (1594). On this occasion, he replaced the monks of Athos brought from Greci by Petru Șchiopu to his father's monastery with Romanian monks. The returning of the Romanian monks to Aron vodă's monastery was temporary, since Ieremia Moghilă (1595-1600; 1600-1606) listened the *jalbă* [=

¹³ DRH. A., I, Bucharest, 1975 (ed. by C. Cihodaru, I. Caproșu, L. Șimanschi), p. 23, no 16; *Documente privind istoria României, A. Moldova, veacul XVII, II (1606-1610)*, Bucharest, 1953, p. 133, no 163 [hereafter: *DIR. A., veac XVII*].

¹⁴ DRH. A., I, p. 58, no 40.

¹⁵ *Ibidem, passim*.

¹⁶ A. M. Bodale, *Ciitori și călugări de la mănăstirea Sfântul Nicolae (Aron Vodă de lângă Iași. Un episod al relațiilor eclesiastice greco-române la sfârșitul secolului XVI și începutul secolului XVII, in Interferențe româno-elene (secolele XV-XX)* (ed. by Leonidas Rados), Iași, 2003, p. 31-45 [hereafter: Bodale, *Ciitori*].

petition] of Zografu Monastery's community and restored its *metoc* [= succursal monastery]. For this, the prince was still constrained to contest publicly Aron vodă's position of founder, a fact that was effected in the extraction of the villages of Averești and Rânzești from the monastery's dominion, since they were not confirmed to the Athonite monastery on May 25, 1606¹⁷. The prince's decision was caused among other reasons by his friendship with the first Basarab on the Moldavian throne and by the Moghilă family's repugnance to Aron vodă. The official recognition of founder position to Aron vodă for Sfântul Nicolae Monastery in Tarina occurred no later than during the rule of Ștefan II Tomșa, the enemy of Moghilă family, when the *Aroneni* regained the villages of Averești and Rânzești¹⁸.

The donations offered from the princely domain to the Church by the princes' wives and daughters, who held *moșii de hrană* [= supporting estates] only during the lifetime, were at the limit of justice. In order to be perpetual, these donations had to be confirmed by the princes. It is the case of lady Ruxanda, Bogdan III's wife, who offered the village of Cuciurul in the county of Cernăuți, with all its *pricuturi* [= annexes], to Putna Monastery¹⁹. Since the village was princely²⁰, it would be taken from the monastery by Ștefan Rareș²¹, although the monks of Putna would redeem it from this prince for 400 Hungarian *galbeni* [= ducats]²² and it would be confirmed later by Petru Șchiopul²³. Then, it is also the case of a part of the domain at Volovăț, on which the Moghilă family raised the Sucevița Monastery. This territory had belonged to the *ocol* [= district] of the Badeuți and by the second half of the 16th century had been the *ocina* with which the Moldavian princes had endowed

¹⁷ Ioan Caproșu, Petronel Zahariuc, *Documente privitoare la istoria orașului Iași, I: Acte interne (1408-1660)*, Iași, 1999, p. 99-100, no 68.

¹⁸ Bodale, *Cititori*.

¹⁹ *DIR. A, veac XVI, III: 1571-1590*, Bucharest, 1951, p. 47-48, no 63.

²⁰ The fact that this village was not "*dreapta cumpărătură a mătușii domniei mele, doamnei Ruxanda* / the right purchase of my princely aunt, Lady Ruzanda", as Petru Șchiopul said (*ibidem*), is proved by the fact that those in Putna redeemed this village from the prince "*din banii mănăstirii* / from the monastery's money" (*ibidem, veac XVI, II: 1551-1570*, Bucharest, 1951, p. 19, no 17 and III, p. 47-48, no 63), "*ca să nu lase în pagubă pomenirea mătușii mele* / so that my aunt's memory be not damaged" (*ibidem, veac XVI, II, p. 47-48, no 63*), while Petru Șchiopul, the above mentioned lady's nephew, did not restore to the monks the redemption that they had vien, but only confirmed the village to them. We suppose that the village had been offered from the princely domain by Bogdan cel Chior to Ruxanda his wife, during her lifetime, in order to be *de hrană* [= for support] to her. Since it was gifted by this lady to Putna Monastery, it came under this monastery's possession, probably as long as the donor was alive. After her death, Ștefan Petrovici would retort it to the princely domain: "[...] *căci acest sat a fost al domniei mele* [...]" / because this village had belonged to my princely dignity" (*ibidem, veac XVI, II, p. 19, nr. 17*) or "*de vreme ce acest sat este drept domnesc de la întemeierea țării* / since this village is princely right since the foundation of the country" (*ibidem, veac XVI, III, p. 47-48, no 63*).

