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## *The Cultural Contribution of Saint Constantin Brâncoveanu through the Religious Books donated to the Church St Nicholas from Șcheii Brașovului*

### Abstract

During a time when the three Romanian countries – Moldavia, Transylvania and Țara Românească – where situated near the Austrian, Russian and Ottoman Empire, suffering a political and religious triple influence, the reign of the Romanian martyr ruler Constantin Brâncoveanu will be placed under the sign of the religious cultural resistance and political diplomacy. Well aware of the religious unity of all Romanians, he will be a great warrior against the Romano-Catholic Union, being support for the Romanians in Transylvania and especially for those from the Saint Nicholas Church from



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Șcheii Brașovului. Constantin Brâncoveanu helped by donating numerous religious books, and preserving the Orthodox faith. From the Chronicle written by David Corbea, between 1683 and 1813, we find out the important role of donations, such as The Holy Bible, The Gospels, the Triod, which were printed in different cultural centres in Țara Românească and Transylvania. Through these books, many written in Rumanian, the Church could stop the anti-national religious character promoted by the Court of Wien.

## Keywords

Constantin Brâncoveanu, David Corbea, Union, Orthodox religion, Chronic, Holy Bible, Holy Gospel, *martyria*

## Introduction

For the celebration of three hundred years since prince Constantin Brâncoveanu and his family were declared martyrs, the Holy Synod of The Orthodox Church decided, even since 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2012, *in capite et in membris*, that 2014 is the year dedicated to the commemoration of *Saints Brâncoveni* and also the year of *The Holy Eucharist*. The faculties for theology were impulse by the Romanian Patriarchy to organize national and international symposiums to celebrate the special moment of faith and Orthodox martyrdom spirituality. Related to this moment, two aspects need to be highlighted:

1. *martyria*<sup>1</sup> – the testimony of believing The Truth through offering – characterised, from its beginnings, the Holy Church

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<sup>1</sup> Alexandru Moldovan, *Martor, Mărturisitor, Martir. O perspectivă nouă testamentară, în Eucharist and Martyrdom*, (Alba Iulia: Editura

built by our Saviour Jesus Christ; it started with His sacrifice on the Cross and continued with the sacrifice of the martyr's blood<sup>2</sup> as an accomplishment of prophetic words: If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you! (John 15, 20);

2. honoring the Orthodox martyrs, like Constantin Brâncoveanu and his family, as a *honouring act hic et nunc*, is in conflict with the tendencies of the contemporary secular dominant culture, it is a very brave act for the times we are leaving, while the Orthodox martyrs of all times died for the religious Truth, identified in the persona of Jesus Christ, divine and human in the same time, and for the ideal of *promoting a divine-human religious culture until the end of time*.

As a form of *anti-culture opposed to constructive-universal culture*, the Christian martyrria is destined to be a *proposal* for the societies in all times and not an imposed act or an affirmation of a "unique confession". (Ephesians 4,5). Faith will blow away the finite and immanent horizon of secular faith that is tributary to anarchic and authoritarian individualism. It will also refuse the affirmation of differences in the religious diversity that is promoted by the secularity, using as opposition the two axes of The Cross, the form of The Theological Trinitarian of The Holy Trinity and the model of ecclesial Christology, expressed under the form of diversity in identity and multiplicity in unity. In other words:

1. The model of trinity will offer the eternal model of an open and dynamic identity of Church, *where unity will not be confusion and difference will not be division, unity being accomplished into differences and difference being accomplished into unity, through an antinomy thinking*;

2. the liberty and the redemption through sacrifice, given by the Jew Jesus Christ, are universal vocation and extension. He is the

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Reîntregirea, 2014), p. 59; Johannes Bauer, Luigi Ballarini, *Dizionario di Teologia Biblica*, (Brescia: Editura Morcelliana, 1965), p. 1434.

<sup>2</sup> Tertulian, *Apologeticum*, cap. I, 13, în: *Apologeti de limbă latină*, col. PSB, vol 3, (București: Editura EIBMBOR, 1981), p. 109.

concrete universal, and Christians, as Church, a divine-human institution, will present vocation and mission of both particular and universal testimony.

