



thrones of these countries of princes born there, even before Phanariot times – such as Mihnea III, Radu Leon, the Ghika family, Vasile Lupu – the numerous families that came from Constantinople to settle here, among which was the Cantacuzino family, as well as the frequent travels of church people, like Dositei Notaras or Hrisant Notaras, who came not only to get subsidies but also, even more, to search for a fulfilment of their political aspirations.”<sup>3</sup>

The princely court at Bucharest was, during the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, a welcoming host for three Patriarchs of the Greek-Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East, whose seat had been situated in Damascus since the 14<sup>th</sup> century: the first was Makāriyūs III Ibn al-Za‘īm (1647–1672) (henceforth, Patriarch Makarios), whose sojourn in the Romanian Principalities is the best known; the second, Athanasios III Dabbās, known to Romanian culture for his Arabic translation of Dimitrie Cantemir’s *Divan* and the books that he printed here, in Greek and Arabic, with technical help from St. Antim the Iberian and funds from prince Constantin Brâncoveanu; the third, Sylvester of Chios (1724–1766), whose sojourn in Bucharest was witnessed by the old church of St. Spyridon (demolished in Communist times and rebuilt in 1994, in the same shape and with some of the original decorative elements) and books in Arabic printed in Iași and Bucharest, very useful to the Levantine Christians.

The first Syrian patriarch whose presence in Bucharest is well documented, Makarios III Ibn al-Za‘īm, was elected to the seat of the Antiochian Church in 1647. In his journal, commonly known as *The Travels of Patriarch Makarios of Antioch to the Romanian Lands, Ukraine, and Russia*, his son, Archdeacon Paul (Būloṣ al-Ḥalabiyy), reported on all that he saw and heard in his travels, between 1652 and 1659, alongside his father and several Syrian priests and monks, in Moldavia, Wallachia, the Cossacks’ country, and Muscovy<sup>4</sup>. Born in 1627, in the fourth generation of Christian hierarchs in the Al-Za‘īm family, Paul was brought up in the Greek-Orthodox spirit and was anointed deacon in 1647, when he also became a secretary to his father. Endowed with an inquisitive and restless mind, Paul collected in his journal, as known, precious information concerning all aspects of the societies that he came to know: history, politics, customs, public and private life, ethnicity, feasts, architecture, language features, literature, music, etc.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Virgil Căndea, *Stolnicul între contemporani*, Bucharest, 1971, p. 115; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2014, p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> The passages that I quote henceforth (indicated by folio nos.) are part of the complete edition that I am preparing, together with researchers in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kiev, which is based on *Ms. Arabe 6016* of BnF (Paris), collated with 3 other manuscripts. This edition will be available in print in 2015, accompanied by an English annotated translation.

<sup>5</sup> See Ioana Feodorov, *Ottoman Authority in the Romanian Principalities as Witnessed by a Christian Arab Traveller of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century: Paul of Aleppo*, in *Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam, Proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Cracow, Poland 2004*, Leuven, 2006, p. 307–321; eadem, *Images et coutumes des Pays Roumains dans le récit de voyage de Paul d’Alep*, in *Tropes du voyage. II – Les rencontres, Colloque organisé par l’INALCO – CERMOM, Paris, 11–12–13 déc. 2008*, Paris, 2010, p. 221–246.

Out of the seven years that he was away from his See on this first journey, Patriarch Makarios spent almost four years in the lands of Wallachia and Moldavia. The Syrian travellers left Damascus on July 9, 1652, spent ten weeks in Constantinople and reached Romanian territories in January 1653 by way of Constanța, having sailed on the Black Sea. After spending more than a year in Moldavia and Wallachia, in June 1654 they crossed the Moldavian border heading for Kiev, and followed the road to Moscow. Back in Iași in August 1656, they remained in Moldavia a couple of months, and then left for Wallachia, where they visited the monasteries of Oltenia. They headed then for Bucharest, in 1657, where they spent nearly one year, with brief interruptions. The Antiochian Patriarch and his suite left the Romanian lands on October 13, 1658, by way of Galați, sailing again on the Black Sea, along the coast of Dobrogea and modern-day Bulgaria. They landed in Sinop in November, stopped for the winter and resumed their trip in spring, when they crossed the Anatolian Plateau and reached Damascus on July 1, 1659<sup>6</sup>.

The sojourn at the court of Mihnea III Radu in 1658 allowed Archdeacon Paul of Aleppo to compose memorable pages about the Wallachian court, the city of Bucharest, the changes brought about by the former prince's deposition and the investiture of the new ruler, and the events that led to the Ottoman armies' involvement in this process. Though Mihnea's name is only mentioned five times in the Arabic manuscript, on fol. 284v, 287v, 289r, 292v (twice), his story is reported at length, mostly on fol. 281r–292v.<sup>7</sup> Several passages concerning the political role that Mihnea III undertook after arriving in Wallachia were commented upon by Radu Păun, in two articles<sup>8</sup>, based on the Romanian version published in *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. VI, Bucharest, 1976. It is significant for our purpose in this contribution that Radu Păun declares Paul of Aleppo's journal „la source principale pour le règne de Mihnea”.<sup>9</sup>

I surveyed for this research all the passages that concern Mihnea III Radu, while my comments come from a new perspective, based on the direct access to the

<sup>6</sup> For details, see Basile Radu, *Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d'Antioche. Étude préliminaire. Valeur des manuscrits et des traductions*, Paris, 1927, p. 3–13; Ioana Feodorov, *Un lettré melkite voyageur aux Pays Roumains: Paul d'Alep*, “*Kalimat al-Balamand*,” *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines*, Beirut, 1996, no. 4, p. 55–62; Hilary Kilpatrick, *Journeying towards Modernity. The “Safrat Al-Batrak Makariyūs” of Būlus Ibn Al-Za‘im Al-Ḥalabī*, in “*Die Welt des Islams*”, XXXVII, 1997, 2, p. 156–177.

<sup>7</sup> A faulty and incomplete translation in English of the corresponding passages in the manuscript of Paul's *Journal* in the British Library (*OMS Add 18427*, *OMS Add 18428*, *OMS Add 18429*, and *OMS Add 18430*) was published in *Travels of Makarios, Patriarch of Antioch, written by his Attendant Archdeacon, Paul of Aleppo, in Arabic*, translated by Francis C. Belfour, London, t. II, 1836, p. 398–412.

<sup>8</sup> Radu G. Păun, „*Si Deus nobiscum quis contra nos?*” *Mihnea III: note de teologie politică*, in Ovidiu Cristea and Gheorghe Lazăr (eds.), *Național și universal în istoria românilor. Studii oferite prof. Șerban Papacostea la împlinirea a 70 de ani*, Bucharest, 1998, p. 69–100; idem, *Pouvoir, Croisade et Jugement Dernier au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: le vécu et l'invisible*, in Ivan Biliarsky (ed.), *Ius et Ritus: Rechtshistorische Abhandlungen über Ritus, Macht und Recht*, Sofia, 2006, p. 213–283.

