

## **Failure of Impropriation of Monastery Possession from Romanian Principalities until 1834**

**Ion Tutuianu**

*Vasile Alecsandri University, Bacau, Romania  
tutuianuion@yahoo.com*

**Abstract:** The events of 1821 in the Romanian principalities resulted in the return earthly rulers after Phanariots century. Immediately, Sublime Porte decided remove monks Greek from monasteries Romanians dedicated to the Holy Places of the East, because of their betrayal during the Greek revolution for national independence. A few years later, under pressure from Russia, who protects the Holy Places, against Romanian interests, Turkey was forced to allow the return of Greek monks in the Romanian Principalities, with higher claims. Secularization has failed and the conflict between the Holy Places and Romanian Principalities become very stressed until the true secularization during the reign of Cuza in 1863.

**Keywords:** monastery; secularization; Sublime Porte; principalities

The Greek hetaerists and Romanian mutiny of Tudor Vladimirescu resulted in casting away the Phanariotes princes from Romanian Principalities by the Ottoman Porte, but also the fugue of the Greek monks afraid of Turkish retaliation. The gentry and Romanian clergy took advantage of this desolation of the monasteries dedicated by their hegumens, as well as by the afterwards provisions of the Porte, taken against the Greeks, investing Metropolitan Bishops, bishops and hegumens only among the Romanians. They decided that the income of the monasteries rented to be considered as a guarantee for the debts of the country left by the hetaerist Alexandru Ipsilanti and a compensation for the damages produced by the Turkish invasion on the Principalities to defeat the mutiny of the Greek hetaerists.

The Hetaerae was initiated with the blessing of gums by Ipsilanti in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Moldavia from Iasi, by the Metropolitan Bishop of Moldavia, Veniamin Costache. The national awake current was aimed at the smartness of the Romanian patriotism and brought into attention the issue of Romanian goods dedicated to the Greek Holy Places in a different approach than that seen until that moment. The critical conscience of this situation appeared, the conscience of the nation deceived because of its own generosity, and the feeling of an immediate reaction to cast away the foreign elements which exploited the energy and strength of the county. They called for an action of collective justice

and of national pride. In 1821, a group of young Moldavian squires submitted to the Porte a written notification requesting to bring back the Princes on the throne of Romanian Principalities and to banish the Greek monks from the rented monasteries.

They requested “to give back the possessions of monasteries rented to the governmental administration, which should have the obligation to pay a yearly charge to the Holy Places (Erbiceanu, p. 214 & Urechia, pp. 306-308), all hegumens of the monasteries should have wages and supporting charges, and the administration of the monasteries’ income should be done by the layman economists and with the exclusion of the Greek clerics. (Filitti, 1932, pp. 85 - 93). Thinking of the change of the foreign administration of the country and wanting a new administration, the errant Vlach gentry from Brasov, because of the rebellion, in December 1821, they also wanted to submit a petition to the Orthodox Kingdom of Russia asking, beside other changes that “all the Greeks should be cast away from their positions” and “the hegumens of the monasteries and those inland and foreign to be with yearly wage”, the administration of income should be done by the “layman economists, honest and faithful people”, that paid their duties to the state budget, to pay from there from the excess to the monasteries where they are devoted (Oltenia’s Archives, 1931, p. 247).

Therefore, the Moldavian and Vlach gentry were so concerned to cast away the foreigners from the principalities and from the administration of the devoted monasteries, following the political events from the first part of 1821 in both Principalities. When the High Porte received from Constantinople, in Mayle 1822, the Vlach gentry to listen to their requests, they, among the proposals regarding the future organization of Wallachia , were asking that “all the Greek monks, rulers, archimandrites and hegumens, to be banished from the country and to go to their dioceses”.

The Turkish, wrathfully on the Greeks for the mutiny form 1821, they decided not only for the rehabilitation of inland administration in Wallachia, but also to cast away all the Greeks “from the administration of the country”. Toward the end of June 1822, the Porte supported the appointment of Governor Grigore Ghica as the ruler of Wallachia and of Chancellor Ionita Sandu Sturdza as ruler of Moldavia, counselled to retake the inland ruling by “apostasy of the phanariotes”, those who brought sufferings to the Principalities, as the appointment documents specified very clearly (Moisescu, p. 423). Along in the same line, at the request of the Vlach gentry, the Ottoman Porte issued a document, indicating to “dismiss the Greek monks who were appointed nearby the monasteries in the area of the Greek rulers” and instead of them to appoint “only among the inland rulers and among these those who are earnest and faithful”.

At the end of June 1822, the new ruler Grigore Ghica who came in Bucharest, recalled the Metropolitan Bishop Dionisie Lupu into the country, the bishops and the gentry that were part of the Administration, to demonstrate all “to the disconsolate inhabitants, in debts that they got rid of the past unhappiness and needs brought by the Greek apostates” (Tomescu, 1827, p. 10). As the debt of the country was calculated at 4,600,000 piastres, the privileges of the gentry were somehow reduced and the benefits of the Metropolitan Church, of the archiepiscopacy and of the monasteries were used “although they ought not to touch them as they are Holy Places and of worship of our laws, but the need determined us to ask the help of our Saint Mother Church”, meaning to give their “two year income to pay the debts”, namely the income of the Metropolitan Church, of archiepiscopacy and of all inland and dedicated monasteries, except for those of the monastic communities and hospitals (Boliac, 1862, p. 83)

