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**Monastic culture and spirituality in Vrancea from
the 16th to the 18th centuries**

Summary

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Summary

Summarizing the ones presented in the chapters of this work we can say that the Moldovan architectural art knows a beginning and a gradual progress, a beginning that can be placed with the coming of the great Prince Stephen the Great and Holy on the throne of Moldova. Corroborating elements of Romanesque, Byzantine and Gothic architecture, it turns out that, in Moldova, during the initial period of its political construction, the first churches did not have their own specific Moldovan style of construction.

Bulgaria and Serbia with their architectural features make their presence felt here by the strong influence shown. The Byzantine art specific to the two countries is impregnated in certain constructions made before the ruler Stephen the Great. Thus, the church of the Holy Trinity, built at a time that is not known, but before the reign of Stephen the Great, is highlighted by the presence of a new building plan, a plan of Serbian-atonite nature. We also find this style especially in the regions of Serbia and Muntenia.

The church constructions erected during the voivode Bogdan I and during his successors Petru Mușat and Alexandru cel Bun represent the incipient architectural style of Moldova. Some churches have completely disappeared, and those that have been preserved find them somewhat restored, restored and modified during the reign of Stephen the Great and his successors. Examples of restored churches can be found at Neamț, Moldoviță, Probota, etc.

The second reign of the great gentleman is characterized by the construction of numerous churches. These, together with those built in the last two decades of the fifteenth century, are the ones that highlight the Byzantine style, a style different from the original Serb-atonite present. In other words, this historical period, through the church constructions that were made, is rightly defined as belonging to the Byzantine style so present in Moldova.

Although the second half of Stephen's reign has its own style, it should be noted that, all the churches erected in the first half of his reign are characterized by the principles that were based on the constructions during the reigns before him. We find such a foundation at Dolheștii Mari, a construction built during the reign of Ashendra, so before 1481. This construction is highlighted as an almost faithful copy of the church from Rădăuți, representing the primitive architectural type of Moldova.

A change in the primitive style to be mentioned at the monastery in the locality of Balinese consists of adding a tower as a bell tower on the south facade of the church. All the churches suffered from the historical period of the first part of the reign of Stephen the Great, belong to the category of old monuments, these presented in a simplistic way, without elements of sensation.

The architectural style characteristic of the founders during Stephen's reign now has certain characteristics that differentiate it from what was known until that time. Thus the churches have the shape of a triconcon, a single nave that is divided into two sections equal in size by a wall which is in turn pierced by a door. The nave has a high tower to the east, and on the opposite side, the nave is square or rectangular in shape. The entrance is usually located to the west or south, and in some cases only to the south.

The flourishing of the church architecture in Moldova is affirmed by a new advance during the brief reigns of Petru Rares (1527—1538 and 1541—1546). However, the original note, characteristic of the churches of this period, not found in almost any of the countries of localization of Byzantine art, is the cover of the facades, from the base to the occuities below the eaves, with rich and wonderful frescoes, arranged in overlapping areas. .

The wooden churches, from the Vrance area, built by local craftsmen, most anonymous, built the wood that was available to them. In some places the church was built exactly where the wood was. They raised them in a short time, from a few weeks to a year. They did not need craftsmen from other parts of the country, but most of the neighboring villages. They made them small, because there were few believers. There are cases when 10-20 families have made their own church.

The peasant manifests his artistic qualities through these constructions. The way of working, by the way of decorating the wood, for those who see it from the outside, in its modesty, denotes humility, and in the interior the decoration by painting is tried.

In the presentation of the wooden churches in Vrancea, we see that this geographical area is characterized by numerous wooden constructions, a fact mainly due to the people's love for God on the one hand, and the poverty of the people highlighted by history since the fifteenth century. The architecture is simple, modest, which preserves the structure of the architecture elaborated in the time of Saint Stephen the Great. The large number of such wooden churches were built relatively quickly, either on the outskirts of a locality, or even in the districts, where certain monks were brought to perform the Liturgy.

Today, these wooden churches are justly valued by the ordinance of our state, and, by the established laws, are saved not only from the tooth of the time, but also from the misunderstanding of those who do not know how to value the artistic value of these monuments.

