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Facultatea de Istorie • Centrul de Studii Clasice și Creștine

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Atti del XIII Convegno romeno-italiano *Tradizione e innovazione tra antichità classica e medioevo: forme, strumenti e modelli di comunicazione letteraria e artistica*
(Iași, 26-28 settembre 2023)

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SIGLE ȘI ABREVIERI / SIGLE E ABBREVIAZIONI*

ACO	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i> , ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin, 1914 sqq.
ANRW	<i>Ausstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> , II, <i>Prinzipat</i> , Berlin-New York.
BOR	<i>Biserica Ortodoxă Română</i> , București.
CCL	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</i> , Turnhout, 1953 sqq.
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> , Vienna-Leipzig, 1860 sqq.
EAC	A. Di Berardino (ed.), <i>Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity</i> , vols. 1-3, Downers Grove, 2014.
LCI	E. Kirschbaum (ed.), <i>Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie</i> , vols. 1-4, Rome-Freiburg-Basel-Vienna, 1994.
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> , I-VIII, Zürich-München-Düsseldorf, 1981-1997.
MMS	<i>Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei</i> , Iași.
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca</i> , Paris.
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina</i> , Paris.
PLRE, I	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , I, A. D. 260-395, by A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris, Cambridge, 1981.
RIC	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i> .
RE	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll), Stuttgart-München.
RGZM	<i>Römische Militärdiplome und Entlassungsurkunden in der Sammlung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums</i> , Mainz.
RLBK	K. Wessel (ed.), <i>Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst</i> , Bd. I, Stuttgart, 1966 sqq.
SC	<i>Sources Chrésiennes</i> , Paris-Lyon.
ThLL (ThLL)	<i>Thesaurus linguae Latinae</i> .

* Cu excepția celor din *L'Année Philologique* și *L'Année Épigraphique* / Escluse quelle segnalate da *L'Année Philologique* e *L'Année Épigraphique*.



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**XIII CONVEGNO ROMENO-ITALIANO
Tradizione e innovazione tra antichità classica e
medioevo: forme, strumenti e modelli di comunicazione
letteraria e artistica**

**AL XIII-LEA COLOCVIU ROMÂNNO-ITALIAN
Tradiție și inovație între antichitatea clasică și Evul Mediu:
forme, instrumente și modele de comunicare
literară și artistică**

**Iași, 26-28 settembre / septembrie 2023
Sala H1 (Facoltà di Storia / Facultatea de Istorie)**



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PROGRAMMA / PROGRAM

Martedì / Marți, 26 settembre / septembrie 2023

8.00-13.00

Arrivo degli ospiti / Sosirea invitaților

16.30-19.00

Moderatore / Moderator:

Nelu ZUGRAVU

16.30-16.45: Apertura del convegno; saluti istituzionali / Deschiderea colocolviului; salutul organizatorilor

16.45-17.15: Relazione inaugurale / Comunicare inaugurală: Mela ALBANA (Università degli Studi di Catania), *Cultura e potere nell'età di Valentiniano I*

17.15-17.30: Discussione / Discuții

17.30-17.45: Pausa / Pauză

17.45-18.30: Presentazione libri

Iulian-Gabriel HRUȘCĂ (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași) presenta: M. TULLI CICERONIS *Actionis secundae in C. Verrem: Liber V*, Luigi Piacente recognovit, adnotationes criticas et indices adiecit, Claudia Tărnăuceanu Dacoromanice uertit, notis atque commentariis instruxit, Luigi Piacente et Claudia Tărnăuceanu praefationem composuerunt = M. TULLIUS CICERO, *A doua acțiune împotriva lui Verres: Cartea a V-a*, restabilirea textului latin, apparatus criticus, indici de Luigi Piacente, traducere în limba română, note și comentarii de Claudia Tărnăuceanu, introducere de Luigi Piacente și Claudia Tărnăuceanu, Editura Universității din București, 2023