Before taking such decision, the Prince Ghica gave orders to the Chancellors Grigore Baleanu and Dumitrache Bibescu, as of November 3, 1822, to verify the income of each monastery for debts. As of December 6, 1822, the Report addressed by the gentry to the Prince, signed by the Bishop Galaction of Ramnicul, concerning the coverage of the country’s debts, submitted proposal concerning the “means by which the country is able to pay the debts”. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1822, another Report of the Vlach gentry to the Prince asked for the appointment of three boyars that feared God who, together with the Bishop of Buzau and the administrator of the Metropolitan Church to organize a “collection spot” into the Metropolitan Church to collect the money which “were decided to be collected” and to investigate all the debts that ought to be paid (Moisescu, p.424). As they had to obey the Order of the Sultan regarding the dismissal of Greek hegumens from the administration of all monasteries, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1822, the Prince Ghica informs the gentry of the administration “as we are ordered to dismiss the Greek hegumens from our monasteries by the Order of the High Emperor and to replace them with other hegumens among the inland people whom you decide are faithful, honest and worth to be appointed hegumens observing the customs for such positions”. By a written report they were informed on the names of the hegumens chosen for each monastery, for them to analyze the “character and the worthiness of each of them”, and following the appointment to ask from the “hegumens that are missing to verify their situation concerning the income and the expenses of the monasteries”, as well as all the other things to be done.

As the Metropolitan administration was vacant as Dionisie Lupu refused to get back from Brasov, although the Prince kindly asked him, the administrative gentry decided that the fulfilment of the Prince’s order regarding the issue of the dedicated monasteries hegumens to happen after the appointment of the new Metropolitan Bishop, thus the Prince’s Decree as of January 4, 1823, ordered the meeting of the Administration “to appoint another Metropolitan Bishop”. The 23 administrators

“with all seriousness and dedication appointed three father monks whom they considered worth to appoint among one of them the shepherd of Wallachia” (Tomescu, 1827, p. 158), and they appointed the erudite hierodeacon Grigorie, who, after obtaining the confirmation of the Prince, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1823 was ordained Metropolitan Bishop of Hungaro - Vlach Land and who would be remembered as „Grigorie the 4<sup>th</sup> the Teacher”.

After the appointment of the Metropolitan Bishop Grigorie, the Prince address to him on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 1823, referring to the Prince’s Decree from the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1822 to the Council of Administration, writing to him that before he was to be placed in the administration of the Holy Metropolitan Church, certain orders were given to investigate and order the Senior Boyars, for certain issues among which he mentioned the issue of Greek hegumens and because up “to now” those issues were attended, he ordered him to meet with the bishops and boyars to enforce the “orders of the Prince which are given for each issue, first of all for the dismissal of the Greek hegumens, being a church issue and which concerned the characteristics of his first rank position”. Consequently, the Metropolitan Bishop with the bishops and the gentry submit on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 1823, a written Report to the Prince indicating that being “ordered by the High Decree of the Prince to dismiss the Greek hegumens from the monasteries of the country and instead of them to appoint another Romanian hegumens, they were chosen among the inland monks who were considered worth and appropriate for the position”. To make sure that the monasteries had the “hegumens which are being ordered not to give away and steal from their assets, they took care, according to the customs of the Council of Administration, which had always been valid and they are going to be valid for all times, to appoint a Chancellor of the Council of Administration, together with the person appointed by the Metropolitan Church to make three inventories on all fixed and intangible assets of the monasteries, which shall be signed by the former and the new hegumen, by the Chancellor and by the Metropolitan Church representative, the new hegumen shall be given an inventory, another inventory to the Metropolitan Church and the third to the Council of Administration.

Afterwards, the Chancellor should bring before the Metropolitan Bishop and the Senior Boyars the old hegumen to explain the income and expenses of the monastery for the period he run it, to specify and explain any debt and to see the documents which the creditors hold and Council of Administration should decide on the appropriateness of the monastery debt, following to make the necessary arrangements to pay the debt”. Concerning the request of the Prince to specify the modality to run the monasteries by the new hegumens, the Metropolitan Bishop says that it is need “to know the content of all wills and habits of each monastery” after which it shall be done (Tomescu, 1827, p., 165-167 & Moisescu, p.427). About the replacement of the Greek hegumens, the Austrian Counsellor Kreuchely reported even on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January at Vienna that following the appointment of

the Metropolitan Bishop “all the Greek hegumens should be dismissed, all the possession of the dedicated monasteries shall have to give their taxes for the two following years in advance to cover the debit of the state of 4,600,000 piasters” (Hurmuzachi-Iorga ,p. 209). On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 1823 the Senior Chancellors were communicated to transmit the Order of the Prince “for the appointment of the new hegumens and for the inventory of the assets of the monasteries, to enforce the specifications of the written report in full” as approved by the Prince (Tomescu, 1827, p. 167). However, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 1823, the Austrian Consul informed his Minister von Miltitz from Vienna that up to that date nine Greek hegumens had been already dismissed and replaced by “Vlachs” (Hurmuzachi-Iorga, p. 19). As the issue was not to be delayed, the appointment of the Romanian hegumens instead of the Greek ones was done immediately, with the participation of the Prince, of the Metropolitan Bishop, of bishops and Senior Boyars on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1823.