Regarding the emancipation of the church art in Moldova, we can say that the painters form here an early local school, whose creation, preserved to this day unaltered by subsequent interventions, are the precious paintings of the churches in this geographical area and especially those of those in the geographical area. northern Moldova, rightly considered, due to the paintings on the outer walls, unique masterpieces in the world.

The artistic daring of the Moldovan painters had manifested itself since 1492, through the illustrations of the Tetraevangiliar of the hieromonah Gavril, who rejects the hieratism, the monumental and the solemnity, of course attenuated, as we have shown to the Byzantine models of the Comnenian and Justinian era, the painters. at Cozia and Arges. Comparative chronology is often revealing.

The second part of the paper presents the Episcopate of Buzau and Vrancea - Its establishment and development in the 20th century. XVI - XVII, this being the foundation of the chapels and monasteries in Vrancea. In order to establish this bishop,

the ruler Radu cel Mare calls himself Nifon, to organize the church life from here. He immediately makes a bishop's bribe with the help of which he ordains two other bishops, the latter being able to appoint priests to organize the proper life of the church.

Nifon calls with the agreement of the Lord the most important egumens and priests in monasteries with which he makes sorcery, and together with the lord, the boyars and the bridegroom establish the right of correction. All the church ordinances that are to be applied are ready now to bring about the correction of the wicked as soon as possible.

Starting with the year 1503 or probably the year 1504, two Bishops are established: one at Râmnicul Vâlcea and another at Buzău, these being obedient to the Metropolis led by Nifon. Only two years after their establishment, Nifon, on the basis of moral problems, enters into direct conflict with Radu Voda and is forced to retire to Athos where he remains until the end of his life in 1508.

Nifon's direct involvement in the church life brought a new color to it, a new soul, because by his will, the Church was now more organized, the people more faithful and closer to the saving traditions of the soul, and the priests in the churches were true missionaries. who worked permanently on the glory of God.

The main idea that emerges from the ones presented is that in 1503/1504 the establishment of the Bishopric of Buzau takes place through the direct involvement on the one hand of Mr. Radu cel Mare, and on the other hand of the former Patriarch of Constantinople, Nifon, which at the time mentioned , out of love for the country and the people, he ordains two Bishops whom he sends to minister to the Church of God.

It is absolutely necessary to present the establishment of the new Bishop, without which there could not have been the monasteries and hermitages to be presented in detail. Starting from the premise that without a bishop there can be no Church, the presentation of the founding and the facts of the newly established and implicitly of the Bishops is imperative.

The extent of the Bishop's Bishop from a geographical perspective is difficult to establish according to the data that have been recorded in the chronicles. What is clear is that the city of residence is Buzau. Therefore, we can suppose that the extension of

the jurisdiction of this Bishop was carried out to the surroundings of the residence area, an area with fantastic potential, offered by the geographical location it had. Thus, located on the outskirts of the sub-Carpathian hills, the city of Buzău we find it attested in historical documents starting with 1431.

After this eparchy was formally founded by the ruler Radu cel Mare, through the above mentioned church, a second foundation stone of this Bishop is practically laid. However, not long after, the jurisdiction of the Bishopric of Buzău is diminished, even during the reign of the one who gave the above mentioned church. It, at the insistent insistence of the Turks, offers Braila with 55 nearby settlements.

Regarding the title that the titular bishops of the newly established Episcopate were carrying, it is: "Father Fr. Eiscop kir Paisie". Another similar name is an alphabet from another document that mentions "Father Bishop Kir Paisie". The third denomination that is highlighted by the use of the name of the Episcopate is: "The former Bishop Episcop kir Paisie de Buzău". Another formula presents the same Paisie Bishop in the year 1546 under the name "of the mercy of God the Most Holy Archbishop Kir Paisie from Buzau". These are the main forms of presentation to the first Bishop of Buzau.

Chapter III of the paper presents the substantial contribution of the Vrancian monasteries to the preservation of Romanian spirituality and culture. The historical analysis of the Romanian people denotes the fact that, unlike other peoples whose date of Christianity is clearly stated, it can be established historically, regarding the Romanian people, that he was born a Christian.

St. Andrew's sermon, or better said by receiving it, is rightly the birth certificate of the Church of Christ founded on our ancestral land, and the fact that after the war of 106, Dacia becomes a province of the great Roman Empire represents the act by which it is testifies to the romances of our people. These two elements are the basis for the formation of the Romanian people, which developed in the faith brought by Saint Andrew.

