

THE INCOME OF MOLDAVIAN MONASTERIES BETWEEN THE FIFTEEN CENTURY AND THE MID-EIGHTEEN CENTURY¹

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In the Romanian territory, the period between the fifteenth century and mid-eighteen century corresponds to the high and late Middle Ages. Even if the Romanian or the foreign historiography have dealt with numerous subjects concerning social and economic history in the aforementioned period, a key point in the history of the Romanians and other Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire has been avoided. Thus, in spite of the fact that the monasteries of Moldavia and Wallachia had had a vast spreading area and had profoundly influenced the social, economic political and cultural life in the Orthodox Levant, the scientific preoccupation of historians has eluded this subject. The causes of this situation seem to be primarily methodological: a vast reference material, written in different languages and paleographies (Slavonic, Romanian, Greek, Latin and German), that remained mostly unpublished.

Thus, in the said period, the Orthodox Church in Transylvania – albeit having the majority of devotees – was deprived of legal rights. Significant in this regard is the fact that the Church lacked the right of establishing and possessing an ecclesiastic domain for itself, and the Orthodox secular clergy had to work the fields of the nobility. For this reason, in order to defend the Orthodox rite of the principality, the princes, the high clergy and the boyars of Moldavia and Wallachia have supplied them with money and religious books, and they have also sent Orthodox missionaries to the Romanians in Transylvania. Actually, in Transylvania, all the political, economic and social rights were reserved for representatives of the four official religions of the province (Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian).

Instead, the Orthodox Church in Moldavia and Wallachia enjoyed a special status in relation to the state. Thus, in Moldavia and Wallachia the princes and the important rulers at the court have made large donations from the central governance domains to both Orthodox churches of the two states and to monastic establishments from the rest of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the most important donations were of whole villages or parts of villages, vineyards, mills, and money donations; to these, some offerings of local monasteries to needy monasteries from across the Orthodox Levant can be added. Along with the real estate acquired through donation from lay people and clergy, the Orthodox Church of the two Principalities consolidated its property by seizing some domains or parts of some villages from their rightful owners.

Therefore, one can find in the economy of the time not only the reasons for which the Romanian princes, hierarchs and great boyars endorsed the Orthodox Churches on the

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Ottoman Empire territory, but the incentives of the permanent extension of the monastic territory of Moldavia and Wallachia as well: the revenue these donations could bring to a monastery. Unfortunately, the exact reconstruction of the money value of that revenue is difficult, due to the gaps in the documents that have come down to us; an exception is the revenue from vines cultivation. However, even without determining precisely the amount of monastery income, documentary information gives us an insight into their importance and diversity.

Given the complexity and peculiarities of the ecclesiastical domain in the three Romanian Principalities, in what follows we will pursue the economic situation of the monasteries in Moldavia compared to that of the monasteries in catholic states, the Moldavian Orthodox Church's sources of income, the importance and the way in which these revenues were used in the period to which we refer.

Thus, starting with late fourteenth century, the Orthodox Church in Moldavia has acquired a large territorial domain. Therefore, should we compare the wealth of the monasteries and the wealth of the boyars and merchants of the principality, it can be said that the former were very rich. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the vast expanse of the ecclesiastic territory in Eastern Carpathians, the monasteries in Moldova were poor compared to those in Western and Central Europe².

This major discrepancy vis-à-vis Catholic Europe has been determined primarily by the extent and, implicitly, by the lesser influence and wealth of Moldavia compared to the Catholic states of Europe. Then, the economic development of this Romanian principality suffered greatly due to the establishment and progression of the Ottoman rule, following the conquest of Constantinople (1453), of the Crimean Khanate (1575) and of Hungary (1526), so the principality was forced to accept Ottoman suzerainty and to pay a tribute whose value has continuously increased³. Moreover, the situation became very difficult in Moldavia with the devaluation of the Ottoman akche (1584)⁴ due to the general depreciation of silver across Europe – in the wake of the import of large quantities of silver from the American continent – and to the rough economic situation across the Ottoman Empire⁵. Actually, the problematic economic situation of the Sublime Porte in the late fourteen century is due, on the one hand, to the enormous expenses made for the maintenance of war troops and colonies left in the occupied countries, and, on the other hand, due to the corruption and mismanagement within the Ottoman state⁶. As such, not managing to cover these expenses, the Turks have raised the coin, thus depreciating it: the akche lost value and weight, while the quantities of precious metal available after this devaluation were used to coin other currency⁷. Under these conditions, the Romanian Principalities have not only been directly affected by the economic crisis of the Ottoman Empire to whose

² The count d'Hauterive: *Mémoire sur l'état ancien et actuel de la Moldavie présentée à A.A.S. le prince Alexandre Ipsilandy hospodar régnant en 1787 / Memoriu asupra vechei și actualei stări a Moldovei prezentat lui Alexandru vodă Ipsilante la 1787*. Bucharest 1902, s. 154–155 (hereafter Count d'Hauterive: *Mémoire sur l'état de la Moldavie*).

³ Berza, Mihai: *Haraciul Moldovei și al Țării Românești în sec. XV–XIX*. In: *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medievală*, 1957, s. 7–47.

⁴ Iorga, N.: *Documente mare nouă, în parte românești, relative la Petru Șchiopul and Mihai Viteazul*. In: *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, Bucharest, serie II, 20, 1898, s. 440.

⁵ Iliescu, Octavian: *Un tezaur de aspri turcești de la începutul secolului al XVI-lea, găsit în Bucharest*. In: *Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică* 3, 1960, s. 305, note 3; Isăcescu, Elena: *Tezaurul monetar din a doua jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea, descoperit la Râmnicu Vâlcea* (hereafter Isăcescu, Elena: *Tezaurul monetar*). In: *Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române* 70–74, 1976–1980, no. 124–128. Bucharest, 1981, s. 335.

⁶ Isăcescu, Elena: *Tezaurul monetar*, s. 335.

⁷ Zane, Gh.: *Economia de schimb în Principatele române*. Bucharest, 1930, s. 119; Isăcescu, Elena: *Tezaurul monetar*, s. 335.

economic system they were tied, but their tribute to the Sublime Porte was converted by Ottoman authorities at the pre-devaluation amount. This meant an abrupt increase in tribute, whereupon the revenues of the reign and of the church fell sharply.

