

SCIENTIFIC REPORT FOR 2019
(JANUARY - DECEMBER 2019)

Research project: **PN-III-P1-1.1-PD2016-1766**

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Project title: ***The Power of Words. Propagandistic or Conspirational Manuscripts and Printings in Moldavia and Wallachia (1769–1812)***

Acronym ***POWORDS***

Contract **No. 84 of 02/05/2018**

Website: <http://history.uaic.ro/research/powords/>

Project manager: **Lect. Ioan-Augustin Guriță, PhD** (“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iași)

The marvellous Byzantine world has always fascinated, increasingly so after 1453, when the Greeks’ yearning for a lost land mainly expressed itself culturally, when the word replaced the sword and all previous eschatological fragments started to repurpose their meaning and change the time when the end of the world, which was meant to occur at the same time as the mass in Saint Sophia, would come. This ‘great idea’ mainly manifested itself in connection to the Slavic world, when the helm of the Byzantine reconquista, its symbolic capital included, was placed in the hands of the tsars... In this context, anyone could be taken as a type of remaining in battle.

The last years of the 18th century and the first two decades of the subsequent century represented a period marked by fundamental changes, mostly given that all the European forces were involved in wars or eroded by domestic conflicts. The Russo-(Austro)-Turkish wars, the Orthodox movements in the Balkans or the French Revolution were just some of the major events that also affected the Romanian Principalities. Moldavia and Walachia, under the suzerainty of the Porte, were in the “target range” of the great ideological currents manifested in those times, such as the Greek project of Russia; the Greek people’s fight for freedom, pan-orthodoxy as a unique identity form (“the Orthodox nationality”) and as a bind between peoples,

“presented” as a new “crusade” (warranted by the “Slavic peoples”), the ideas of the French revolutionaries and so on. Beyond any doubt, Russia and Austria – powers claiming Byzantine descent – proceeded to specific actions of propaganda to bring together the parties involved in all this “deployment of forces” at ideological level. On the other hand, at the same time, conspirative actions were also conducted, especially coordinated by “initiates”, owners of texts (printed in the West) or manuscripts being put into contact – through networks – with the new Western ideas. During all this time, some of the representatives of the clergy played a special role, on either of the sides, (thus favouring or condemning currents, ideas, directions of thought. I must also highlight the fundamental role played by the Church, whose administrative networks and structures distributed and promoted certain texts considered in the post-Byzantine period “comfort books”, but who were mainly effects and/or tools of the propaganda!

It cannot be a mere coincidence that the histories of Constantine the Great (a model par excellence for the Orthodox autocrats – in our case, for the Russian tsars), the accounts about the foundation or fall of Constantinople, as well as the eschatological fragments, the oracles, or prophecies related to that anti-Ottoman “crusade”, led by the eastern emperors – starting with Peter the Great, given that the fall of the Ottoman empire was seen as a “prelude for Parussia”. Even more, it is no coincidence that after 1750 the Romanian space included – as translations – besides the aforementioned works, various versions of its life and testament, found in several unpublished manuscripts. During the periods of occupation, when Moldavia and Walachia were under Russian military administration, I have noticed an increase in texts with specific topics, intrinsically related to Russia and to its policy in the Orthodox world. The effects of propaganda reified in the spread of ideas, in their distribution under forms accessible to everyone, but also “codified” mystically, eschatologically, with a strong message fitting religious sentiment.

In the pre-modern and modern Romanian society the *written word* was, alongside the other *expressions of power*, one of the latter’s easiest means of manifestation, whether communicated through ritual (in solemn manifestations, proclamations, princely and/or religious ceremonies etc.) or circulating in various endemic media (elite groups or families, monastic communities, secret societies etc.). In the meantime, the Church, through its representatives, played a significant part, supporting either one faction or the other, favouring or

blaming movements, ideas, thought paradigms. A thorough analysis of the texts which can be defined as *propaganda* or *conspirational* that circulated under different forms in the Principalities does not exist, either exclusive to this time period or through the general analysis of the sources. Furthermore, neither was the *fundamental role of the Church*, whose networks and administrative structures distributed and promoted texts and ideas considered, in the post-Byzantine period, '*consolation books*', but they were, even more, the effects and/or tools of propaganda! From my research I noticed that these manuscripts were copied particularly after the fourth decade of the 18th century, mostly between 1769 and 1812.