²¹ Petru Șchiopul justified his predecessor's gesture "*pentru niște cheltuieli ce a știut* / for several expenses that he knew" (*ibidem*).

²² *Ibidem, veac XVI, II, p. 19, no 17 and veac XVI, III, p. 47-48, no 63.*

²³ *Ibidem, veac XVI, III, p. 47-48, no 63.*

their wives and daughters in order to be of their *hrană* [= support]. Consequently, the villages of Sucevița and Novoselița (Movoileani) were probably gifted by Petru Rareș or by his sons Iliăș or Ștefan to his daughter/their sister Maria, as dowry. Once owners of these villages, Petru Rareș's daughter and her husband Ioan Moghilă achieved the state of protectors of the hermitage in the area. This position of lifelong owner over the mentioned estates made that Maria Rareș and *logofăt* [= chancellor] Ioan Moghilă²⁴ be considered also as founders of the monastery raised by their sons at Sucevița. The donation of Petru *Șchiopul* to Sucevița Monastery proves that these estates had not been for ages of the Moghilă family: "*am dat, și am miluit și am întărit nou ziditei mănăstiri [...] un sat din satele noastre care au fost drepte domnești [...], anume Sucevița [...] cu munții / I gave and I took pity and I confirmed [...] a village among the villages that had been right princely to the new built monastery [...], namely Sucevița [...] with the mountains*"²⁵. Whether the Byzantine foundation right was to be respected in its letter and spirit, then such a situation could cause the loss of the position of great founder by Gheorghe and Ieremia Moghilă. Thereof, we consider that such a right was not applied in its letter in the Romanian space. Nevertheless, the fact that this monastery was built by the Moghilă family on an estate temporarily under their dominion would allow that the state of great founders of Sucevița Monastery be achieved also by the princes when the above mentioned villages were to be restored to the *ocol* [= district] of Bădeuți. We consider that such a situation was difficult to be accepted by the Moghilă family's haughtiness, since its members not only exhibited their family's wealth and power, but also underlined their progeny from the ancient rulers of Moldavia. Consequently, in order to do not put the Moghilă family's state as great founders of this dwelling in danger and in the name of his friendship with it, the prince consecrated a situation *de facto*: the estates gifted to Maria Rareș during her lifetime and on which her sons built their foundation came *de jure* irrevocably in Moghilă family's and their monastery's possession²⁶.

The donations offered from the villages previously taken to the prejudice of the prince because of *hiclenie* [= faithlessness] are also at the limit of justice²⁷. This

²⁴ Studying the votive picture at Sucevița Monastery, Victor Brătulescu demonstrates the fact that the portrait of *logofăt* [= chancellor] Ioan Moghilă as pendant of lady Maria is represented immediately after the image of Metropolitan Gheorghe (Victor Brătulescu, *Portretul logofătului Ioan Movilă (monahul Ioanichie) în tabloul votiv de la Sucevița*, "Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei", XLII, 1966, no 1-2, p. 23-53).

²⁵ Teodor Bălan, *Documente bucovinene*, I: 1507-1653, Cernăuți, 1933, p. 88-89, no 32 [hereafter: Bălan, *Documente*].

²⁶ Bodale, *Semnificațiile*.

²⁷ Although the princes in the Romanian Principalities had the absolute right to confiscate the faithless boyards' estates, it seems that this right was enclosed in time even by the princes. Thus, under the circumstances of the struggles for the throne and of the rule's instability, the princes gradually and irreversibly crushed this privilege, since they regarded all those that sustained them unconditionally as faithful servants. Therefore, whether the wealth of such a right and faithful servant had been taken by a certain predecessor on the throne who had been one of their or of their

deed was caused by the fact that these estates were not a result of the donor's right acquisition, as the Church's canons and tradition demanded²⁸. Then, some of these donations were offered because of revenge and did not fulfill the condition to be perpetrated "*cu inima curată și luminată* / with pure and enlightened heart"²⁹. This is obvious especially beginning with the 17th century. Thus, under the circumstances of the gradual land irreversible crushing of the central power's right to take the *hicleni* [= faithless] boyars' estates to the princely domain, it occurred that the princes to aspire after the firmness of their measures through the endowment of the church with such an estates³⁰. Therefore, their gesture conceals these voyvodes' fear that a successor favorable to their enemies would revoke their measure.