To these causes, natural disasters can be added (drought, plagues of locusts, famine, epidemics, etc. extremely common in the region of the Danube). Furthermore, the poverty of monastic establishments was also determined by the sporadic military confrontations between Moldavia and Hungary, Poland and later the Ottoman Empire, after which followed the wars the neighbouring countries fought on its own territory: Poland, Austria, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The picture is completed by the numerous plunder raids and slave captures that Moldova has suffered from the Tartars, the last of these numerous campaigns taking place in 1758. All these wars generally synopated the economic life in the principality between the Dniester and the Carpathians, and particularly made of the Moldavian monasteries a favourite target for plunder-thirsty troops.

Finally, seeking to cover the debts they had after occupying the throne, some princes called the monasteries to tribute in the second half of the eighteenth century⁸, thus leading to the impoverishment of many monasteries towards the end of the century. Accordingly, due to poverty and poor management of monastic possessions, some monasteries started to degrade and the monks were scattered to other monasteries or even to their own estates. For this reason, many monasteries – deprived of the material support from Moldavian princes and rulers of the principality – have disappeared without a trace, leaving only the memory of their existence in the shape of ruins, archival documents or local toponyms in people's memories. Actually, except for monarchic monasteries and some boyar monasteries come under the patronage of the reign, most of the monastic churches were made of wood, thus disappearing without a trace. However, stone monasteries were not spared the danger of ruin and extinction. Such examples are the Catholic monasteries in Siret, Baia and Bacău.

Still, notwithstanding this extremely unfavourable context, some monasteries have had periods of economic stability, especially the monarchic monasteries, which benefited from the help and protection of the great founders. As a sign of their wealth, some monasteries managed to purchase, along their existence, one or two estates. Such an example is the monastery of Putna, which, during the time it held the status of monarchic necropolis, managed to gather enough money to redeem the village of Cucurul Mare from Prince Ștefan Rareș⁹.

At the same time, to save themselves from extinction, some monasteries had tried to get liquidities by selling their own estates. However, the importance of these sales was very low, for Romanian mediaeval law did not allow monasteries to sell their own estates¹⁰. This was due to the fact that the real estate belonged not to the monks, but to the monastery where they lived, and their waste was likened to stealing from the Church¹¹. This explains the sporadic interventions of the central rule in order to stop the sale of monastic property.

⁸ Romanian Academy Library-Bucharest (hereafter RAL-B), Romanian Manuscript (hereafter Ro. Ms.), Manuscript number (hereafter Ms. no.) 111, s. 43–43v, no. 3; s. 49r, no. 6; s. 50, no. 7; s. 50r–51v, no. 9 and s. 78, no. 6; Balan, Teodor: Documente bucovinene (hereafter Balan, Teodor: Doc. bucovinene). Vol. III (1573–1720). Cernăuți, 1937, s. 12, no. 7 and s. 18, no. 12.

⁹ Documente privind istoria României, A. Moldova (hereafter DIR.A.), veac XVI. Vol. II. Bucharest 1951, s. 19, no. 17; vol III, 1951, s. 47–48, no. 63.

¹⁰ Mițaș, Nicodem: Dreptul Bisericesc Oriental. Bucharest, 1915, s. 438.

¹¹ Documenta Romaniae Historica. A. Moldova (hereafter DRH. A.), vol. XIX. Bucharest, 1969, s. 144–148, no. 121 and s. 149–153, no. 122; Iorğa, N.: Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor (hereafter Iorğa, St. și doc.). Vol. V. Bucharest, 1903, s. 97–98, no. 91; Codrescu, Teodor: Uricariul. Vol. VII, Iași, 1875, s. 23.

Since they were not allowed to sell the monastery estates, but their need of liquidities was overwhelming, the monks found the solution of bypassing the mediaeval customary law by changing the monastic estates received as a gift for worse estates, so that the difference in value between the two categories would be covered in money or animals¹².

Regarding the income obtained between the fifteenth and the mid-eighteenth century in the Moldavian monasteries, they came mainly from raising cattle and beehives¹³. Furthermore, a significant part of the ecclesiastic income were the money donations made to the monastery by the princes, boyars and merchants of the country, but also by some better-off peasants who hoped to obtain salvation by donating money to the clergy. Gradually, starting with the seventeenth century, the monasteries' sources of liquidities have expanded after some shops and taverns entered their keep¹⁴. In addition to this, the Moldavian clergy enjoyed a special regime of exemptions, for tolls were rarely imposed upon them. Thus, disregarding the number of pigs, sheep or hives they possessed, the monasteries paid a boyar-like tax to the state, that is, half of the sum a peasant would have paid for the same animals¹⁵, although the latter's financial situation was extremely difficult.

Then, at the turn of the eighteenth century, the monastic synods have found yet other solutions to cover their urgent financial needs. Thus, they began practicing tenure more and more intensely, in order to transform the obligations of monastery villages into liquid leases; they also started to strengthen the commerce with cattle and alcohol. All these measures brought important income to the monasteries, but money was spent very fast by paying taxes to the reign, sustaining the sanctuary, the synod and the employees, but mostly due to the hegumen's poor management or greed.

Likewise, other traditional sources of income for the monasteries were the tithe and the corvée. Thus, according to the custom of the land, on each estate the landlord was entitled to the tenth part of the revenue from fields, gardens, meadows, mills, ponds and forests. Therefore, for possessing monastic lands (fields, meadows, vineyards and orchards), the bondmen had to pay a tithe to the owner¹⁶ and to work certain number of days for him (as many as the boyar needed) for, according to the Romanian customary law, peasants only possessed the trees, vines, fish, vegetables and crops, not the land per se¹⁷.

A document from early eighteenth century attests the wine production from an acre of land and the respective tithe taken by the landlord. Thus, in 1701, Ștefan, the son-in-law of priest Timofte from Bălești, testified that he took three and a half acres from Serafim, hegumen at Bogdana monastery, and will give back ten buckets of yoke every year, by the local custom¹⁸. Considering that he who took a piece of land from its owner had to give back

¹² DIR. A., veac XVII. Vol III, 1954, s. 175–176, no. 271, s. 187–188, no. 285, s. 189–190, no. 288 and s. 214, no. 313;RAL-B, Ro. Ms. no. 111, s. 49r–v, no. 6.

¹³ Kogălniceanu, Mihail: *Cronicele României sau Letopisețele Moldaviei și Valahiei*. 2th Ed, vol. III. Bucharest, 1874, s. 37; Splény von Mihály, General Gabriel: *Descrierea Districtului Bucovinean* (hereafter Splény: *Descrierea District. Bucovinean*). In: *Bucovina în primele descrieri geografice, istorice, economice și demografice* (1775). Bucharest 1998, s. 93.