The contextualization of the *emergence* and *distribution* of such texts, the identification of their authors or the sources they were inspired by, the impact they had in the society of the time and in the prosopography of the people tied to these materials (*translators, scribes, typographers, clergymen, teachers* etc.) are just a few of the elements that will be the basis of our research in addition to editing these texts. From this point of view, the difficulty of the chosen topic is high, since the responsible approach and careful distribution of the interest for each of these constitutive elements of the research project are required. The project's topic is also a challenge, especially since the required information is scattered in studies and volumes partially concerned with some aspects of the issues I wish to analyse in my research.

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We will consider all the aspects that have characterized the historiography of the last decades, both in terms of theorizations, chronologies or interpretations, as well as in the sense of demystifications, restorations or re-configurations and historiographical reinterpretations. The main objectives are: the publication of a volume of studies and sources, critical edition of a manuscript, publishing excerpts from Russian chronicles, as well as participating in national and international scientific events. By reaching these objectives I will bring new contributions and information in the national and international circuit which will contribute to a better understanding of some general or particular aspects in pre-modern and modern Romanian history, the history of the Orthodox Church in the Romanian Principalities, the history of political thought in the Romanian area. Through the sources and studies published

and the approach used, the research I am putting forth will open new paths in the research of the political, cultural and Church history of the eighteenth century so necessary in our historiography.

The analysis of various texts hosted by deposits and libraries, archives, and museums, or private collections may contribute to a better insight of them within the academic community, thus encouraging their research from various perspectives, even interdisciplinary. The editing and publication of sources follows a direction appreciated and followed by many historians, even more as there is a focus in the research field on the elements of originality concerning various topics. Interpretations of any kind may be made only by using the sources unconditionally, while the objectives proposed, once attained, may bring new and original elements within the research field.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT IN 2019

In the period related to the current report (2019), the objective of the project was fully attained. The objective included activities provided in the research plan, such as research and documentation in libraries, research institutes, and archives. An important activity was represented by the documentation and analysis of sources, as well as by the transcription of manuscripts. I analysed some of the main sources I had considered when drafting up the project proposal. I have conducted research and documentation activities especially at the National archives in the Republic of Moldova, at the Romanian Academy Library, at the Central University Library in Iași, at the Romanian National Library, at the Library of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, at the State Archives in Bucharest and Iași, as well as at the “N. Iorga” History Institute in Bucharest.

Aware of the challenges entailed by such research and of the time I had, the results included in the plan were the publication of two papers (one of them comprising the edition of a manuscript assessed in the project) in IDB-indexed journals or in collective volumes,

as well as the presentation of three scientific papers during national or international events. These results were fully attained and even exceeded; I will detail it in the following lines.

Within the project, I published two papers (both in an IDB-indexed journal) and I presented five scientific papers, an international paper abroad, an international paper in the country, and three national papers. Some of these papers will be published in the following period, either in specialised journals or in collective volumes, and they will be reported in the project.

Within the first paper mentioned, I also published the **edition of the Romanian manuscript II-68**, within the collection of manuscripts and rare books of the Central University Library Mihai Eminescu” in Iași, a miscellaneous dating to late 18th century, namely to 1794, comprising a rather interesting fragment: a prophecy ascribed to (Pseudo)Methodius of Patara. The text is preceded by two other writings with variable circulation in the Romanian Principalities: of history of Constantine the Great’s life, as well as a version of the fall of Constantinople. This is one of the few known manuscripts comprising the two accounts and the prophecy in one place, making up a relative whole.

All these scientific contributions focus on the project topic or on very similar topics. At the end of the year, it may be stated that all the results have been delivered.

