IS LITERATURE A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY?[1]

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The present contribution aims to infer a few things as to the 18th century society living in the Romanian Principalities putting together the literary production of both Romanian and Greek expression. The corpus it is based on was selected according to criteria of being representative and original. Newly discovered items are an integral part of it.

Keywords: 18th century, literature, Greek, Romanian Principalities.

It is not just a mannerism to reconsider the Phanariot[2] epoch in its literary demeanour under a new perspective prompted both by the fact that new items were discovered and can be added to its canon and by a certain kind of interpretation of which we assume the risks.

Putting side by side some Romanian and Greek 18th cent. pieces of original literature written on Romanian soil, which is in fact the aim of the present article is to ultimately take them as a signifier for the epoch and its characteristic social and cultural phenomena.

The literary production of the 18th cent. linked to the Phanariots, a political class of the Ottoman Empire is generally known as Greek. The Greek literary historiography has adopted the Phanariot literature as a phase of its national history without many arguments and aright so taking into account the Byzantine tradition and the linguistic expression, which is in fact essential for defining any kind of literature.

The Romanian literary historiography is adamant about the expression of national literature which is vernacular Romanian. The prestigious series of literary histories and dictionaries of the Romanian literature[3] has helped build up a quite clear image of the 18th cent. developments and their literary consequences.

[1] Read in its initial form as a paper for a section of the 12th Congress of South-East European Studies in 2019 the present article has been enriched as the ever-growing Phanariot canon proved true to itself and thanks of course to some of the discussions that followed the presentation.

[2] See Jacques Bouchard, « Depuis quand existe le terme Phanariote », http://sfb-episteme.de/_media/Verantaltungsmaterialien/C06/Workshop_Regelwissen/Bouchard.pdf (sept. 2015) and also Nir Shafir, Phanariot Tongues : the Mavrocordato Family and the Power of the Turkish Language in the Eighteenth century Ottoman Empire in *Oriente Moderno*, Brill, 2021. There the Phanariots are restrictively and tendentiously defined as "the only non-Muslim of the Ottoman Empire who claimed power by virtue of their command of the Turkish language".

[3] Of which let us quote Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria literaturii românești*, 1929, George Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*, Bucharest, 1941, Dumitru Micu, *Istoria*

The criterium of being written on Romanian soil is debatable but arguable. The nomination by the Ottoman Porte of hospodars of Greek origin in the Romanian Principalities at the beginning of the 18th cent. replacing the princes with a more local heredity did cause major changes in the local society with all sorts of consequences. One was of course that the original literature in the vernacular language which was definitely at its beginning had to adjourn continuation for a few decades.

The *Divan or the Quarrel of the Wise Man with the World or the Judgment Between the Soul and the Body* written in Romanian in 1697 and printed in Iași with a Greek translation by Demetrius Cantemir[4] was a prose of ideas, in fact a first Romanian piece of religious thought. Written in the vein of Apostle Paul's *Epistle to the Colossians* with a presumed influence from *Dioptra* ("mirror"), an ascetic work in poetry, originally composed around 1100 CE by a monk, possibly from Mount Athos, known as Philip Monotropos ("solitary") the work (which was to be translated in Arabic[5] in 1705 by Athanasios Dabbas, the Patriarch of the Antiochian Church (1684–94;1720–24) casts a wise man ask the world for riches, only to reach the conclusion that the celestial power is the really valuable one.[6]

The *Hieroglyphic History* (written in 1703–1705 but only printed in 1883, after the Principalities were both united and officially independent), was perceived as a secret history, or a hermetic work. It is in fact a satire, written in the manner of an allegory inspired by the Byzantine *Poricologos* ("The tale of the fruits"). It is the first learned Romanian romance, a fable of the political pre-Phanariot life in the Romanian principalities with quite a simple story of a conflict between two kingdoms, that of the animals (stable and reliable beings depicting the author's co-nationals, the Moldavians) and that of the birds (messengers of the gods with their wings expressions of spiritual power but all in all instable and unreliable depicting the Wallachians) which is to be solved in an assembly. The conflict originated in prince Constantin Brâncoveanu's of Wallachia (depicted as the Raven as the coat of arms of Wallachia comprised a raven) wish to have a favourite on the Moldavian throne, Mihai Racoviță (the Ostrich-Camel). Helped by traitor Scarlat Ruset (the Chameleon), he betrayed Dimitrie Cantemir depicted as the Unicorn (a symbol of purity and power, with its horn standing for the solar ray or God's sword, the divine revelation). The Unicorn was delivered to the Turkish soldiers (the Crocodiles). In the conflict the Ottoman Empire, depicted as the secret temple of the Goddess of Greed plays an important part. A revolt of the peasants made the Ostrich-camel depart and the Elephant (depiction of Cantemir's brother Antioh Cantemir) appointed as a prince. The conflict was deflated, the Raven and the Unicorn healed the breach between them.