Inside the dialogue of an open synodal Church, the two axes are complementary, reciprocal conditioned, the universal into the specific cultural particularity of a nation and the particular into the universal Logos – Love of divine-human Jesus Christ. In his relationship with God, *possible through faith and celebrated through Eucharist*, the Christian will receive from above God's grace, a Supernatural and also Natural paradigm model, *a model that is above the vicious natural circularity of Individualism attributed to the "Father of Liar"* (John 8,44).

Through the efforts of a life under the sign of the Cross, received due to the power of Eucharist Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the believers understood, in time, that they need to be prepared and transmuted into the sacrifice condition of Christ, who gave Himself to death, becoming *the source of our Resurrection* (Holy Liturgy, the third troparion after the coming of The Holy Gifts) in God's Kingdom. The examples of their life, transformed by the Holy Mystery of Eucharist through the splendour of moral truth, will give light throughout history, starting from the Truth identified in Jesus Christ, *awakening life giving consciousness against a world darkened by the lies of The "Father of Liar"* (John 8, 44).

The life of the believers is a continuous advancement to *the resemblance* with the Supreme model of Saviour Jesus Christ. Eucharist is formed of *multiple sentiments, acts and symbols*, starting in a reversible permanent dialogue in the existential triangle God – Human – World. It will be an expression of loving fidelity for God, through "Christ, because He produces inside us a predisposition for sacrifice, not imitating but irradiating His grace in us. More than this, He is inside us the permanent sacrifice until the end of time"<sup>3</sup>. „His presence is not of idealistic

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<sup>3</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Liturghia comunității și jertfa interioară în viziunea filocalică*, în *Ortodoxia XXX*, 1978, nr. 1-2, p. 396.

origin, but an irradiating presence that links, in mystery, the community with the presence"<sup>4</sup>, *confessed many times in cavalries and humiliation, receiving in exchange the holy blood stained crown of the Church, like Constantin Brâncoveanu did.* His words: "My sons, be brave! We lost everything into this world. But we may save our souls and wash our sins with our blood!"<sup>5</sup>, are eternal example to follow "on the path between the history and the sinaxar – the calendar of the Christian holidays and the lives of the eastern orthodox Saints - , between the time of the world and the eternity of the after life".<sup>6</sup>

The present study propose, inside the above described context, a discourse of culture *on the theme of the witness of faith and the lover of Bible*, transmitted to his dear people, like prince Constantin Brâncoveanu did. This road opened by the power of The Holy Book will be not just Gospel for the faithful people in all times, but also *a modality of resistance through religious culture to protect the identity inside the unity of confession we were born into.*

### **The Cultural and Religious Relations of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu with the Church Sfântul Nicolae in Șcheii Brașovului**

Enthroned on 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1688, age of 34, while some nobles in opposition wanted as prince for Țara Româneasca the very young son of Serban Cantacuzino or his son-in-law Constantin Bălăceanu, Constantin Brâncoveanu becomes the

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<sup>4</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Euharistiei*, in: *Ortodoxia XXI*, 1969, nr.3, p. 352.

<sup>5</sup> L.S. Desartovici, *Martiriul Sfinților Brâncoveni*, (București: Editura Sofia, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Laurențiu Streza, *Mitropolitul Ardealului, 1714-2014: Martiritul Brâncovenilor și exemplul pentru generațiile actuale*, in: *Revista Trimestrială de Istorie și Cultură Glasul Bucovinei*, nr 1-2, anul XXI, nr. 81-82, Cernăuți-București, 2014, p. 25

choice for the throne for his qualities as strategy, diplomat and leader: they decided in their judgement that Constantin the chancellor Brâncoveanu is Matei Vodă bloodline and has other qualities, gentleness and so on, deserving to be prince, because, is an old enough man to take care of the country while it's in danger of armies and wars"<sup>7</sup>. The chronicle shows that " they chose Constantin the chancellor Brâncoveanu to be their ruler and the entire court went to mitropolity where the custom was to appoint the ruler"<sup>8</sup>. Continuing, the chronicle regards that " all agreed: Chancellor, we all welcome you as our ruler! He answered: Why would I want to rule the country when I rule my own house and I don't need anything else! They insisted: Please, do not let bad or crazy strangers to enter and ruin our country, be the ruler! They took his hands and pushed him in front as a ruler"<sup>9</sup>. Over many centuries, Nicolae Iorga, our great Romanian historian, describes the great ruler, making a reference to the Chronicle written by Radu Grecean, as having a peaceful personality: "he had no hate towards anyone, no contradictory arguments, he had no arrogance to show himself as being more neat than others."<sup>10</sup>