¹⁴ Splény: *Descrierea District. Bucovinean*, s. 93.

¹⁵ Splény: *Descrierea District. Bucovinean*, s. 85.

¹⁶ Iorga, N.: *St. și doc.* Vol XI. Bucharest 1906, s. 282, no. 41; Mihordea, Vasile (editor in charge); Constantinescu, Ioana; Istrati, Corneliu: *Documente privind relațiile agrare în veacul al XVIII-lea*. Vol. II Moldova, Bucharest, 1966 (hereafter Mihordea s.a.: *Doc. relațiile agrare*. vol. II-Moldova), s. 187, no. 124; s. 341, no. 325; s. 357, no. 347. National Archives-Bucharest (hereafter NA-B), Manuscripts Collection (hereafter Ms. Col.), Ms. no. 628, s. 224v.

¹⁷ Codrescu, Teodor: *Uricariul*. Vol. X, s. 179–180; Iorga, N.: *St. și doc.*, vol XI, s. 282, no. 41,

¹⁸ *Catalogul documentelor moldovenești din Direcția Arhivelor Centrale* (hereafter CDM). Vol. V (1700–1720). Bucharest 1974, s. 20, no. 76.

the tenth share of the crops, then an acre of vineyard (6. 445 m²)¹⁹ produced 100 buckets (1 bucket = cca. 15,20 l)²⁰ of wine. Then, this document attests not only the wine production from a vineyard in Moldova, but it also proves the fact that the tithe of ten buckets per acre per year was an old law, the custom of the land.

At the same time, from all the fields that peasants had on monastery estates, they only paid tithe for the beehives, and this meant that they were entitled to the honey and beeswax of every tenth beehive in the estate²¹. As a matter of fact, the hive productivity was high in Moldavia and Dimitrie Cantemir shows that if the peasant “has 20 beehives, then, with this income, he can easily pay all his tolls around the year. Not to mention that if the weather be good, each hive swarms seven others each year; and it is enough for every hive to give two or more measures of honey upon cutting, for each measure is sold with a thaler. Those who live in the mountains have sheep, honey and berries in abundance, while in the plains people have wheat, cattle and horses”²².

Finally, all craftsmen (tanners, potters, butchers, wheelwrights, tubbers, spoonmakers, etc), cattle merchants and tavern keepers that lived on monastery property, whether they were freemen, servants, bondmen or slaves, they all had to pay a tenth of the fruit of their labour to the monastery synod²³.

Noteworthy is the fact that sometimes monasteries forgave bondmen of their tithes²⁴. Some other times the monastic tithe was taken by free peasants²⁵ or by servants of the rule²⁶.

Next to the peasants' lots, the monasteries had their own fields and meadows, gardens, vineyards and orchards²⁷, tended by monks²⁸, plough boys, serfs, and possibly by the slaves from the village. In fact, the fact that the collective owner participates in labour is the feature that distinguishes Moldavian monastic domains from boyars' domains, the latter being tended only by villeins, bondmen and gypsies.

The monks' physical labour had mainly a spiritual motivation, for their toil was useful to the Church in her mission of saving Christians. Thus, by means of physical labour, the monks showed their disdain for the sinful flesh²⁹, trying to keep their love for Christ alive, fighting against temptation and helping strengthen the Holy Monastery. Therefore, it is understandable why idleness is considered a sin within monasteries, while labour is seen as a form of obedience. Thus, according to each monk's origin, training and vocation, aside

¹⁹ Stoicescu, Nicolae: Cum măsurau strămoșii. Metrologia medievală pe teritoriul României (hereafter Stoicescu, Nicolae: Cum măsurau strămoșii). Bucharest, 1971, s. 135.

²⁰ Stoicescu, Nicolae: Cum măsurau strămoșii, s. 176.

²¹ NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 360v, s. 367v and s. 369r.

²² Cantemirii, Demetrii: Descriptio antiqui et hodierni status Moldaviae (Descrierea Moldovei) (hereafter Cantemir, Demetrii: Descrierea Moldovei). Bucharest 1973, s. 473.

²³ Mihordea s.a.: Doc. relațiile agrare. vol. II-Moldova, s. 181–182, no. 119; Olteanu, Ștefan – Șerban, Constantin: Meșteșugurile din Țara Românească și Moldova în Evul Mediu (hereafter Olteanu-Șerban: Meșteșugurile în Evul Mediu). Bucharest 1969, s. 168, note 507.

²⁴ Dan, Dimitrie: Mănăstirea Sucevița. Cu anexe de documente ale Suceviței și Schitului celui Mare. Cu ilustrații. Bucharest, 1923 (hereafter Dan, Dimitrie: M-rea Sucevița), s. 152–154, no. 8.

²⁵ NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 367r, 367v, 369r–v.

²⁶ Balan, Teodor: Doc. bucovinene, vol. II (1519–1662), Cernăuți, 1934, s. 162, no. 86 and s. 162–163, rez. no. 1, 2, 3 and 4; Dan, Dimitrie: M-rea Sucevița. s. 205, no. 3; Condicta lui Constantin Mavrocordat. Ed. Corneliu Istrati, vol. III, Iași, 1987, s. 241, no. 1465.

²⁷ DIR.A., veac XVII, vol. II, s. 138, no. 171.

²⁸ NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 367r and s. 369r–v. Cantemir, Demetrii: Descrierea Moldovei. s. 359. Caproșu I. – Chiaburu E.: Însemnări de pe manuscrise și cărți vechi din Țara Moldovei (hereafter Caproșu-Chiaburu: Însemnări de pe mss.). Vol. I (1429–1750), Iași, 2008, s. 37; Dan, Dimitrie: M-rea Sucevița. s. 181, 192.

²⁹ Panaitescu, P.P.: Manuscrise slave din Biblioteca Academiei R.P.R. Vol. I. Bucharest 1959, s. 120, Ms. sl. no. 93, s. 284v.

from taking part in the religious ritual, they were also appointed by their superiors³⁰ to some community work in order to fulfil their obedience oath. Thus, the literate monks of noble descent had to copy, bind, paint and embellish books, otherwise they painted icons and churches³¹. The unsophisticated monks, most numerous, were appointed to other labours. Thus, most of the monks tended the vineyards, orchards, apiaries, gardens and the fields of the monastery³². When a monastery was erected or renovated, or new constructions around the sanctuary were needed, the monks were the ones to work upon them³³. The monks that knew a trade manufactured liturgical objects, monastic clothes and shoes, and tools, as well. Thus, some brothers were painters, millers, grain warehouse guards, tailors, coopers or blacksmiths³⁴. All these crafts practiced by monks brought monasteries significant gains.