parents' enemy, then the new princes usually revoked this decision, for all those that opposed to their enemies were "*slugi credincioase ale domniei și țării* / prince's and country's faithful servants"... thus, a boyard could very well be *hiclean* [= faithless] for a voyvode and the right and faithful servant for another. Thus it occurred that in the 16th century several confiscations of villages because of *hiclenie* [= faithlessness] be temporary and revocable. This phenomenon becomes general in time, especially beginning with the 17th century. This lack of lastingness of the confiscations of the ocine was probably due also to the fact that not all these measures were taken for the proved guilt, since several princes prove themselves greedy with regard to a certain boyards' wealth ("*Ion vodă [...] dacă a primit scaunul domniei, s-a apucat să adune aur [...] Dacă se afla pe undeva aur, se repezea și-l aducea la dânsul, căci era robul aurului* [emphasis mine]; *a lipsit chiar pe ostași de leafa lor* / Ion vodă [...] began to collect gold if he took the rule [...]. Whether there was gold somewhere, he hurried and brought it with him, because he was the *gold's slave*; he even deprived the soldiers of the their salary" (*Cronica lui Azarie, in Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV-XVI publicate de Ion Bogdan*, (ed. by P. P. Panaitescu), Bucharest, 1959, p. 149; see also vornicul Grigore Ureche and Simeon Dascalul, *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei până la Aron Vodă <1359-1595>* (ed. by Constantin C. Giurescu), Craiova, 1934, p. 157, especially under the circumstances of the princely domain's restriction.

²⁸ One should notice that the following advice was inscribed in a diptych of Sucevița Monastery, after the noting of the various holy fathers that had lived in this dwelling and previous to the mentioning of the its initial or later founders: "*dacă vrei să moștenești viața de veci, și să câștigi împărăția ceriului, și să fii scris în cărțile vieții, și să te mântuiești de munca de veci, să adaogi și să ajutori acest hram din dreptul tău câștig și din toată inima ta, cu dorința către Dumnezeu, ca să fie amintiți în vecii vecilor tătorii, și părinții, și frații noștri și tot neamul creștinesc, care au binevoit să se înscrie aici* / if you want to inherit the eternal life and to reach the Heaven's Empire and to be written in the books of life and to eternally be redeemed of your work, [then you should] add to and to sustain this devotion from your right income and from all your heart, with the will of God, so that the founders and the fathers and our brothers and the whole Christian people that have been willing to be inscribed here be mentioned for ever" (*Pomelnice*, p. 182).

²⁹ *DIR, A, veac XVII*, II, p. 141, no 177; p. 152, no 195; p. 154, no 197; p. 157, no 203; p. 165, no 214; p. 208, no 277 etc.

³⁰ We mention here the case of the village of Rânzești from the *ocol* [= district] of the borough of Bârlad, which Petru Șchiopul gifted to *postelnic* [= seneschal] Melestan (*ibidem*, *veac XVI*, IV: 1591-1600, Bucharest, 1952, p. 117-118, no 144 and *veac XVII*, vol V: 1621-1625, Bucharest, 1957, p. 185-186, no 255). In December 1593, Melestan the *postelnic* raised along with Loboda the *hatman* [= hetman] against Aron vodă (see N. Iorga, *Acte și fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor*, I, Bucharest, 1895, p. 134; *DIR, A, veac XVII*, V, p. 185, no 255), so that the new prince confiscate it because of *hiclenie* [= faithlessness] and put it again under the obedience of the court

Although the disinherited families made numerous requests to have their *ocină* and *dedină* restored, the church was ousted from such estates only seldom. Thus, although many of the *ocine* taken by the princes and offered to the *ocoale* [= districts] or to other boyars were acquired by the *hicleni*'s relatives from other princes, who proved to be more merciful with regard to the sins committed by these disinherited parents, the most of the endowments to the monasteries were confirmed by the subsequent princes to the Church. This fact was caused both by the clergy's influence in the period's society and the fear of the curse in the donation charters.