This choice, a well thought one, is justified by the vast experience Constantin Brâncoveanu earned since his 20's. He was, in 1664, the second seneschal – vftori seneschal, during Șerban Cantacuzino's regency, then, in 1676, second seneschal for Duca Vodă, great agha at the age of 25, commander of army guarding the capital, later sub prefect, great seneschal in 1682 and great spatharus, the equivalent of general of police and defence minister. He had many diplomatic abilities and was

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<sup>7</sup> Constantin Greceanu, *Istoria Țării Românești de la octombrie 1688 până la martie 1717*, (București: Editura Științifică, 1959), pp. 6-7

<sup>8</sup> Idem, pp.6-7.

<sup>9</sup> Idem, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Viața și domnia lui Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu*, (Vălenii de Munte, județul Prahova: Editura Neamul Românesc, 1914), p. 32.

sent as diplomat to prince Mihai Apafi in Transylvania and also to the Austrian emperor and the Russian tsar. Antim Ivireanul, the famous metropolitan wrote about Brâncoveanu: "He prays to God in fervour, to give power from above to our ruler, the Providence chose over people, so the ruler may intelligently decide upon all trusted in his hands for years, in light, happiness and sanity, protected by seen and unseen predators"<sup>11</sup>.

For 26 years, over 13,000 documents emitted by the princely chancellery, remained in several archives <sup>12</sup>, present Brâncoveanu as an active ruler, much above the political, economic, social and religious problems of his time, keeping an diplomatic equidistant equilibrium with the two great empires of the times, Turkish and Austrian, which tried to impose to the Romanian country their rules. We are able to present several documents regarding the political, economic and religious relationships of prince Brâncoveanu with *Cetatea Braşovului*<sup>13</sup>, also with the Church *Sfântul Nicolae* of Şcheii Braşovului<sup>14</sup>, seen as an outpost for the defence of the religious liberties and rights of the Romanian Orthodox inhabitants in Transylvania. These relationships had two stages: a first stage, until 1690, presents

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<sup>11</sup> Antim Ivireanul, *Opere*, ediție îngrijită de Gabriel Ştrempele, (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române, 1972), p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> The archive of the First Romanian School in Şcheii Braşovului is such an example, through the Inventory and the Old Book found, which contains over 800 manuscripts.

<sup>13</sup> Radu Manolescu, *Comerţul Ţării Româneşti şi Moldovei cu Braşovul sec XIV-XVI*, în *Analele Universităţii C. I. Parhon* din Bucureşti, Seria Ştiinţe Sociale-Istorie, nr. 5, 1965, pp. 207-259; see Ion Bogdan, *Documente şi registre privitoare la relaţiile Ţării Româneşti cu Braşovul şi Ungaria sec. X şi sec XVI*, Bucureşti, 1902.

<sup>14</sup> Sterie Stinghie, *Documente privitoare la trecutul românilor din Şcheii Braşov*, vol I-VI, 1889-1906, Candid Muşlea, *Biserica Sfântul Nicolae din Şcheii Braşovului*, vol. I, 1945, vol. II, (Braşov: Editura Institutul de Artă Grafică "Astra", 1946).

distant relationships <sup>15</sup>, due to the economic problems between the merchants in and outside the mountain circle and due to the self-exile of the opponent nobles – agha Constantin Bălăceanu – to Braşov, living with the hope of an Austrian help. The second stage starts after the battle of Zărneşti, in 11<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> of August 1690, on a Monday, when Constantin Brâncoveanu won in an not equivoque manner<sup>16</sup> - Nicolae Iorga wrote that *the ruler only lifted his sword once: in Zărneşti*—against the imperial army led by general Donat Heissler, chancellor Mihai Teleki and agha Constantin Bălăceanu.

