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Monastic Libraries from Bessarabia – Collection Centers of Old Books Patrimony

Abstract: The research of the monastic libraries contributes to a great extent to the identification of lesser known information about the bibliophile or secular church values and to the capitalization of novel manuscripts inscriptions, written by the owners or readers. According to the latest estimates in Bessarabia there are 27 monasteries and old hermitages, 37 missing and 38 monastic settlements are established in the last decades. The oldest of these (Capriana, Varzaresti, Hancu, Curchi) served as centers for spreading the written culture in eastern Moldavia through the copyist monks, living in these monastic settlements. During the Soviet era, only Japca was functioning, and our recent investigations have shown that most of the books in the library have burned after repeated fires during the second half of the 20th century. The library of the New Neamt Monastery was preserved in the funds of the National Archives of the Republic of Moldova, which require a multidimensional research. During its existence, however, several manuscripts and printed books have been alienated, some of which are currently in public libraries funds, private libraries, museums, churches and monasteries. Recent researches have convinced us that some monasteries have partially reconstituted their libraries and completed them with ancient Romanian and foreign books that they present themselves as true bibliophilic heritage research centers. We have also succeeded in specifying within the boundaries of the information in the notes or on the basis of the archive data the moment of founding the monastic libraries and watching the

phenomenon of the circulation of the books, the branches and the itineraries on which these have moved in time and space.

Keywords: monastic libraries, bibliophile values, Bessarabia, Varzaresti, Capriana, Hâncu, Curchi, Condrita, Harbovat, Răciula, Chitcani, Christian spirituality, Old manuscripts

Introduction

The study of monastic libraries contributes greatly to the identification of information less known about church or laic bibliophile values and to the prominence of unique manuscripts, written by owners or readers. According to the last estimations, there were founded 27 monasteries and old sketes, 37 disappeared and 38 monastic sites in the Prut-Dniester area in the last decades (*Mănăstiri și schituri* 5-7).

During the soviet period, the only monastery from Japca had functioned and our studies have showed that the majority of the books from the library had burn because of repeated fires during the second half of the 20th century. The library of the monastery Noul Neamt was stored in the funds of the National Archives of the Republic of Moldova, which needs a multidimensional research. During its existence, however, more manuscripts and books were sold, as some of them are currently in the funds of the public and private libraries, in museums, in churches and monasteries. The studies from the last period have convinced us that some monasteries have rehabilitated their libraries and have completed with old Romanian and foreign books, so that they become true centers of collection and study of bibliophile patrimony. We managed also to specify, in the limits of the information from the inscriptions or based on archives, the moment of the monastery libraries foundation and to follow the phenomenon of books, files and itineraries circulation, made in time and space. In this communication, we will reflect the contributions of the most representative monastic institutions from Bessarabia to the salvage and the preservation of Romanian and foreign bibliophile values, subject to destruction process during the soviet period and resumed in the '90s of the last century.

The monastery of Varzaresti is the first monastic institution attested documentarily in the space between Prut and Dniester. By a charter of April 25th, 1420, the voivode Alexandru cel Bun had offered to governor Oana a series of villages from the East of Moldova, and "the monastery of Varzar" has been mentioned as border (*Documenta Romaniae Historica* 67-

68). There are not documentary or other type proves about the monastery of Varzaresti from the moment of documentary attestation and up to 1770. There are not, unfortunately, information about manuscripts and old books of its library up to the interwar period. P. Constantinescu-Iasi mentions about *an Evangel* (Bucharest, 1742) from the library of the monastery of Varzaresti (Constantinescu-Iași, *Circulatia* 26). We have established following the recent researches that there are in the library of this monastery Romanian and foreign church books, saved by the monks during the Soviet period. Some examples come from the monastery of Noul Neamt, which constitute the prove of spiritual and cultural links between monastic settlements during the period of Tsarist governing in Bessarabia.