literaturii române: de la creația populară la postmodernism, Bucharest, 2000, Nicolae Manolescu, *Istoria critică a literaturii române – 5 secole de literatură*, Pitești, 2008, etc.

[4] See Moses Gaster, s.v. Cantemir in Hugh Cisholm (ed.) *Encyclopaedia Britannica* vol. 5 (11th ed.), Cambridge, 1911, p. 209.

[5] Dimitrie Cantemir, *The Salvation of the Wise Man and the Ruin of the Sinful World* (Salāh al-hakīm wa-fasād al-'ālam al- damīn), edited by Ioana Feodorov, preface Virgil Cândea, Bucharest, 2006.

[6] Nicolae Manolescu, *Istoria critică a literaturii române – 5 secole de literatură*, p. 80.

The strong animals (the wolf, the fox, the bear) and birds (the Falcon) stand for the boyars in strong positions while the humble people are the flies, the peasants the bees, the soldiers the wasps and the courtiers horseflies.

Cantemir was to be on the throne of Moldavia in 1693 and in 1710–1711, did employ his expertise to write the *Hieroglyphic History*.

Mavrocordatos' first reign in Moldavia was in 1709 and his first reign in Wallachia dated from 1715.

In some kind of a symmetry with Dimitrie Cantemir, Mavrocordatos wrote in his Transylvanian captivity the moral essay Περί καθηκόνδων ("On one's duties") which he published in Bucharest in 1719. The work was translated into Latin by the classical scholar Stefan Bergler, Mavrocordatos' secretary to be published in Leipzig in 1722[7]. His is a code of deontology which formulates man's duties as to God and as to his neighbour. It draws on the divine wisdom and on the moral virtues which help the humans reach wisdom.

In another kind of symmetry with Cantemir *Hieroglyphical History* is Mavrocordatos' novel Φιλοθέου Πάρεργα ("Philotheus' Leisures") written in 1719 and published in 1800. It is a "first attempt at novel-writing in the modern Greek literature"[8]. There was no much intention to make it a page-turner as it was written in a pedantic kind of Greek. Its contemporary editor, a classical scholar himself, is keen to presume as a destination the learned Greek or Balkan people or the Westerners conversant with classical languages[9]. What if we thought of the intention of enciphering his critique and his admiration of the Ottoman Empire? And by all means one cannot suppose that a learned Greek member of the Constantinople elite could in any way sympathise with the Greek vernacular which was mostly spoken and therefore showed consistent deviations from what was the ancient Greek language. Mavrocordatos' novel has an open ending and is mostly descriptive and reflective and all in all its author does seem a member of the Ottoman establishment, what he really was.

What one should bear in mind and never forget as a reading pattern is the prevailing atmosphere of the existence in the Balkan 18th cent.

The real everyday life in point of security of Christians in the Ottoman context was as one would infer from the lived from inside and reliable account of Mary Wortley alias Lady Montagu, the spouse of the English Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, (a learned lady) quite uneasy:

> *The great number of Greeks, French, English and Italians that are under our protection, make their court to me from morning till night ; and, I 'll assure you, are many of them very fine ladies; for there is no possibility for a*

[7] See Jacques Bouchard (ed. and preface), Nicolas Mavrocordatos, *Les Loisirs de Philothée*, Montréal, 2012, p. XIII.

[8] See C.Th. Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμούς* (The Greek Enlightenment), Athens, 1983, p. 265.

[9] See Jacques Bouchard (ed. and preface), Nicolas Mavrocordatos, *Les Loisirs de Philothée*, Montréal, 2012, p. XIV.