After the battle, the prince will arrive in Braşov setting his residence in the area of Cetăţuia, built in 1524. He participated the next day to the *Romanian celebrations* in Turcheş, Săcele, Teliu and Prejmer, seven Orthodox Romanian Villages, forming after a while the town of Săcele. In Prejmer, the prince will receive the delegation of marquis Doria, trying to mediate a new establishing for the relationships between the Austrian empire and Brâncoveanu. Very diplomatic, the prince will accept the dialogue, participating in Cristian to the solemn proclamation of Emerik Tokoly as prince in Transylvania.

Some Turkish soldiers will bring to the Romanian prince the head of Constantin Bălăceanu, later exposed at the gates of Bucharest in the celebration day of St. Mary, ironically to the sayings of the dead *Bălăceanu that he will be a ruler in Bucharest*<sup>17</sup>. This episode consumed forever the conflict with

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<sup>15</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Braşovul şi români*, (Bucureşti: Tipografia Socec, 1905), p. 161

<sup>16</sup> Laurenţiu Streza, Mitorpolitul Ardealului, Vasile Olteanu, *Sfântul Constantin Brâncoveanu şi braşovenii*, (Sibiu: Editura Andreiană, 2014), p. 61

<sup>17</sup> Anton-Maria del Chiaro, *Istorie delle moderne rivoluzioni della Valachia, Veneţia, 1718*, text reedited by Nicolae Iorga, trans. S. Cris Cristian, (Iaşi: Editura Viaţa Românească, 1929), p. 39; see Constantin Rezachievi, *Constantin Brâncoveanu, Zărneşti, 1690*, (Bucureşti: Editura Militară, 1989), p. 206.



Bălăceanu family and started the beautiful relationships with the Church *Sfântul Nicolae*.

Constantin Cantacuzino, the valuable intellectual will help Brâncoveanu to extend the actions of donations for churches from Țara Românească – the Potlogi Church, Mogoșoaia, Saint George or for the monasteries such as the Hurez Monastery, Mamul, Arnota - motivated also by the intention of having a refuge for his family in Transylvania when necessary<sup>18</sup>. The building of churches will be spread on a large area from Făgăraș Church (1698), Ocna Sibiului and Monastery of Sâmbăta de Sus. In this context *an architectonic contribution* is to be expected for the Church *Sfântul Nicolae*, as many other Romanian princes did: Aaron Vodă, Gheorghe Ștefan al Moldovei, Neagoe Basarab, Nicolae Pătrașcu and Petru Cercel.

Brâncoveanu will have the initiative, after the dialogue with the Austrians, to buy several properties *ilustrissimum noble of Brașov*. 1967 was the year when in the north part of the church were discovered ornaments and architectonic details specific to the architectonic style created by the Romanian prince. Constantin Dobriceanu, the man leading the restauration of the church, wrote an article for *Astra* about the important discovery<sup>19</sup>, gaining scientific credit after the historic mentions about the princely donations in the accounting books from Șchei.

The oldest document, from 1683, started by David Corbea, mentions at the chapter dedicated to the resources of the church the donations from Brâncoveanu family, also from many relatives as Șerban Cantacuzino, Mihail Cantacuzino, Pârnu Cantacuzino, even from the Constantin Bălăceanu<sup>20</sup>. Due to

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<sup>18</sup> Veniamin Tohăneanu, *Mănăstirea „Constantin Brâncoveanu” de la Sâmbăta*, in: Mitropolia Ardealului, X, nr. 7-8, Sibiu, 1965, pp. 521-546.

<sup>19</sup> Constantin Dobriceanu, *O importantă descoperire istorică în Șcheii Brașovului*, in: *Astra*, Brașov, nr. 5, mai, 1968.