After the speech of the Prince “to call and appoint the hegumen fathers for the position entrusted to them”, the protosyngellos Naum Ramniceanu, erudite and patriot monk, as he himself received then “the pastoral mission of the holy monastery of Saint Apostles from Bucharest”, dedicated to the Stavronikita monastery from Athos, took the floor, speaking on behalf of all Romanian hegumens appointed at the moment as replacement of the Greeks, that they shall administrated the monasteries entrusted as good as they could and they should strive to put order in their affairs. Naum was known as a active supporter of the idea of dismissing the Greek monks, and in a “secret letter” to the Metropolitan Bishop Grigorie form the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 1823, after describing the miserable situation of most of the monasteries and the Ecclesiastical embassy church he investigated, exhorted the Metropolitan Bishop to “obey immediately the order of the Prince to dismiss the Greeks from the dedicated monasteries foreign places, as later it might become hard to do. Beside these, if the country needs to be placed in writing form that from now on no church positions should be received by those who spoke foreign languages, only for the faithful patriots” (Erbiceanu, 1888) (Erbiceanu, 1889).

The dismissal of Greek hegumens from Romanian monasteries was not well received by the Greek Patriarchies, which, finding themselves without such income started to make the necessary arrangements to get back the assets lost. The Greek mutiny from 1821 convinced Turkey of the Greek’s lack of loyalty, hence in the dismissal of the Greek hegumens from the Principalities was not only a reaction of Romanian authorities, but also an observance of the provisions of the sovereign power Decree. As the people banished from the Romanian Principalities had preserved their relations with the High Porte, to ease the Turkish upset caused by the mutiny they use the classical bribery by which the monks from Athos succeed to submit to the Porte a complaint, toward the end of year 1823 “that, with no

reasons, they were deprived of their rights, while the monasteries and all their income is theirs, especially that the reasons for such deprivation were “not real” (Tomescu, 1827, p.171).

But the Porte delays any definite answer and submits the complaint of Athos to the Romanian diplomatic representative of Romanian Princes at Constantinople, who, in his turn, informs the Prince Ghica and Ionita Sturdza. Receiving the notification, the Prince Ghica submits a Decree to the Council of Administration on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1824, with the following content: “Your Holiness Father Metropolitan Bishop, lover of God bishops and you Senior Boyars of my Princedom Council of Administration, see the attached Decree submitted by the Romanian diplomatic representative of the High Porte at Tarigrad to the application to pay the yearly taxes for twelve monasteries from the Saint Mountain as it may be seen from the attached document signed by the mighty interpreter of the High Porte, to be shown to me by a written report.” Only on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June 1824, the Metropolitan Bishop Grigorie with the bishops and the gentry in the administration, submit to the Prince the written report requested indicating that the “reason for which those fathers requested such yearly taxes from these monasteries, is doubtlessly the edificial wills of those who built them and dedicated the monasteries. I cannot approve to deny the deceased builders of such monasteries and the will are meant to preserve forever such Holy Places entirely for those who built them and endeavoured to be mentioned. I cannot also approve that “it is a custom to be followed here in our country to pay a tax for any need of the country and these dedicated monasteries together with those undedicated have the obligation to pay a tax according to the needs.

What greater need can be beside that is due now which was produced by the past events, as the debt is so great and it is a real burden?” As the High Porte was informed, “for the help requested from the dedicated monasteries, what is the right invoked by those believers that said that their right was violated? Isn’t it the urgent need of the country where the remaining of those who built the monasteries is buried? We thought that after the country paid its debt, we shall be able to pay from the income of these dedicated monasteries their debts too, to which, according to the custom of the time, the Greek hegumens appointed by our fathers produced. After they are free of any debt and in sound condition, those parents can also use their yearly taxes. However, if the need shall be so great, as I mentioned before and so shall decide the High Porte, we shall obey the order to help them before paying the debt of our country, with which those who built the monasteries, therefore such payment shall be decreased from the amount of these monasteries expenses, of the debts to the Greek hegumens, which, if they deny, we invite their auditor to come to verify all our registrars to be fully convinced” (Tomescu, 1827, p. 173; Moisescu, p. 438).

The Prince Grigore Ghica being completely convinced by the written report he received on the situation, responded to his Romanian diplomatic representatives at the High Porte from Constantinople who, in their turn, informed the Ottoman Porte. Nevertheless, before the answer reached Constantinople, there was a rumour in the country that the monasteries from Athos obtained an Order from the Sultan which allowed them to send in the Principalities several monks to verify the accounting books of the monasteries dedicated to them and to verify their income and debts situation. (Hurmuzachi-Hodoş, p. 1135) The rumour concerned the Russian pressures, immediately after the Turkish-Russian diplomatic recommenced, which made that the joy of Romanians to be short. After the insistencies of Russia, the protector of the Christians from east, the Turkish shall have the obligation to change their attitude toward the Greek monks, as one of the conditions of the reconciliation imposed by the Russians was to approve for the Greek monks to come back into Romanian Principalities and to regain their old rights. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1824, the Porte had already agreed to the eviction of the Principalities, and under the new conditions it was more concessive with the Greek monks, now protected by Russia. At the end of year 1824, the Holy Places had the approval of Porte to send exarches into the Principalities to verify for himself the condition of the monasteries and to put an end to their complaint seeing the condition of the monasteries and the amounts of the income. And putting in order, deciding and having compassion for their tormented income, they shall come back.