From the total of 93 books (75 titles) printed in Romanian language, amongst which 25 exemplars (23 titles) have been printed until 1830, i.e. during the period of old Romanian book. The oldest come from the typographies of Bucharest, Ramnic and Iasi. Books, printed at the monastery of Neamt, Chisinau and Sankt-Petersburg, have appeared in the first decades of the 19th century in the library of the monastery. There was an *Evangel* (Bucharest, 1742) in the library of the monastery of Varzaresti, which was replaced with a printed one during the interwar period at Ramnic, in 1784, dressed in silver and which today is in the altar of the Saint Dumitru's church. Obviously, the oldest books were in manuscript variant, about which the historical sources do not provide information. The oldest books printed in this library come from the typography of Bucharest, followed chronologically by those from Ramnic and Iasi. In the first decades of the 19th century, the typographies from the monastery of Neamt (1807) and the monastery of Chisinau (1814) have started their activity. A more numerous presence of the book printed at the monastery of Neamt may be explained by the cultural and spiritual links of this important monastic centers with the monasteries and sketes from the East of Moldova.

The monastery of Capriana is one of the most important religious centers from the Eastern space of Prut, which was documentarily attested in the first half of the 15th century. The first mention of the current monastery settlement was registered in a charter of Alexander cel Bun era, on April 25th, 1420, by which the lord of Moldova had offered and confirmed to governor Oana a large field, and as border was mentioned "the meadow of Chiprian" (*Documenta Romaniae Historica* 67-69). In another charter, dated of February 10th, 1429, Alexandru cel Bun assigns the monastery Vasnevat, where hegumen was Chiprian, to his wife, Marena (*Ibid.* 124-127).

Until 1541, the history of monastery Capriana is not known due to the lack of written information. The chronicler Grigore Ureche has written that Petru Rares had also worked (*Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei* 84) at Capriana, i.e. he had built the church assigning to it the saint title of the Assumption of Mary in 1545, which preserved until nowadays (Защук, *Бессарабские монастыри и скиты* 2; Berechet, *Mănăstirea Căpriană* 3; Negrei, *Mănăstirea Căpriană* 132-144). In 1541, he offers to the monastery of Capriana an *Evangel* written on parchment, tied with wood barks and dressed in golden silver (Мурзакевич, *Надпись* 288-289; Ганицкий, *Древнее славянское Евангелие* 1120). It is the first written mention about the existence of a book in the library of monastery Capriana. Obviously, being a lordly foundation, founders provided it with other manuscripts and later with publications.

There was for centuries in the monastery of Capriana a strong tradition of copying the manuscripts, spreading them out also in other monasteries from Bessarabia. The first attested manuscript was copied at Capriana by the monk Evloghie in 1552. The documentary data, however, does not present information about the collection of manuscripts from the library of this monastic settlement. It is known that the writing or the copying of manuscripts has continued at the monastery of Capriana until the 20th century, when the church officials had been using fully the printed book.

It is known that the oldest printed book from its library is a Slavonic *Evangel*, printed in Kiev in 1636, which was given in 1680 to Lipovat, Vaslui county (Eșanu, *Biblioteca mănăstirii Căpriană*, 77). The oldest Romanian book, known as belonging to the monastery of Capriana, is another *Evangel*, printed at Snagov in 1697 (Cereteu, *Cartea românească* 49), ransomed from Tatars of Causeni and offered to the church of Micauti by the priest Stratul. We have ascertained from the known information the presence of printed books in Moldova, followed by those printed in Wallachia and Transilvania in the library of the monastery of Capriana.

The monastery of Hancu with the saint title of Saint Parascheva is considered one of the oldest monastic institutions of Prut-Dniester Moldova. It was founded in 1677 by the boyar Mihalcea Hancu and it was named at first Vlamnic skete. The founder had provided the monastic institution with lands (Boga, *Documente* 92-93) and certainly with the pearls necessary for the church service as manuscripts and old printed books, all the more that there were noticed old manuscripts and publications of the 17th century in the library of the monastery.