Sometimes, the Church's endowment could be done "*rău și fără cale* / unworthily and well for nothing". First, it is about the donations of several villages bought by their founders *cu împresurare* [= with enclosures]. Thus, according to their wish to consolidate their own monasteries, the great founders – princes, great boyars, or hierarchs – abused of their social position and dispersed boyars' or free holders' money, taking their *ocine* by force in order to donate them to these dwellings. Also because of the fear for curse, these badly done donations were often inflexible. Anyhow, when the new princes were declared enemies of these founders or when the free holders done an injustice brought clear proofs that they had suffered such an injuries, the princes restored the *ocine* taken without justice.

Then, the great founders but also the monks set up documentary fakes in order to legitimize their pretensions over several estates. Sometimes, these acts were set up in the state chancellery. The most of the times, the *ocine* achieved by such a documents were gifted to the Church³¹.

Another mean of injury was the non-restoration to the new owners of all the acts of the estates exchanged, a fact that allowed the monks to emit new pretensions over them. Thus, on June 17, 1712, Nicolae Mavrocordat confirmed to Sucevița Monastery to take the *zeciuială* [= tithe] from the village of Nahoreni and from a half

in Bârlad initially, and later gifted it to his monastery in Tarina Iașilor (*ibidem*, *veac XVI*, IV, p. 117-118, no 144; Ioan Caproșu, Petronel Zahariuc, *op. cit.*, p. 62-63, no 39). In exchange, it seems that the Moghilă family, the enemy of Aron vodă, took the village of Rânzești from Sfântul Nicolae Monastery and restored it to *postelnic* Melestan's family. This conclusion could be inferred from the fact that under Ieremia Moghila (*ibidem*, p. 99-100, no 68) and Radu Mihnea (*DIR, A, veac XVII*, IV: 1616-1620, Bucharest, 1956, p. 261-263, no 318 and p. 296-297, no 363) the village is not mentioned among the monastery's *ocine* anymore. It would be only on February 14, 1623, when Ștefan Tomsa II would confiscate it from the *postelnic*'s successors and restore it to the monks in Tarina (*ibidem*, *veac XVII*, V, p. 185-186, no 255).

Then, it is the case of the village of Mândrești, which belonged to Petru Hudici, but the ancestors of the Moghilă family lost probably because of *hiclenie* [= faithlessness] so that it became princely (*ibidem*, *veac XVI*, III, p. 223, no 275; Gh. Ghibănescu, *Surete și izvoade. Documente slavo-române*, XIX, Iași, 1929, p. 177-178, no 127 [hereafter: Ghibănescu, *Surete*]; Bălan, *Documente*, II: 1519-1662, Cernăuți, 1934, p. 37-38, no 9). Nevertheless, the Moghilă family demanded the "*rău și fără cale* / unworthy and good for nothing" village (see below, our explanation) in order to donate it to Sucevița Monastery.

³¹ Bodale, *Semnificațiile*.

of Hrusovăț³², although these estates were not possessed anymore by the monks for almost one century³³.

Another method to enrich the Church and to develop the monastery *ocoale* [= districts] was the purchase of estates. The great founders or the monks could do this. It was usually done with justice, without that the buyers be done an injustice or be constrained to sell their *ocine*. The most eloquent example of such a founder is Stephen the Great. However, in other cases the great founders constrained the owners of several *ocine* in the surroundings of their foundations to sell them in order to endow the monasteries.

A particular case was the purchase done by the princes, who enjoyed the right of *dominum eminens* when they were interested in an estate. Thus, the estate's owners sold their *ocină* to the prince and received the proper price, without that these sales be considered as being under pressure and oppression.

Sometimes, the monasteries also bought by themselves the estates they were interested in. At other times, the monks redeemed the *ocine* offered as donation from several founders that were not entitled to offer them, so that "*a nu pieri pomenirea ctitorilor lor* / the memory of their founders do not disappear". It is the case of the *ocine* gifted well for nothing and without justice by the ladies and their daughters for *hrană* [= support] from the princely domain. Then, there are the *ocine* injured by the boyard or clerk great founders for the endowment of the dwellings raised for the height of God.