A special feature of our monasteries is that they are built outside the world, that is, retreated into forests and woodlands. This withdrawal is due to the desire for a distance from the world and the closeness to God. However, it should be mentioned that this

withdrawal did not mean a lack of monasteries and therefore a monastic life in the world. In other words, although hidden from the world to some extent, these Vrancian monasteries worked permanently for the world, through the numerous schools established here, the first teachers being even priests and monks. In these schools, besides the writing and reading, the Romanian spirit was constantly cultivated, which by faith brought an increase of hope, these two latter elements inevitably leading to an increase of love for each other.

The purely Romanian culture preached in these monasteries was authentic and always called for the defense of the ancient land, uniting all the believers in a single thought. Moreover, the living examples offered by the monks, made them all feel and live in one thought, even in difficult times characterized by poverty and struggles.

The area of Buzau and Vrance enjoys perhaps the largest number of monastic settlements, which have existed throughout history. Thus, a number of 138 monastic settlements can be investigated, which is not very common in other geographical areas of the country.

The involvement of the churches and the hermitages in the life of the Romanian people was permanently highlighted. This is probably due to the fact that most monasteries and hermitages were built through the effort of ordinary people, without ordinary possibilities. The godliness of the people gathered together made it possible to erect so many monasteries and hermitages in this area.

Although they were not fortified military centers, monasteries and hermitages often had the power to unite the people before the danger, at the same time being refuge areas for those who could not fight. Moreover, they were centers of Romanianism, as they raised awareness for the country and for the nation, and for this reason, they were always plundered and burned by the pagan peoples.

The burning of monasteries was a normal practice for paganism. This is mentioned and historically in a letter written by the ruler Matei Basarab, in which he expressed his annoyance at this fact, saying that the Episcopate, by this being understood the whole of the chapels and monasteries, was often burnt, left and enslaved. The co-rulers, that is,

the Tatar people, knew that churches are places of refuge, and in order to destabilize the people, they plundered and burned all the sketches that appeared in their path.

Also among the walls of the shrines were often killed we could say the saints of God, to the monks who were trying to protect both the hermits and the people who were sheltering there from the path of the Tartar urge. Such is the case at the Brazi Shrine where, Metropolitan Theodosius II, a founder here in Brazi, is tormented and then beheaded by the Tatars who wanted to find out where the "treasures" of the schist are.

From the large number of monasteries and hermitages in the Buzau diocese, we see that some of them, especially those built by the voivodes, were provided with certain protection systems. In other words, in addition to the main purpose, namely those of a place of worship, they also had a defensive purpose, being considered as true shelters.

Referring to the Bradu monastery we can say that this monastery through its location played a very important role in the trials of the times. Located on the Nișcov Valley, it has a defensive role. Its walls built of river stone have by construction a road for the stage, places for shooting, which are still visible today.

Basically, the monastery was a fortress with fortifications that respected the military tradition. It is clear that all the investments in fortification systems did not have as their main purpose the defense of the small church, but to be a powerful defense center against the guards.

Due to the clear command of the Ottoman empire not to build defense cities, the rulers built these monasteries like cities with all the military fortifications available at that time, not violating the sultan's command. Thus, these monasteries become major centers of refuge in case of any danger.

The Orthodox Church, by its construction and by the norms that it strictly respects, defines itself as the guardian of the cult organized systematically by the Holy Fathers. This prevents the Church from the possible innovations that can be introduced, innovations that distort the truth specified in the theology of the Holy Scriptures and implicitly the Holy Fathers.

All units of worship, regardless of where they were, whether they were city or village parishes, needed worship books to use according to the established ordinance. Due to the fact that we can not speak until the eighteenth century of mass printing, within a typography, it turns out that all the books of worship were handmade, so in manuscript form.

Besides the books of worship, there were also theology books so necessary for living according to the will of God and here all the writings of the Holy Fathers can be remembered. As print could not be, certain monks in the monasteries, who were busy with the calligraphy, had the task of manually copying certain manuscripts to share further, where needed.

One such center where the manuscripts were multiplying according to the needs of the time is the Poiana Mărului monastery in Vrancea county. This monastery acquires these skills because of the abbot who was a lover of prayer and culture. Moreover, the ascetic life and the good strenuousness practiced here, not only by the abbot, but by all the needy living, increased the monastery's reputation, being considered at the same time as Mount Athos.