There were in the library of the monastery of Hancu in 1817 seven titles of books printed in Buzau, three in Bucharest, five in Iasi, four in Ramnic, 16 titles in the monastery of Neamt and 3 titles in Chisinau. It was noticed a title of the 17th century, 11 titles of the 18th century and 22 titles of book of 19th century (until 1817). There is observed for the 19th century (until 1817) an increase of the number of books, due to the presence of the publications from the monastery of Neamt and Chisinau, whose typographies have started their activity during that period (Cereteu, *Pagini din istoria bibliotecii mănăstirii Hâncu* 139-154).

The monastery of Hancu was closed in 1950 and the property was dissipated. Some books of the library had disappeared and only several have been recovered. A small number of books have been attested in the libraries of other monasteries from Bessarabia. There were identified from the historical sources 118 books (109 titles), property of the monastery of Hancu until its liquidation, amongst which 75 exemplars (71 titles) have been printed until 1830. There were attested five books of the 17th century, 14 titles of the 18th century and 49 titles of 19th century (until 1830). It emerges from the statistical data we have presented that a lot of books were printed in Neamt due to the importance that the esthetic Romanism had and of course due to the cultural links between the monastic communities of the both sides of Prut. An important role in this context has to be given of course to the typographic center of Chisinau.

The monastery of Hancu has been reopened in 1990 when the reconstruction of the entire monastic institution has started. After reopening, it has been populated with monks. Probably, inhabitants from Tabara, Japca and Cosalauca had come to live therein, as there are some books from the current library with marginal inscriptions, mentioning these three monastic centers from Bessarabia. There are attested also books with inscriptions, once property of the monasteries of Harbovat, Curchi, Frumoasa and the localities of Busauca, Zagaicani, Pecistea, Straseni, Cuizauca and Cioc-Meidan.

There were identified in the library of the monastery 75 printed books (64 titles) and they were printed in the following centers: Iasi (11 exemplars/11 titles), Ramnic (4 exemplars/4 titles), Brasov (1 exemplar/1 title), Buda (3 exemplars/3 titles), Sibiu (1 exemplar/1 title), the monastery of Neamt (16 exemplars/13 titles), Chisinau (29 exemplars/22 titles), Sankt-Petersburg (2 exemplars/1 title), Bucharest (6 exemplars/6 titles), Buzau (2 exemplars/2 titles). Only 24 titles (26 exemplars) from them are books

printed until 1830. It results from these statistic data that in the library of the monastery Hancu the most numerous are the books printed in the monastery of Neamt, Iasi, Chisinau, followed by those of Buda, Ramnic, Bucharest, Brasov, Sibiu and Sankt-Petersburg.

The monastery of Condrita is attested in the first half of the 18th century, but according to the new hypotheses, convincingly argued, the skete might be founded in the 16th century and the status of monastery was assigned in 1918 (Eșanu et. al., *Mănăstirea Căpriană* 97-113; *Mănăstiri și schituri* 227-230; Eșanu, *Cultural universe* 85). The foundation of a library in Condrita skete was not registered documentarily, but there were inscriptions on old books, which attested two old church books in the 18th century. The first description of the books from the library of Condrita skete was made by Mihail Ganitchi, who has studied 14 manuscripts and printed books in 1874. There were in the monastery more Romanian books, as according to the words of Mihail Ganitchi, it results that the inhabitants of monasteries were speaking the Romanian language, and the religious services were officiated only in Romanian. There were in Condrita skete Russian books, found in a box of church chorus, which was studied and described (M.I., *Рукописи и старопечатные книги* 22, 840-851) by Mihail Ganitchi. The fact that these books were not at the hand of the confessor or skete monks, makes us believe that they were not used because they did not the Slavonic language and the divine services were officiated in the Romanian language.