Along with the tithe, monasteries used peasants' and slaves' work in order to gain more income. Thus, thanks to these obligations bondmen and slaves had, monasteries were exempted from paying employees for the work that was necessary to maintain the monastery and its installations on the field, for ploughing, sowing, carrying harvests and haymaking.

Although several Romanian researchers have denied the existence of serfs' statute labour on noble estates in the Romanian Principalities until mid-seventeenth century³⁵, in reality the villagers' work for the benefit of monasteries in Moldavia is attested since the mid-fifteenth century³⁶. Considering that the monastery fields are attested as early as 1497³⁷, we are convinced that peasants were used for other tasks as well, not only for the maintenance of monastic facilities and haymaking.

Whereas on the monasteries' work fields plough boys and bondmen had to provide free labour, for working the vineyards, skilled workers³⁸ called vintagers were employed with wages. By these employments, the monks sought to obtain a superior harvest, in order to gain important profits from selling wine. Thus, documentary information dating from the second half of the seventeenth century offers precious insight into the wine production, the tax range demanded by the reign for this kind of activity, the vintagers' payment and the wine prices in Moldavia. Thus, on December 14th 1668, the Catholic missionary Vito Piluzzi from Vignanello purported that the Church from Baia "had eight vineyards and now has three left; and it had from its vineyards six vessels of wine: two taken by the Prince <Gh. Duca, at his second reign (November 1668 – August 1672) – editor's note>, four are left and they are sold for 16 lei a vessel; and for working the vineyard, people ask 10 lei for each vinery; the priest is given 30 lei"³⁹. We believe that by "one vineyard" the

³⁰ Cantemir, Demetrios: *Descrierea Moldovei*, s. 359.

³¹ Caproșu-Chiaburu: *Însemnări de pe mss.* Vol. I, s. 30, 31, 36, s. 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 73, 80, 83, 84, 96, 98, 99, 100, 136, 152 etc. Dan, Dimitrie: *M-rea Sucevița*, s. 190.

³² NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 367r and s. 369r-v. Dan, Dimitrie: *M-rea Sucevița*. s. 181, 192. Cantemir, Demetrios: *Descrierea Moldovei*. s. 359. Caproșu-Chiaburu: *Însemnări de pe mss.* Vol. I, s. 37.

³³ Caproșu-Chiaburu: *Însemnări de pe mss.* Vol. I, s. 37.

³⁴ Dan, Dimitrie: *M-rea Sucevița*, s. 180–181, 190. Caproșu-Chiaburu: *Însemnări de pe mss.* Vol. I, s. 127.

³⁵ Panaitescu, P.P.: *Dreptul de strămutare al țăranilor în țările române (până la mijlocul secolului al XVII-lea)* (hereafter Panaitescu, *Dreptul de strămutare*). In: *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie I*, 1956, s. 73; Cihodaru, C.: *Branșițele și apariția rezervei senioriale în Moldova*. In: *Analele Științifice ale Universității «Al. I. Cuza», Iași, Serie Noua, Istorie*, 3, 1957, fasc. 1–2, s. 30–36.

³⁶ DRH.A. Vol. II, s. 80, no. 55.

³⁷ Caproșu-Chiaburu: *Însemnări de pe mss.* Vol. I, s. 37.

³⁸ *Carte românească de învățătură de la pravilele împărătești și de la alte giudeațe, cu dzisa și cu toată cheltuiala lui Vasilie voivodul și domnul Țării Moldovei, di mai multe scripturi talmăcită, di în limba ilienească pre limba românească, în tipariul domnesc, s-au tipărit în mânăstirea a Trei Svetitele, în Iași, de la Hristos 1646.* Bucharest 1961, s. 55.

³⁹ *Călători străini despre Țările Române* (hereafter *Călători străini*). Vol VII. Bucharest 1980, s. 80.

writer designated a “falce” (one and a half hectare, TN), for the “falce” was the current unit for vineyards in Moldavia⁴⁰.

Furthermore, monasteries derived important profits from the employment of other monastic assets. For instance, the forest reserves, special estates that no one was allowed to use without the monastery’s consent. Thus, all the neighbouring people who felled trees for construction or for fire, who mowed, who went fishing or hunting in these forest reserves had to pay the tenth share of their felled trees, hay or hunted animals to the monastery⁴¹. Moreover, the mountain forest reserves offered room for meadows and for grazing or animal fattening – not only for the animals belonging to the monastery, but for those of the neighbouring villagers (horses, cows, sheep, goats and pigs). Noteworthy is the fact that cattle belonging to monastic establishments were for the monks’ use, but mostly for trade. Given the fact that most of the mountainous forest reserves had a much larger surface than the number of animals monasteries needed and they surpassed the feeding needs of the synod, the monks used to allow either their own peasants⁴² or the freeholders to come there and pasture their cattle or mow the grass. As such, in return of herding their sheep and cattle during summer, foreign shepherds had to pay 12 rams and a block of ewe-cheese⁴³.

When people and synod did not strike a deal for using these borders, the forest reserve keepers were entitled to take all that poachers had upon them (cart, axe, nets, clothes, etc.), leaving them naked⁴⁴ or wearing only a shirt⁴⁵.

Also, some monasteries had brine springs in their mountain forest reserves, thus obtaining important income from selling the saltwater to surrounding peasants, who had to carry their own from the salt-mine for use in their households⁴⁶.

At the same time, the ponds and lakes in the monasteries’ possession had the same status as the forest reserves, because the monks were the only ones entitled to fish there⁴⁷. Thus, those who lived on the territory of these lakes had to negotiate with their keepers not only for fishing, but for being allowed to bring their animals for grazing and water, to mow the grass surrounding the ponds and to cut and use the brushwood, cattail and reed of these ponds⁴⁸. In lowland areas, wood was difficult to find, so the cane and brushwood of these ponds were used by peasants when building houses and rooftops for parish churches, when making fences and different braids for household use, but also for home heating and for food preparation⁴⁹. For using these, peasants had to pay the monks their ordinary tithe and to help them when fishing fish and crabs, that is “when closing these ponds <and> tending the fisheries⁵⁰”.