I also mention that – in this stage of the project – I developed the web page, accessible online at: <http://history.uaic.ro/research/powords/>.

DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

Papers

1. **Ioan-Augustin Guriță**, *Despre Ștefan cel Mare și Moldova la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea. Note pe marginea unor fragmente de cronică târzie [About Stephen the Great and Moldavia at the End of the 17th Century. Remarks on a Late*

Chronicle], in “Analele Putnei” [The Annals of Putna], XIV, 2018 (published in 2019), 2 p. 157–190 (CEEOL, Index Copernicus).

2. **Ioan-Augustin Guriță**, *La 341 de ani după căderea Constantinopolului: un manuscris, un sucevean și un fenomen cultural [341 Years after the Fall of Constantinople: a Manuscript, a Native of Suceava and a Cultural Phenomenon]*, in “Analele Putnei” [The Annals of Putna], XIV, 2018 (published in 2019), 2 p. 27–90 (CEEOL, Index Copernicus).

Paper presented at international scientific events

1. **Ioan-Augustin Guriță**, *Pagini de istorie bisericească mai puțin cunoscute din primii ani ai stăpânirii austriece în nordul Moldovei [Less known ecclesiastical history pages in the first years of the Austrian domination in Northern Moldavia]*, “Colocviile Putnei” [Putna colloquia], 23rd edition, Putna-Dragomirna, 2019 (<https://www.centrulstefancelmare.ro/en/activitati/putna-colloquia-23rd-edition/>).

2. **Ioan-Augustin Guriță**, *The Byzantine Empire in Romanian Manuscripts from the 18th Century: Prophecies, Histories, Hagiographies*, The 7th Annual Conference of Medieval, Renaissance and Early Modern Studies, 15-19 April, Nicosia, Cyprus (<https://www.othelloisland.org/copy-of-2018-provisional-programme>).

Paper presented at national scientific events

1. **Ioan-Augustin Guriță**, *Dascăli putneni din veacul al XVIII-lea [The Putna teachers from the 18th century]*, “Colocviile Putnei” [Putna colloquia], 22nd edition, 12th February 2019, “N. Iorga” History Institute, Bucharest

<https://www.centrulstefancelmare.ro/en/activitati/putna-colloquia-22nd-edition/>).

2. **Ioan-Augustin Guriță**, *O „însămnare” din 1789 și importanța ei [A “note” of 1789 and its importance]*, monthly session of the Heraldry, Genealogy, and Sigillography Commission, Iași, 12th March 2019 (https://www.irgh.org/?%C5%9Eedin%C5%A3e_lunare_de_comunic%C4%83ri_2019_Ma_rtie)).

3. **Ioan-Augustin Guriță**, *Rugăciuni pentru cazuri de epidemii și boli în spațiul românesc (sec. XVIII-XIX) [Prayers for epidemics and diseases in the Romanian space (18th-19th centuries)]*, within the workshop *Înfruntând un "inamic" invizibil. Politici administrative, practici medicale și comportamente sociale în Țările Române în context epidemic (secolele XVIII-XIX) [Confronting an invisible “enemy”. Administrative policies, medical practices, and social behaviours in the Romanian Principalities in an epidemic context (18th-19th centuries)]*, “A.D. Xenopol” History Institute, 4th October 2019 (http://adxenopol.academiaromana-is.ro/images/program_oct2019.pdf)

For the effective unfolding of the research and for the attainment of the objectives proposed, I had regular meetings with Prof. Laurențiu Rădvan, PhD, who has been involved constantly in this project.

The funds were used correctly, in a balanced manner, according to the objectives, activities, and budget categories within the project plan.

The scientific activity unfolded throughout the project has enabled the attaining of the results proposed and of the objectives set, respectively for 2018, creating firm premises for the development, with good results, of the scientific activity in 2019, when the volume of studies and sources announced in the project proposal will appear.

03. XII. 2019

**Project manager,
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