Luigi PIACENTE (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro) presenta: Federica CALABRESE, *Il sito di Glastonbory. Fonti letterarie e indagini archeologiche sul 'primo' contesto cristiano di Britannia*, Aracne, Roma, 2022

18.30-19.00: Discussione / Discuții

19.30: Cena / Cina

Mercoledì / Miercuri, 27 settembre / septembrie 2023

9.00-10.15

Moderatore / Moderator:

Dan RUSCU

9.00-9.30: Nelu ZUGRAVU (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), *Continuità lessicali – continuità e discontinuità semantiche e simboliche nelle Historiae abbreviate di Aurelio Vittore*

9.30-10.00: Ecaterina Gabriela LUNG (Universitatea din București), *Geography and ideology in Late Antiquity*

10.00-10.15: Discussione / Discuții

10.15-10.30: Pausa caffè / Pauză de cafea

10.30-12.30

Moderatore / Moderator:
Alessandro LAGIOIA

10.30-11.00: Maria AMBROSETTI (Università degli Studi di Sassari), *Forme della narrazione drammatica in Ammiano Marcellino*

11.00-11.30: Antonella BRUZZONE (Università degli Studi di Sassari), *Paradosso, metamorfosi, spettacolo. Suggestioni ovidiane nella Gigantomachia latina di Claudiano*

11.30-12.00: Florica BOHÎLȚEA-MIHUȚ (Universitatea din București), *Classical authors in Sidonius Apollinaris' library*

12.00-12.30: Discussione / Discuții

12.30-15.00: Pausa pranzo / Pauză de prânz

15.00-17.00

Moderatore / Moderator:
Antonella BRUZZONE

15.00-15.30: Emanuel GROSU (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), *Da refrigerium al suo contrario. Alcune sfumature del concetto nelle visiones animarum medievali*

15.30-16.00: Simona NICOLAE (Universitatea din București/ Institutul de Studii Sud-Est Europene), *L'hellénisme païen des épigrammes chrétiens (Anthologie Palatine)*

16.00-16.30: Alessandro LAGIOIA (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro), *“O misera domus Herculea”: un contributo inedito alla fortuna del mito di Ercole nel primo umanesimo*

16.30-17.00: Discussione / Discuții

17.00-17.15: Pausa / Pauză

17.15-18.30

Moderatore / Moderator:
Luigi PIACENTE

17.15-17.45: Federica CALABRESE (Ministero della Cultura, Italia), *San Barbato di Benevento. Passaggio dal paganesimo al cristianesimo in terra campana*

17.45-18.15: Dan RUSCU (Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca), *La patena del vescovo Paternus di Tomi e il suo simbolismo*

18.15-18.30: Discussione / Discuții

19.00: Cena / Cina

Giovedì / Joi, 28 settembre / septembrie 2023

8.30-10.30

Moderatore / Moderator:
Simona NICOLAE

8.30-9.00: Claudia TĂRNĂUCEANU, Ana-Maria GÎNSAC (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), *Innovation et nouveauté dans la traduction biblique du*

latin au roumain. Les Psaumes de la Bible de Blaj (1760-1761) versus des versions antérieures [Travail réalisé dans le cadre du projet de recherche roPsalt – CNCS-UEFISCDI, code PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-2939]

9.00-9.30: Daniel NIȚĂ-DANIELESCU (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), ***Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi’s Forewords – their role and importance in the age of “national renewal” and “European sentiment”***

9.30-10.00: Ioan-Augustin GURIȚĂ (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), ***The source(s) of one Romanian 18th century version of The history of the fall of Constantinople***

10.00-10.30: Discussiune / Discuții

10.30-11.00: Nelu ZUGRAVU, ***Conclusioni***



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THE PREFACES OF METROPOLITAN VENIAMIN COSTACHI – ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE AGE OF “NATIONAL REGENERATION” AND “EUROPEAN SENTIMENT”

Daniel NIȚĂ-DANIELESCU*
(Faculty of Orthodox Theology,
“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași)

Keywords: *Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi, homeland, prefaces, regeneration.*