<sup>9</sup> R. G. Păun, *Pouvoir, Croisade et Jugement Dernier*, p. 215, n. 6.

Arabic original<sup>10</sup>. Considered as a whole, the pages that refer to the short-lived reign of Mihnea III reflect the change in attitude of the Arab guests, who witnessed the „growth and decay” of his political ambitions. Another source resulting from the „common laboratory” of the two Syrian hierarchs, father and son, is the miscellany *Mağmū‘ laṭīf* completed by Patriarch Makarios around 1664<sup>11</sup>. In this work the Patriarch inserted passages of various lengths from the Greek texts that he acquired while travelling in Eastern Europe, among them an early version of the chronicle of the rulers of Wallachia, probably written on the basis of an earlier version that was granted the title *The Cantacuzino* (or *Anonymous*) *Chronicle* (*Letopiseșul* – or *Anonimul* – *cantacuzinesc*)<sup>12</sup>. By adding the information concerning Mihnea III Radu collected by Paul of Aleppo to that presented by his father we obtain a more comprehensive portrait of this prince, who left a strong impression on the Syrian hierarchs.

On their first sojourn in Bucharest, in 1657, Paul noted some details about the princely court, the churches and monasteries that Patriarch Makarios visited, as he always did.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the impressions below precede the events of 1658, when Mihnea III Radu was enthroned by force by the military power of the Sublime Porte, against the will of the Wallachian boyars and common people.

“<On the appearance of the city of Bucharest>

This city is very large. They told us that since olden times there were over there six thousand houses and that it boasts forty churches and monasteries. The famous river Dâmbovița flows through its centre. Then we went to the court, which is great, surrounded by a tall wooden fence. An older one was here, but the late Matthew-voivode had torn it down and built a new one, constructing wonderful

<sup>10</sup> All previous versions of Paul of Aleppo’s journal that are usually quoted (F.C. Belfour’s *Travels of Makarios, Patriarch of Antioch*; Basile Radu’s *Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d’Antioche*; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. VI etc.) give fragmentary or faulty translations of the passages included in my survey herewith. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian translation by G. A. Murkos, based on one manuscript preserved in Moscow, is virtually unknown to the great public, although a second version (printed in 2005 in Moscow) is currently available online.

<sup>11</sup> See Joseph Nasrallah, *Un manuscrit inconnu du patriarche Macaire Za’im d’Antioche († 12/22 Juin 1672)*, in *Notes et documents pour servir à l’histoire du Patriarcat Melchite d’Antioche*, Jerusalem, 1965, p. 105–122; idem, *L’oeuvre historique du Patriarche d’Antioche Macaire III Za’im († 12/22 Juin 1672)*, in “Bulletin d’études orientales”, Damascus, XXV(1972), 1973, p. 191–202; idem, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l’Église melchite du Vème au XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle*, Louvain – Paris, vol. IV, t. I, 1979, p. 87–127; Michel ‘Abraș, *The Manuscript «Mağmū‘ laṭīf» of Patriarch Makarios III Za’im (1647–1672)* (in Arabic), in „*Al-Machriq*. Revue de l’Université Saint-Joseph”, Beirut, 1994, p. 68, 175–196; Deacon George [Barbārī], *The Manuscript «Mağmū‘ laṭīf» of Patriarch Makarios (Ibn al-Za’im)* (in Arabic), in “*Al-Nūr*”, Beirut, 58, 2002, no. 4, p. 196–201; C.-M. Walbiner, *Preserving the past and enlightening the present. Makarios b. al-Za’im and medieval Melkite literature*, in „*Parole de l’Orient*”, 34, 2009, p. 433–441.

<sup>12</sup> See Virgil Căndeia, *Letopiseșul Țării Românești (1292–1664) în versiunea arabă a lui Macarie Zaim*, „*Studii. Revistă de istorie*”, 1970, 4, p. 675–678.

<sup>13</sup> The city of Bucharest is mentioned in Paul’s *Journal* roughly twenty times, in contexts connected to several major events that the Syrians witnessed.

buildings, which amaze and delight the minds. It is more beautiful and more enchanting than the court of Târgoviște.”<sup>14</sup> (fol. 281r)

In 1658 Patriarch Makarios and his suite witnessed the ordeal that the country had to withstand when Ottoman troops overthrew Constantin Șerban and installed in his place Mihnea III Radu (5 March 1658 – November 1659), who had sworn allegiance to the Sultan on 29 January 1658.

„When the vizier heard about this he became very angry, and first he sent [his men] to depose Constantin, the voivode of Wallachia<sup>15</sup>, as we mentioned before – that on the eve of the Feast of the Lord’s Baptism the news of his deposition arrived. Then [the vizier] granted the rule [of Wallachia] to one of the Emperor’s house<sup>16</sup>, named Mihnea, *i. e.*, Mihail, son of Radu-vodă.” (f. 284r)

Thus, Paul had been told that Mihnea III Radu was, as he claimed, the son of Radu Mihnea (d. 1626, ruled 1611–1616, 1620–1623).<sup>17</sup> However, other versions of the story state that he may well have been the son of Radu Șerban (prince of Wallachia in October 1601, July 1602 – December 1610, May – September 1611), or possibly that of another Wallachian ruler, Mircea Ciobanul. On the legitimacy of this supposed parenthood Paul of Aleppo does not say a word.<sup>18</sup> The *Cantacuzino Chronicle* states: „This Mihnea was originally a Greek money-lender. His father was called Iane the Deaf (Rom. “Surdul”), and he himself was baptized Franți. Thus, showing from a young age a propensity to follow Ishmael, Hagar’s son<sup>19</sup>, he ran away from his parents, went to Țarigrad [*i. e.*, Istanbul], and bowed in allegiance to Kinan-pașa, telling him that he was the son of Radu-voivode and the grand-son of Mihnea-voivode. And thus he spent his life with the Turks, around 40 years”.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, in Istanbul Mihnea, who was called Gioan (Ioan) bey<sup>21</sup>, had been a good friend of the Grand Vizier Kenan Pasha and his wife Atike, the Sultan’s own

<sup>14</sup> On the repair and construction work at the court in Bucharest see Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria Bucureștilor din cele mai vechi timpuri până în zilele noastre*, București, 1966, p. 71–73; Paul Simionescu, Paul Cernovodeanu, *Cetatea de scaun a Bucureștilor. Consemnări, tradiții, legende*, București, 1976; Teodor Octavian Gheorghiu, *Arhitectura medievală de apărare din România*, București, 1985, p. 216.

<sup>15</sup> On 5 January 1658.