In order to buy these *ocine*, the Church and the great founders did not usually come up against the owners' opposition. This fact is due on the one side to the needs of these sellers for money, but especially to their wish to contribute to the putting into execution of deeds to please God, by facilitating the holy churches to acquire wealth, so that the latter are able to accomplish the vocation for which they had been built. The diptychs probably mentioned several sellers as benefactors of the dwellings for which they consented to alienate their estates. Several owners also accepted the offer made by the princes, boyars and Church's hierarchs to sell their *ocină* consequent to the wish for becoming close to those or to avoid their enmity.

The sales of estates by the monks also established the extension of the monastery domain. The importance of these sales was extremely scanty, for the Romanian medieval law did not entitle the Church to sell its estates³⁴. This was because these *ocine* did not belong to the monks, but to the monastery, and their dissipation was regarded as similar to the larceny in the church³⁵. This also explains

³² *Din tezaurul documentar sucevean. Catalog de documente (1393-1848)* (ed. by Vasile Gh. Miron, Mihai Ștefan Ceaușu, Gavril Irimescu, Sevastița Irimescu), Bucharest, 1983, p. 216, no 653.

³³ *DIR. A., veac XVII, III: 1611-1615*, 1954, p. 195, no 294.

³⁴ N. Milas, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

³⁵ *DRH. A., XIX: 1626-1628* (edited by Haralambie Chircă), Bucharest, 1969, p. 144-148, no 121 and p. 149-153, no 122; N. Iorga, *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor* [hereafter: Iorga, *Studii*], V, part I, *Cărți domnești, zapise și răvașe*, Bucharest, 1903, p. 97-98, no 91; Teodor Codrescu, *Uricariul*, VII, Iași, 1875, p. 23.

the central power's interventions to protect the monastery goods, for the sale of the monastery estates could put in danger the accomplishment of the mission for which the dwelling had been raised. The synod had only the right to administer these *ocine* in order to feed itself and to endow the God's House in which it lived. For this reason, the Church sold very few estates and it was exclusively due to the needs and poverty that these monasteries came to, because of the wars and their taxation³⁶. However, according to the local custom, the monks needed to sell the fathers' estates, without answering for these sales to anyone.

Sometimes, the monks allowed several great boyars to redeem the fathers' *ocine* that had been gifted to the monasteries by their relatives. These redemptions were possible only because of these high officials' importance in the country's

³⁶ We mention the case of Putna Monastery, which sold Novoselița and Stroiinții between 1664 and 1665 (Bălan, *Documente*, III: 1573-1720, Cernăuți, 1937, p. 12, no 7 and p. 18, no 12) in order to pay the imposts to the prince. We notice the fact that these two villages were the only estates sold by those of Putna.

It was afterwards, in 1661, when Humor Monastery, "*agiugând la mare nevoie și greutate întru acea vreme, întâmplându-se mare foamete [mare] în țară, rămăind la toată lipsa hranei și rămăind și viile pustii, au socotit decât să să răsăpască soborul și decât să rămăie viile pustii, mai bine să caute din moșiile sfintei mănăstiri un loc undeva să îl cheltuiască să-și prindă hrana și cheltuiala vie. Și așa s-au socotit cu toți frații până la unul și au scos la vânzare o seliște, anume Strahotinul, ci iaste pe Jijia, în ținutul Hârlăului [...]. Deci au socotit să nu piardă de tot moșia, ci să ia și bani și alta în preț și să le dea și o bucată de loc să fie de treabă mănăstirii. Deci așa au socotit la tocmală pentru o sută de galbeni bani gata, și 50 de matce și a patra parte din sat de Derzsca / coming to great needs and precariousness in those times, occurring great famine in the country, coming to the complete lack of food and the vineyards deserted, it was decided that, than the people be dispersed and the vineyards be deserted, it would be better to look among the holy monastery's estates for a place where to spend so that to eat and to spend alive. It was thus that all the friars considered and put for sale a *seliște* [= fireplace], that is Strahotinul, which is on Jijia, in the district of Hârlău [...]. So, they decided to do not lose the whole estate, but to take both money and another one included in the price and to have a place given to be for monastery's necessities. So, they decided to negotiate for 100 ducats in cash and 50 *matce* [= river beds] and the fourth part of the village on Derzsca" (Biblioteca Academiei Române-București, Ms. rom. nr. 111, *Condica Sfintei mănăstiri Humorului cu toate uricile moșiilor și a daniilor ctitorilor*, p. 49r, no 6). Although the buyer, that is Dumitru Nacul vistier, pays everything (*ibidem*, p. 49, no 6 and p. 50, no 7), his successors restored in 1691 the estate of Strahotinul on Jijia to Humor Monastery (*ibidem*, p. 50r-51v, no 9). This conclusion was due to the fear for curse (*ibidem*). The same fear made that Vasile Talpa left the *seliște* of Glodeni to those of Humor on his deathbed in 1672, although he had bought it from them (*ibidem*, p. 43-43v, no 3). Then, in 1680, being in "*mare nevoie / great need*" the same monastery sold 2 *fălci* [= ancient unit of measure] of vineyard at Cotari (*ibidem*, p. 78, no 6). These successive sales attest the difficult situation of Humor Monastery in the second half of the 17th century. However, the fear for the fears in the charters manifested by the buyers but also by the sellers made that the monks make efforts and succeed in regaining of these estates by the monastery.*