Abstract: *A special role in the work of Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi is played by the prefaces to works translated and printed by him, or published with his blessing and through his care. Their importance, primarily pastoral and cultural, also stems from the need to identify and recommend the most appropriate solutions to meet the challenges of his age, designated as one of “national regeneration” and “European sentiment”. Thus, responses and recommendations can be made to remove the causes of the deplorable state of affairs that legitimized, nourished and enabled the regeneration effort, such as political and social instability, the corruption of morals and the “non-development of culture”.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *Mitropolitul Veniamin Costachi, patrie, prefețe, regenerare.*

Rezumat: *Prefețele Mitropolitului Veniamin Costachi – rolul și importanța lor în epoca „regenerării naționale” și a „sentimentului european”. Un rol aparte în opera Mitropolitului Veniamin Costachi îl au prefețele lucrărilor traduse și imprimare de dânsul, sau apărute cu binecuvântarea și prin purtarea lui de grijă. Importanța acestora, în primul rând pastorală și culturală, reiese și din necesitatea identificării și recomandării soluțiilor celor mai potrivite pentru întâmpinarea provocărilor epocii, desemnată drept una a „regenerării naționale” și a „sentimentului european”. Astfel, pot fi evidențiate răspunsuri și recomandări pentru înlăturarea cauzelor generatoare a stării deplorabile ce legitima, alimenta și capacita efortul de regenerare, precum instabilitatea politică și socială, coruperea moravurilor și „nedezvoltarea culturii”.*

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1. “*The guardian saint of Moldavia*”

Remembering events he had witnessed, Edgar Quinet wrote with reference to Veniamin Costachi, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava (ministering as a high priest between 1803-1842, with two interruptions: 1808-1812 and 1821-1823): “oh, sublime and grandiose spectacle! A soul of angelic chastity; a beautiful and majestic elderly man as I’ve never seen in my entire life. When Metropolitan Veniamin, in the splendor of his oriental Church, appeared in his golden vestments, with his snow-white wavy locks reaching down to his shoulders, the people saw in him the guardian saint of Moldova”¹. Such appreciations are due not only to the impressive and moving, splendid and hieratic way in which he was celebrating the liturgy; he will be gratefully remembered as a saintly figure by the generations to come, especially due to his exemplary service to the community, in all high priestly duties that he fulfilled with skill and devotion².

¹ „Le peuple le prenait pour Saint patron de la Moldavie” (Edgar Quinet, *Les Roumains in Oeuvres complètes*, VII, cinquième édition, Hachette, Paris, 1857, 116). Edgar Quinet was Gheorghe Asachi’s son-in-law, Asachi being one of Metropolitan Veniamin’s many scholarship-beneficiaries and close collaborator in the decades of his ministry as a high priest in Iași - E. Lovinescu, *Gh. Asachi. Viața și opera sa*, final edition, Casa Școalelor Press, Bucharest, 1927, *passim*; Gheorghe Ungureanu, *Figuri de arhiviști români. Gheorghe Asachi 1788-1869*, Bucharest, 1969, 3-28; George Sorescu, *Gh. Asachi*, Minerva Press, Bucharest, 1970; Vasile Lovinescu, “O nouă fațetă a lui Gh. Asachi”, in *Incantația sânelui*, second edition, edited by Alexandrina Lovinescu and Petru Bejan, preface and notes by Petru Bejan, European Institute, Iași, 1999, 97-107; Petronel Zahariuc, *Începutul domniei lui Ioniță Sandu Sturza. Un fragment din istoria anului 1822*, in *In honorem Mircea Ciubotaru*, edited by Lucian-Valeriu Lefter, Mihai-Bogdan Atanasiu, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Press, Iași, 2015, 504-506; Angela Jianu, *Ermiona Asachi-Quinet și „republica inteligențelor”*, in Violeta Barbu, Maria-Magdalena Székely, Kinga S. Tüdös, Angela Jianu, *Grădina rozelor. Femei din Moldova, Țara Românească și Transilvania (Sec. XVII-XIX)*, Romanian Academy Press, Bucharest, 2015, 339-348; *Dicționarul literaturii române de la origini până la 1900*, Academy Press, Bucharest, 1979, 55-60 - voce by Algeria Simota.