<sup>16</sup> In the Arabic manuscript: *li-rağul min bayti l-malik*, „to a man from the Emperor’s house”. On the origins of Mihnea III Radu see Emilia Cioran, *Călătoriile Patriarhului Macarie de Antiohia în Țările Române, 1653–1658. Teză pentru licență în Istorie, Facultatea de Litere și Filosofie*, București, 1900, p. 241, note 1 (citing sources); Radu G. Păun, *Pouvoir, Croisade et Jugement Dernier*, p. 213, citing Al. Ciorănescu, *Domnia lui Mihnea III (Mihail Radu), 1658–1659*, in „Buletinul Comisiei Istorice a României”, XIV, 1935, p. 88–97, and *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. VI, Bucharest, 1976, p. 244, note 520; 260, note 612; 707.

<sup>17</sup> The information is repeated on f. 287v, see below.

<sup>18</sup> A. D. Xenopol states that „on the other hand, this parenthood [...] could only have been illegitimate”; see his work *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană*, vol. IV, Iași.

<sup>19</sup> Hagar the slave, mother of Ishmael (ar. Ismā‘īl), who is considered by the Muslims their Biblical ancestor.

<sup>20</sup> *Letopisețul cantacuzinesc*, Mihail Gregorian (ed.), in *Cronicari munteni*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1961, p. 172.

<sup>21</sup> Xenopol, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

daughter. According to the famous Turkish traveller Evliya Çelebi, Mihnea had enjoyed with them the status of an adopted son. However, brought up in the Greek language community of Istanbul, Mihnea „passed for a Greek, and this is what he was rightfully considered also by the Romanians, on whose heads he had fallen with his rule.”<sup>22</sup>

Paul reports on the new prince from the very beginning of the story: „He had lived for more than twenty years in the Emperor’s palaces, among Turks. No one [in Wallachia] doubted his faith. From what they told us, at the start of every month he would invite the priests to him, to consecrate holy water, to hear confessions and give the Eucharist. He always visited the churches, prayed without failure every morning and evening, and he had therefore become a very pious man, and an enemy of all who fought [without respite].” (f. 288r)

It is worth noting that there is no mention in Paul’s journal of this information, recorded in the *Cantacuzino Chronicle (loc. cit.)*: „And [in Istanbul] he was acting as if he was very faithful to the Turks. And they chose him as if they grasped him from their very hearts, and made him prince of Wallachia, for he had deceived them, saying that he would become a Muslim himself. And his mouth promised to do this, but in his bosom he reflected that if he succeeded in taking the throne he would rise against the Turks, beat them and become Emperor.”

To return to Paul’s report of the events of 1658 in Wallachia, „when this was ascertained, [the people] were very angry and the prince burst out with fury. Then the news came that the vizier had sent a *hatt-i şerif* to the Khan and the Tatars, to mount their horses and ride against Moldavia and Wallachia. Then the [Wallachian prince] hastily sent messengers to spread the news all over the country, so that everyone rises and leaves everything behind, fleeing to the mountains to take shelter from the Tatars, and they did accordingly. As a consequence, the people were very worried and villages were deserted – poor them, in that terrible weather, rich in snow! They were in a sorry and a pitiful state.”<sup>23</sup> (f. 284r–v)

„Then [Constantin] decided not to leave Târgoviște, but to face his enemies there. This counsel was not a good one. When he received the news that the Turks were advancing on Bucharest he sent orders to the troops that were there and they set fire to the entire city, alongside the court, and then the monasteries and the churches caught fire. He then received poor counsel again, they say, so that when the new ruler [Mihnea] arrived he would not find any place for his seat, where he could sit on the throne and the commoners and the troops could have presented themselves to him, to bow to him, for [Constantine] was afraid that the people would submit to that one, as had happened before.” (f. 285v)

„The Pasha entered Târgoviște, accompanied by prince [Mihnea], on Tuesday, during the [Great] Lent [...]. Then they returned to Bucharest, and the

<sup>22</sup> Xenopol, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

<sup>23</sup> Henceforth, Paul reports on the punishment campaign of the Tatars and Ottomans against the Romanian Principalities in February and March 1658.

Pasha ordered that Târgoviște be burnt down, together with its fence, out of spite against Constantine, who had set Bucharest on fire, the old [princes'] seat.” (f. 286r)

The destructions equally impressed Patriarch Makarios, who describes them in a dramatic passage in his work *Mağmū‘ laṭīf*, in terms that are very similar to his son's:

„The Tatars and the Turks made dreadful devastations in Wallachia, for they captured all the people they found, they stole all their belongings and burned down all the lands they entered, even the churches and monasteries. They killed a lot [of people], especially the old and the weak.”<sup>24</sup>

In his journal Paul of Aleppo continues as follows:

“Then Mihnea, the new prince, settled in his father's monastery<sup>25</sup>, *i.e.*, the Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Bucharest [Radu Vodă], which he fortified, and he began raising around it a double wooden fence with a soil mound in between, meant to strengthen them.” (f. 287v)

The following passage refers to prince Mihnea's official recognition by the Wallachians:

“Then the people and the troops started presenting themselves to him, to bow in allegiance and ask his forgiveness, for none of what had happened was their fault, but it was all provoked by their fear of Constantine. And he pardoned them. Then he said farewell to Fazıl Pasha<sup>26</sup>, and he gave the *seimens'* captain (Tk. *čawūš*) forty purses, for his service, and more than twenty purses to the *capujis'* captain (Tk. *capuği-başı*), and dismissed them too. Afterwards he sent letters all over the country, heralding his mercy and [will of] reconciliation, so that the fugitives return to their homes. [...] When the mercy and peace letters arrived from the new prince, everybody calmed down.” (f. 287v)

Mihnea's attitude towards the captives that were taken away by the Ottoman troops is interpreted by Paul and his father Patriarch Makarios as a good sign, proof of the new prince's future conduct as a good, wise ruler of his people.

“Then they all saw that peace and quiet had settled and that the Tatars had left with the captives, who were as many as seventy or eighty thousand: some even mentioned one hundred and fifty thousand captives. The prince redeemed from them many of those [captives], for he did not allow the Turks to take away not even one captive, except those that they had snatched secretly.” (f. 287v)

The story continues with a report on the measures taken by Mihnea III Radu after securing the allegiance of his people and military chiefs:

“Then the new prince sent [messengers] to threaten brutally the Magyars and their King, so that they allow the return of the Boyars that had been unwillingly

<sup>24</sup> *La Chronique de Valachie (1292–1664), texte arabe du Patriarche Macaire Za'im. Tawārīḥ wa 'aḥbār muḥtasira 'an 'afandīyyat al-'Aflāḥ. Introduction, édition du texte arabe et traduction française*, in “Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joséph”, Beirut, 1995, 52(1991–1992), p. 38 (in Arabic) and 64 (in French).