At other times, the monks used to sell their monastery's *ocine* in order to repair their deteriorated dwelling.

political, social and economic life, the right of *protimisis* being still invoked³⁷. Usually, when a dwelling came without justice in an estate's possession, the monks sold it so that the legal owner did not disinherit them. In this case, the former owners had only few chances to regain their fathers' *ocine*.

Although the monastic synods were not able to sell their estates, they found means out in order to cover the pressing financial needs. Thus, they resorted to the practice of *orândă*³⁸, which had the advantage to bring liquidities to the monasteries, although it deprived them of several rights (the tithe, the boyard right). The leasing of several monastery estates was caused only by the existence of those leaseholders interested in them and not by the impossibility for the monastery to administer them³⁹. The custom of leasing the monastery estates by the monks became general in the 18th century. This custom provoked numerous losses to the Church, so that several princes were constrained to take measures to prohibit the practice of *orândă*. Despite this, because of the princes' instability, and of monastic synods' need for liquidities, the mentioned measures did not produce any expected result, so that at the middle of the 18th century almost all the monastery estates were 'sold' to several leaseholders. At the same time, the monasteries 'produced' liquidities also by transforming the obligations of several monastery villages in a money donation⁴⁰.

One could conclude that the cattle sales brought important revenues to the synod and sometimes surpassed the incomes achieved through leasing⁴¹. This face was due on the one side to the great number of cattle that could be reared on the monasteries' *braniște* [= fenced-in districts], and on the other side to the high price of the cattle in Moldavia⁴².

The exchanges of *ocine* also caused the creation and evolution of the ecclesiastic domain. At the beginning, they were done under the founder's patronage⁴³, but after their death, all the monasteries took advantage by themselves

³⁷ Thus, the Moghilă family redeemed the village of Verbia from Voroneț Monastery. The settlement had been selt by their nephew Dumitru, *părcălab* [= chief magistrate of a city] Vascan Moghilă to Avram the monk, and this latter gave it those of Voroneț (*DIR. A, veac XVI*, III, p. 193-194, no 247 and p. 228-229, no 279).

³⁸ Ioan Bogdan, *Sămile mănăstirilor de țară din Moldova pe anul 1742*, "Buletinul Comisiei Istorice a României", I, 1915, p. 235-236.

³⁹ In the case of Sucevița, it resulted from the fact that the leased villages either were settled in the nearby of the monastery (Horodnic), or disposed of Sucevița's *metoace* [= succursal monasteries], because of a greater concentration of contiguous villages (Ibănești) or of a particular economic importance (Mândrești and the mobile bridge on the Siret river).

⁴⁰ I. Bogdan, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² Thus, the monks of Sucevița achieved 50 lei from saling of five cattles, meaning the same price that they achieved from the lease of the most important monastery estate, that is Mândrești with the mobile bridge on the Siret river (*Ibidem*).

⁴³ Thus, Bishop Gheorghe Moghilă had in view the consolidation of Sucevița's landed hinterland. For this reason, on June 20, 1589 the hierarch of Rădăuți exchanged (Bălan, *Documente*, I, p. 110-111, no 44) the village of Stanilești in the Hotin district with the village of Holovăț, settled in the

from the right to exchange the estates. Sometimes, these exchanges were also concluded from the initiative or with the assistance of the hierarchs with the *metanie* in that dwelling⁴⁴. These acts of exchange were concluded with the country's princes⁴⁵, great⁴⁶ or little boyars⁴⁷, freeholders and other monasteries⁴⁸. Usually, the estates exchanges with the prince were concluded by virtue of the prince's right of *dominium eminens*⁴⁹. Actually, the princes resorted to these exchanges in order to endow their own foundations and to restore the princely domain. Sometimes, the monasteries were constrained to exchange their villages because of several hierarchs' or great boyars' political, social and economic position, the latter intending thus to endow their own foundations and dwelling of *metanie*⁵⁰.