<sup>20</sup> Laurențiu Streza, *Mitorpolitul Ardealului, Vasile Olteanu, Sfântul Constantin Brâncoveanu și brașovenii*, (Sibiu: Editura Andreiană, 2014), p. 96-99.

these donations, Constantin Brâncoveanu sees himself as *protector of the Romanians in Șchei*, gives them good advices and also reprehend them when necessary. He often calls to his court the administrators of the church to check the registers and will be directly involved in choosing gociman, the representative of the church, as in 1709 when sends Mihai Cantacuzino to preside the elections<sup>21</sup>. In the difficult times after the year of 1701, Constantin Brâncoveanu will take care that the Romanians in Șchei have the Orthodox religious books necessary to *resist through culture in front of unitary*. The school teachers and the Orthodox priests in Transylvania had to obtain *the blessing from the metropolitans of Teodosie and Antim Ivireanul*. A convincing example is the protocol from 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1713<sup>22</sup> where is presented the naming of a deacon and of a teacher from Șchei by the metropolitan Antim Ivireanul in Bucharest and later the naming on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 1713 of another teachers for Brașov by Antim Ivireanu.

### **Books Donated by Constantin Brâncoveanu, Mentioned in Registries, Protocols and Manuscripts in The Archive of the Church Sfântul Nicolae**

During his 26 years as a ruler, Constantin Brâncoveanu, himself raised in an effervescent cultural environment, chose to be surrounded by special intellectuals, as Radu Popescu, brothers Radu and Șerban Greceanu, metropolitan Antim Ivireanul, born in Georgia and Archbishop Mitrofan of Buzău, born in Greece. Dozens of books in Greek, bilingual and especially in Romanian were printed during his regency. Most of them were religious books but also historical or philosophical books were printed. We propose a look upon the first category and the help of the prince for the Orthodox Romanians from Church *Sfântul*

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>22</sup> Arhiva muzeului Sfântul Nicolae, fond „Protocoale”, catastif nr. 3, p. 90.

*Nicolae*, preoccupied to fight the ancestral spiritual faith. David Corbea was the link between the prince and the Romanian inhabitants in Șchei area.

The oldest book starts in 1683 and finishes in 1813 and has a chapter regarding the donations to the Church - *Izvod pentru cărțile ce se află în sfânta Biserică la Șcheii Brașovului tot anume și care cine au dat cărțile*. The chapter mentions Constantin Brâncoveanu's personal donation of many religious books, most treasured being *Biblia românească de Constantin Brâncoveanu Bărrăbă Voievod (The Romanian Bible of Constantin Brâncoveanu Bărrăbă Voievod)*, still kept in the archive of old books in Șchei museum<sup>23</sup>.

The title page mentions that The Gospel is translated from Greek, at the request of Christian prince Ioan Șerban Cantacuzino, nephew of the ruler. The translation was made in metropolitan Teodosie's lifetime, during Brâncoveanu's first year as a ruler, in 1688. The book is printed on two columns, its cover is wooden and yellow leather and the title is in red and black, circled by a floral pattern. The second title page bears Șerban Cantacuzino's blazon, a bicephalous vulture, and also Brâncoveanu's blazon, a vulture carrying a cross in its beak. The same page contains praise versed for chancellor Radu Greceanu:

*The sun, the moon, the gryphon and the raven,  
Also the mace got together to praise you, lord,  
They braid you beautiful blazon,  
The sun and the moon are your parents.  
You were born as Light for the people and the country,  
Honest ruler of the country and the army.  
The raven that fed St. Ilie shall  
Bring you the cross, the power and the strength.  
Spread your wings like the gryphon, rule over all*

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<sup>23</sup> Arhiva muzeului Primei Școli Românești, fond Carte Veche, număr inventar carte 133.