<sup>25</sup> This is the second time that Mihnea's parenthood is explained in these terms, see above.

<sup>26</sup> For sources on the relations between Mihnea III Radu and Fazıl Paşa, see *Călători străini...*, t. VI, p. 257, note 600.

taken away by Constantine, together with their wives, and all those who had fled with him from Wallachia, to let them return to their homes. For they had closed the passes and did not allow them to leave, because, as we were told, all the ways into the Hungarian lands consist in narrow passes guarded by citadels and bridges, obstructing both the way out and the way in. When they heard the prince's threats addressed to them, they started gradually letting them go. How often did I not go to Rucăr, where I was amazed at the many fugitive groups from the Hungarian lands, soldiers and others, who had escaped by untrodden paths! Between them and the Magyar army that stood guard a big fight was fought and many were killed. All those who returned and pledged allegiance to the new prince, he received kindly and allowed them to resume their office.

The prince kept with him three or four squadrons (Tk. *bayrak*) of Tatars, which he sent to stand guard at Rucăr, with two aims: first, so that the Magyars would be frightened of them, second, so that no treason would occur on the part of the Wallachians that stood guard, and allowing Constantin to move down swiftly from the Hungarian lands to the Wallachian territory and find him unprepared, for these were the rumours that circulated." (f. 287v–288r)

At this point in his journal Paul of Aleppo stops to recollect the events, numerous and troubled, that Patriarch Makarios and his suite had witnessed since they entered the Romanian Principalities:

„Here was everything that happened since we were in those countries: the events that occurred with Vasile-voivode, then his deposition, and after that the deposition of Stephen, as we shall report henceforth. Then Matthew-voivode died, and now Constantin was deposed and this new prince was enthroned, but even thus the issues were not finished yet." (f. 288r)

In these circumstances, Patriarch Makarios acted as before – he waited for things to calm down and then, putting his hope in God, he prepared, with his customary diplomacy, to meet with the new prince.

„Afterwards our father the Patriarch sent a letter to the new prince, bidding him good wishes, and he received it with joy, sending his answer to the Patriarch. The content was that he bears him great love and he is eager to meet him anytime. But that for the time being it would be best to stay in his quarters at Câmpulung Monastery until the Turks leave the court and peaceful times would come, and then he will meet him." (f. 288r)

Before this meeting, the Syrian travellers carefully enquired about the habits and behaviour of the new prince: Paul reports in a tone of surprise, but also admiration, on the processions that were organized by order of the new prince shortly after his enthronement.

“Then they told us about this new prince that on Palm Sunday he [ordered] that the Moscow rites be performed precisely, with much dedication and care, because he was very pious, humble, and devoted. [...] As to the day of the Palm

celebrations, he thought of what the [Russian] emperor did in Moscow<sup>27</sup> and he did exactly the same, especially since no other prince before him had ever acted this way. Hence he dressed the Christian soldiers in their most beautiful coats and came out with great ceremony. The Metropolitan of the country was riding a mule, in full canonical dress, holding the Gospels and the cross in his right hand, and the prince himself held the bridle. Left and right the house footmen advanced, while the princely horses trotted in front of them. He himself walked, accompanied by all the court dignitaries, each of them holding the bridle of his horse. Heavy rain started to pour and thick mud started to form. Nevertheless, they went around the whole city of Bucharest and returned to the monastery, where they completed the Mass.”<sup>28</sup> (f. 288r–v)

Paul obviously reports about the Palm Sunday celebrations organized by Mihnea III Radu from the reports of other eye-witnesses, since the Syrians were not there at the time. They arrived in Bucharest for the second time in April 1658 and they stayed there (with brief interruptions) for almost five months, *i.e.*, until 9 September 1658, the day of their departure for Galați, on their way home.

As soon as they reached Bucharest, the Patriarch and his suite presented themselves to the prince, who impressed them from the start: Paul paints a flattering portrait of him, as he was full of hope for the fulfilment of his father’s designs.

„We arrived in Bucharest on 28 April [1658] and they hosted us at the St. Sabbas Monastery. After Easter the prince sent an invitation to our father the Patriarch and we went to meet him. We presented to him an icon painted in Moscow, a large candle lamp and a mirror, among the presents that we still had with us. And he [the prince] ordered a daily grant [for the Patriarch]. All his speech and all his questions concerned the Holy Scriptures and matters of faith, so that we were very surprised by his words. He had a strong desire to meet [with the Patriarch] and converse with him all day long; therefore he moved him from St. Sabbas and lodged him in his own monastery.<sup>29</sup> Here the Lord’s mercy was seen, for we were hosted right [beside] the church in the centre of the monastery.<sup>30</sup> After the events that had happened in this country only the churches were still standing, due to their vaults being made of stone, and here they now lived. They told us that many cruel deeds had happened inside [the churches], for the Tatars and the Turks

<sup>27</sup> The Syrians had participated in the Palm Sunday celebrations in Moscow, in 1655, see Michael Flier, *Breaking the Code. The Image of the Tsar in the Muscovite Palm Sunday Ritual*, in M. S. Flier, D. Rowland (eds.), *Medieval Russian Culture*, II, University of California Press, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, 1994, p. 213–242.

<sup>28</sup> This passage was commented on by Radu G. Păun, stressing Mihnea’s intentions to impress his people, but also the Turks, see *Pouvoir, Croisade et Jugement Dernier*, p. 216–218.

<sup>29</sup> *I.e.*, the Monastery of Radu Vodă, see above.

<sup>30</sup> Ar. *Fī wasaṭ kanīsat al-dayr*, lit. „in the centre of the church of the monastery”. Considering the explanation in the following phrase, one may think that they were hosted inside the church.

had stopped here with the prisoners, right in the centre of the sanctuaries, and did abominable, forbidden deeds.” (f. 288v)

The Monastery that was called at the time Holy Trinity, according to its patron feast, had been built by Alexandru II Mircea (1568–1577) on a hill overlooking the Dâmbovița River. It was the most outstanding monastic establishment within the city of Bucharest. Altered by the Ottomans to accommodate a gunpowder storage facility in the summer of 1595, the building was defiled by Sinan Pasha’s soldiers, who drove their horses into the church and then changed it into a mosque.<sup>31</sup> The buildings were blown into the air by the Ottomans when they retreated before the armies led by Mihai Viteazul.<sup>32</sup> The monastery was rebuilt by Radu Mihnea in 1613–1614, to be known henceforth as „Radu-Vodă”. Paul had mentioned it before, when the Syrian delegation visited it for the first time:

„On Monday, the last day of August [1657], we went to a monastery devoted to the [Holy] Trinity, built by the late Radu-voievod [Mihnea], who ruled, in his time, both over Moldavia and over Wallachia. This is situated on the outskirts of the city, high on a hill. All around it there is a running river and waters, but you can only cross them on a wooden bridge. And when they slide it to the side, there is no way you can [cross]. It is a beautiful and delightful monastery, and its church is large, tall and very bright. It is as ornate and charming as possible, all painted inside. [...] We officiated Mass here and we ordained a priest and a deacon. This establishment depends on the Ivion Monastery, *i.e.*, the Georgians’ monastery, on the Holy Mountain [Athos]. An abbot and Greek monks are in charge of it, and they change every three years” (f. 281v).