The Order of the Sultan to the Prince Ghica further specified “Now, because the Saint Agora, the Saint Grave and Sinai by written document indicated that they have not collected the taxes ordained for some monasteries from Wallachia even starting with year 1236 (1821) give notice on this subject by your diplomatic representative at the High Porte and also wrote to you several times and because after confirming your diplomatic representative proof was made that you wrote to your diplomatic representatives that some of the monasteries were in poor condition and their income are not sufficient for the moment and after the expenses of the seminaries and after their application for 63,950 lei p.a. to give instead 12,100 lei for two years, meaning 24,200 lei to Sfetagora and instead of the amounts requested by Sina of 35,000 lei p.a. to give 18,000 lei for two years, meaning 36,000 lei, from the Saint Grave the amount of 57,000 lei is requested per annum, they request to give 17,000 lei for two years, meaning 35.900 lei. If they consider that this arrangement is not satisfactory, to send their counter parts to see the conditions of the monasteries and the amount of income at present. But because there is a serious difference between the amounts they requested and that offered by you, on which you informed the Romanian diplomatic representatives at the High Porte, they were not satisfied with the proposal, complaining all the time. Finally, because their mandate extension was done at your approval and of the boyars and as you sent notification to request the presence of an administrator from

their part and because the country does not receive the decrease and update of income and because you have decided to have them sent there to see for themselves, only with your approval, they were notified to come” (Moisescu, p.440).

The Order of the Sultan is brought by the exarches of the Holy Places in Bucharest, at the middle of December 1824, coming to meet the Prince. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 1824, the Prince Grigore Ghica ordered the Metropolitan Bishop and the Council of Administration to “gather to investigate and evaluate the condition of the Ierosolime, Sinai and Sfetagore monasteries from the country, for which the exarches come here and they are about to investigate the situation” (Tomescu, 1827, p.441). The result of the exarches investigation is still not known, but it is obvious that the income of the Holy Places shall not be cut entirely. By a written report of the Council of Administration, from the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1825 to the Prince, on the “debts of the country and their payment done in the account of debts” we understand that until that the amount of 318,000 talers was paid “for the yearly taxes of the monasteries of the Holy Grave from Sinai and Sfetagora”, considered for a four years period: 1823-1826 with 79,550 tales p.a., after the calculus done and another 30,000 talers for the yearly taxes of the monasteries form Rumelia, and the share of the monasteries for 1825 was 710,947 talers.” (Tomescu, 1827, p. 441)

As the Greek complaints to the High Porte were coming one after another, the Metropolitan Bishop Grigorie Dascalul sends to the Porte a notification signed by the three bishops, ten hegumens and more than ninety boyars from the Administration, asking to decide what the complaints should be given. Reminding the “Order of the Sultan” which deprive the Greek monks of any church administration, adding that the “new yearly taxes which are being given to the Greek hegumens, adding larger amounts, were written to know their duty, but they are not satisfied with the extra yearly taxes, they ask for higher taxes, which cannot be paid, as they would not recognize even the debts they produced, being ready to disobey the order of the Ruler and to violate the renewal of the old privileges and to come here again to do what they have done in the past or even worse. This the reason why the Porte is kindly asked to decide on the amount we ought to give as yearly tax for the monasteries as the amount of money registered are not enough, and before the little help we need, meaning the extra income we used to send the amount established by the deceased builders of the monasteries and as much as we could, as these monasteries are in debts, beside the yearly taxes, to help the country in times of need, as we did before. We are certain that the monasteries shall overcome this situation and they shall be in a better financial condition, as they were before, the sooner they recover, they shall pay their debts.” (Tomescu, 1827, p. 192)



The Porte decided that the Holy Places shall received the third party of the income of the monasteries dedicated to them, starting with year 1823 and until 1826, and to be able to keep the accounting books, the Metropolitan Bishop Grigorie, in a written report to the Price on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 1826, proposes to establish a house of monasteries. “Your Highness knows the burden of the monasteries, from all the country of Your Highness and those Aghiotafic, from Sinai, Aghioritic Rumeliotic and those free of the country. Because I have to run the diocese, I cannot attend this issue too, and because I do not want to leave them like some sheep without their shepherd, I ordained to establish an administration of three persons, appointed, under the name of the House of Monasteries, to search and take care of the patters described below, meaning: 1. To establish all the income of groups of monasteries dedicated and then to make the difference for the whole year for the amount of money they have to pay to the monasteries they are dedicated to, and the income left to be considered for the expenses and debts, helping one another. 2. To give the accounts to each monastery on yearly basis and to decide for each hegumen how much he can spend. In the same time, they shall have the duty to report all the expenses with the money of the monasteries for the period 1823-1826, to see the extra amounts. 3. Because the terms of the lease of monasteries is ending in 1826, to make the necessary arrangements for the lease to come for another three years, to be careful not to face any “sfererimos” and they shall take care to administrate the money for schools observing the accounts elaborated. 4. Any repair and maintenance works shall be done with the approval of the House and of the Public and Cultural Administrative Institutions. 5. No hegumen shall have the right to lend money without the approval of this House. 6. The House of Monasteries shall keep two records, one for the payment of lease and income collection and one for debt and expenses payment. 7. Any hegumen who does not keep record of these debts shall be replaced by the decision of the Metropolitan Church and order of the Prince. 8. This House shall also take care to pay the amount of 112,753 talers left to be paid as yearly taxes beside the 318,200 talers, up to the amount of 440,953 talers owed as the third party of the income of the monasteries.

The three chosen by the Metropolitan Bishop were: the hegumen of the New Saint George monastery and the lord steward Radulescu Tocilescu (Moiescu, p. 422). The Prince Grigore Ghica approves the written report on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 1826, indicating that the Metropolitan Bishops is to be responsible of the affairs of the monasteries and especially for the collection and payment of yearly taxes of the Holy Places as any time the amount is requested, he should be ready to give it, deciding how to run the affairs of the monasteries by their leaders had no right to lend money without obtaining first the approval of the Price.