*And bring enemies on their knees with your mace.  
 Conquer the seen and unseen enemies  
 Cause will ask Almighty God in humility to  
 Give strength in your regency.  
 Peace and harmony, a blessed life,  
 And happiness in His kingdom  
 Will be rewarded to you afterlife.*

The following works are inventoried at page 87 in the same book: *Praxiu românesc de la Șerban Cantacuzino; Evanghelia rumânească de la Șerban Cantacuzino Voievod, cu două table ferecate; Două mărgărituri ale lui Ioan Zlateaus românești date de Constantin Brâncoveanu Basarab Voievod*. Page 89 mentions as donations: *12 Minee tiparnice foarte cu treabă, date de Măria Sa Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu Basarab; Triod Postna-Penticostar- de la Măria Sa Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu Basarab; 1 Penticostari de la Constanin Voevod; (...), 1 Apostol românesc de la Constanti Vodă Brâncoveanu dat de preotul Ioan; O liturghie românească cu multivelnic dimpreună dat de dumnealui postelnic Șerban Cantacuzino; 1 Octoih rumânesc da la Constantin Voda Brâncoveanu dat de căpitan Giurc; 1 Minei din luna mai s-au dat de Radu Priocop de cele ce s-au scos de Constantin Brâncoveanu*<sup>24</sup>.

Part of the above mentioned works are available as documents in the permanent exposition organized by the distinguished priest and professor Vasile Olteanu, under the name *Constantin Brâncoveanu and Brașov*. The exposition also contains Ioan Zlateaus's Mărgăritare, printed in Bucharest in 1691, *by the will and on the expenses of the enlightened and faithful Prince and protector of Țara Românească, Ioan Constandin Băsărabă Voievod*. The book contains many teachings and words of wisdom *on greed* (word 5, list 28), *pride and vanity* (word 6, list

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<sup>24</sup> Laurențiu Streza, Mitropolitul Ardealului, Vasile Olteanu, *Sfântul Constantin Brâncoveanu și brașovenii*, (Sibiu: Editura Andreiană, 2014), p. 114.

31), *redemption and confession* (word 9, list 45), *hate and envy* (word 10, list 52), *forgiveness* (word 11, list 55), *devoutness and equity* (word 22, list 22), *richness and poorness* (word 25, list 131) and so on<sup>25</sup>. Another book is *Sfânta și Dumnezeiasca Evanghelie*, printed in Bucharest in 1693, where the following words are written in Greek on the back of the title page: *Blessed by God, Ioan Constantin Basarabă Voevod, lord and ruler on the entire Ungrovlahia, 8 political verses on the enlightened and devoted prince Ioan Constantin: Blessed ruler of Țara Rumâneasca, celebrate those great Băsărăbești. Enlightened prince, they born you as a jewel for the country and God, our Heavenly King, crowned you as a prince, gave you conquering army and sets you above all enemies. The cross is your most powerful weapon. Be strong, Constantin, cause God is preparing you good life on earth and Heaven*<sup>26</sup>. Another edition of the *Sfânta și Dumnezeiasca Evanghelie* (Holy Gospel) was published in Snagov in 1697, two exemplars being donated to Șcheii inhabitants *by the will of the enlightened and highly respected ruler and protector of Țara Românească, Constantin Brâncoveanu (...)* together with *Kir Teodosie, the Metropolitan of the entire Țara Româneasca and the exarch of the lands*<sup>27</sup>. The old book of the church in Șcheii Brașovului, makes reference to *12 Minee printed and donated by his nibs Constantin Voevod Brâncoveanu*<sup>28</sup>. All 12 books, one for each month, were printed in Buzău in 1698, *together with Tipicul and Parimiile and Sinaxariul in Romanian from the order and on the expense of Constantin Basarabă Voevoda, protector of the entire Țara Româneasca, while Kir Teodosie was the metropolitan in the country.* It is interesting that not all books, excepting the books

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 114-115.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 117; fond Carte Veche număr inventar lucrare 2431 in: "arhiva Primei Școli Românești din Brașov".

<sup>27</sup> Idem, pp. 124-125, fond Carte Veche, număr inventar lucrare 2609, in: "arhiva Primei Școli Românești din Brașov".

<sup>28</sup> Idem, p. 126; Catastif 1, număr inventar fond Carte Veche, p. 89 in: "arhiva Primei Școli Românești din Brașov".

for march and april, contain 10 political verses above the blazon of *the enlightened and devotes prince Constantin B(asarabă) Voevoda*<sup>29</sup>.