² The “classic” portrait of the Metropolitan is drawn by N. Iorga at the beginning of the 20th century: “If you had asked someone, 60-70 years ago, in the city of Iași during the rule of Voivode Mihail Sturdza, a city where, together with many whack-pots and scatter-brains, lived many people of a beautiful temperament and zeal to do good, many well-mannered elderly and young person ready to make many sacrifices, if you had asked the old-fashioned boyar, as well as the student in Paris, the faithful Christian as well as the Jew, ‘who is the best man in Moldova,’ they would have answered as one: Father Veniamin. If you had questioned the same people, ‘who

In the second half of the century, trying to offer as synthetic a view as possible on the personality of the former Metropolitan of Iași, Constantin Erbiceanu, a reputed scholar and member of the Romanian Academy, maintained that “the history of Moldavia, particularly of 1803-1840, is summarized by or identifies with the figure of Metropolitan Veniamin; there is no political and charitable act where you would not find him leading”³; in time, he is joined by other numerous writers who shed light on the features of the Romanian priest, ennobled by numerous virtues he cultivated steadfastly and diligently: “founder of holy places of worship”, “enlightened patriot,” with a rich social-pastoral activity, promoter of culture, “founder and mentor of national schools”⁴.

As for how he understood his mission of service, the Metropolitan himself confessed in his *Testament* that “during my entire life (...) God’s infinite mercy (...) planted a spark of His holy grace, awakening His rightful judgement and self-consciousness; for this I have never

is the most hard-working person in the Country, who lets not a second go by without employing it for the benefit of others’, you would have been shown, in the meagre little house belonging to the Old Metropolitan Church, an elderly monk of almost 80 years, who kept his vigils in the night to acquire and spread the teachings of the Scriptures, which seemed to him to be the safest guide on the hard roads of life. If you had wanted to know who is the poorest, the most needy, the most steeped in debt among those who do good, some of which is seen and plenty of which remains unknown, they would have whispered the same venerated name of the octogenarian Metropolitan. Amongst such diverse and divided people in terms of how their judgement, there was agreement in this one single matter. Because he held a different opinion – or maybe precisely because he shared everyone’s opinion – the smart, but selfish and greedy Voivode chased the archbishop of Moldavia from his throne and on a harsh winter day in January 1842, the townspeople saw the oh so old Metropolitan taking to the mountains where, at Slatina, in Alexandru Lăpușneanu’s ancient Monastery, a simple room awaited him, where his soul could go peacefully to the place of eternal dwelling, where he’d been longing to go for a long time” (N. Iorga, *Viața și faptele Mitropolitului Moldovei Veniamin Costachi (1768-1846)*, Minerva Press, Bucharest, 1904, 5-6).

³ Constantin Erbiceanu, *Despre viața și activitatea Mitropolitului Veniamin Costache ca mitropolit al Moldovei*, Imprimeria Statului, Bucharest, 1886, 22.

⁴ *Dicționarul literaturii române de la origini până la 1900*, 221-222 (voce compiled by Constantin Teodorovici); Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. III, 3rd edition, Trinitas Press, Iași, 2008, 9-24; Nicolae Chifăr, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română de la începuturi până astăzi*, by Viorel Ioniță (coordinator), *Istorie Bisericească Universală*, vol. II/2, *De la 1054 până în prezent*, Bucharest, 2021, 515-516.

ceased to trudge on the paths of salvation, therefore I've been reading the *Divine Scriptures*, the teachings of the Holy Fathers, teachers of the Orthodox Church and, in agreement with their spirit, I've used all my powers to improve and adorn the holy churches, both from the perspective of ordinances and of the books necessary for the sacred service, and from the perspective of its celebrants. (...) I've also busied myself with the translation of God's books and words, according to the measure of the understanding that God has given me and of the little knowledge I have gained, fearful of the punishment of the cunning servant who buried the entrusted talent. From among the translations, I printed some at my own expense and shared them as gifts, for the easier spreading of the light"⁵.