Christian to live easily under this government but by protection of an embassador- and the richer they are the greater is their danger.[10]

The consequences on people's lives ensued:

The new solution of Phanariotism would bring no feeling of comfort and no increased security. It was to be felt as a period of extreme insecurity. That which might seem curious at first sight is the fact that the Phanariot princes themselves were to experience on the thrones of the two Romanian Principalities moments of blatant insecurity, dramatic situations which were to lead many of them to the loss of their lives in most unusual circumstances or were to live episodes one can hardly imagine, be they playwrights with a vivid imagination. The fate of the Phanariots proved so distressing that there is no reason to envy them. Their lives on the thrones of the two Romanian Principalities was nothing but a perpetual awaiting for banishment, loss of property and loss of life. The fact would generate a specific psychology in which a central place was held by what one could call the Damocles' complex, the fear of an unexpected brutal death[11].

Instability was a constant of the existence on Romanian soil:

The princely generous patrons were not felt either in the exploration of the lay domains or in the reconsideration of the Byzantine religious tradition. If the princely initiative diminished noticeably we have to acknowledge several causes of this phenomenon: First of all the lack of continuity: now under the direct control of the Porte they do not have the time to settle in their capital. No sooner did they prove their administrative qualities that they were transferred, matching the needs of the cause, either to Wallachia or to Moldavia. On the other hand the Romanian Principalities were often transformed in a theatre of war. The teachers active in the princely academies could not constitute a real learned body and support the possible cultural policy of the court[12].

With these in mind let get back to the discussion on Phanariot literature.

Sometime after the death of Constantine Brâncoveanu but not much later than 1740 a monk wrote a tragedy entitled *Domna*[13] kept in a manuscript at the

[10] *The works of the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley, Lady Montagu. Including her correspondence, poems and essays.* Published by permission from her genuine papers. In five volumes. Vol. II, London, Printed for Richard Phillips, 1803, p. 216. The bold letters belong to the author of the present article.

[11] Toader Nicoară, *Sentimentul de insecuritate în societatea românească la începutul timpurilor moderne* (The feeling of insecurity in the Romanian society at the beginning of modern times), Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p.165.

[12] Alexandru Duțu, *Coordonate ale culturii românești în secolul XVIII (1700–1821*) ("Characteristics of the Romanian culture in the 18th cent."), Bucharest, 1968, p. 132.

[13] See our contributions : "Post-Byzantine curriculum and Jesuit tradition: Zacharias Karandinos' plays", in *Peuples, États et nations dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe*, Bucharest, 2004, p. 133–140; "Tragedia *Domna* și semnificația ei printre celelalte scrieri dedicate domnitorului

Library of the Romanian Academy. Zaharia Karandinos of Etolia, the author of the tragedy might well be one and the same person with a Zacharias who wrote a letter to Brâncoveanu[14]. The letter, dated 2nd of March 1714, displayed familiarity, the monk was back from a journey and took part in the enthronement of a new patriarch, Kosmas, a fact which seemed to be much to Prince Brâncoveanu's liking.[15]

Written in Greek the tragedy is dedicated to the martyrdom of prince Brâncoveanu and his four sons and is composed from the viewpoint of the devastated widow and mother, Princess Maria, the "domna"[16].

The immediate inspiration was drawn from Χριστός πάσχων (*Christus patiens*), attributed to Gregory of Nazianz, in fact a cento of Euripides[17]. The *Christus patiens* makes use of seven texts by the famous tragedian, while the *Domna* seems to draw mainly on *Hecuba*, a piece often present in the post-Byzantine handbooks.

The main character of the tragedy *Domna* is Princess Marica Brâncoveanu and the other characters are the nanny, the servant, Prince Constantine, the choir of young girls, The King of the Arabs (the Sultan), Constantine's three sons and a daughter.