Usually, the exchanges were concluded with justice and both sides' will. Whether the estates' value was not appropriate and the exchange partners were disadvantaged and did not receive the price's difference for their *ocină*, these latter

vecinity of his foundation. Stanilești came under the power of Sucevița in the times of Aron Vodă (MEF, II: *Documente slavo-românești (veacurile XV-XVI)* (ed. by D. M. Dragnev, A. N. Nikitici, L. I. Svetlicinaia, P. V. Sovetov, editor-in-chief L. V. Cerepnin), Chișinău, 1978, p. 358, no 116), a fact that allowed Bishop Gheorghe to exchange it one more time, on March 20, 1598, this time for the village of Solca (Bălan, *Documente*, I, p. 124-126, no 50). In exchange, Ieremia Moghilă did not follow his brother's effort to consolidate Sucevița's hinterland. Through the exchanges that he did and patronized, he intended to concentrate Sucevița's villages in the district of Hotin. This goal was not strange to the fact that many villages in the district of Hotin had belonged to his ancestors, that is Stanilești, Overcăuții, Lincova, Hrusevăt, Tuleatin, Nahoreani or Voronoviții. Thus, these villages along with the domain of Sucevița had to assure the military and economic base to the prince in order to return to Moldavia, in case that he would be removed from the throne. This is the only explanation for the fact that on November 23, 1605 Ieremia vodă exchanged an estate settled in his monastery's neighbourhood – it is about the Southern part of the village of Dornesti on Suceava river with five eighths of Hrusevăt and one eighth of Tuleatin in Hotin (*ibidem*, II, p. 62-63, no 19). At the same time, Sucevița was guided to exchange the village of Noscova in the district of Soroca with Nahoreanii of Toader Moghilă (*ibidem*, p. 62-63, no 19). The Moghilă family's philo-Polish politics, the fact that the *ocine* of Hrusevăt, Tuleatin and those in Nahoreani brought only a scanty income to the monks (*DIR. A., veac XVII*, III, p. 195, no 294), and also the date of the exchanges, that is November 23, 1605 lead us to believe that the prince became cautious consequent to the war against Mihai Viteazul.

⁴⁴ See Bodale, *Contribuții*, p. 150.

⁴⁵ Bălan, *Documente*, I, p. 160-161, no 74; V. A. Urechia, *Miron Costin-Opere Complete*, I, p. 214-215, no 7.

⁴⁶ V. A. Urechia, *op. cit.*, I, Bucharest, 1886, p. 214-215, no 7.

⁴⁷ *DIR. A., veac XVII*, V, p. 352, no 464.

⁴⁸ *DIR. A., veac XVII*, V, p. 317-318, no 420; Bălan, *Documente*, I, p. 192, no 94.

⁴⁹ Thus, several princes endowed their own foundations by 'infringing' those of Sucevița's possession rights. For instance, this is the case of Ștefan II Tomsa, who confiscated the village of Solca (nowadays, the commune of Arbore) from the Moghilă family's monastery and gave it to his own foundation from Solca (Bălan, *Documente*, I, p.160-161, no 74). In order to do not come under the incidence of the curse and to avoid the Divine punishment, the prince indemnified the synod on the Sucevița Valley by offering it two *fâlc*i of vineyards at Cotnari, a silver chalice, 700 Hungarian *zloți* and the villages of Stăniilești (*ibidem*) and Verbia (V. A. Urechia, *op. cit.*, p. 214-215, no 7).

⁵⁰ *DRH. A.*, XIX, p. 592, no 433.

could invert the exchange with the support of a new prince, to whom they had to prove that they had suffered from the coercion and injury of those that urged them to give their villages⁵¹. Many times, the monks concluded these exchanges in order to remove their needs, since the monasteries were constrained to give better *ocine* for worse ones, but receiving money for the value difference. Consequently, these exchanges were a masked form of selling of the monastery *ocine*. In other words, the local custom was avoided so that the synod received liquidities and escaped the dwelling of prejudice⁵².