Elsewhere, in the *Foreword* or *Preface* to a paper meant "for the use of the Romanian youth", he expresses his belief that "once books and the sciences in the native tongue increase, if not I, at least my descendants will be worthy of a learned and pious clergy and they will gain a flock enlightened in the knowledge of Christian teachings"⁶.

The forms of address and how pastoral responsibility is assumed might baffle modern readers. For this reason, we must remind them that in the former Romanian principalities, in the first half of the nineteenth century, an archbishop's service, and especially the Metropolitan's, was carried out with high regard to traditional practices, and it was one of great scope, responsibility and authority. Mihail Kogalniceanu, a contemporary of Veniamin Costachi, when he writes about

⁵ *Testamentul Mitropolitului Veniamin* in Constantin Erbiceanu, *Istoria Mitropoliei Moldovei și Sucevei și a Catedralei mitropolitane din Iași*, Tipografia cărților bisericești, Bucharest, 1888, LIV, 59.

⁶ *Înainte-cuvântare la Istoria Scripturii Vechiului Testament*, translated and printed by Metropolitan Veniamin, Iași, 1824; *Bibliografia Românească Veche 1508-1830*, tome III 1809-1830, by Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoș and Dan Simonescu edițiunea Academiei Române, Bucharest, 1912-1936, no. 1211, 438-442; Ilie Gheorghică, *Un veac de la moartea Mitropolitului Veniamin Costachi*, Sfânta Mănăstire Neamțu, 1946, 169-171. The Metropolitan writes that this purpose "kept me sleepless and restless in translating the Holy Books" and wants to show that in translating and printing this book he "was more diligent (...), because this book contains it all – both laws and morals". He ends with a prayer: "may the Gift of the Holy Ghost give rise to the holy thought and useful knowledge in your soul and strengthen you to complete all, following His good will, through which thou shall be worthy of both beatitudes, and to the country honour, and praise from relatives, and from God gifts and mercy, Amen. Your humble God-praying Veniamin, Metropolitan of Moldavia 1824 (*ibidem*, 172-173).

Metropolitan Iacov Stamati, insists on showing that “then, especially during the Phanariot regime, the Metropolitan alone had the courage, might and right to speak on behalf of Moldavia. The boyars listened to him (the Metropolitan – *our note*) as if he were the Head of the State. Since the ruler was a foreigner, the Sultan addressed to him the relevant firman to Moldavians; during all foreign occupations, it was the Metropolitan Church that army leaders headed for; it was there that boyars gathered; it was there that the multitudes went during hardships. The Metropolitan Church was, then, not only the centre of religious life, but also of State affairs.”⁷ According to custom, the Metropolitan presided over the Divan, tended to the educational system and the cultural and spiritual life of parishioners, the Ruler and dignitaries had him as advisor and collaborator, and the congregation, from all walks of life, were used to thinking of him as Father of them all and the highest moral instance, to whom they would resort and from whom they received guidance and admonishment, absolution and blessing⁸. Being used to this manner of shepherding and to this understanding of an archbishop’s service and dignity, Veniamin demonstrates steadfastness and a unified vision of the place and role of the Church in the community, as well as an understanding full of spiritual realism, flexible in some circumstances, but firm and faithful to the everlasting Orthodox values⁹. This is quite clear and convincing in the numerous *prefaces* that accompany the works printed under his care, with his blessing or at his expense, in the printing workshops of the Metropolitanate from Neamț Monastery and from Iași.

⁷ M. Kogălniceanu, *Biografia Mitropolitului Iacov, Ateneul Român*, II, Iași, 1861, 85.

⁸ Al. Zub, *Cu privire la unele frământări din Moldova, în anul 1819. Un episod din viața Mitropolitului Veniamin Costachi*, *MMS*, XLV/3-4, 1969, 195-216; Vasile Vasilache, *Mitropolitul Veniamin Costachi, 1768-1846*, Neamț Monastery, 1941, 101-102.