Another work mentioned in the registry of the church Sfântul Nicolae of Șcheii Brașovului, is *Chiriadromion-Evanghelie Învățătoare*, printed in Alba-Iulia in 1699. The book is the first to be printed in Transylvania from the order of the prince. The complete title is *Chiriadormion sau Evanghelie învățătoare care are întru ea Cazanii la toate duminicile prestre an și la praznicele domnești și la sfinții cei numiți*. It contains the names of the leaders of those times, like *Iosif Leopold, the king in Buda. Hungarian territories and Transylvania... and the governor Bamfi Gheorghie with blessing from the metropolitan Atanasie, Mitropolitul Țării*<sup>30</sup>.

An extreme valuable work for the Romanian culture is *Cartesau Lumină (Book or Light)*, written by Antim Ivireanul, future metropolitan, printed in 1699 in Snagov. The complete title is *Carte sau lumină cu drepte dovediri din dogmele Bisericii Răsăritului asupra dejghinării papistașilor, descoperită și așezată de preainvățatul ieromonah Maxim Peloponesianul, acum întaiu tipărit pre limba rumânească cu porunca și toată cheltuiala a preluminatului și înălțatului domn și oblăduitoru a toată Țara Românească Ioan Constandin Brâncoveanu Voevod*<sup>31</sup>. The content of the book contests the innovations in the Catholic church on many dogmatic problems , as: *the new finding of The Pope of the Romanians on the coming of The Holy Spirit, wafer, the cleaning fire they call purgatory, for the change of the Holy Mysteries, for the joy taken away from the devoted ones*<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Laurențiu Streza, Mitropolitul Ardealului, Vasile Olteanu, *Sfântul Constantin Brâncoveanu și brașovenii*, Sibiu, Editura Andreiană, 2014 p.127; fond Carte Veche număr inventar lucrare 98 ce se găsește în arhiva Primei Școli Românești din Brașov

<sup>30</sup> Idem, p. 136.

<sup>31</sup> Idem, p. 142; fond Carte Veche număr inventar 330, in: "arhiva Primei Școli Românești din Brașov".

<sup>32</sup> Idem, p.142.

*Triodion* is another important work, printed in Buzău in 1700. Its title page contains in Romanian with Cyrillic characters the following inscription: *this Triod is gift for the holy church of Braşov in Şcheai by His Nibs Constantin Basarab Brâncoveanu, forever charity to be*. The blazon of the prince is on verso, followed by a 12 verses of political *laudatio*<sup>33</sup>.

Another book is *Penticostarion*, printed in Buzău in 1701, available in two exemplars in Şcheii Braşovului. The last page of the title shows the importance of the donation, the word and the book as means to enlighten the masses: *the prophetic orders are followed by my sinful person, creature of Almighty Christ,..., I cannot put the word away into obliteration and took God as help to bring it to light for all those reading it*<sup>34</sup>.

*Liturghierul de la Buzău (Missal of Buzău)*, printed in 1702 is another work donated by , Brâncoveanu to the church *Sfântul Nicolae*. This time, the text is in Slavic, with the following text in Romanian: *The Holy Liturgy of Saint Ioan Zlataust, of great Vasilie and Saint Grigorie Dvoeslov, which is Prejdescenia, reprinted and brought to light for the use of priests and deacons, to proper follow the rules of the liturgy, to the Greek model, edited in Romanian, by the will and the expense of devoted noble Şerban Cantacuzino, during my regency, the enlightened and devoted Constantin Basarab Voevoda, to the good regency in the holy church of Kir Theodosie, archbishop in the entire Ungrovlavia*<sup>35</sup>.

Another two *Missals* printed in Râmnic, in 1706<sup>36</sup>, and Târgovişte in 1713<sup>37</sup>, were donated to the same church, one of

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<sup>33</sup> Idem, p. 146, fond Carte Veche, număr inventar 916, in: „arhiva Primei Şcoli Româneşti din Braşov“.

<sup>34</sup> Idem, p. 150.