The first example worth mentioning and followed by this sketch, is even the abbot Vasile, who was constantly obstinate to give a model to the brothers, and in addition to the many activities he had, was also involved in those of writing and copying.

Another example to be remembered is the schemonah Mitrofan who handled the copy of the writings of Saint Basil and Macarie the Egyptian. Then we must mention the hierarchical Dorothy who took care of copying the texts of Gregory Sinaitul. The latter can also be appreciated for its outstanding qualities in the art of calligraphy.

The rules for such a work were not easy. Thus, at the Poiana Mărului hermitage there was practically a school of calligraphy and copying, because the copies had clear rules that they had to adhere to in order to be able to render texts in Latin, Greek and others as accurately as possible.

The ability to copy manuscripts involves first and foremost basic reading and writing knowledge. And since at that time there were no schools to teach such notions,

the existing chapels and monasteries were study centers. Only later in history do we see the churches in the villages mentioned as having taken on this responsibility, namely to teach all writing and reading, as later, in 1832, to take primary education offered by the state.

In other words, until the state began to conduct education in an organized form, the book makers were priests and monks of the hermits. There is no denying that the monks have a very important role in terms of Romanian education. Starting from the hermitages, the education is then organized with the Bishops, and the first teachers are also monks. So, many centuries ago, before the state made it to the first school, there were real schools within the scriptures where writing and reading were taught.

A school to be mentioned is that of Brazi. It was organized in such a way that it could teach the book not only to adults, but especially to children. Therefore, in 1839 Bishop Meletie knew that in Brazi there is a school for children, led by the Theoctist hierarchical monarch. Here are taught basic notions of writing and reading, easy to remember for all the children who came here for the love of the book.

The Dălhăuți school opens its doors to the school established here in 1859. Here, all those who wanted to learn the book, but especially the young monks were trained. It can be said that this school is founded because of a need for trained priests to have priests and singers, who know exactly not only how to write and read, but also the church order, music and other arts.

At this famous school of those times, monks from all the diocese come to study, even from Poiana Mărului, because here the psaltic music, so necessary to the church life, was intensely studied. Starting from the bishop's command, on December 1, 1859, Father Dimitrie comes to the monastery for teaching parents and brothers through sketches. Beside him, the monk taught the monk Domitian. All those who participated in the courses organized in Dălhăuți were obliged to return to the sketches of the waves at their completion, for the benefit of those from there, the house could be taught to everyone.

At the Nifon school, 45 priests from the monasteries come to study to prepare intensely for entering the seminary. Also in the same period, it seems that the

government has decided to establish schools for the people not only in the big cities, but even in the villages, so that everyone can know the writing and reading.

As theological seminars were founded, many of the myrrhians came and studied, thus becoming prominent priests, and the monastic dinner could not be earlier. For this reason, at the Nifon hermitage, intense training of the monks takes place, so that they will be among the intellectuals. Moreover, considering that the monks, unlike the myriad priests, are open to all the steps of the priesthood, that is, they can reach bishops, it was all the more important for them, the monks, to acquire as many knowledge.

Seeing all the hard work of the monasteries to ensure a decent school, the state also helps by providing firewood, but this aid lasts until 1865, when all the schools take care of the communes.

Beginning with 1867, the school at Nifon receives a new status, that of the primary school. If at first it was a training center for monks only, it now becomes a state-recognized school, which issued certificates of primary school. The main branches of study practiced here are: grammar, religion, reading, history and geography, mathematics, and not least church music.

The news about the girls' school from Cotești has spread and now at the courses here not only orphans participated, but also children from families around the sketch, families who wanted their girls to be book-acquainted. Interestingly, this girls' school operates during a historical period when girls were somehow considered inferior, having no school need.

Coming soon enough to have 70 girls studying here, the bishop wishes that with the help of the Ministry he could offer even better conditions of study, which is why he repeatedly writes addresses to the Ministry, to involve him in the construction of a size school. correct for such a large number of students.

We can say that the school from Cotești is very important, because it has succeeded through the efforts of some people, to bring light through knowledge in the lives of many girls, most of them orphans, thus giving them the possibility of a better life by applying knowledge on who acquired them every day of the course.