⁴⁰ Stoicescu, Nicolae: Cum măsurau strămoșii, s. 110, 129, 134 and 135–140.

⁴¹ NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 224v. Balan, Teodor: Doc. bucovinene. Vol. II, s. 96, no. 41, s. 124–125, no. 59. Balan, Teodor: Nuii documente câmpulungene (hereafter Balan, Teodor: Nuii doc. câmpulungene). Cernăuți 1929, s. 24–25, no. 17; Mihordea s.a.: Doc. relațiile agrare. vol. II-Moldova. s. 178, no. 114, s. 181–182, no. 119; Olteanu-Șerban: Meșteșugurile în Evul Mediu. s. 146, note 244, s. 168, notes 503 and 507.

⁴² Balan, Teodor: Nuii doc. câmpulungene, s. 16, no. 8.

⁴³ NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 367r-v and s. 369r-v. Balan, Teodor: Doc. bucovinene. Vol. II, s. 96, no. 41.

⁴⁴ Balan, Teodor: Nuii doc. câmpulungene, s. 16, no. 8; Balan, Teodor: Doc. bucovinene. Vol. II, s. 96, no. 41.

⁴⁵ RAL-B, Ro. Ms. no. 111, s. 43v-44r, no. 5.

⁴⁶ DIR.A., veac XVI. Vol. III, s. 225-227, no. 278. Călători străini. Vol. I, București 1968, s. 282.

⁴⁷ DIR.A., veac XVII. Vol. IV, s. 157, no. 195.

⁴⁸ NA-Iași, Colecția Litere „Gheorghe Asachi”, dossier B-27, s. 14; dossier B-71, s. 40, 51r-v, 58r-v; dossier B-72, s. 69r-v, 93r. DIR.A., veac XVI. Vol. II, s. 157-158, no. 203.

⁴⁹ NA-Iași, fond Tribunalul Iași-secția a III-a, tr. 1818, op. 2082, dossier 91/1866, s. 6r. NA-Iași, Colecția Litere „Gheorghe Asachi”, dossier B-87, s. 41v; Melchisedec, Episcopul Dunării de Jos: Chronica Romanului și a Episcopiei de Roman, compusă după documente naționali-române și străine, editate și inedite, vol. I (de la anul 1392 până la anul 1714). Bucharest, 1874, s. 40–41.

⁵⁰ NA-Iași, Colecția Litere „Gheorghe Asachi”, dossier B-27, s. 14; dossier B-71, s. 40r, 51r-v, B-72, s. 69r-v, 93.

We believe that the size and number of the monasteries' revenues varied every year, from one monastery to another and from one village to another, depending on how the bargaining between domestics and peasants was made⁵¹. It should be noted that only the owners had the right to catch fish and crabs from the ponds⁵², but they could let the peasants feed themselves out of these ponds, without selling what they caught and only after giving the monastery the tenth part of what they had fished⁵³.

Still, given the size of these ponds, it seems that not all monasteries had enough people to guard them, so poachers sometimes stole their fish⁵⁴. If caught, these poachers were punished and they were taken their oxen, cart, fishing tools and axes⁵⁵.

Using the estate facilities (mills, fulling mills, brandy distilleries, wine presses and water mills⁵⁶ etc), brought important revenue to the monasteries. Thus, those who used them had to share the tenth part of the processed product to the owner of the facility⁵⁷. This tax brought a large income for those times, reason for which monasteries have always built one or two such installations in each village.

When some priests or better-off peasants built their own mills, taverns, fish ponds, orchards, vineyards and apiaries on monastery ground, they paid a tenth of the income they got to the monks⁵⁸. Still, given the importance and gainfulness of these facilities, in the eighteenth century, domain owners managed to convince the reign to grant them the monopoly upon these installations. This happens during the expansion of the tenure phenomenon, because keeping other people from building their own mills, taverns, mills, wine and oil presses, the monastery superiors could lease their own facilities at a higher price.

Actually, if until the second half of the seventeenth century, the handsomest of monastery income came from selling animals and from milling, starting with this date the largest profit came from taverns⁵⁹, booths and tenure. Thus, keeping taverns came to be more important in the eighteenth century than the wholesale of wine and cattle. For this reason, the owners sought to obtain the monopoly upon the right to keep a tavern (1766)⁶⁰. Then, another source of income for the monasteries, especially for those in the big towns, was the tavern tax. This represented the rent payment for the taverns, booths and monastery places around the city⁶¹, being in reality a form of tenure.

Leasing estates appeared as early as late seventeen century⁶², but until the Kuciuk-Kainargi treaty (1774), the leaseholder was the one to operate the estate household according to the mediaeval law, in which the revenue was derived mainly from the exploitation of

⁵¹ NA-Iași, Colecția Litere „Gheorghe Asachi”, dossier B-27, s. 14; dossier B-71, s. 40, s. 51r-v, 58r-v, and dossier B-72, s. 69r-v and s. 93r-v.

⁵² NA-Iași, Colecția Litere „Gheorghe Asachi”, dossier B-27, s. 14; dossier B-71, s. 40, 51r-v, and dossier B-72, s. 69r-v.

⁵³ DIR.A., veac XVI. Vol. I, s. 518, no. 465; veac XVII. Vol III, s. 121, no. 195.

⁵⁴ DIR. A., veac XVII. Vol. III, s. 186-187, no. 283 and 284.

⁵⁵ DIR. A., veac XVII. Vol III, s. 134, no. 210.

⁵⁶ Panaitescu, P.P.: Dreptul de strămutare, s. 73.

⁵⁷ Rosetti, Radu: Pământul, sătenii și stăpânii în Moldova (hereafter Rosetti, Pământul). Vol. I De la origini până la 1837. Bucharest 1907, s. 225.

⁵⁸ Dan, Dimitrie: Mănăstirea și comuna Putna. Cu două apendice (hereafter Dan, Dimitrie: Putna). Bucharest 1905, s. 187-188, doc. no. 4; Mihordea s.a.: Doc. relațiile agrare. vol. II-Moldova. s. 174, no. 108. National Archives-Suceava (hereafter NA-Suceava), fond Balan, Teodor: Documentele mănăstirilor din Bucovina. Ms., pachet II/11, vol. X, s. 23-24, no. 4. NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 223r and s. 225r.