⁹ See the special issue of *BOR*, LXIV/10-12, 1946, 481-600 (with studies on the life and work of Metropolitan Veniamin collected by Patriarch Nicodim, I.D. Ștefănescu, N. Iorga, Vasile Vasilache, Mihail Bulacu, Constantin Turcu, Gheorghe I. Moisescu, T.G. Bulat, Th. Fecioru și Teodor N. Manolache); *MMS*, XLIII/1-2, 1967, 7-174 (studies by Irineu Crăciunaș, Gh. Vlad, Ilie Gheorghiiță, N. C. Enescu, Nestor Vornicescu, Mircea Sfichi, Epifanie Norocel, Ioan Ivan, Eustohia Ciucanu, I. Zugrav, Mitrofan Băltuță, I. Serafinceanu, V. Caramzin-Cacovschi, Ionela Manolescu, Parthenie Apetrei, Const. A. Stoide, Scarlat Porcescu); Milan Șesan, *Teologia Ortodoxă în sec. al XIX-lea*, *MMS*, XLVI/1-2, 1970, 13-16.

2. “National regeneration” and “European sentiment”

The age in which Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi lived was sometimes called the “renaissance and the European sentiment”, and its characteristics can be detected in the writings and initiatives of clergy and lay men among his contemporaries or those coming after him¹⁰. Thus, when they reflected on the topic of the *meaning of Romanian history* and the “unending transformation”, the concept most often highlighted was that of “decay, growth and descent”. Among the causes generating the deplorable condition, which legitimized, fed and enabled the regenerative effort, internal circumstances such as political and social instability, moral corruption and “non-development of culture” were identified and described¹¹. Especially in what concerns

¹⁰ Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria ideilor politice românești (1363-1878)*, Jon Dumitru Verlag, München, 1987, 69. See also Gheorghe Platon, *Geneza revoluției române de la 1848*, Junimea, Iași, 1980; idem, *România în veacul construcției naționale. Națiune, frământări, mișcări sociale și politice, program național*, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 2005; Bogdan Murgescu, *Țările Române între Imperiul Otoman și Europa Creștină*, Polirom, Iași, 2012, *passim*.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 51-55; some of the external causes of decadence are the infelicitous *geographical position* (the Romanian Principalities are “in the way of all evil”, in the area of interest and competition of the great neighboring Empires), the unfavourable *political circumstances*, more and more numerous and dangerous (in the context of “the oriental problem”, the state of crisis and generalized conflict in international relations in the competition to inherit the “sick man of Europe”, as the Ottoman Empire was often called, as well as the presence of unfitting *alien elements* - this latter topic being seldom discussed in the 19th century and sometimes used for “demagogic purposes” (*ibidem*, 47-50; see also idem, *Mémoires et projets des réformes dans les Principautés roumaines (1769-1830)*, vol. I, Association internationale d’Études du Sud-Est Européen, Bucharest, 1970, *passim*; Andrei Oțetea, *Contribuții la chestiunea orientală*, in *Scrieri istorice alese*, Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1980, 69-185; Leonid Boicu, *Geneza chestiunii române ca problemă internațională*, Junimea Press, Iași, 1975, 12-14; idem, *Principatele române în raporturile politice internaționale (secolul al XVIII-lea)*, Junimea, Iași, 1986, 148-296 and *passim* (and idem, *Principatele Române în raporturile politice internaționale, 1792-1821*, edited by Victor Spinei, European Institute, 2001); Veniamin Ciobanu, *La granița a trei imperii*, Junimea, Iași, 1985; idem, *Statutul juridic al Principatelor române în viziune europeană (sec. al XVIII-lea)*, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Press, Iași, 1999, 203-288; Harald Heppner, *Austria și Principatele dunărene (1774-1812). O contribuție la politica Sud-Est Europeană a Habsburgilor*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, *passim*; Gh. Cliveti, *Concertul european, un experiment în relațiile internaționale din secolul XIX*, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 2006, 109-264; Cristian Ploscaru, *Ori-*