Thus, the House of the Monasteries verify the income of the monasteries dedicated for the four years were the following: from the Aghiotafic monasteries the inland

hegumens raised 484,421 talers, adding the 4723 talers taken by the Greek hegumens, and from the Aghioritic monasteries 579,634 talers except of the 180,650 talers taken by the Greek hegumens. The debts of these monasteries raised at the amount of 507,623 talers among which for the Aghiotafic monasteries the amount of 165,306 talers and for the Aghioritic ones the amount of 342,317 talers, compared to the 1,105,139 of the total of income, not to mention the 113,373 talers taken by the Greek hegumens (Tomescu, 1827, p.443). When the Emperor Nicolae I took his office (1825-1855), the Greek monks have found a dedicated protector. By the Russian-Turkish convention from Akkerman, from the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 1826, the influence of the Russian protector power is strengthen on Romanian Principalities, and the Greek monks shall succeed to obtain certain Orders of the Sultan dictated by Russia by its counsellor to Constantinople to regain the monasteries dedicated from Wallachia.

As the situation was alike in Moldavia, the concern brought by the coming back of the Greek hegumens supported by the Russians determines the Metropolitan Bishop Veniamin Costache to write to the Metropolitan Grigore from Bucharest on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 1827 that “the visit of the Russian representatives made me think that the monasteries dedicated shall remain as they were before, unchanged, under the power of others, indicating the will of the Russian Emperor. We had enough resistance asking the emperor to be kind enough not to deprive us by this old privilege by the High Order of the Sultan to forgive us indicating him the condition of the monasteries, how desolated there were and they were full of debts, asking for them to be ruled by the inland people which shall keep all the accounting, shall use them for the County and shall undertake all the places where they were governed with the help we hope to receive. But his Eminence still were against it. We consider that we should not let this right of earth to pass away, but we have to make all things possible to establish”. Asking for the opinion of the Vlach brother, the Metropolitan Bishop Veniamin wants to collaborate into the issue of dedicated monasteries “because if we are united, together to elaborate a plan” for the both Principalities to find out.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1827, the Decree issued by the chancellery of the Ottoman Porte to the high offices of the Empire and to the Princes of the Principalities, bearing the stamp of the Sultan to be executed in accordance on the Convention from Akkerman arrived to Bucharest, which worried the Metropolitan Bishop Grigorie concerning the recalling of the Greek hegumens, as, by the written report on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 1827, advising the Prince to ask the Porte to enforce the decision taken by the political and church forces that the hierarchal and hegumen positions should be occupied only by Romanians in the future. Remembering the written report from the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1823, by which he indicated that the “hardships and the high duties of the dedicates monasteries which were produced by the bad management and administration of the Greek hegumens” as well as the

“altmagzarul” from the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1825 enforced by the Council of Administration of the country to the Porte, the Metropolitan Bishop said that the foreigners, the Greeks with insinuations and by gifts in money they entered in all the monasteries of the country the dedicates ones and of the Metropolitan Church and the Episcopal Church until they got them into large debts giving away their assets which were dedicated by our ancestors”. He asked the Prince to mediate their situation with the High Porte to confirm the privilege of the country” to choose among the positions of the church only Romanian inland persons as well as to decide on the yearly taxes to be paid by the monasteries.” (1904-1905, pp. 1261-1263)

The answer of the Prince came on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 1827, but it did not settle the request of the Metropolitan Bishop, only ordering him that the expenses of the quarantine hospitals to be done “for the moment” only from the undedicated monasteries, but by the House of Monasteries. The situation was not hopeful, as even in July 1827 (Zilhige 1242) the Order of the Sultan was sent to the Romanian Principalities to give back the administration of the dedicated monasteries to the Greek hegumens. The Order made reference to the request from 1822 submitted to the Porte by the Vlach boyars when they “wanted to banish all the Greek monks from the dedicated monasteries, following to pay the Holy Places a yearly tax by the Romanian diplomatic representative at the High Porte from Taringrad”. But because the “old patriarchs from Jerusalem, from Sinai and from Sfetagora complained to the emperor both for their income which were not send on time and for the amounts that were sent they were lesser and lesser compared to what they used to receive they wanted mercy that they should be given back the administration to these monasteries, to make an understanding that the patriarch should appoint and send honest and faithful priests, without any interference in the administration of the monasteries (dedicated) and of the assets and their income”. The patriarchal representative should have a good behaviour and if the country “should have any complaint on his behaviour and if proof is made of such to be punished and the patriarch should appoint another one. The fugitive monks who lead the Zavera shall not be received in the monasteries.” (Moiesescu, p. 447)