There were in the library of monastery, in different periods, not less than 13 manuscripts and 61 printed books, amongst which 32 books were printed until 1830, and 29 in the modern period of Romanian books (1831-1918). From 32 old books, 24 are in Romanian language and 8 in Slavonic language. From the number of Romanian books, two were printed in the 17th century, seven in the 18th century and 15 in the 19th century (until 1830). The majority of books from the library of the monastery of Condrita were printed in Chisinau, where since 1815, religious and laic were spread out in the entire eparchy.

The monastery of Harbovat – an old cradle of Christian spirituality of Bessarabia situated in the valley of Ichel stream and was founded in the first half of 18th century, according to older traditions, even in the 17th century. The first testimonies about the existence of books in Harbovat skete date since 1813, when the hieromonk Teofil was searching the four books with the lives of saints. In 1815, the library skete was completed with a *Liturgy* in Slavonic language (Tomescu, *Diferite știri* 232, 24). Valuable data about

the monastery's library were published in 1874 by an unknown author (*Описание Гербовецкого Свято-Успенского монастыря* 520-533), from which it results that in 1874 there were in the library 5 manuscripts and 415 printed books, amongst which 327 Slavonic and Russian church books, 60 Romanian books and 28 Greek books. From the total of 415 books, only 120 were religious (*Ibid.* 529). According to these data, there were in 1874 in the monastery 10 evangels, amongst which one is Greek, two are Romanian and seven are Slavonic. The oldest one is a Slavonic evangel and it dates since 1746, followed by other Slavonic evangels printed in 1775, 1805, 1851, 1854, 1859, 1861. The Greek *Evangel* dates since 1811, the Romanian ones since 1812 and 1857, the last was offered by the monks from the monastery (*Ibid.* 520-522).

The books of the monastery of Harbovat were studied in 1929 by P. Constantinescu-Iasi, appreciating the library as modest in Romanian literature (Constantinescu-Iași, *Circulatia* 18-19) and notifying only 30 books, amongst which five were printed before 1812, 20 were printed after this date, five were printed in Chisinau and the rest could not be identified due to the lack of the title pages. It results from these data that in 1874 another *Evangel* has been bought or received as gift, which was printed in Bucharest in 1682. Paul Mihail has identified in the library of the monastery a bigger number of books (Mihail, *Mărturii* 182, 185-191, 198), amongst which 39 titles of old Romanian books (46 exemplars) and 26 titles of modern Romanian books (47 exemplars). From the total number of titles of old Romanian books, 12 were printed in the 18th century and 28 in the 19th century. Before the typographies of the monastery of Neamt (1807) and of Chisinau (1814) have been opened, the monks from Harbovat had used, especially, the books printed in Bucharest, Ramnic, Buda and Iasi, followed by those from Blaj and Brasov.

In the 20th century, the Soviet authorities had closed the monastery. The property had been confiscated, but some books and a part of church inventory had been saved and the scientists have identified in private collections or in some centers of Ukraine and Russia.

The library of the monastery of Harbovat was reconstituted after 1992 of books left after it had been closed and of some books from the libraries closed by the Soviet authorities. We have studied 88 titles of Romanian book (112 books), amongst which 39 titles of old Romanian book in 48 exemplars. We notify from the inscriptions made on the books studied in the library of the monastery of Harbovat an intense circulation of bibliophile values in the

monastic environment. Some publications were in Noul Neamt, Tiganesti, Hancu, Curchi, Tabara, Capriana, Varzaresti.

The monastery of Curchi had been founded in 1773 by the mazel Iordache Curchi of Morozeni village, he and his brother, priest Manasie, had built on their property a wood church with the saint title of the Great Martyr Dumitru. Iordache Curchi had been frocked with the name Ioan, probably by the Metropolitan of Moldova Gavriil (1760-1786) and had become its first abbot (Negrei, *Mănăstirea Curchi* 257-281; Михалевиць, *Курковский монастырь*, 7, 217-226; 8, 246-249; 9, 278-290; 10, 311-318). On October 20th, 1775, the hegumen Ioan had passed away and the conduct had been taken by his brother, Manasie (1775-1793), who was a priest and had headed the monastic community from Curchi for almost two decades (Tomescu, *Acte* 100). Manasie had collected more books, which he took at the monastery. In 1793, after he had passed away, he left as inheritance a small library (*Ibid.* 100). Teodor Sabau, frocked with the name Filaret, had built in the first decade of the 19th century a stone church with the saint title of the Birth of Mary and had bequeathed, in 1814, a library with a big number of books (*Ibid.* 111-113).