the latter two categories, the edifying words, the fervent efforts and the leading example of the Metropolitan of Iași are felt at the time as a guiding, diligent and benefactor presence. He himself is sometimes keen on showing how he understands the duty of his service in the real circumstances of the time: “for as the teaching of the faith decreases, too easily faith has also decreased, and as faith decreased, naturally the signs of faith decreased as well”¹². The effects of this state of things are seen in “many parts of Europe”, but the author believes that “the movement astray that they also cause to Orthodox believers is not little, as they lead men to consider themselves learned philosophers, who will not allow themselves to be guided by the harness of faith, and they are foolish enough to invent their own laws and justice, slandering the truth of wisdom, which is the fear of God, as madness, and receive as wisdom the madness of this world”¹³. Veniamin is aware of the necessity and value of his efforts and he refers to “some of the men of the political herd” who think of the archbishop’s service as “delight”, as one who “gives a report of the people to God”; about the commoners he says that “they won’t see anything, not only with their mind”, but also “with their eyes they see only what they wish to see”. Comparing himself to them, Veniamin writes: “however, I will not shy away from this, and no wise man shall oppose me, nor self-spoken will they find me, saying that some observations as the above caused me great sadness and concern”. This is why he shows that he has always “advised, rebuked, berated, sincerely mourning the carelessness in the Christian upbringing of the youth.”¹⁴ And he “strove through encouragement, and at my own expense I translated and printed books of all kinds with advisory teachings towards the true knowledge, of much spiritual benefit”¹⁵. Especially his urges to read, addressed to his “beloved patriots”,

ginile „partidei naționale” din Principatele Române, vol. I, Sub semnul „politicii boierești” (1774-1828), “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Press Iași, 2013, passim.

¹² *Înainte-cuvântarea/ Foreword to Istoria Scripturii Vechiului Testament, in Bibliografia Românească Veche 1508-1830, tome III, 1809-1830, 440; Ilie Gheorghiuță, op. cit., 168.*

¹³ *Ibidem, 441.*

¹⁴ *Ibidem.*

¹⁵ The Metropolitan speaks harshly of parents who do not attend to their children’s instruction: “truly murderers of their sons can those parents deem themselves, who don’t take the pains to give their sons any learning, and even worse than those, as St John Chrysostom said, ‘murderers of sons only separate the body from the soul, and those who do not teach their sons separate the body from the soul and

so that “your will be according to the Law of God”, and “day and night thou shalt think according to His Law and be just like a tree planted by water springs, which brings the fruit of good deeds at all times.” Just as useful and fitting is his advice to “found in your sons’ hearts this true and spiritually beneficial wisdom”, for “without it all other sciences and philosophy are proven insanity” (and he insists that they “feed this to the tender mind” of the youth, “for them to ground themselves into its teachings, for it to be their foundation, on which any other science could stand, unquivering and well-approved”¹⁶).

We should also mention here the remark concerning the place Veniamin’s works occupy among the great movements of ideas of his age: he who often signed as “humble Veniamin”, he who showed, again in the *preface* of a book, that “I, once desiring this (hermit - *our note*) life, (...) led the most lonely life and as is my belief, the life which is more loving of God”¹⁷, he, the accomplished monk, great lover of the hesichast life, was the “first to break the narrow walls of monastic thinking and to breathe the fresh air of the wide expanses open before him.” ‘Father Veniamin’ became a patriot and remained so till the end of his life”¹⁸.

3. The Metropolitan’s Prefaces: Their Role and Importance

The remarkable and rich editorial activity he encouraged, supervised and sustained in the Metropolitanate’s two printing presses (one in Iași and one in Neamț Monastery, where he printed 17 theolo-

the soul from God; woe to you, parents, in this world! Still, wow, in the world to come!” (*ibidem*).

¹⁶ It is remarkable that sometimes the Metropolitan presents his own effort to the readers as “testimony of my wish (...) for the use and learning of our Romanian people” (*Prefața-Pastorală la Iubitorul de înțelepciune*, Iași, 1831, to Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 173).