<sup>35</sup> Laurenţiu Streza, Mitropolitul Ardealului, Vasile Olteanu, *Sfântul Constantin Brâncoveanu şi braşovenii*, Sibiu, Editura Andreiană, 2014, p. 156; fond Carte Veche, număr inventar 136 ce se găseşte în arhiva Primei Şcoli Româneşti din Braşov

<sup>36</sup> Idem, p. 164, fond Carte Veche, număr inventar 342 in: “arhiva Primei Şcoli Româneşti din Braşov“.

them being connected to the book *Molitfelnic*. The donations were made for the 18<sup>th</sup> celebration of regency and the 25<sup>th</sup> celebration of regency. A special gift for the Orthodox Romanian in Șcheii Brașovului is the book *Apostolul*, printed in Buzău in 1704, when archbishop was. On the back of the title page, together with the blazon of the prince, there are *laudatio* verses for Brâncoveanu; this book was not preserved<sup>38</sup>.

*Antologhionul* printed in Râmnic, în 1705, mentions in its introductory part that the book, the *flower of the words*, contains the entire ritual in church for the whole year, printed after the greek model, during the lifetime of the enlightened rules of Țara Rumînească, Ionn Constandin Brâncoveanu Basarab...<sup>39</sup>. *Octiohul*, first translated in Romanian to the use of the people, during the 24<sup>th</sup> year of the regency of the enlightened prince and protector of Țara Rumînească, Ionn Constandin Brâncoveanu Basarab Voevod<sup>40</sup> was printed in Târgoviște, in 1712. *Molitfelnicul* also printed in Târgoviște in 1713, for the anniversary of 25 years of regency. The last both books are documents in the exposition dedicated to the great ruler of the Romanians, the founder of religious books for the spiritual help of the Romanians over the mountains<sup>41</sup>.

## Conclusions

In a political context when the most powerful empires disputed hegemony in battles like the Austro-Turkish War in 1673, 1699

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<sup>37</sup> Idem p. 167, fond Carte Veche, număr inventar 2255 in: „arhiva Primei Școli Românești din Brașov”.

<sup>38</sup> Idem p. 159.

<sup>39</sup> Idem, p. 163, fond Carte Veche număr inventar 1619 in: „arhiva Primei Școli Românești din Brașov”.

<sup>40</sup> Idem, p. 164, fond Carte Veche număr inventar 342 in: “arhiva Primei Școli Românești din Brașov”

<sup>41</sup> Idem, p. 167, fond Carte Veche număr inventar 868 in: “arhiva Primei Școli Românești din Brașov”.



and the Russian-Turkish War in 1711, one of the most efficient weapons was weakening the small countries in the eastern Europe, including the three Romanian countries, using the *cultural and religious decentralization*.

The Unity in 1700 is an example of how the Orthodox Romanians were considered as *tolerated religion* after refusing the unification with the Catholic Church of Rome. Being aware of the great political game in which he entered, he wrote a letter to the czar of Russia, dated 31 December 1688, in which he said he knows the backstage cross on which he assumed: "my job is to be merciful and to be the bearer of all difficult things, to shed my blood in the name of the Christ, for the faith and for the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church"<sup>42</sup>.

Constantin Brâncoveanu fully experienced the consciousness of preserving the national essence and the ancestral confession, also the consciousness of *unity through Orthodoxy of the Romanian nation*. He never dissociated between the Romanian inside and outside the Carpathians Arch and helped all of them, being aware of the consequences of such a move. One of the modalities used to preserve the unity was resisting through the *culture offered by the religious books*. He sent this type of books to the Orthodox Romanians in Șcheii Brașovului and other places in Transylvania.

The museum archive of Șchei contains many *letters and documents related to Brâncoveanu and many books donated by him for liturgies*. This is the reason why, in the memory of the great Romanian prince sacrificed for faith and country, the inhabitants of Brasov decided to name one of the main streets in Șchei *Constantin Brâncoveanu Street*, a street where is also situated one of the former properties of Brâncoveanu, built in the architectural style that is named after the Romanian prince.

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<sup>42</sup> Laurențiu Streza, Mitropolitul Ardealului, 1714-2014: *Martiritul Brâncovenilor și exemplul pentru generațiile actuale*, in: Revista Trimestrială de Istorie și Cultură  *Glasul Bucovinei*, 1-2, XXI, nr. 81-82, Cernăuți-București, 2014, p. 25.