⁵⁹ NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 169-v. Caproșu, Ioan: Documente privitoare la istoria orașului Iași (hereafter Caproșu, Ioan: Doc. ist. orașului Iași). Vol. II Acte interne (1661-1690). Iași 2000, s. 359, doc. no. 388.

⁶⁰ Codrescu, Teodor: Uricariul. Vol. II, Second edition, s. 224.

⁶¹ Balan, Teodor: Doc. bucovinene. Vol. III, s. 29-30, no. 21.

⁶² Bobulescu, C.: Două chipuri bisericesti. In: Revista Istorică Arheologică Bisericească, Chișinău 19, 1929, s. 39, annexes V-VI.

taverns, mills, and ponds, as well as from levying the tithes and the peasants' corvée. Under the conditions of transhumance and cattle trade, the leasing system first entered the monastery domain, the preferred sources being the mountain and plain pastures, but the facilities and the estate ponds as well, and only later did it extend over all of the estate income⁶³.

In what regards monasteries, in late seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century, they used to dedicate their estates to different boyars, for unlimited periods of time, in exchange of fixed royalties in goods or money⁶⁴. Actually, all the income that was due to the monastery from the leased estates was taken by the lease-holder (owner)⁶⁵. It has been considered that the payment of the lease (the tavern tax) was damaging to the monasteries, because they weakened the rights of possession and it led to the alienation of monastic estates, so that leaseholders could get rich, as they had a fixed annual payment, which was often underpriced⁶⁶.

Since this custom was unbeneficial for monasteries⁶⁷, leasing was forbidden repeatedly by the central reign, but it continued to be widely practiced, for it was a source of liquidities. Concurrently, it is also possible that the lease money was not declared to the princes' clerks, out of the monks' fear of being forced to pay taxes to the state, but also maybe some superiors used part of the money in their own interest, hiding them from other monks.

Likewise, in the fifteenth century and in the first half of the following one, the most important monasteries of the principality were offered the takings from domestic customs. Thus, Bistrița monastery received the right of taking the toll from Bârlad, Bacău and Tazlău⁶⁸, while Putna monastery received "*the small customs in Suceava, which is at Vicov*"⁶⁹. Similarly, the monks from Moldovița monastery have charged such taxes from the localities of Gura Moldoviței, Covurlui and, respectively, half the sum from Vadul Călugăresc⁷⁰. Still, from the second half of the sixteenth century, following the monetary crisis of the Ottoman Empire, the Moldavian princes were bound to confiscate the customs revenue from the monasteries in order to pay their own taxes and tributes to the Sublime Porte.

In return, monasteries were exempted from the wine or fish customs tax, and sometimes from the merchandise they sometimes professed⁷¹.

Actually, notwithstanding ecclesiastical canons, all Moldavian monasteries practiced merchantry at a large scale, sometimes beyond the borders of Moldavia⁷². Thus, between the fifteenth and the seventeenth century, monasteries achieved significant revenue from the cattle trade, trade which the princes of the Romanian Principalities also practiced⁷³.

⁶³ Constantinescu, Ioana: *Arendășia în agricultura Țării Românești and a Moldovei până la Regulamentul Organic* (hereafter Constantinescu, Ioana: *Arendășia în agric. Țării Rom. and Mold.*). Bucharest 1985, s. 24.

⁶⁴ Constantinescu, Ioana: *Arendășia în agric. Țării Rom. and Mold.*, s. 24.

⁶⁵ Mihordea s.a.: *Doc. relațiile agrare. vol. II-Moldova*, s. 181–182, no. 119.

⁶⁶ Constantinescu, Ioana: *Arendășia în agric. Țării Rom. and Mold.*, s. 24 and note 30.

⁶⁷ Bogdan, Ioan: *Sămile mănăstirilor de țară din Moldova pe anul 1742*. In: *Buletinul Comisiei Istorice a României* 1, 1915, s. 224–225.

⁶⁸ DRH.A. Vol. I, s. 75, no. 5, s. 150–151, no. 10, s. 284, no. 200.

⁶⁹ DRH.A. Vol. III, s. 63, no. 36, s. 509, no. 285.

⁷⁰ DRH.A. Vol. I, s. 39, no. 27, s. 344–345, no. 242, s. 358, no. 253, s. 285–386, no.272, s. 410, no.287, vol. II, s. 8–9, no. 6. DIR.A., veac XVI. Vol. I, s. 518, no. 465.

⁷¹ DRH.A. Vol. II, s. 52–53, no. 37, s. 244, no. 164.

⁷² Furnică, Dum(ă)tru) Z.: *Documente privitoare la comerțul românesc 1473–1868*. Bucharest 1931, s. 1–3, doc. no. 1 and 2.

⁷³ Bănescu, N.: *Opt scrisori turcești ale lui Mihnea II „Turcitul”*. In: *Academia Română. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, Bucharest, 1926, serie III, tom. VI, mem. 8, s. 184, doc. no. II, s. 189, doc. no. VI. Corfuz, Ilie: *Odoarele Movileștilor rămase în Polonia. Contribuția la istoria artei and a prețurilor*. In: *Studii. Revista de Istorie*, Bucharest, 25, 1972, no. 1, s. 29–59.

Yet, along with the monasteries, in the sixteenth century some of the peasants also took part in this extensive trade, beyond the Moldavian border. They sold cattle, honey, wax, leather, butter and wine. Sometimes, these bondmen were the envoys of the lord, and sometimes they were on their own⁷⁴.

Instead, monastery slaves practiced small scale, local trade. Given that in the Romanian Principalities gypsies were used as craftsmen by the aristocratic or monastic domains⁷⁵, and money was scarce and expensive for most peasants, domestic industry had a huge development in Moldova. For this reason, the villages on these domains had an autarkic economy in regard to the craft industry of merchants and cities⁷⁶. They purchased only the expensive products designed especially for the monastic court that local craftsmen could not manufacture: expensive fabrics, weapons or liturgical objects, sophisticated tools, etc.

Certainly, gypsy slaves sold their products to the people of the domain particularly through barter, offering crafts in exchange for food and clothing, and only after their obligations towards the monastery were cleared.

Although rhythmically inconsistent, important sources of income for monasteries were the money donations made to the Church by the princes, boyars and the clergy to have their names written in the monasteries' diptychs⁷⁷.

Then, sometimes the reign passed the responsibility of paying the taxes the monastery owed to the state from the vineyards and taverns in the synod's keeping to the monks⁷⁸.