Following the tradition of ancient tragedy there is a précis at the beginning[18]:

> *In the year 1711 A.D. under Sultan Ahmet a war was initiated by this latter against the kingdom of Moscow and thus sending his armies against the Russians (in this he was helped by Constantine Bassarab the then prince of the whole Wallachia as he was the Sultan's subject). Thus as no little time went by he was calumniated by someone to the Sultan as wanting to become an apostate and help the Russians and fight with them against the Empire. In order to prevent this from happening the Sultan was stirred to punish Constantine for his gold, as he was rich from his forefathers and also loved to get the precious metal. For this reason as he took him and his sons from post to post in chains to Constantinople first he killed the sons in front of him and then him himself.* (f. 25r)

Constantin Brâncoveanu", in N. Chifăr, I.O. Abrudan, P.Guran (ed.), *Epoca lui Constantin Brâncoveanu în context sud-est european biserică, societate, geopolitică*, Sibiu, 2015, p. 225–239; "Brâncoveanu şi fiii săi, eroi de tragedie" in *Moştenirea Culturală a epocii Brâncoveneşti.Interferenţe Multietnice şi Modernitatea pe Drumul Sudului*, Bucharest, p. 83–91. See also but with no data as to the author: Ioannis G. Hatzis (ed.), *Ζαχαρίου Καραντινού Ακολουθία και Συναξάριο των νεομαρτύρων Χρίστου και Παναγου* ("Mass and saint's lives the neo-martyrs Hristos and Panagos"), Athens, 2005.

[14] E. Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor (Documents regarding the history of the Romanians)*, vol. XIV, part I *(1320–1716)*, Bucharest, 1915.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 573.

[16] A Latin loan-word in Greek which occurred in mediaeval Greek mainly in contexts linked to the Romanian Principalities.

[17] See André Tuilier (ed.), *Grégoire de Nazianze, La Passion du Christ*, tragédie (Sources Chrétiennes, 149), Paris, 1969, p. 11–26.

[18] Given the fact, the we have not yet published the tragedy, which we were able to discover in the Library of the Romanian Academy (Greek ms. no. 919) in 2002 we will quote some longer than usual fragments.

The play starts with the lamentation of the nanny who would rather:

> *The gold of the whole earth got lost, it never came out of nature's caves, the shiny sunshine never penetrated there again to make the gold get born without pain …[the gold] got buried again so that the miners could never reach it again*… (f. 25r)

Reminiscent of the *Christus patiens* the princess, still at home, laments in turn the departure of her husband and her sons, fears the worst, for in her dream "the reigning town of Constantine" was present where her husband had arrived (so he was in Constantinople) and his face "issued black rays". He feared the "barbarians" for "the barbarians would do anything". Her hope was Virgin Mary "the mistress of all celestial things and higher than the stars" (f. 29r).

A lengthy part of the further play is dedicated to the dialogue between Brâncoveanu and the Sultan[19] and still longer is the decapitation scene (a probable sign that the author was a witness) in which the father had to persuade each son in part to let himself be killed. The youngest son was the most frightened by death so the father had to insist longer:

> *Why, oh child do you fear death so much as to have your face pale? Why should you be afraid of death which bestows you with immortality? Do you not see this is not death but an achievement of salvation? Happy you really if thus you display wholeheartedly a clear conscience. Without sighing you rather embraced sorrow than pleasure as you were honoured to be beheaded for the sake of the truth.) Being pious, you have to act in piety as if you knew from the beginning that you were more important than many words than sacred people who give speeches in the gymnasia healing in holy gardens. Pray stay in the faith in which you were rightfully reared as a scion who has increased his power many times you have to shake the fruit in a celestial trough, in an intangible monastery where God is happy with the celestial legions with incessant and irrepressible voices raising hymns thrice together with nature*. (f. 57v)

The Princess buries her husband and sons, but still rejoices in being left with a daughter and hopes for no further sorrows.

The connecting elements between the *Hecuba* and the *Domna* are quite obvious. Wealth is the reason for which Polydonis was killed, the greed for wealth of the Turks was the reason for which Brâncoveanu was sacrificed. Domna, the princess, with a hint to the Holy Virgin, on whose commemorative day her husband and sons were killed (15th of August 1714), is a Christian Hecuba who unlike her prototype does not contemplate revenge but resorts to Christian repentance.

The tragedy remained in a manuscript and what exactly was the aim of its composition is still unclear. As the same author has in the same manuscript the text

[19] Called the king of the Arabs.

of two masses and a synaxarion of two neo-martyrs it is quite likely that it could be linked to an (unfulfilled) project of a church theatrical performance after the mass.