The Cislău school was by definition a school that prepared the future servants of the holy altars. From the desire not to limit this school only to the preparation of the future priests, the bishop allows all those who want to learn the book to attend the courses taught here. The news was received with joy, as evidenced by the large number of children who were studying at the school at Cislău Monastery. Therefore, in addition to the studies conducted for the preparation of the seminar, here, being sufficient space, there are also taught primary school, where children were taught to write and read.

Until 1870 we have no more testimonies about the events that took place in this school, and in the mentioned year we have a document attesting that Popescu Demetru received a diploma certifying that he attended the courses of this school for three years.

The school from Sfântul Gheorghe performs its function in the difficult conditions generally offered by historical factors. Although this school does not have a very long life due to external factors, its prestige is not lower than the others, here coming to visit the very ruler Carol I, ruler to whom the mothers from here addressed a letter complaining to him about the conditions of living here, taking into account the frequent land surprises. The desire of the nuns was to receive permission to move to the Barbu hermitage, and to be allowed to build their cells from the forests of the state.

The last chapter of the paper, entitled Vrancian Monasteries, which promotes Romanian spirituality, presents, based on documents from the State Archives, a number of six significant monasteries from this geographical area, highlighting the special role they played in Romanian culture and spirituality.

Thus, the first monastery presented is that of Sihastru. The monastery is located on a plateau that is to the left of Siret and implicitly of the Adjud - Tecuci road. Being built at a height, it has a spectacular panoramic view, from here you can admire the way in which the Sidewalk and Sireto are united in one water. Its richness, rarely encountered, does not consist in material things, but in the special landscape that the pilgrims have the opportunity to see, here at the monastery.

History mentions the year 1474 as the time when the hermitage was created by the care of the brother-in-law of the great ruler Stephen, so shortly after the end of the second battle he had with the ruler of the Romanian Country, held in 1473.

Another solid testimony that gives weight to the first statement, is that certain authors, confess that the document of establishment is held by Bishop Melchizedek. So this document contains both the year of establishment and the name of the founder. The fact that the Șendrea family continued to maintain the hermitage even after the death of the founder of the law, it is still a certainty that he was none other than the hatman of Șendrea.

Costache Șendrea, is the historical character who has contributed significantly to the effective destruction of the Sihastru sketch. He, through the kinship he had through marriage, with certain boyars, had a certain influence, both at the ruler and at the Boiar courts.

Taking advantage of the relations he had made among the boyars, he ignored the act by which the Razu family came into possession of his sketch and his assets, and on July 20, 1836, by another act, "the whole property of the sketch was entrusted to the Medelnicer Costache Șendrea ", this being now considered a founder with full powers.

Although the estate from Sihastru has been a source of dispute for a long time among the members of the Șendrea family, after her forced residence by Petrache, it remains in the administration of the sons of Octav and Miltiades. They, like their father, are looking for only the earning part of what the estate and land of the church meant.

This situation continues until 1903, when the Law establishing the House of the Romanian Autocephalous Church was given, a law that clearly specifies the attribution of this House to control the administration of the assets of churches, monasteries and church settlements, whatever the origin of these assets and regardless of who would administer it.

Life from the Sihastru hermitage is divided into two significant periods of time, the first lasting from the establishment of the hermitage until 1955, and the second period from 1955 to the present. If in the first period the hermitage was inhabited by monks, in the second period it is transformed into a monastery of nuns.

From the analysis of the historical facts of this monastery, we can see that the life here was not easy, hence the small number of living. Thus, in 1808, we find eight monks, and 26 years later 34 survivors are remembered.

Starting from the fact that the first living here mentioned in history is a sihestrian, we believe that the monastic life here was of a sinister character, and the end of the 18th century brings to the monastic life also the country current, practiced here by Samuil, a statesman from Neamt. Although with few living, the spiritual life from Sihastru is a quality one, a fact proven by history that proves that in the forehead of the monks from here, in the year 1820 there was a hieroschimonah.

The spiritual life from Sihastru undergoes a significant development with the coming of Filaret's status as abbot. Having friendly relations with Mount Athos, he manages to bring more Holy Relics to Sihastru, which means by implication an enrichment in the spiritual life of the monks. Then the work of the abbot is continued by the Hieronymite Ioil, formerly living in Athos, who lives here with two other monks from the Prodrom.