Paul goes on with his report on Mihnea III Radu over several pages, careful, as usual, with the new prince’s attitude towards the Church, its hierarchs, and its rituals.

“On the fourth Thursday after Easter we put on our garments, by order of the prince, and we accompanied him on a great procession outside the city, in our canonical dress, holding candles, as was the ritual, for he never missed any of the Thursday processions.<sup>33</sup> We did the same on the fifth and the sixth Thursday after Easter. Every Thursday they walked out of the city, one side or the other, to a meadow, while the cantors chanted the *Paraklisis*. When they reached the place, they formed a large circle and placed two chairs in the centre, one for the prince and the other for our father. Then they spread a carpet in the middle [for our father] and he stood there, reading the customary prayers for rain or for rich wheat harvests. After it was done they returned, while the footmen [walked] in front of

<sup>31</sup> See Archimandrite Policarp Chițulescu, *Mănăstirea Radu Vodă*, Bucharest, 2009, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> This Romanian hero, who drove away the Turks from the country after this event, was granted a glorious portrait in Patriarch Makarios’s work *Mağmū’ latīf*, in the chapter that comprises the *Chronicle of the Romanian princes*.

<sup>33</sup> There should have been six of them, according to Radu G. Păun, *Pouvoir, Croisade et Jugement Dernier*, p. 217–218.

the prince, six on the right and six on the left, six of them Turks, wearing turbans embroidered with gold thread, and six Wallachians, wearing hats of red brocade. The prince walked both when going and when returning, with our father always on his right hand – strolling and chatting together. On the return trip [the choir] would chant the Resurrection canon until we reached the church of the monastery, and then we officiated Mass there.

On the Thursday of Ascension we officiated Mass in great splendour, and a large banquet took place afterwards. The same occurred the next Sunday, when a noble messenger was also present, who had been sent by the Ljach [*i.e.*, Polish] king to reach the [Ottoman] Emperor, at Edirne. He attended the service with deep devotion and we struck up a great friendship with him.” (f. 288v–289r)

Details about the ambassadors, messengers, and diplomats that the Syrian hierarchs met at court, in Wallachia, Moldavia or Moscow, are carefully recorded by Paul, as proof of the power and esteem that this or that prince enjoyed from other great rulers of Europe.

A special moment that Paul of Aleppo describes in minute details was the coronation ceremony that Mihnea-voivode prepared for himself at Bucharest, taking advantage of the presence of an Eastern Patriarch who, by anointing him as prince of Wallachia, strengthened his power as a ruler both in his country and before the Sublime Porte. This ambitious act was consistent with several others, meant to secure Mihnea III the recognition of his standing as heir of the political and spiritual missions of the Byzantine emperors of yore. Another such act was the insertion of the double-headed eagle in his seal<sup>34</sup>. It is worth noting that, back from Moscow, Paul describes this event, as well as other court ceremonies that he witnessed afterwards, in much more detail than he had done, for instance, when he reported on the enthronement of prince Constantin Șerban, on 13 April 1654.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> The double-headed eagle was first present in the portrait of Mircea the Old at Cozia and in the seal of the city of Argeș (17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> c.), see Emil Vîrtosu, *Din sigilografia Moldovei și a Țării Românești*, în *Documente privind istoria României. Introducere*, vol. II, Bucharest, 1956, p. 494–495. Mihai Cantacuzino (Șeytanoglu), Șerban Cantacuzino’s grand-father, also included it in his seal, see N. Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance*, Bucharest, 1935, p. 116. Mihnea III’s seal was described by Emil Vîrtosu in *Sigilii domnești rare din veacul al XVII-lea*, Bucharest, 1942, p. 4–5. This author later indicated that in the case of Mihnea III the double-headed eagle was influenced by the Austrian symbol, not by the Byzantine one (see his article *Tipare sigilare domnești din sec. XIX-lea*, in „Studii și cercetări de numismatică”, 1, 1957, p. 308, note 1). The symbol then appeared on the dinars that were struck by order of Mihnea III, as prince of Wallachia, see Dimitris Nastase, *L’aigle bicéphale dissimulée dans les armoiries des Pays Roumains. Vers une crypto-héraldique*, in *Atti del I Seminario internazionale di studi storici “Da Roma alla terza Roma”*, Roma, 1981, p. 359 and note 1. For the symbols chosen by Mihnea III Radu for his coins and his banner see N. Iorga, *Steagul lui Mihnea Vodă Radul în Muzeul istoric din Belgrad*, in “Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice”, S. II, t. 36, 1914, p. 532 and fol.

<sup>35</sup> Prof. Tudor Teoteoi complained about this scarcity of information: „Le cérémonial a commencé avec l’office divin, déroulé à l’église. Malheureusement, Paul d’Alep ne fournit pas de détails sur ce sujet [...]”, see *Origine romano-byzantine et valeur comparée d’un détail du cérémonial d’intrônisation des voïvodes roumains du Moyen Âge, selon le récit de Paul d’Alep (XVIIe siècle)*, in *Romanian Principalities and the Holy Places along the Centuries, Papers of the Symposium held in Bucharest, 15–18 October 2006*, Bucharest, 2007, p. 177–196.

Mihnea's anointment ceremony, on the Feast of Pentecost, definitely took place at the Holy Trinity (or Radu-Vodă) Monastery, where the prince lived and all major services were officiated, since the future Metropolitan church, dedicated to Sts. Constantine and Helena, was only going to be consecrated later, by Patriarch Makarios precisely, as Paul himself reports further on.<sup>36</sup> This story covers several pages – here are just a few relevant passages.