The Order of the Sultan was brought in Bucharest by the Greek equerry Panaiotache Anghelopol, the representative of the “Mighty Reiz Edendi” only that before the Order reached its addressee, the ecumenical patriarch Agatanghel rushed to write to the Metropolitan Bishop Grigore Dascalul on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1827 that the exarches of the High Church, of the Holy Grave, of Athos and Sinai shall come to decide for the issue of the hegumens and to verify the accounts for the last six years (Delikanis, 1903, p. 86). Although the Order made no reference to the Ecumenical Patriarch, as it was in the disgrace of the Porte, for it was involved in the Greek Haeteria, the patriarch Agatanghel rushed the reinforcement measures. Receiving the letter of the patriarch, the Metropolitan Bishop Grigore

communicated to the Metropolitan Bishop Veniamin of Moldavia on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1827 that “from a letter of the patriarch father he understood that the exarches were about to come first into the Principality of Walachia to enforce the order”. But he heard that from the Silistra they left for Iasi, which gives the right to suspect that maybe they intended to “make a schism”. From Panaiotache Anghelopol understood that “it is not in line with the intentions of the exarches or with the reasoning of the father books with the intentions of the Orders”. In order not to be deceived which can be against those from the Principality of Wallachia, draws the attention to the Metropolitan Bishop Veniamin such things, advising not to make any “move until the High Officer Panaiotache did not come to Iasi” (Tomescu, 1827, p. 212), where it can be seen that the exarches served three masters, as a good Greek and diplomat, meaning he was the man of the Grad Vizier, of the patriarch but also of the Romanians. Receiving the letter of his brother from Bucharest, the Metropolitan Bishop Veniamin made the following observation: “The purpose of the Greek fathers is, as has been indicated by some, to be able to trace the money taken from the monasteries as help. Because of this, all the attention should be paid as they succeeded in receiving back the monasteries to succeed to get them back, being helped by the schism and the fact that the union did not take place”.

The Prince Grigore Ghica did not waited much and without an attentive study of the “Order of the High Porte” on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1827 addressed with the Decree of the Prince to the Assembly to give into administration of the Greek hegumens “the administration of the dedicated monasteries and of their income” taking from the exarches acceptance certificates. After each hegumen shall “receive the possession of the monasteries he owned”, they shall have the duty in accordance with the full powers given to them by the patriarchy of Taringrad, “appointing the hegumens to inform the Prince, so each hegumen shall be known by the ruler of the country”. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1827 the Order of the Sultan was read in the Council of Administration and they decided in obey it. Although, the Council of Administration sends to the Prince a written report, at the proposal of the Metropolitan Bishop, indicating that “they did not used to choose the hegumens by the patriarchy of Traingrad. We are kindly asking that the Greek hegumens that shall be now placed in their positions to have the obligation to administrate them as customarily for each monastery, as it has been written and established by the will of those who built them. After that the persons in charge shall pay all the dedicated monasteries and they shall take care of their repair works.” For such “rightful” order be observed, I think necessary “the supervision of the Holy Metropolitan Church, of the Chancellery and of the fathers that built the monasteries, thus the monasteries can never become the ruin they are now” (Tomescu, 1827, p. 50; Boliac, 1862, p. 88).

For the “Rumeliotic monasteries”, in 1828, a “High Special Order of the Sultan” came so they could appoint Greek hegumens again who shall be appointed by the fathers of the monasteries where they are dedicated by the supervision of the Patriarch from Constantinople”. And Price Ghica, by the Prince’s Decree on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1828, orders the Metropolitan Bishop and the chancellors of the monasteries to “to appoint in the same line Greek hegumens for the monasteries mentioned above, supervising the customs established” in the Orders of the Sultan from 1827 regarding the monasteries dedicated. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1828, the Patriarch from Constantinople writes to Price Grigore Ghica, thanking him for the resettlement of the dedicated monasteries and for the acknowledgement of the exarches sent by the Holy Places. (Delikanis, p. 254) The Greek monks received even more supported when the war between the Russians and the Turkish started in the spring of 1828 and the Principalities where taken over by the Russians.

The Count Teodor Petrovici Pahlin, the President of the Administration of Moldavia and Greater Wallachia informed the Metropolitan Bishop Veniamin from Iasi and Grigorie from Bucharest, regarding the administration of the dedicated monasteries assets. “For the future the assets dedicated to the Holy Places, shall be administrated by a special commission composed from hegumens and administrators of the monasteries sent from there, by several administrators from here and two fatherly confessor persons appointed by the Metropolitan of Unguro-Vlachia. The extra income shall be kept in the commercial bank from Odessa, to be increased by bonds, on behalf of such monasteries. The unhallowed shall choose among the members of the Council of Administration among four candidates”. The church administrators shall be appointed by the Metropolitan Bishop (Tomescu, 1827, p. 215; Moisescu, p. 449). But the Holy Places were still unsatisfied with the decision, so they complain even to the Emperor of Russia that they did not get the reestablishment of all monasteries to be administrated by the exarches and the hegumens they sent, insisting beside the “protector of the Christians that obeyed the Porte” to take out the administration of the dedicated monasteries from the supervision of the commission made up in May 1828 to be ruled according “to the old custom” only by the hegumens.

Taking into account the understanding between the Metropolitan Bishops from Iasi and Bucharest in 1827, that the measures that shall be taken for the dedicated monasteries in a Principality to be observed by the other Principality too, the Bishop Neofit of Ramnicul, the Metropolitan Bishop’s Lieutenant, after the banishment of the Metropolitan Bishop Grigorie from Chisinau in May 1829, he asks the Metropolitan Bishop Veniamin a copy of the written report from February 1828 “which damaged the dedicated monasteries”. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1829, Veniamin sends “the copy they begged for”, accompanied by a warm letter regarding the patriotism and of the good deeds to fulfil spiritual debts to the builders of the monasteries and for the praise of the country.