From 1955, more precisely from April 9, the Sihastru monastery becomes a nun's monastery, transferred here from the Buciumeni monastery, the pope being Popa Tecla. This proves in addition to exemplary spiritual living and a good organization, for which, the monastery, with only 20 nuns, is organized in such a way that, through their hard work, they get everything they need.

As for the museum of books and old icons, the Sihastru monastery, because of the negative historical events we have presented, cannot be boasted with an impressive number of books. Usually, in other monasteries, where the number of monks was high, after their death, their books remained in the monastery, but here in Sihastru, due to the small number of monks, and due to the abolition and robbery of the Ashendra family, a never could have been made. treasure in the true sense of the word.

One of the icons of the exhibition to be highlighted is painted on wood, and the frame is carved being adorned with smaller icons. This icon is valuable both in its beauty and in its antiquity, it being dated to 1748. Another icon can be seen here, which is dated a little later, in 1751.

As for the treasure trove of books, most of them are in a precarious state without a title sheet. They were printed in two large centers, namely in Iasi and Neamț.

The second monastery presented is the one in Brazi. If we look at the Brazi sketch from a historical perspective, we see that the first question that the analysis raises concerns, refers to the initial name of the sketch. There is a fundamental difference in the recognition of this sketch, because, in the documents, it is referred to as the "cross from the cross. This name would come from the existence in that place of a stone carved cross, something that is quite common in this region. Probably from here and the two villages received the name of the Cross from above and from below, and the hermitage between them, as was natural, was called the hermitage of the Cross.

Later, there are several names that the hermit receives from the people. If it was originally called the Cross of the Cross, then it becomes the Cross from the lower Cross, then the Cross of the Cross from the Cross, then from the Brazi, and finally the Brazi Chart remained.

The death of the abbot Dimitrie meant the beginning of a new wave of heavy trials through which the Brazi monastery had to pass. The entire monastery wealth passed to the state property, for which the churches and monasteries could no longer self-administer. However, there was a positive side, too, because with the Law of Secularization of monastery assets, the state was somewhat committed to supporting churches and monasteries.

This support was financial in nature, when a monastery suffered heavy damage, and the monks had a form of remuneration that would provide them with the necessary necessities in order to survive. Although there were these forms of aid, we should not understand that the state had as a primary concern the repair of the monasteries, but only that, in some cases, at great insistence, they gave part of the value of the repair costs, the rest being left to the statesmen and to the state. believers.

The period of the First World War brought with it numerous damage that the Brazi monastery suffered. The Germans during the two years 1916-1918 did not hesitate to bring much suffering. However, after the end of the war, the Brazi monastery had a

beautiful development. All the churches have been rebuilt, but their suffering does not cease.

The year 1949 brings a significant change to Brazi. This is the moment when the Brazi monastery becomes a nun's monastery, under the spiritual guidance of the priest Clement Cucu. The first abbot here is the monk Tecla, who together with the other nuns reside the entire monastery.

The year 1959 represents perhaps the saddest moment in the monastery's history. Starting with this year, until 1980 the monastery in Brazi is closed by the new political regime. These 21 years in which everything was closed, meant in fact the ruin of everything that was built, ruins to which some residents of Panciu locality contributed, who, appropriating their undesirable things, "destroyed everything that had been built from the foundation. ". The place where once fervent prayers to God were raised was now nothing more than a mere ruin.

The most important contemporary event to be mentioned is the canonization of Saint Theodosius, the founder of Brazi after the two monks mentioned, and the martyr who found his martyrdom trying to defend the hermitage of the pagans.

Although it has been through many difficult times in which it was always damaged by various factors, the Brazi monastery is today a true monument, a place of tranquility in which prayer is harmoniously combined with the work, and the results are tailor-made.

From all the data we have presented, it turns out that the Brazi monastery, reborn from its own ash, is an important center of Orthodox spirituality, which brings to prayer thousands of pilgrims who bring glory to God through the honor of the relics of Saint Theodosius.

The third monastery presented is called Dălhăuți. Many monasteries and hermitages can boast that they have as rulers who give a certain value to the founding. Here we can mention Tismana, Radu's foundation, the Lord of the Romanian Country, Horez, built by Constantin Brâncoveanu, Cozia of Mircea cel Bătrân, Putna founding of Stephen the Great and others.