There were undertaken during the interwar period more researches in the field of the history of Bessarabia generally and the bibliophile values, particularly. We have identified in the library of the monastery a licentiate thesis (manuscript) of the student Alexie Marza from Mihaileana University of Iasi, the Faculty of Theology, located in Chisinau, entitled *Monography of the Monastery of Curchi* and defended publicly in 1937. The author of the thesis has consecrated an entire chapter to the bibliophile values of the library of monastery and thanks to this paper, we may reconstitute partially in the present the list of manuscripts and printed books existing in the monastery of Curchi in that period. According to the data from the paper in 1937, there were in the library of the monastery not less than 78 titles of old Romanian books, amongst which 41 titles were in churches and 37 in museums. The most numerous is the book from the monastery of Neamt with 25 titles, followed by the one of Bucharest with 15 titles, Iasi with 15 titles, Chisinau with 11 titles, Ramnic with 7 titles, Viena, Sankt-Petersburg and Brasov with 3 titles each and Buzau, Sibiu and Blaj with 2 titles each.

As other monastic institutions of Bessarabia, the monastery of Curchi had been liquidated during Soviet period and has been reopened in the fall of 1994, when there were started the reconstruction works of churches and other constructions from its inside. The bases of library reconstructions

have been put. There was no book when the monastery had been reopened. There were only three church books in 2000 in the summer library with the saint title of the Birth of Mary. Currently, the monastery has a small number of old books, printed in Romanian language.

The monastery of Raciula is the in the zone of Orhei Forests, nearby the other monastic settlements with Christian traditions: Frumoasa, Harbovat and Harjauca. It had built at the end of the 18th century on the yeomen property of Niscani village. In 1822, when it had built and sanctified the wood church from Raciula skete, it had been specified in an inventory of summer church things, made on September 27th, 1822 that an evangel from the three existing in the monastery had been brought in the new wood church. When the sanctuary had been sanctified on October 8th, 1822, the hegumen Venedict had offered two books. P.Constantinescu-Iasi had made the inventory of books at the monastery of Raciula during the interwar period. There were according to these data in 1929 at least 53 Romanian publications, amongst which 13 old Romanian books (Constantinescu-Iași, *Circulatia* 42). From the books printed until 1830, the most numerous are the publications from the monastery of Neamt, followed by the books printed in Chisinau, Bucharest, Ramnic, Iasi, Brasov, Buda. After 1830, the numerical situation of the books from the library of the monastery of Raciula has modified substantially. From the total number of 53 books attested during this period, more numerous are the publications of the monastery of Neamt – 17 exemplars, Sibiu – 16 publications, Chisinau – 11 books, Iasi, Bucharest and Ramnic with 2 exemplars each and Buzau, Buda and Brasov – 1 exemplar each.

There are today in the monastery 78 books printed in Romanian language, amongst which only 23 exemplars (17 publications) are old Romanian books. From the total number of 23 exemplars of old Romanian books, the most numerous were printed in Chisinau – 8 exemplars, followed by those of the monastery of Neamt – 7 exemplars, Iasi – 5 exemplars, Bucharest – 1 exemplar.