„On the Feast of Pentecost a great celebration occurred and a party like never before, because the prince had asked our father the Patriarch to crown him that day with an imperial crown, in the manner that the great imperial *Evhologhion*<sup>37</sup> specifies, giving him the blessing dedicated to monarchs, as customary. [...] After our father the Patriarch and the Metropolitan of the country dressed up, the Postelnic came, together with the Cămăraș, and asked their permission to enter [the sanctuary], then they placed on the [Holy] Table a sort of imperial crown from Istanbul, tall, similar to the Seljuks' head-cover, with the lower part inset with jewels and decorated with a large, tall panache, resembling flower stems, and decorated with feathers and various precious stones, which he had recently bought for two thousand dinars.” (f. 289r)<sup>38</sup>

Paul describes here the *cucă*, or the tall ceremonial hat, adorned sometimes with a panache made of ostrich feathers and jewels. Originally worn by the Turkish army commanders, this hat was adopted in the Romanian princes' dress, especially for enthronement ceremonies.<sup>39</sup> On an icon kept at Mount Athos, Alexander the Gentle, prince of Moldavia, wears a similar hat<sup>40</sup>, taking after the Byzantine emperors who imitated the fashion of the Seljuk sultans, called by Paul of Aleppo *al-Salāqiyya* (correct: *al-Salāḡīqiyya*, missing one consonant in the Arabic original<sup>41</sup>). Paul surely refers to the sultans of the Seljuk tribe, rulers of the *Rūm* Sultanate in Anatolia (1077–1307), a Turkish-Persian state that was established in territories conquered from the Byzantine Empire.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, this head-cover was

<sup>36</sup> Two other hierarchs accompanied Patriarch Makarios when he officiated this consecration service: Ignatius the Serb and metropolitan Stephen of Wallachia. Paul does not mention them – see Ovidiu Olar's article herewith.

<sup>37</sup> Ar. *al-'Afhūlūḡiyūn* < gr. *εὐχολόγιον*, “ritual book”.

<sup>38</sup> See the description of Mihnea's portrait wearing such a hat in N. Iorga, *Portrete și comemorări*, Bucharest, 1936, p. 102–105 (reprinted in *Scrieri alese. Cuvântari și comunicări rostite la Academia Română*, Dorina N. Rusu (ed.), t. I, Bucharest, 2008, p. 92–93). On the fur hat see also Dan Simonescu, *Literatura română de ceremonial. Condica lui Gheorgachi. 1762*, Bucharest, 1939, p. 265; Ana Dobjanschi, Victor Simion, *Arta în epoca lui Vasile Lupu*, Bucharest, 1979, p. 71.

<sup>39</sup> Corina Nicolescu states that it was usually matching the *caftan* or ceremonial coat, see *Istoria costumului de curte în țările române. Secolele XIV–XVIII*, Bucharest, 1970, p. 151.

<sup>40</sup> A paper by Dumitru Năstase, *Pălăria lui Alexandru cel Bun*, read in his absence at „Colocviile Putnei”, 13<sup>th</sup> edition, Bucharest, 7 March 2013, will soon be published in „Caietele de la Putna”.

<sup>41</sup> Here Georges Abramovič Murkos, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian translator of Paul's *Journal*, translates with some doubt: *golovnoj ubor selevkijcev (?)*, i.e., „the Seljuks' head-cover (?)”.

<sup>42</sup> Its capital was successively situated in Iznik, Konya, Kayseri, and Sivas.

ancient and granted great prestige in the Ottoman realm: Mihnea III Radu and other Romanian princes are shown in portraits wearing such hats.<sup>43</sup>

The following lines in Paul's journal comprise a very detailed report on the coronation ritual that took place at the Holy Altar, which reveals a combination of Romanian Orthodox practices and Byzantine ones, as requested by the prince. The ceremony culminated in the Patriarch's uttering of the phrase: „By the grace of God, Who at all times heals the sick and redeems the poor, the deeply devoted prince Mihail, son of Radu-voivod, is now elected to the princely throne.” (f. 289r)

This change in name, requested of Patriarch Makarios by the new prince – who would henceforth be known as Mihail Radu – was discussed at length from the perspective of its consistency with his imperial aspirations.<sup>44</sup> I would only mention that it was probably Mihnea (Mihail) Radu – who definitely had a say in the form of this sacrament – who insisted here on his blood connection to Radu Mihnea, a most glorious and cherished precursor on the Wallachian throne, who achieved for a brief time (1623–1626) the unity of Walachia and Moldavia by obtaining the Wallachian throne for his under-aged son Alexandru Coconul. As known, unity for the Romanians was also one of Mihnea III's goals; therefore, evoking one of the earlier promoters of the ideal was perfectly consistent with his plans.

Moreover, by mentioning this (presumed) ancestor at such an important moment – the coronation that he had carefully planned for himself – even the Antiochian Patriarch was feeling safer in officiating at this unusual ceremony, bearing in mind that Radu Mihnea, son of Mihnea II (1564–1601, also known as “Mihnea Turcitul”, *i.e.*, “the one who adopted the Turkish faith”), had been appreciated by the Ottoman authorities as one of the most valuable Romanian rulers for the Sublime Porte. During his long absence from the Antiochian See, Patriarch Makarios received news about threats and attempts, by hostile hierarchs of his own Church, to overthrow him (as mentioned in Paul's journal). Steering clear of upsetting the Ottomans and their allies was a constant concern for Patriarch Makarios III.

Paul also describes the banquet that was held after the coronation ceremony, in the vicinity of the Radu-Vodă Monastery, imitating the splendour of the Ottoman court (*toutes proportions gardées...*):

“He [the prince] had sent for and brought from Istanbul an enormous pavilion, which had cost twenty purses<sup>45</sup> – and it was absolutely splendid, with three golden canopies – besides the two pavilions that he already had. He pitched them all together, raising around them a wall, like a very tall partition, on a large

<sup>43</sup> See Nicolescu, *op. cit.*, illustr. CLXV–CLXIX.

<sup>44</sup> See Radu G. Păun, *Mihnea/Mihail. Câteva note despre strategiile patrimoniale ale familiilor domnitoare din Valahia, secolele XVI–XVII*, in „Arhiva genealogică”, VI, 1998, p. 89–94; idem, „Si Deus nobiscum quis contra nos?”, p. 69–100; idem, *Pouvoir, Croisade et Jugement*, p. 235–240.

<sup>45</sup> At the time ceremonial tents were bought most often in Istanbul: *e.g.*, *Condica de venituri și cheltuieli de la leatul 7202–7212 (1694–1704)* (ed. C. D. Aricescu, „Revista istorică a Arhivelor României”, București, 1878, p. 623) mentions a tent, bought there for the Court guests, which had cost 144 talers.

field before the Monastery gate. The river was running all around, as if this was an island separated [from the land], because he had them divert the running river through a moat alongside the Monastery wall, on three sides, and then he had them dig a pond where the water rushed forcefully and then spread all around. A beautiful meadow was thus formed, covered with sand and green grass. Around the [main] pavilion about seventy smaller tents were pitched, like the Turkish ones, all new, for his companions, dignitaries, and servants. [...] When we came out from Mass we all descended [to the meadow] and the entire army was lined up according to their rank, line after line, holding their muskets, prepared to walk ahead of him, from the church to the outer side of the monastery, and to surround the large pavilion. That same day a messenger arrived from the Hungarian lands, bringing back the cannons that Constantine had carried off when he had run to them, for the prince [Mihnea] had sent word and claimed them back, seeing that they were Wallachian property. And they feared him, so they returned them. When we reached the large pavilion and [the prince] stood at the entrance, they all came and blessed him once more. Then the cannons started to be fired, three times; and these cannons were fifty-three in number, for the Pasha had left [the prince] a lot of cannons, to help him. Among them were three iron cannons, each having seven mouths. The soldiers fired their muskets all at the same time, three times: the earth trembled and the air was filled with smoke. We could not hear each other's voice and could not see anything. That day they only served lunch in the afternoon." (f. 289r-v).