In ancient times the importance of founders was given to some extent by the importance of the founder. That is why these royal monasteries have always enjoyed a better material situation, appropriate books of worship, and not least by prominent authors who write about them, so that their names last forever.

In addition, there is a category of monasteries that make a name for themselves from the value of the living and praying God who lived in them. Also here is the value given to some sketches and monasteries of certain writers who wanted to study and write defended by the silence between the walls of such holy places.

In other ideas, the monasteries are oases of spiritual tranquility, quietness put to the benefit of all who seek it, they are relieving the weariness of those who run through desolate places of sin.

Nowadays, every monastery and hermitage is known by the people, either by what has been written about them, or by the specificity of each one, that is, through the elements that it holds and makes each one unique. Such is the case in Dălhăuți, a monastery that cannot be praised as a royal foundation, but instead has a true treasure. It is about the miracle icon of the Virgin Mary that protects more than any ruler this holy place and all who come to pray here.

The news about the miracle icon made the Dălhăuți monastery very sought after by pilgrims. There is a legend that would say that this icon was painted by the Evangelist Luke himself. The main idea is that the beginnings of the Dălhăuți monastery are somewhat related to this icon.

Throughout the ages, there were many needy people, saints of God, who, from deep humility, did not want to leave signs of their existence.

Not having a scholarly life here, it is clear that written testimonies about the events that took place in Dălhăuți are very rare. However, there were some people who noted something about this holy place. Here can be given as an example the hierarchist Macaris Ghetnanu who writes two small booklets containing some historical landmarks related to the monastery, but which can not be found in other historical documents to validate their authenticity.

A believer in the law of Christ, the great Paisie de Neamț, which through its ordination has positively influenced the lives of many monks and nuns, is sheltering for a while at the Poiana Marului. Located in the immediate vicinity of Poiana Mărului, the Dălhăuți monastery borrows for the small number of people from here certain landmarks of spiritual life characteristic of Paisie's life. From this it follows that the passage of Paisie from Neamț to Poiana Mărului influenced categorically, the spiritual life and from Dălhăuți and why not even from Vărzărești.

Although it has suffered numerous hardships throughout history, the Dălhăuți monastery has continued to stand beyond those sufferings. The most difficult period was during the First World War when it was turned into a prison by the Germans, and the monks here were banished. Moreover, all the books of worship and all that the archive meant were destroyed, resulting in many shortcomings regarding the historical documents needed for research.

The year 1990 brings with it the re-establishment of the monastery, now being a nun's monastery. Through their work, between 1992-1995 the church with the dedication "Holy Archangels" is renovated according to possibilities.

To preserve the few remaining books, the nuns here set up a small museum in 1995. In addition to the books, the museum brings to light some cult objects, objects that escaped the plague of old times.

These are the few valuable things that the Dălhăuți monastery holds in its museum, and which it shows to the pilgrims for the desire to promote the Romanian culture and spirituality. Perhaps if history had been gentler with this beloved monastery of God, it would certainly have been able to exhibit in the museum many more books and holy odors, but due to historical factors, this is impossible.

The same is true of spiritual life. Certainly, many monks lived here with a special spiritual experience, monks who either did not want to leave us traces of their existence out of humility, or, due to the hardships of the history of this place, the evidence that was lost there.

The fourth monastery presented is named Poiana Mărului. Not all monasteries can boast that they are built by the rulers, or that they have high-value odors. There is a category of hermitages and monasteries that can be highlighted by the spiritual living that the inhabitants had here, living what was and is a model for promoting the Romanian spirituality beyond any borders.

One of the main reasons why the famous Paisie Velicikovsky turns his attention to the monasteries in the Romanian Principalities is that, here, libraries with writings and manuscripts in several languages could be found, and the monks in charge of them were of a particular culture. In other words, here in Poiana Mărului, the cultural activity was very well defined, the monks, book writers, dealing among others with writing or copying manuscripts.

Even though the large monasteries could show libraries to the extent, however, even the sketch of the abbot Vasile was no longer relevant. The assiduous and almost unstoppable work of the monks from here, led by their abbot, was to raise a valuable library.

From the numerous books and manuscripts present at Poiana Mărului, we naturally deduce that this spiritual center of Moldova was definitely a cultural center. The profound signs in literature left by the works carried out at this sketch are of paramount importance. Although in general, the large monasteries were dealing with the activity of the scholar, the Poiana Mărului hermitage, although small, had a high priesthood, which taught the monks both the book and the prayer of the heart.