The monastery of Noul Neamt (Chitcani) had been built in the second half of the 19th century and became in the next decades and until Soviet authorities had closed it in 1962, a true center of Christian culture and spirituality promotion in Bessarabia and over Dniester. Mihail Ganitchi had approached for the first time the issue of the scholar values from its library. He had elaborated and published a list (it seems an incomplete one) of identified printed books and manuscripts. The author includes in the

scientific circuit 30 manuscripts and books printed in Romanian language, 8 publications and 24 Slavonic manuscripts. The information presented by M. Ganitchi published in 1880 in three journals *Кишиневские Епархиальные Ведомости (Chisinau Diocesan Council)* (n°. 20-22). In n°. 20, the author included 30 manuscripts, amongst which the first 19th are either written, either translations of Andronic and only one of them, *A Short History of the Monasteries of Neamt and Secu*, was printed in the monastery of Neamt in 1857 (*Bibliografia Românească Modernă* 245-246). There are included in the next number eight publications, specifying that they are Slavonic books, but the first three (a *Molitvenic/Missal* and two *Liturgies*) were printed in Moldova and Wallachia. There are written in the last part (n° 21 partially and n° 22 entirely) the titles of 24 Slavonic manuscripts. A. Stadnitichi has confirmed in 1887 the existence of old manuscripts of the 14th century copied in Slavonic and Greek languages coming from the monastery of Neamt (*Стадницкій, Поездка въ Ново-Нямецкій монастырь* 414-430). The contributions of A. Iatimirschi are important in this context, who has studied thoroughly and has described the fund of Slavonic manuscripts from the library of Noul Neamt (*Яцимирский, Славянские и русские рукописи* 952-953; *Idem, Из истории славянской проповеди* 113).

More precursors of Romanian culture of Bessarabia had visited the monastery of Noul Neamt during the interwar period, who had left some memories about the visits they had made, thorough studies related to the history of monastery or its library. The hieromonk I. Ieronim has reflected in *History of the Saint Monastery of Nou-Neamt* just a little bit about the spiritual life, referring especially to the economic life or to the personalities that had founded or had headed the monastic institution. He has described about the activity of the abbot Andronic Popovici and has recalled only the fact that he had written over 50 toms (Ieronim, *Istoricul Sfintei Monăstiri Noul-Neamț* 27).

P. Constantinescu-Iasi has studied the collection of bibliophile values of Noul Neamt, who specified that there were in 1993 in the library almost 25-30 manuscripts, but he had described only few of them. The author has specified that Theofan and Andronic had transported bibliophile values from the old lavra of Neamt. He has admitted that more books had disappeared, as A. Iatimirschi had sold them. More attempts were made during that period to transport the oldest manuscripts from the library to the Romanian Academy of Bucharest, and due to the firm position of abbot and monks, the books have remained in the monastery (Constantinescu-

Îași, *Manuscrisele de la M-rea Noul Neamt* 43-47; Negrei, Danilov, *Istoria mănăstirii Noul Neamt* 491-502).

The valuable contributions to the capitalization of bibliophile patrimony from the library of the monastery Noul Neamt belongs to Paul Mihail, who had refereed in details to the manuscripts and the printed books and the library's completion of this monastic settlement. The author had published from the correspondence of the priest Andronic with brothers from the lavra of Neamt after he had established on the property of Chitcani. He had also referred to the scholar links between the hierarchs of the Metropol of Moldova and the monastery of Noul Neamt from Bessarabia in the last decades of the 19th century (Mihail, *Înfățișări* 53-60; Idem, *Legături cărturărești* 14; Idem, *Din biblioteca M-rei Noul Neamt* 233-236).

V. Ovcinicova-Pelin has also studied in details the old manuscript from Noul Neamt, who has elaborated for the first time a catalogue of Romanian manuscripts preserved in different centers of the ex-URSS. The author included in the scientific circuit 143 old Slavic and Romanian manuscripts from the 14th-19th centuries, she identified six manuscripts that are currently in different institutions from the Russian Federation and mentioned other old manuscripts from the same period, without knowing where they are preserved. The catalogue contains a study on the history of the foundation of the library of Noul Neamt (*Catalogul general al manuscriselor moldovenești* 438).