At this point in his story, Paul, who highly appreciated the knowledge of languages, seeing it as a testimony of intelligence, careful education, and nobility, airs his and his father's admiration for the Wallachian prince's many gifts:

"We were very surprised by this prince, for he would converse with the Ljach messenger and the Magyar one in their own languages, not requiring an interpreter, and Wallachian was his language, but he [also] knew Greek, Turkish, and Persian." (f. 289v)

The following report, on the consecration of the church dedicated to the Sts Constantine and Helena in Bucharest, is again an opportunity for Mihnea III (Mihail) to reveal his knowledge, this time, as to church rituals. The future Metropolitan cathedral was consecrated soon after the previously mentioned event, *i.e.*, right after Pentecost, on the Sunday of All Saints. Patriarch Macarios had already sprinkled holy water on the unfinished building in 1657, as Paul reported in the passage regarding their first visit to Bucharest:

"Then we went to the outskirts of the city, on a tall hill, where this prince [Constantin Șerban] had started to build a large monastery with a great church, delightful and wonderful, resembling inside the church in [Curtea de] Argeș, only it is made of brick, while in the narthex there are twelve round pillars, carved in one single piece of stone, to match the number of the Apostles. It has four very tall domes, and outside there are wide porches. The roofs are overlaid with lead: they

told us that they weighed around forty thousand *okas*. We made holy water and [the Patriarch] sprinkled it, as was customary, for it was not yet completed.<sup>46</sup> It is dedicated to Sts Constantine and Helena, in his [Constantin Șerban's] name." (f. 281r)<sup>47</sup>

In the summer of 1658 the Arab travellers were anxious to receive the prince's permission to depart, heading home: Paul repeatedly mentions his father's requests to Mihnea III (Mihail) Radu to assist their departure before the onset of bad weather conditions on the Black Sea. The prince's desire that the church be consecrated by Patriarch Makarios probably speeded up this holy service, although the building was not yet completed. Metropolitan Stephen of Ungro-Wallachia and the Bishops of Râmnic and Buzău also took part in this service.

"Then [the prince] started to complete the building of Constantin-voievod's monastery that was situated in this city, for it was not finished yet. He charged the Grand Postelnic to prepare everything necessary for consecration. Then he invited our father, and we prepared. We went to him on the Sunday of All Saints, we dressed in our ceremonial dress, then the prince came with his suite and entered [the church], and they started the litany. They brought Saints' relics from the church that was situated below this one<sup>48</sup>, on a platter that was born by our father on his head. The prince walked ahead of him until we returned to the new church; we walked around it and we went in. We then completed the ritual of consecration, according to the rites, and when the time came to consecrate the Holy Table they brought the icons of the four Evangelists, painted on four sheets of paper: they placed under each of these painted sheets, in each corner of the table, a little mastic, wax and marble [dust], previously boiled in a pot. The prince stuck them with his own hand and placed upon each of them a dinar, in each of the four [corners]. [The dinars] he took [from] the Protopapas. The first dinar was from Egypt, so the prince despised it and threw it away, telling the Treasurer to produce another: a Hungarian one, *i. e.*, one that belonged to the Christians.<sup>49</sup>" (289v)

We should note at this point that Paul, who rarely mentioned any enmity on the part of Christians towards anything Muslim, does not fail to note the prince's attachment to Church rituals, which forbid any non-Christian presence at the Holy Altar, or anywhere in church, for that matter. This comes as a new point in support of the Syrians' appreciation of this pious ruler of Wallachia.

<sup>46</sup> In Belfour's version an explanation formulated by the translator follows: "and consequently remained unconsecrated" (t. II, p, 375).

<sup>47</sup> For information on this church see especially I. D. Trajanescu, *Mitropolia din București*, „Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice”, 5, fasc. 20, 1912, p. 138–176; N. Ghika Budești, *Evoluția arhitecturii în Muntenia și în Oltenia. Partea a treia. Veacul al XVII-lea*, „Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice”, 25, 1932, fasc. 71–74, p. 63–65; N. Iorga, *Istoria Bucureștilor*, Bucharest, 1939, p. 74; Nicolae Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic al monumentelor feudale din București*, Bucharest, 1961, p. 241; Ion D. Ștefănescu, *Arta feudală în Țările Române. Pictura murală și icoanele de la origini până în secolul al XIX-lea*, Timișoara, 1981, p. 143–144.

<sup>48</sup> Probably from the church of the Radu-Vodă Monastery.

<sup>49</sup> See Virgil Căndea's commentary of this passage in *Sources byzantines et orientales concernant les Roumains*, RESEE, 16, 1978, 2, p. 313.

“When our father came out [of the altar] to sprinkle holy water on the church walls and pillars, [the prince] followed him, bearing a [long] brush<sup>50</sup>, and drew crosses on the walls, behind our father, with the [above-mentioned] brew: wonderful crosses that made us marvel, for he seemed to have consecrated in his life thousands of churches, as he knew and comprehended everything in detail. For, as we said before, he was truly an expert in holy books and works.<sup>51</sup>

After we came out from Mass the prince sat in a small tent outside the church, until [everyone] drank *raki* and liquors, and then we returned to the large pavilion for the banquet. [...]

[The prince] did not part with our father from morning till dawn. More often than not, he would ask him or talk to him, over lunch or dinner, about issues concerning the faith, and also many others.” (f. 289v–290r)

The proof of reciprocal respect, friendship, and intimacy between the prince and Patriarch Makarios (who, having placed the prince’s glorious hat on his head before the Holy Table, thoughtfully adjusted its panache) revealed in this long passage fully substantiate the hopes that the Syrian delegation had of the newly consecrated prince Mihail Radu, in terms of financial support for their ailing community back home. These hopes were in line with previous expectations from the other Romanian princes that they had met in these countries.

However, the political situation was not stable yet, and the new prince’s behaviour would soon become violent, when a new war broke out which required him – and here the Syrian chronicler is very careful in his report – to ask for the help of Ottoman troops, generating terrible troubles and bloodshed in the country.

