

Însemnări de pe manuscrise și cărți vechi din Țara Moldovei [Notes from manuscripts and old books from Moldavia], I: 1429-1750 (a corpus edited by Ioan Caproșu and Elena Chiaburu), Iassy, Demiurg Printing House, 2007, 665 p.

During the Middle Ages the manuscripts and books were treated as long lasting objects due to the fact that they were expensive and many of them represented church ornaments and looked upon as sacred.

This mentality allowed the scholars to register collective or family events as marginal notes, thus the followers would learn from their forefathers' experience. True, the notes have a stronger emotional component than other sources, but the advantage is that they mediate the contact with the daily life, they illustrate the contemporary perception on the on going events and reveal the mentality of the community, and thus the notes are a genuine "collective journal" of Romanian's history. In fact most of these notes offer unique information for all historians preoccupied with Middle Age or especially with thorough knowledge of the historical evolution of the Romanian Countries. Thus, the books were the first "civil status registers" from the Romanian history because on their pages the owner wrote down the main events (birth, marriage or death) of his life.

Sometimes, due to the owners' notes the books are genuine deeds of testament, of sale-purchase or pawning. However, the value of the notes from the manuscripts and old books is given by the fact that they catch political aspects (the relations between the Romanian Countries and the Ottoman Empire, the foreign occupation regimes, the theft of territories or political advices for the followers), social aspects (robberies, slavery, taxes, conflagrations or outbreak of infectious diseases), economical aspects (currency, prices, monetary traffic, historical metrology, some ruler's economic policy, crafts, labor system, communication way, means of transportation and periods of starvation or abundance), military aspects (conflicts within the Romanian territory), cultural aspects (donations of liturgical books, scientific knowledge, categories of scholars and books owners, copiers, books' price and circulation or inducement to learn), or collective or individual mentality.

At the same time, the notes often are the only information on natural phenomena that occurred on Romanian soil (earthquakes, eclipses or natural disasters) and the notes contain many elements of chronology – essential in clearing up some aspects from the Romanian's history. This publication is also one of large interest for the linguists preoccupied with the history of Romanian language and its particularities, especially those phonetic and lexical emerged from the different origin and education of those who wrote these notes.

Finally, this category of sources provides the theologians interested in Romanians' religious life or in reconstitution of the Romanian religious and moral rules, with numerous documentary resources. Even though numerous attempts to publish this category of sources were registered, it had been published only in local or regional publications, in catalogues or in papers related to history of books. Considering that the prior editions are connected to the area of preservation of the manuscripts and old books

containing this kind of notes, the scientific research of the mentioned sources was limited.

To elaborate such a documentary corpus with notes on manuscripts and old books is a complex work and implies a great effort, essential for all historians, philologists and theologians interested in the Middle Ages. Thus, the publication of a documentary corpus of this category of sources was expected with interest by the academic world for many decades. The editorial event that fulfilled these expectations took place in July 2008, at *Demiurg* Publishing House when the first volume of the single documentary corpus (hopefully not for long time) from Romania was published.

This paper, *Însemnări de pe manuscrise și cărți vechi din Țara Moldovei*, owes its publication mainly to the work and scientific punctiliousness of one of the most significant publisher of Romanian documents, Ioan Caproșu. His long experience in publishing Romanian medieval sources, its constant interest in finding these documents in Romanian and foreign private and public libraries allowed him to accomplish a new fundamental collection of documents. Thus, in order to allow the informed researchers to obtain a new complete and accurate image of the Romanian society until the Unification of the Principalities, the reputed historian used his experience in publishing medieval diplomatic documents to elaborate a corpus of old notes from manuscripts and old books.

Very well known are his laborious researches in archives and libraries. During 50 years an impressive number of such notes were gathered and systematized, most of them were mentioned in archival registers and inventories or published in registers, catalogues, publications and studies of history all over Europe.