Also, monasteries in Moldavia could gain the right of cashing in their own behalf the taxes owed to the reign by the peasants⁷⁹. That these taxes would bring significant revenue is proven by the fact that royal servants often used force in order to enter the monastery villages and seize these rights, so the reign's command was needed in order to administer justice.

Concurrently, the hegumens of large monasteries were granted the right to judge and punish their villagers for adultery, incest, quarrels and fights⁸⁰. Those who won the trial had to pay a so-called "iron-charge"⁸¹, while the guilty were fined⁸². These "iron-charges" and fines brought important revenues, as evidenced by the numerous conflicts emerged between the high clergymen and boyars for the right to judge and charge the villagers on monastery lands⁸³. As such, royal command was needed in order to prevent the high stewards, aldermen, or the lawmen and bailiffs of the province from interfering with these

⁷⁴ Iorga, N.: Documente românești din Arhivele Bistriței. Scrisori domnești și scrisori private. Vol. I, 1899, s. IX-X. Iorga, N.: St. și doc. Vol. V, s. 511–512, no. 3.

⁷⁵ Panaiteșcu, P.P.: Introducere la Istoria Culturii Românești (hereafter Panaiteșcu, Introducere la Ist. Cult. Rom.). Bucharest, 1969, s. 285.

⁷⁶ Panaiteșcu, Introducere la Ist. Cult. Rom. s. 285.

⁷⁷ Costăchescu, Mihai: Documente moldovenești de la Bogdan voievod (1504–1517). Bucharest 1940, s. 334–335, no. 48. DRH.A., veac XVI. Vol I, s. 89–90, no. 85–88, s. 92, no. 89, s. 97–98, no. 97. Vol. II, s. 97–98, no. 88, s. 139, no. 131. Dan, Dimitrie: Putna. s. 215, no. 7. Dan, Dimitrie: M-rea Sucevița, s. 172–174 and 178.

⁷⁸ NA-Suceava, fond Balan, Teodor: Documentele mănăstirilor din Bucovina. Ms., pachet II/9, vol. VIII, s. 85, no. 31; Caproșu, Ioan: Doc. ist. orașului Iași. Vol. II, s. 359, doc. no. 388, s. 379–380, doc. no. 414; NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 20r, 169v.

⁷⁹ NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 4v, 63v, 164r–v, 192v–193r and s. 199r. DRH.A. Vol. II, s. 80, no. 55, s. 120, no. 84. Caproșu, Ioan: Doc. ist. orașului Iași. Vol. II, s. 379–380, doc. no. 414. CDM, Supliment I (1403–1700). Bucharest, 1975, s. 64, doc. no. 115.

⁸⁰ Archives Putna Monastery (hereafter APM), doc. no. 29; NA-Suceava, fond Balan, Teodor: Documentele mănăstirilor din Bucovina. Ms., pachet II/7, vol. VI, s. 81–82, no. 24.

⁸¹ APM, doc. no. 57.

⁸² NA-B, Ms. Col., Ms. no. 628, s. 4v, 20r, 163v and 199r. DRH.A. Vol. II, s. 104, no. 70, s. 80, no. 55; s. 120, no. 84; Caproșu, Ioan: Doc. ist. orașului Iași. Vol. II, s. 379–380, doc. no. 414.

⁸³ APM, doc. no. 170.

trials and fines that were under the jurisdiction of the church⁸⁴. The fact that some princes in need of money have called back some old privileges⁸⁵ from the monasteries and this led to numerous scandals is another proof of the importance these taxes had. That these fees and fines were important sources of income is evidenced by the fact that the royal charters given to monasteries prevented the monks from fining the relatives of the guilty when the latter could not be found or when they noticed that they had no money to pay the fines with⁸⁶.

Like princes, the metropolitans and the bishops of the principality had the right to absolve some guilty people from paying the fine⁸⁷. Given the peasants' lack of money, most of these payments were made in kind: products or days of work, and some were beaten black and blue. But the villagers preferred to carry out the first and suffer the latter, than obey the royal servants' trials. Unlike royal servants, monks imposed a much milder punishment. They knew each villager and punished them with mercy, for a harsh punishment would have made the peasants flee their domain, depriving the monastery of labour force and taxes. In return, the royal servants did not care whether they impoverished the peasants or made them flee the land⁸⁸.

However, as an exceptional case of monastery revenue, we note that the Monastery of the Three Hierarchs in Iași obtained income from tuition fees from its students⁸⁹. In the same time, the Metropolitan Church from Suceava⁹⁰ and the Monastery of the Three Hierarchs in Iași⁹¹ were cashing money from the existing public baths in the two royal residences of the principality, Suceava and Iași, respectively.

Moreover, in the eighteenth century some monasteries were entitled to collect taxes from the sale of cattle and goods at city fairs. Thus, the monasteries of Galata, Cetățuia, Saint John and Frumoasa shared this fee charged at the fairs held in Țirgușor and Cîrcic, near Iași⁹², while the monastery of Răchitoasa was given its fee from the fair held in Galați⁹³.

Unfortunately, the income of the Moldavian monasteries was largely under the sign of the founders' and benefactors' generosity, but most of all under the sign of their hegumens' virtue or greed. Then, since many of them were dedicated to holy places in the East, most of their revenue went to the Levantine Orthodox monasteries. This was against the church canons, as the income a monastery got from its villages, cattle, vineyards and apiaries had to be, first and foremost, used for the place of prayer, for the monastic community and for the poor, and only if something was left after that, then it could be sent to parent-monasteries⁹⁴. In fact, the hegumens that came to Moldavia from the East and got to be in charge

⁸⁴ NA-Suceava, fond Balan, Teodor: Documentele mănăstirilor din Bucovina. Ms., pachet II/7, vol. VI, s. 81–82, no. 24; pachet II/9, vol. VIII, s. 215–216, no. 91. APM, doc. no. 170.

⁸⁵ APM, doc. no. 57. Costăchescu, Mihai: Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță voievod (1517–1527). Iași 1943, s. 243–245, no. 48 and s. 311–312, no. 62; Balan, Teodor: Doc. bucovinene. Vol. I, s. 8–10 and s. 23–24, no. 9.

⁸⁶ APM, doc. no. 57.

⁸⁷ NA-Suceava, fond Balan, Teodor: Documentele mănăstirilor din Bucovina. Ms., pachet II/9, vol. VIII, s. 215–216, no. 91.