“On the Feast of the Apostles we officiated Mass again and [the prince] took the Eucharist, for he was preparing to go to war and ride against the Magyars, together with the Tatar Khan, the Vizier, the Pasha of Silistra, Qadrī Paşa, who had been a commander (Tk. *çavuş*) of Seimens, and Ghica-voivode, the prince of Moldavia. [...] And this occurred because the [Wallachian] prince had learned that Constantine was not content to have escaped by fleeing, but he started gathering troops, and gathered more than ten thousand soldiers, with whom he had the design to come and throw himself on Wallachia, in the parts of Câmpulung, intending to do terrible mischiefs. He therefore sent [a messenger] and informed the Vizier about it, and the latter mounted his horse and prepared for war against them. He left the city of Edirne and went to Sofia, then to Belgrade, where he stopped. We were told that he had with him eighty thousand soldiers. [...] Consequently, Wallachians were very frightened, because news came that the Tatars were approaching, lead by the Khan, and they would cross their lands. The Magyars secured their borders and were preparing for war.” (f. 290r)

<sup>50</sup> Ar. *rumh*, litt. „spear”, „stick”, „pole”.

<sup>51</sup> See R. G. Păun, *Pouvoir, Croisade et Jugement Dernier*, p. 244, for comments on the political meaning that Mihnea III (Mihail) Radu attached to this ritual.

The Patriarch's desire to leave Wallachia in order to avoid the devastation and dangers of war – which he was well acquainted with, after his long sojourn in the Romanian lands – could not be fulfilled as quickly as he wished. Paul reports, as always, on the situation of the donations that they wished to obtain from Mihail Radu, as they were the main reason for their presence at the court of Bucharest, in spite of the perilous circumstances of the country.

“This new prince then promised to pay the debts that Constantine had left behind, the same way all new princes did, for each one, when taking the throne, would pay the debts of the prince who had ruled before him. This is what [Mihnea] had promised to our father the Patriarch, while asking him to pray to the Lord for his own guidance, that no war or trouble start, and he would be able to pay up. We stayed and we waited for this to occur, as well as other events. Constantine and his boyars had not allowed us to leave in their time, unless things got better [...]. This prince – poor he – was resolute about paying and letting us prepare [to leave], after he fulfilled all our needs according to our wishes, but he did not have the time, for the Turks, the taxes (Ar. *harāğ*), and the shortage defeated him, as well as the scarcity of revenue generated by the war devastations. He was in a terrible difficulty because of this. We were sorry for him and pitied him, especially when we saw how the Vizier's *capijis* were coming by his palace day and night, urging him to go to war.” (p. 290r–v)

Yet in late August and early September the Syrian hierarchs were terrified by the bloody events at the Wallachian court. On 4 September 1659 several of the Sultan's messengers, together with many Turkish merchants and Wallachian boyars – among them, Treasurer Pârnu Vlădescu, Postelnic Eustratie Leurdeanu and Vornic Preda Brâncoveanu – were treacherously killed at a banquet convened at court, under the accusation of treason (Rom. *hainie*). In Paul's own words, “we did our utmost to leave this wretched country”.<sup>52</sup>

The opinions that Patriarch Makarios held upon his departure from the Romanian Principalities must have been quite different from those that he had when hosted at the Courts of Wallachia and Moldavia before the autumn of 1658. Certainly, the hope that Ottoman power could be overcome through an alliance of rulers of the Central and Eastern states of Europe would stay alive in the hearts of the Middle Eastern Christians of Syria and neighbouring provinces. As Virgil Căndea put it, „there was a belief that fed, at least for two centuries, the hopes of Greek political men within the Turkish realm, *i.e.*, that – to have the best chance – the fight for freedom would have to start from Moldavia and Wallachia. The idea was supported by several elements: the two countries enjoyed autonomy at home, alongside all the advantages of an economic, political, and military nature that came from it; they were neighbours with the great powers that had risen against the

<sup>52</sup> These events are graphically reported by Paul of Aleppo on f. 291r–v of the Paris manuscript.

Ottoman Empire, Austria and Russia, whence military support was expected to come; the Romanian people harboured the same hope of liberty; after the warlike traditions of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the new century had opened with Mihai Viteazul's heroic feats, and the flame of battle, ready to be rekindled by Matthew Basarab, had shone for a while during the rule of Mihnea III."<sup>53</sup>

When summing up the latter's conduct, Patriarch Makarios still draws an admiring portrait of him in the chronicle of the Wallachian princes inserted in his historical miscellany *Mağmū' laṭīf*:

"This prince (Tk. *bey*) ruled the people very wisely, for he was an honest man, decent, generous, and fair, who could stand any mischief or fault. Finally they fed him poison and he died. He had been on the throne for two years."<sup>54</sup>

The news that Mihnea III (Mihail) was dead reached the Patriarch in 1660, in Damascus, by means of some traveller or messenger<sup>55</sup>; therefore, he may have referred to the fact that Mihnea had died the next day after he was present at a banquet thrown by the exiled prince, Constantin Șerban, on April 5, in the city of Sătmar (Transylvania).<sup>56</sup> The Patriarch was still interested in events in the Romanian Principalities after returning home: some connections may be inferred from correspondence and local events, such as the one involving Makarios's nephew and messenger, called in Russian sources Peter Ivanov (or Hristophoros), who, having been captured by the Pasha of Silistra while on his way to Moscow, was released by request of prince Mihnea III (Mihail) Radu, who claimed that Peter was his servant.<sup>57</sup>

I shall conclude by expressing my conviction that the opinions that Paul of Aleppo and Patriarch Makarios III Ibn al-Za'im formed of several great rulers of the Romanian Principalities whom they met in 1653–1658 – including Mihnea III Radu – deserve a special survey.<sup>58</sup> This will definitely contribute to drawing a more precise portrait of these historical figures of the Romanian lands, through the detailed information provided by these Syrian hierarchs, who were attached to another Church that was a heir to Byzantine spirituality – the Greek-Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East.

<sup>53</sup> Virgil Căndea, *Stolnicul între contemporani*, p. 114; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2014, p. 132.

<sup>54</sup> See Ioana Feodorov, *La Chronique de Valachie*, p. 64–65.

<sup>55</sup> Mihail Radu was on the throne until the end of 1659, when, after the war against the Turks had started in Wallachia, he was forced to flee to Transylvania.

<sup>56</sup> Another version of the story is that Prince Rákóczy ordered Mihail Radu killed.

<sup>57</sup> Peter spent eight months in Wallachia and then left for Moscow with a Wallachian embassy. See the entire story in Konstantin A. Panchenko, *Pravoslavnije arabi-osvedomiteli rossijskogo posol'skogo prikaza v XVII v.*, in *Arabskie strani zapadnoi Azii i severnoi Afriki. Istorija, ekonomika i politika (Arab, West Asian and North African Countries. History, Economics and Politics)*, t. 4, Moscow, 2000, p. 308–309.

<sup>58</sup> This survey should be based on the complete Arabic edition of Paul's *Journal* mentioned above, in note 4.