Theatrical performance might be a key-word for what happened in the minds of those living in the Romanian Principalities in the second half of the 18th cent. An yearning or a desire for what in the West was part of everyday reality seems to be creeping in. For about three decades though not much except for translations and copies of well-known popular books could be witnessed.

The most translated was Metastasio (1698–1782)[20] a fact that could indicate the viennese source of inspiration, as starting 1730 the author lived in Vienna. A first such translation was *Artaxexu* (*Artaserse* written in 1720) made by Al. Beldiman in 1784 which was to be continued with *Siroe* (*Siroe rè di Persia,*a text dating from 1726) and *Milosârdia lui Tit (La clemenza di Tito* written in 1730*)*. All three plays shared the theme of royal court with intricate plots which must have looked alike the local princely courts. *Milosârdia (La clemenza...)* was an apology of the tolerant prince.

In 1785 a drama, Αλεξανδροβόδας ο ασυνείδητος (Prince Alexander without consciousness) was written most likely in Iași as a libel against a Phanariot prince (Alexander Mavrocordatos Firaris) who defected to Russia. Deeply flawed, the play can hardly be called a comedy but has outstanding passages and its author, Georgaki Soutsou son to Nicholas Soutsou, a drogman of the Ottoman Porte, was well-known as a translator from Italian poetry.

In 1786 an unfinished comedy preserved in only one manuscript (as opposed to the four of *Prince Alexander*) was written by Rigas Fereos. Its title, reminiscent of the Descartes' vortex[21] is Το σαγανάκι της τρέλλας *Folly's Maelstrom.* An open satire against Nicholas Mavrogeni, a non-Phanariot nominated by the Ottoman Court in the Principalities, this is a successful pastiche after at least two of Moliere's comedies, namely *Le malade imaginaire* and *Le bourgeois gentilomme*.

Iordache Slătineanu translated and published in Sibiu in 1797 Metastasio's *Ahilefs la Schiros*[22] a play valued for its carnival-like atmosphere.

In 1800 an unknown author continued the Metastasio series with *Catone in Utica*.

Matei Milu translated in 1803 Regnard's *Les Menechmes*, a charming comical pastiche after Plautus with a vague classical referentiality[23].

A notable fact was that in 1806 Costache Conachi's *Amoriul, Giudicata femeilor* ("Love, the women's trial") as well as the collective comedy (by him,

[20] See G. Oprescu (ed.), *Istoria teatrului în România* (The history of theatre in Romania), vol. I, Bucharest, 1965, p. 264–266.

[21] Since the alleged motion of the earth was one of the Church's main objections to Galileo's astronomy, Descartes wished to avoid this opposition by placing the earth at rest in a vortex band that surrounded the sun, so as the earth does not undergo a change of place relative to the surface of the neighboring material particles.

[22] See "Teatrul lui Metastasio în România", in *Studii italiene*, I, Bucharest, 1934, p. 131.

[23] See I. Tanoviceanu, "Un poet moldovean din veacul XVII, Mateiu Milo", AAR, 1898, p. 1–25.

N. Dimachi and D. Beldiman) *Comedia banului Costandin Canta ce-l zâc Călbujan și Cavaler Cucoșu* ("The comedy of ban C also called C and Rooster Knight") were performed at a puppet theatre[24].

The series of original comedies continued in Moldavia with *Serdarul din Orhei* ("The cavalry commander from Orhei"), written before 1811, then with *Sfatul lumii* ("The people's advice") belonging to N. Dimachi, an attempt to expose a well-known family living in. the small town called Bârlad.

The performances were irregular, *Mirtil and Chloe* by Florian taking after Gessner was translated and played through the good offices of Gh. Asachi on December 27 1816 in Iași at the mansion of C. Ghica's while *Hecuba* by Euripides (translated by C. Năneșcu) was played by the students of the Saint Sabbas College in 1819[25].

The original comedies *Γενεράλης Γίκας* ("General Ghica") and the Ο χαρακτήρ της Βλαχίας ("The Character of Wallachia") can be considered together. Written in Greek before 1818, possibly by Costache Faca they are a critique of Bucharest high-society presenting a firmly moral conclusion. Towards the end of *The Character*... the shade of Ienăchiță Văcărescu appears and laments his country's decay.