This impressive effort was combined with the work of Mrs. Elena Chiaburu, famous researcher in the history of books, who made the documentary index. The result of this combination was a new collection of documents, extremely important for the history of the Romanians. Thus, the collections of medieval sources within the Romanian territory: chronicles, diplomatic documents and notes of foreign travelers, are completed. This ensemble of sources will be broaden with the publication of a corpus containing the ecclesiastical diptychs – which is also prepared by the reputed historian from Iassy for a long time – and of a corpus containing inscriptions.

This paper contains all the known notes from the manuscripts and printed books, which at a certain moment existed in Moldavia, regardless the language used for writing: Slavonic, Romanian, Greek, Polish, Russian, etc. The chronological limits of this edition are within the first known note from Eastern-Carpathian area written by the hermit Gavril Uric on March 13, 1429 and 1750.

Actually, the editors intend to carry further the mentioned collection pending the Unification of the Principalities in 1859. As a result, this collection provides the researchers with an extremely rich documentary material pertaining to the history of Moldavia and offers unique data on political, religious, social or private events, thereby enables not only the accomplishment of the historical information but also new scientific analysis.

At the beginning of the first volume of the corpus we may find a *Foreword* followed by a *Bibliography* and the list of *Șigles and abbreviations*. In the foreword the editor emphasizes on the impossibility to gather in this volume all the notes pertaining to Moldavia, considering that, unfortunately, numerous manuscripts and old books are not

in the scientific circuit. When these manuscripts and old books will pervade the scientific world an appendix for the documentary corpus where all the inherent omissions will be included will be made.

Further on, in chronological order, we may find all the known *Notes* foreign from Romanian or foreign funds and from publications pertaining to Moldavia within the period 1429-1750. Editors verified and completed the documentary data from the manuscripts and books catalogues from the last 30-40 years when it was required. Nevertheless, many sources from this category are inedited.

In the same time, for the manuscripts, besides the basic notes, the colophons have been reproduced because they enable the localization of the manuscripts in time and space and the detection of the motivation to be written, the name of the owners and of those who were involved in the writing process, the prices, etc. For all these notes are mentioned the material they were written on and the possible prior editions.

When the Romanian texts were reproduced after prior publications the editors did not intervene in the transcription, consequently it is recommended for the linguists to use them with caution. Under these circumstances the inadvertences of any kind have been marked at footnotes. The translations of the foreign texts were revised when it was required and this was mentioned in bibliography and footnotes, as well.

The publishing standards for the Slavic texts and for the index are naturally similar to those adopted for the collection *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, A series: *Moldova*, and the rules for transcription of the Cyrillic texts are the same as in *Monumenta linguae dacoromanorum. Biblia 1688*. One of the editors was involved in the publishing of these two collections as well.

Next we may find the *General Index*, where the voices were ordered alphabetically and the referrals were sent to the page number.

There is no doubt that this is one of the most important editions of published documents. The huge effort and dedication required for the research impose the work of Ioan Caproșu and Elena Chiaburu as one of the greatest accomplishments of the Romanian historiography, representing a remarkable scientific contribution with rich information indispensable for a proper knowledge of Moldavian history.

Thus, this edition is one of maximum interest for all historians studying the economic, social, cultural, religious and politic development within the Eastern-Carpathian area pending 1859.

Arcadie M. Bodale

Anton Coșa, *Catolicii din Moldova în izvoarele Sfântului Scaun (secolele XVI-XVIII)* [Die Katholiken aus der Moldau in den Quellen des Heiligen Stuhls (17.-18. Jahrhundert)], Iași, Editura Sapientia, 2007, 574 S.

Gegenwärtiges Buch ist die Veröffentlichung der 2004 von Herrn Anton Coșa am "N. Iorga" Institut für Geschichte verteidigten Doktorarbeit⁴. Diese unter Anleitung

⁴ Der Verfasser selbst präzisiert dieses in der *Einleitung* auf S. 9, Anm. 1.