After the monastery of Noul Neamt had closed in 1962, the library was stored in the funds of the National Archives of the Republic of Moldova and the book printed in eight languages is in over 1500 exemplars. The researches of the last years allowed us to formulate some conclusions about the foundation of a library and the contribution of the confessor Andronic Popvici, the hegumen Theofan Cristea to the foundation and the completion of the library of this monastery with valuable publications coming from different typographic centers from the Romanian space, Eastern-Slavic environment, Western and Eastern Europe. The manuscripts from the library of this monastery frame chronologically between the 14th-19th centuries and the printed book in the 17th-20th centuries. It results from the manuscript inscriptions made on books that remarkable personalities from the Romanian space as: Conon Aramescu-Donici, who became later the Metropolitan of Wallachia, the Metropolitan of Moldova Iosif Naniescu, Constantin Botezatu and his son-in-law Gavriil Catacazi, Mihail Cogalniceanu, the bishop Melchisedec Stefanescu, monks, priests and some

religious personalities from Eastern-Slavic space have completed the library in the second half of the 19th century.

Sustained efforts were made to renovate the current library from the monastery of Noul Neamt. The hierodeacon Alexie, the librarian of the monastery has collected a large number of books, amongst which a distinct place occupies the old Romanian publications.

From the total of 59 titles (72 books) studied in the current library of the monastery of Noul Neamt and others attested in other monastery libraries of Bessarabia, 26 titles (30 exemplars) were printed in the old period. There was mentioned a book from the 17th century, 6 publications from the 18th century and 19 publications from the 19th century (until 1830). There were identified books printed in the monastery of Govora, Bucharest, Vienna, Iasi, Chisinau, Sankt-Petersbug and Neamt (Cereteu, *Contributii* 33-54).

Conclusion

The monasteries are true centers of culture and Christian spirituality. Although, the religious settlements of Bessarabia were greatly liquidated in Soviet period and revived in the last decade of the 20th century. True bibliophile treasures of the patrimony may be found in the libraries of some monasteries, copied and printed in the last century. If we can usually see in myrrh churches books of church service, than their theme diversifies in monastery libraries and patristic, juridical and didactic literature may be identified beside publications necessary to the divine service. The manuscript inscriptions render many times unusual information from the Romanians and world history and considered true historical sources, based on which certain events and historical phenomena may be confirmed and completed. According to the statistical data we have elaborated following the studies in monasteries, we have established that the most numerous titles and exemplars are in the monastery of Neamt, followed by the publications from Bucharest, Iasi, Buda, Ramnic, Chisinau and Blaj. The specifications, which have to be made here, are related to the relatively big number of publications from Buda and the big number of exemplars of books printed in Chisinau. There were observed orthodox Christian books for 12 months from Buda in the monasteries from Bessarabia and this is the reason why the number of titles and exemplars is higher than the one from Ramnic, which has printed books in large editions for the Orthodoxies of the entire Romanian space. The fact that this typography founded in 1814

explains the numerical disparity between titles and exemplars printed in Chisinau, attested in the monasteries of Bessarabia, as the printed books were distributed centrally or in other cases, to each priest.

Books from Romanian and foreign typographic centers have circulated in the Eastern side of Romanism. Although, this territory was sold after 1812, the books have circulated, often in clandestine way, being forbidden by the authorities from different political or dogmatic reasons. The book, by its religious or profane content, had opened certain visions on the past and present of the Romanian society from the Eastern side of Prut river. A significant contribution in completing the monastery libraries had the monks, booksellers, bishops of Romanian church etc.

The monasteries and sketes of Bessarabia are collection centers of Romanian and foreign bibliophile values. For centuries the monks and the monasteries have collected thousands of manuscripts and printed books, many of them were sold or destroyed during Soviet period. A part of these values were stored in profile institutions, and others are kept in monastic settlements in the last decade of the 20th century. The monasteries of Varzaresti, Capriana, Hancu, Curchi, Raciula, Harbovat, Noul Neamt and others may be considered as true centers of Christian culture during periods of foreign occupation. The library of the monastery of Noul Neamt was preserved by being stored in the National Archives of the Republic of Moldova.

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