Although the exarches of the Holy Places obtained by the Order of the Sultan the administration of the dedicated monasteries, they could not use this right until the end of 1829, because the Romanians slowed down in different way the executions of the works for the inventory of the monasteries' assets and the keep keeping. As the Russian Emperor ordered, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1829, the President Jeltuhin communicates to the Council of Administration of Wallachia that "the commission on the Greek monasteries assets" is dismissed and they shall "give the administration to the exarches and hegumens as customarily", and they shall "appoint among the boyars to keep the accounts on yearly basis of the exarches and hegumens". Nevertheless, as the Council of Administration delayed the enforcement of the order, because the Greeks insisted, the President General submits a new order on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1829 to enforce the order as it should have been.

Consequently, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1829, the City Assembly gives a response to the new President of Romanian Principalities, Pavel Kiseleff, that they obeyed the order appointing the members in the Guardianship of the dedicated monasteries: the Bishop Neofit, the ruler of the Metropolitan Church, Barbu Stirbei, Mihail Cornescu, Mihail Filipescu and Alecu Cocorascu. The Guardianship, who replaced the old commission, was meant to supervise "all the times" on the hegumens, forcing them to fulfil all their duties for the good administration of the monasteries dedicated to them, as the guardianship had no right to administrate, only to control all actions. Although, the Romanian counterpart delays the accounting books asked by the exarches, hoping in a political turnover of the situation, hoping that this would bring the dedicated monasteries under the administration of the Romanians. Facing this situation, the patriarchal exarches, the officer Anghelache, complained to the president general, Kiseleff, that the "Wallachian ruling", with all the orders they received, did not take any re-measure to finish the book keeping for the past years, this being the reason for which the exarches cannot fulfil their mandate received from the Holy Places. Receiving the complaint, Kiseleff sends it to the Council of Administration, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1830, to put the complainers into their rights, and the Council of Administration sends the complaint on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1830 "to enforce the application of the rights of the exarches and the hegumens of the Greek monasteries" and of the guardian boyars (Hurmuzachi-Iorga, p.449, 648; Moisescu, p.450).

At the same time the Vice-president Boschinack submitted to the Council of Administration a long complaint comprising all the provisions specified up to that moment regarding the dedicated monasteries, insisting on the conditions imposed to the exarches and Greek hegumens, after they recovered the administration of all assets they had after the Commission of the Monasteries was cancelled. Even if the Russian representatives strived to settle the Greek-Romanian litigation, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1830, Kiseleff writes again to the Council of Administration that the

“complaints and the claims on the dedicated monasteries to the Holy Place and to other monasteries of Rumelia in line with the orders and to avoid any future such unwanted complaints”, to decide on the full avoidance of such situations, to be considered as an example. Only on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1830, the Council of Administration gives a response to Kiseleff that “on the grounds of the law applied from ancient times, documents are being elaborated”, the registrars are being verified, orders are being also verified to bring light into the registrations required by the rulers in the past for the dedicated monasteries and it is proved that the patriarch of Taringrad and the Metropolitan Bishops from Rumelia had never had the right to appoint hegumens and to send exarches to the monasteries dedicated in Wallachia, or to interfere in the administration and management of such monasteries, the appointment as always done by the monasteries”.

Regarding the guardians, the members of the Administration Council say that they ought to supervise the fulfilment of the father’s will, to determine the hegumens to manage the assets of the monasteries and to supervise their behaviour to be in line with the custom and to make sure that they do not involve in unnecessary expenses, as their ancestors did. The lease of lands shall be done informing the guardians first, by auction and only for a three years period. For the future, the book keeping shall be done as follows: the income of each monastery shall be divided in three parts for the whole year: one shall be considered for the needs of the monastery, another to pay its debts, and the third shall be sent to the Holy Places. The resistance of the hegumens to receive the supervisors – the guardians “which damaged their rights”, is not admitted by the Council of Administration, and the request of the Greek hegumens to recover the possession of the money taken from the monasteries to pay the debts of the country receives the response that these monasteries, which were built by the Romanians, could not succeed in paying their debts without the help, but the inland offices had their share of contribution. They insisted that the hegumens should submit the documents of the monasteries to fulfil the law in accordance.

Things were not settled yet and because the Greeks still insisted on taking over the accounts kept by the inland hegumens, Kiseleff sends to the Council of Administration on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1830 a request to obey the orders concerning the Holy Places, concerning the administration of the dedicated monasteries assets. The Council of Administration sends a letter to the Bishop Neofit “to look for the accounts of the hegumens starting with 1827, to track when they stopped keeping records”, giving the order that starting with the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1830 to send to the guardians all Romanian hegumens and the Greek ones that were appointed instead of them. The elaboration of the Organic Regulations was about to start, following the order of Kiseleff, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1831, the Council of Administration decides that the hegumens should lease the lands of the monasteries only on one year period basis, to be under the provisions of the new Regulation starting with the

23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1832 (Moisescu, p. 452). The Organic Regulation of Wallachia provided the establishment of a commission under the ruling of the Metropolitan Bishop, in which the Chancellor of the Church should participate too, four boyars and four representatives from the Holy Places; this commission should consult on any abuse and the settlement measures (Organic Rule of Valahia, art.363, alin.1).