At last, the extent of the monastery *ocoale* [= districts] was appointed also by the *împresurări* [= enclosures]. The economic value of the claimed piece of place established the most of the enclosures of boundaries. Sometimes, they could be caused also by the lack of the ancient borders or by the modification in time of the natural – the variations of the brooks' and rivers' flows – or artificial borderlines, such as the physical disappearance of the borderlines – trees, prickles, osiers. When the villages disappeared and became *seliști* or changed their names, the news monks did not know where the former estates had been – or did not want to know and – “*cu urice drepte* / with right charters” but “*fără cale și fără dreptate* / worthless and without justice”, demanded villages that had the same name with those of the former monastery estates⁵³. Also with the aid of the ancient charters and *drese* [= documents] of the monastery, one could detect cases when the monks demand for *ocine* that had been possessed by their monastery, but which the monks before them had sold or changed without delivering all the estates' acts to the new owners⁵⁴. The prince confirmed some of these enclosures, but the most of them were unmasked and the monks were regarded as remained by the country's entire law.

At the same time, one could also notice several enclosures of whole estates through the agency of false acts. Through these fakes, set up in monasteries or even in the princely chancellery, the monks intended to acquire estates of other owners. The most important enclosures of this kind were concluded over the princely *braniște* [= forest], with the founders' and monks' purpose to make a border around their monastery. Among the Moldavian monasteries, it was only Putna, Tazlău, and Neamț who had original charters for these *braniști*. Although they had acts for their *braniști*, these monasteries asked for confirmations also from the princes that succeeded on

⁵¹ DIR. A., *veac XVII*, III, p. 195, no 294; Bălan, *Documente*, II, p. 62-63, no 19; Dan, *Sucevița*, p. 115, no 25 and note 10; N. Iorga, *Studii*, V, p. 254 and p. 411; see also Bălan, *Documente*, I, p. 103, no 41.

⁵² DIR. A., *veac XVII*, III, p. 187-190, no 285 and no 288.

⁵³ Thus, Humor Monastery attempted to acquire the village of Stroinți belonging to Putna Monastery through the agency of a charter delivered for one of its village with the same name, but which was dispersed and became a deserted place (see Bodale, *Contribuții*, p. 147-148).

⁵⁴ This is the reason why the saling acts of several *ocine* specified that the village's most ancient charters had been given on the buyer's or changing partner's own hand, and that whether other *drese* would appear, “*sa nu se fie în samă* / to do not take into account”. It seems that the method of enclosure by preserving the estate's ancient acts was very usual for those times.

the monastery founders' throne, because these estates had belonged to the princely domain and the less merciful princes could cancel the donations. The precedent that monasteries received *braniști* and the custom that the monks received confirmation for them from other princes induced also other monasteries to ask for such a *braniști* with no justice and on the bases of false charters. The successes gained by these encouraged later that all the monasteries in the mountain area attempt to make protected border around them. Then, some enclosures of estates were carried out by the monks on the prejudice of other monasteries, but also of the boyars' and freeholders' estates, especially when the laymen had no direct descendants⁵⁵.

When the monastic dwellings achieved enclosure estates, several synods changed the villages received by their monastery with enclosure with other monks⁵⁶. By these means, the clergy rendered difficult the legal owners' endeavor to regain the *ocine*, while the monasteries earned important wealth.

On other occasions, the monasteries also suffered enclosures from the side of the great boyars, Church's hierarchs and rival monasteries. Although these enclosures were confirmed by several hostile or not informed princes, this kind of losses were usually temporary, because the injured monks asked for their justice from other princes.

Created through donations, purchasing, exchanges or enclosures, the monastery domains had a particular extension and importance in Moldavian economic, social, political, and cultural life. Their creation caused the relationship between founders and monasteries, between monasteries and the people on the domain and, last but not least, the relationship between the country's religious institutions.

Translated from Romanian by Șerban Marin

⁵⁵ Dan, *Sucevița*, p. 129-130, no 24; Ghibănescu, *Surete*, XII, p. 19, no d.

⁵⁶ *DIR. A, veac XVII*, V, p. 317-318, no 420; Bălan, *Documente*, I, p. 192, no 94 and p. 238, no 134, II, p. 145-146, no 71.