⁸⁸ Rosetti, Radu: Pământul, s. 229.

⁸⁹ RAL-B, Ro. Ms. no. 4023, s. 25r, doc. no. 13.

⁹⁰ Popovici, George: Index Zolkiewiensis. In: Candela, Cernăuți, 3, 1884, no. 10, s. 695, doc. no. 32–33; no. 12, s. 747, doc. no. 79; 4, 1885, no. 1, s. 23, doc. no. 77; no. 2, s. 96, doc. no. 135.

⁹¹ RAL-B, Ro. Ms., Ms. no. 4023, s. 25r, doc. no. 13.

⁹² Caproșu, Ioan: Doc. ist. orașului Iași. Vol. VI (1756–1770). Iași 2004, doc. no. 14 and . no. 407.

⁹³ Bejan, Cezar: Duță. Alexandru: Iordache, Stelian: Solomon, Viorica (ed.): Tezaur documentar gălățean, Bucharest, 1988, s. 42–44, doc. no. 14.

⁹⁴ RAL-B, Ro. Ms., Ms. no. 4023, s. 21r–v, no. 4.

of the dedicated monasteries managed to raise huge fortunes at the expense of their own sanctuary; they didn't minister for the church or for helping the poor, the widows, the elderly and the orphans; they deprived the other monks from their due food and proper clothing; upon the monasteries' income and expenditure monitoring, they managed to deceive both the Moldavian vestrymen and the Levantine bishops to whom they had pledged obedience. Theoretically, if the hegumens didn't prove to be good treasurers for the religious residence they supervised, they should have been removed from their office as hegumen after the checks performed by the monastery vestrymen and princes of the region. Unfortunately, the vestrymen believed blindly in the words of such hegumens, especially since the latter kept the first ones always on the monastery diptychs in order to corrupt their vigilance, while princes trusted these vestrymen blindly. For this reason, most often, the monastic community came to diminish or vanish altogether, and the dedicated monasteries of Moldavia were let to collapse; this sparked indignation among the foreign scholars that visited the Danubian Principalities⁹⁵. The poor state of the dedicated monasteries, with wasteful or greedy superiors, extended to all monasteries in the time of war, pestilence, locusts plagues and famine, when income decreased naturally for the monastic establishments.

Thus, the sources of income for Moldavian monasteries were extremely varied: the land exploitation, the right to charge a number of fees and fines, exemptions from taxes, and sometimes, money donations. The amount of the income differed from one monastery to another, from one village to another, and from one year to another. The amount of such revenues is only known for the income derived from administering the monastery real estate, representing one tenth of the products obtained on the monastic domain. Although colossal when compared to the income of other inhabitants of the principality, the Moldavian monasteries' income was much smaller than that of the monasteries in the Catholic world. However, despite this handicap, the monasteries of Moldavia supported the orthodoxy from Transylvania, Poland and the Ottoman Empire.

Příjmy moldavských klášterů v období od 15. do poloviny 18. století

Navzdory skutečnosti, že moldavské a valašské kláštery měly značný územní rozsah a hluboce ovlivnily sociální, ekonomický, politický a kulturní život v pravoslavné Levantě, vědecký zájem historiků se tomuto tématu zatím vyhnul. Příčiny této situace jsou pravděpodobně především metodologické: obrovské množství dokumentů, psaných v různých jazycích a různých paleografických kulturách (slovanské, rumunské, řecké, latinské a německé), které jsou většinou nepublikované.

V období od 15. století do poloviny 18. století provedla knížata a vysocí dvorští hodnostáři rozsáhlé donace centrálních panství ve prospěch obou moldavských pravoslavných církví a klášterů ve zbytku Osmanské říše. Nejdůležitějšími dary byly celé obce nebo jejich části, vinice, mlýny i finanční dary, k nim je možné připočítat ještě další dary celé pravoslavné Levanty. Pravoslavná církev v Moldávii tak upevnila své majetkové posatvení získáním vesnic od jejich právoplatných vlastníků.

Zdroje příjmů moldavských klášterů se velmi lišily: zemědělství, vybírání poplatků a pokut, osvobození od daní a někdy i peněžní dary. Výše příjmů se lišila od jednoho kláštera

⁹⁵ Count d'Hauterive: Mémoire sur l'état de la Moldavie, s. 154–157.

k druhému, od jedné vesnice do druhé a od jednoho roku do dalšího. Výše těchto příjmů je známá pouze u příjmů plynoucích ze správy klášterních nemovitostí, což představuje asi jednu desetinu celkového příjmu klášterní domény, i když velmi významnou, zejména ve srovnání k příjmům ostatních obyvatel knížectví. I tak byly ovšem příjmy moldavských klášterů mnohem menší než u klášterů v katolickém světě. I přesto podporovaly moldavské kláštery pravoslavi v Transylvánii, Polsku a Osmanské říši.

Tento významný rozpor vzhledem ke katolické Evropě byl primárně určen menším vlivem a bohatstvím Moldávie ve srovnání s katolickými státy Evropy. Dále, hospodářský rozvoj tohoto rumunského knížectví značně utrpěl v důsledku vzniku a rozvoji osmanského práva, po dobytí Konstantinopole (1453), krymského chanátu (1575) a Uher (1526), takže knížectví bylo nuceno přijmout osmanskou nadvládu a zaplatit poplatek, jehož hodnota se neustále zvyšovala. Navíc se situace v Moldávii stala velmi obtížnou z důvodu obecného oslabení stříbra v celé Evropě a nedobré ekonomické situace v celé Osmanské říši.

K těmto příčinám mohou být dale připočteny přírodní katastrofy (sucho, sarančata, hladomor, epidemie, atd. velmi běžné v oblasti Dunaje). Kromě toho, chudoba klášterů byla také zapříčiněna sporadickými vojenskými konfrontacemi mezi Moldávií a Uherskem, Polskem a později Osmanskou říší, po kterých následovaly války sousedních zemí na jejich vlastním území: Polsko, Rakousko, Rusko a Osmanská říše. Obraz pak doplňují četné drancovací nájezdy a výpravy za otroky, k posledním dochází v roce 1758. Všechny tyto války obecně ovlivňují ekonomickou situaci knížectví mezi Dněstrem a Karpaty a zejména z moldavských klášterů činí oblíbený cíl pro lup vojáků.

K ožebračení mnoha klášterů konečně vede snaha některých knížat sanovat své dluhy z klášterního majetku a výnosů.