If the dedicated monasteries were closely verified, the commission also took into account the inland ones, only that four inland clerics were added, chosen by the Metropolitan Bishop, participating in its debates, without being specified if the four members from the Holy Places could participate in the debates (Organic Rule of Valahia, art. 363, line 2). The decisions of the Commission were compulsory, as they were enforced by the authority of the State by the Chancellor of Churches (Organic Rule of Valahia, art. 363, alin.3). The Organic Regulation of Moldavia provides such a commission too, adding for the dedicated monasteries “four priests from the places where such monasteries are dedicated to”. The commission was meant to inventory the assets of all monasteries, to determine the amount to be paid to support the seminary, of public schools and of charity actions, they investigated the rights and obligations of the dedicated monasteries, in line with the will’s provisions and with the protector power, they involved in any improvement projects (Organic Rule of Moldova, art. 416).

The Holy Places did not accept any limitation in using the assets, so the Russian protecting administration could not bear their claims. The fact that the Organic Regulations also enforced on the monasteries dedicated to make a yearly contribution for the charity works and for the schools was a continual source of discontent for the Holy Places, and Kiseleff, receiving the protest of the patriarchs, writes to them to send delegates who, together with the commission of the country to reach an agreement on a clearly regulation of the dedicate monasteries situation, accepted by both parties. The patriarchs give an answer, specifying that they could not accept any involved of the inland people in the administration of the dedicated monasteries. When, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1833, Grigorie Dascalul regains the ruling of the Metropolitan Church, from the exile from Bessarabia, the situation of the dedicate monasteries was not clear yet, and Kiseleff, even in the following day, submits an order to the Chancellor of Churches, Barbu Stirbei, to inform on the improvements that needed to be done for the monasteries of the country, whether dedicated or not. (Moisescu, p. 453)

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1833 the Chancellery of the Churches sends reports to the Chief of Counties to have inventoried all the assets of the inland monasteries (Bulat, 1975, p. 1165) to indicate their poor condition, as well as a reduced, number of people: 789 monks and 1100 nuns. When the Metropolitan Bishop Grigore Dascalul died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1834, the misunderstanding between the Greek hegumens and the administration of the country were not ended yet, and the



issue shall become deeper. The Council of Administration of Wallachia determined in May 1833 the wages of the hegumens, repairs of the monasteries and their help share owed to the Holy Places, in line with the will. The strong opposition of the Greek monks determined Kiseleff to order the obligation to pay the debts owed to the state, but, however, as the action of the Greek monks was supported by the Russians, nothing was enforced. (Boliac, 1862, p. 55; Xenopol, p. 178)

The situation was the same for Moldavia too, only that the Moldavian and Greek oppositions were not related. As the Holy Places were under the situation to be deprived by their money rights, they appealed to the patriarch from Constantinople, which represented their interests to the Ottoman Porte.

Thus, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1825, the hegumen patriarch Agatanghel writes a letter to Moldavia drawing the attention to make all the arrangements to pay any yearly outstanding amounts, an unhappy situation, in line with the specifications of the hegumen Inochentie of the Protozani monastery, the branch administrator of the patriarchy of Antiohia. (Delikanis, p. 242) The same Agatanghel communicated to the patriarch Meletie of Antiohia on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 1828 that 10,000 grossus from the branch specified above, sent by Kir H. Panvanos, as they are to be sent to the Holy Grave, at Athos, at Sinai and in other places and he is concerned with this issue (Delikanis, p. 244). On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1829, another ecumenical letter, sent to Antiohia concerning the two monasteries from Moldova, indicated that all things were settled. In another letter, from the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 1830, Agatanghel the patriarch asks the assembly of the council of Protozani monastery, the Metropolitan Bishop Inochentie de Ilionopolis to pay the yearly debt, in case of refuse, he shall be sanctioned. (Delikanis, 246) On the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1830, the patriarch Agatanghel sends a letter to Moldavia, to the two prohegumens, remembering them the things specified above. The new hegumenic patriarch, Constantinos, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 1830 writes to Moldavia to inform on his appointment, to give thanks for the gifts received from the Metropolitan Bishop Ionchentie of Ilionopolis and from the patriarch Metodie of Antinochia. (Delikanis, pp. 247-249)

The hegumen Agatanghel also had written to the Metropolitan Bishop Veniamin Costachi on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1828 to talk about old issues, which were dated back in the 1813 at the branches of Sinai monastery, using local judges and not from any other place. (Delikanis, p. 524) The settlement of issues of monasteries dedicated is also tried under the management of the first inland rulers and under the Russian administration of the general Kiseleff, proved to be in vain, but the efforts of this period shall be continue for three decades and hey shall be fulfilled by ignoring the Greek or international pressures by the law of the Romanian state.

## Conclusions

The fortunes of the monasteries donated because of the believes of the Romanians towards the holy places was since the beginnings a gesture of tenderness and Christian solidarity for the remaining Byzantines, already in lurch and stateless. Through the Patriarch of Constantinople is being maintained the memory of the emperor, as leader of the Christians from the Turkish empire and undeniable spiritual leader of the Christian east. For five centuries Romanian aids were highly appreciated, than because of this act of mercy they regretted the deception of expectations. In fact, Romanian monasteries had no importance for Greek monks, but the lands of the monasteries were highly appreciated by the holy places devoted. To repair the betrayed belief, Romanians had to fight almost 4 decades until they could perform the act of secularization of these fortunes. Romanian charity, generated so much ingratitude that for few decades they been involved in an international conflict. Interesting is the fact that Romanian church stood aside not, caring, although the church owned the dedicated monasteries.

And restoring monasteries dedicated, involved all state power while church and state apart. According to the civil and ecclesiastical law, these fortunes had to return to its rightful own. The owner, however, did not object to the loss of these goods, it tried to recover them or not manifested in any way that would be even dispossession or desire to regain consciousness.

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