Also here in the sketch we must remember the existence of a "scriptorium", that is to say a center itself for copying the manuscripts. All the copy monks showed a true calligraphic talent, a fact proved by all the manuscripts of the library. The existence of many manuscripts in Slavic language in the sketch is due to the fact that many of the monks here were of Russian origin.

Also from this "scriptorium" we have many documents, manuscripts copied in Romanian, a special place occupied by the writings of the abbot Vasile. Although thought and written in Slavonic, they were immediately translated by the author, so that their multiplication would be in both Slavic and Romanian. The existence of these

manuscripts and in Romanian also denotes the fact that among the monks, book-makers, who were in charge of copying, there were also Romanians.

Regarding strictly the writings of the abbot Vasile, or the translations made by him or under his careful leadership, the research must go on two guidelines. The first of these refers to everything written in Slavonic, and the second line of research concerns all the writings made in Romanian.

The special importance of these writings is also due to the fact that, they are the basis of the writings that followed, writings made by his disciples like Paisie. The writings that were authenticated as belonging to the abbot Vasile from Poiana Mărului, were implicitly introduced in the edition of Optina.

The second line of research deals strictly with the work of the abbot Vasile, realized or translated into Romanian. The Bucharest Academy library contains eight manuscripts. Virtually all the Slavonic writings are translated into Romanian, to which is added the manuscript entitled: "Imagining how it is to live, nine of us who are passionate".

The fifth monastery presented is called Vărzărești. This foundation of Radu Vărzaru, is one of the monasteries of Moldova that had the honor of hosting it, even for a short time on Saint Theodora of Sihla. Although the holy relics of this holy beloved of God are for worship in Kiev, she lived for a period, alone, in the church life here in Vărzărești, during the time when the hermitage was abandoned.

Another great name of the monastic life that linked the presence of the monastery is Paisie, the disciple of Vasile from Poiana Mărului. Returning from the Holy Mountain, together with a haul of monks, they stayed here for several months, "after which they retreat to the Dragomirna monastery.

From these few examples we understand that the Vărzărești monastery, although it has been through difficult times for the monastic life, for this reason it is long deserted, yet it can be presented as an establishment in which both saints of God and scholars have lived. to some extent they have made their mark on these lands.

Without their presence, the history sheets regarding the Vărzărești monastery would suffer, because the imprint placed by these great people who lived here will be highlighted until the end of the centuries.

The sixth monastery presented is named Recea. The name of the Monastery comes from the Recea stream near which it is built, having as neighbor to the north the village of Cândești. This is dedicated to the "Birth of the Virgin Mary" and can be included in the monasteries of great beauty in the Vrance area, more precisely near Dumbrăveni.

If we analyze the few historical documents that have been preserved, we find that the founder of this Holy Monastery is Mănilă Mărcineanu, a boyar of Buzian origin. From the few facts about the founder it appears that he also built other chapels and monasteries, being captain in the leadership of Sherban Cantacuzino. Although at first glance, he seems to be a man with a fear of God, through the foundations he has made, yet his actions denote less worthy actions. Perhaps being too subject to the mentioned vioevode, he executes certain commands, many of them unfair. This was also the case with Saint Theodosius II, the founder from Brazi, who, following the command of the voivode, was taken by force from Mănilă and taken to Bucharest, where he was detained for about ten weeks.

Beginning with 1900, the hermitage was deserted. Because of this he is restored and becomes a monastery of nuns. Starting with this year, due to natural factors, the landslides destroy the church in the village of Bordești, and the believers having no place to go to prayer, gather at Recea. This situation continues until 1940, when, following a strong earthquake, the Recea monastery is badly damaged.

After about 6 years, the monastery is reopened, and at the command of Bishop Antim, it is populated with nuns. The following years meant a substantial effort regarding the totality of the works that were carried out, works both on the masonry side and on the painting.

In conclusion, we can say that the Vrancian monasteries had a special role in the cultural and spiritual situation of their time, which cannot be disputed, being clearly exemplified in the historical documents that have been preserved. Although few in number, due to the many robberies and fires that have taken place throughout history,

these documents allow the sketch of clear images of each particular monastery and of their special work which they carried out in difficult conditions, out of love for God and the people.

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