Another interesting cluster in Greek are Συνέλευσις των Μακάρων μετά του Πλούτωνος, Περσεφώνης και των λοιπών, εν τοις Πεδίους των Ηλυσίων ("The Assembly of the Deceased with Pluto, Persefone and the Rest in the Fields of Elysia") written in 1821 by Naum Râmniceanu, a graduate of the Princely Academy of Bucharest perfectly conversant with Greek and Κωμωδία νέα της Βλαχίας ("Wallachia's New Comedy") which are both libels against the medical community whose members were predominantly Greek. The first is set in Brașov during the forced refuge the Romanians had to take because of the 1821 revolution. *Wallachia's New Comedy* is set in Bucharest in 1822. It is well structured and its solid classical culture and good knowledge of legal practice point to Athanasios Hristopoulos as an author. He had read medicine as well.

Iordache Golescu's theatrical libels had most probably in view to be played on the scene that existed in Bucharest at Cișmeaua Roșie (the Red Source) and had a quite different scope as they contained extremely tough political criticism. Their titles were *Istoria Țării românesti, starea Țării Românești pă vremea străinilor și pământenilor* ("The history of Wallachia, the state of W in the times of the foreigners and of the locals"). Observing the rules set by Aristotle for comedies, Golescu underlines the minimal difference between the ending Phanariot rules and the new ones by locals in *Barbu Văcărescu vânzătorul țării* („BV the traitor of his country") written in 1822.

Alecu Beldiman resumed his dramatic production in 1820 when he published the first translation from Voltaire, *Tragedia lui Orest*. After just one year, he was authoring his own play *Tragedia sau mai bine zis jalnica Moldovei intâmplare*... ("The tragedy or better said the miserable misfortune of Moldavia").

[24] See G. Oprescu (ed.), *Istoria teatrului în România*, p. 259.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 266.

The undeniable charm exerted by the Ottoman poetry on the Christian subjects of the empire and a remote, still strong echo of the Paris *Société du Caveau* poetry[26] gave birth to the complex phenomenon of the Phanariot poetry[27]. Reading aloud these poems or listening to them set on music accompanied by oriental dances was as good as a kind of a performance. It was happening behind closed doors watched by... Albanian armed guards.

Here is an account of bishop Grigorie of Argeș, an archimandrite, whom Ienăchiță Văcărescu had invited at his place. Thus, living his own place supposedly imbued with the chieratical atmosphre of the metropolitan palace, Grigorie reached, not very far from home, Ienăchita's mansion where around he could see many armed men, servants, Albanians (hirelings), panduri." The bishop was shocked by the unrest:

> *one could hear all sorts of shoutings, the trumpets the fifes, and the drums; lots of horses, many horses were neighing ..., veterans with saddles which were glittering with gold and silver..." The bishop took the courage to proceed and as he reached the staircase where there were people "armed with long spears, with thick maces, with guns, with revolvers". Filled with horror "he went on walking ahead, as no one stopped him" and he reached "the door of the large room".*

Followed a real shock, the scary guards were actually keeping watch over... a performance: "*there my sight was pierced by the light of the flames in some braziers ..., I could hear a pleasant sound of violins, Pan's flutes, drums, mixed up with women's voices, sweet and penetrating. They charmed me and as if they chained my hands and feet.*" The prelate remembered his position and withdrew in dignity*:* "*I cannot imagine how I sat up quickly and, running, passing all the things and people formerly described, I hardly found the large entrance to the yard and thanked God as I could pass the wall, relieved from such temptations*"[28].

Much has been written on the Phanariot poetry. Ienăchiță Văcărescu, the host of the above-mentioned performances as well as the character in Golescu's libel was among the first to write this kind of poetry[29]. The unique poem he wrote in Greek epitomizes many reasons accounting for the prolific character of the phenomenon. It was a new way to express one's thoughts and concerns, actually describe one's everyday existence. The poem, *Με δυστυχίες πολεμώ* ("I brace misfortunes") abounds in words of the semantic series of "misfortune", "bad luck",

[26] L. Brad Chisacof, "Poezia fanariotă pe înțelesul celor din veacul al XXI-lea" ("The Phanariot Poetry for the understanding of those who live in the 21st cent."), *Caiete Critice* (Bucharest), 2017, no. 7 (357), p. 71–72.

[27] An illuminating contribution on the topic is the volume resulted from a conference with this subject, Χατζηπαναγιώτη-Sangmeister, Χ. Καρανάσιος, M. Kappler, Χ. Χοτζάκογλου (ed.), *Φαναριώτικα και αστικά στιχουργήματα* ("Phanariot and urban verse"), Athens, 2013.

[28] Al. Odobescu, *Opere*, ed. M. Anineanu, notes by V.Cândea, vol. II, Bucharest, 1967, p. 65.

[29] See further in this issue of *RESEE* the contribution on this topic by Ileana Mihăilă.

also “danger” and consequently “sigh” which denotes helplessness in an aggressive environment.

A significant part of the Phanariot poetry, retracing its history, are the bilingual verses.

The very initial one were Greek-Turkish and speak volumes about the source of inspiration of the whole phenomenon[30].

The Greek-French verses display parallel poems and are testament for the good knowledge of French:

Quand je dis que je vous aime cher amour à la folie
Μόνον για να με πληγώσεις λες αυτός παραλαλεί
Et toujours quand je vous parle de ma triste passion
Με προστάζεις να σωπάσω, με υβρίζεις με θυμό
Je sais bien que pour vous plaire il faudrois d’autres appuis
Δια να μην σε θυμώνει όποιος λέει πως αγαπά
Mais tandis que ce n’est guère dans ma bonne volonté
Είναι δυνατόν ψυχή μου να με αγαπάς ποτέ
Et ce sera ma tendresse l’objet de la moquerie[31]

The Phanariot Greek poems have hardly any translations in Romanian[32], there is a vernacular production of the kind of poetry only that eponymous marking a difference with the Greek production which is mostly anonynymous. This is the case of Alecu Văcărescu poems:

Ενας όπου σε λατρεύει, και εις άκρον σ’αγαπά
Urmează dintr-al tău libov și el a să adăpa
Λοιπόν έχε ευσπλαχνίαν, μη με τυραννείς σκληρά
Sau n-a dat de la o vreme, ce-au deprins a supăra
Εγώ ότι σε λατρεύω γνώρισες αλάαλέμ
De a-mi voi însă răul, dobândești mare blestem
Νέα να’χει τόσα κάλλη και να το’ χει εγλεντζές
Să răneascâ fără știre, mă mir și eu pentru ce
Κλαίω και θρυνολογούμαι και κανείς δεν με ρωτά
Și care atunci să fie decât iarăși dumneata
Οθεν πρόλαβε λυπήσου, την καϊμένην μου καρδιά
E din pricină că arde, tocmai ca o pervanea. [33]

And there are of course items as the following one published in 1852[34] encompassing mostly the grudge against a revolute but very popular and therefore resilient trend:

[30] See annexes of *Φαναριώτικα και αστικά στιχουργήματα*.
[31] Greek ms. no. 1248, Library of the Romanian Academy, ff. 20v–21r.
[32] See our article “So the Last Will Be First”, quoted above.
[33] Romanian ms. no. 332, Library of the Romanian Academy, f. 12v.

Cali spera spera
Che cachi su mera,
Fili ti mandata
Psomi kai salata

A whirl among modernity and tradition, the literature written on Romanian soil on a long 18th cent. played more than one part each of which it is testimony.

It was an expression of its subjects' inner world (the Phanariot poetry in all its guises), it was a political backup (from Cantemir's *Hieroglyphic History*, to Rigas'*Maelstrom* up to the comedies of Wallachia), it continued (ancient/ Byzantine) tradition (see mainly the *Domna*), it was subversive (see *Philotheus' Leisures*) and it praised the Ottoman *statu-quo* (see *Philotheus' Leisures* again), it foresaw the national states (Cantemir's *Hieroglyphic History)* all in all it was also an image of a very complex reality albeit tragical for under terror and insecurity and irregularity on the whole.

[34] Anton Pann, *Spitalul amorului sau Cântătorul dorului*, Bucharest, 1852.