¹⁷ *Foreword (to my beloved readers) (Cătră iubiții miei cetitori)* to Evghenie Vulgaris’ Book, *Îndeletnicire iubitoare de Dumnezeu (Adoleshia filotheos)*, translated by the Metropolitan when he first stepped down from office (1808-1812) and printed in Iași in 1815 (tome I); *Bibliografia Românească Veche 1508-1830*, tome IV *Adăogiri și îndreptări*, by Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoș and Dan Simonescu, edited by the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1944, no. 867, 299; Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 140.

¹⁸ N. Iorga, *op. cit.*, 10.

gical books and supervised the printing of 23 other books) is first of all related to his pastoral care¹⁹, and this results from the information recorded in many, if not all the *prefaces* he wrote. They are addressed to the readers (and through them, to the listeners), all seen by the hierarch as his “spiritual brethren” under his pastoral supervision. He always relates to them with the awareness of his fatherly responsibility and duty, often reasserting this for his listeners.

Also, another significance of the “predoslovia” or “the word to the reader” has been highlighted, in connection to what had been written before the time when he lived: “it is the first creation of Romanian prose of a normative, didactic, educational, national-patriotic character”; added to this is the idea that “predoslovia” is the first form of appreciation of the book, a recommendation and dissemination in the reader’s world – we could say a primitive, elementary form of literary criticism”²⁰.

A more careful study of the numerous prefaces written by Metropolitan Veniamin highlights, first of all, the importance of the pastoral role he intended them to have (which is why when they are referred to, later, they are sometimes called pastoral-prefaces). Also, one can note how the internal factors mentioned above as responsible for the decadence of the times are noticeable in their contents, each factor finding in prefaces its own necessary remedy and appropriate recommendations. The study of the Metropolitan’s texts, which he endowed with a fatherly and institutional authority recognized and respected at the time, can highlight the Romanian hierarch’s view on how to lead the Church at the dawn of modernity; let us not forget that he is remembered by posterity as an “icon of the enlightened and country-

¹⁹ For the printed works, see *Bibliografia Românească Veche 1508-1830*, tomes II, 1716-1808 (edited by Ioan Bianu and Nerva Hodoș), III, 1809-1830 (edited by Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoș and Dan Simonescu) and IV, *Adăogiri și îndreptări* (edited by Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoș and Dan Simonescu), Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1910, 1912-1936 and 1944; *Bibliografia Chronologică Română sau Catalogu generalu de cărțile române imprimare, de la adoptare Imprimeriei 1550-1873*, 2nd edition, collected and edited by Dimitrie Iarcu, Imprimeria Statului, Bucharest, 1873; Gheorghe Adamescu, *Istoria Seminarului “Veniamin” din Iași (1803-1903)*, Bucharest, 1904, 21-40; Mircea Păcurariu, *Dicționarul Teologilor Români*, 2nd edition, revised and completed, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 2002, 131-133.

²⁰ Dan Simonescu, “Predoslovia” în cărțile românești vechi, *Biblioteca*, 4, 1978, 38-41; *Predoslovii*, Anthology, Foreword by Tudor Nedelcea, Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1994, 6.

loving man”, “Archbishop of the Homeland”, “founder of the Romanian language”²¹, founder of modern education and a cultural promoter who, towards the end of his life, confessed that “I did all that I could, in counsel and deed, to increase the spiritual and material blossoming of the Holy church and of our Homeland”²².

3.1. *Social and political instability*

The topic, recurrent in the writings of his time, seems to reiterate, if not literally, at least for sure as a present state of mind, the old and painful observation of the chronicler: “it’s not man that drives time, but man, poor him, is under the force of time”²³. In several of the Metropolitan’s texts, the failure of initiatives that wished to be salutary at the time is blamed on the weakness of men who “often serve power more than justice”²⁴. Veniamin writes about this failure in his *preface* to Evghenie Vulgaris *Buna murire* (*Good Death, n. tr.*) (1844/1845), following the Pauline letter: “I have often found myself in temptations, in much weariness, in persecutions and slanders by enemies, (...) in perils by foreigners, in need by lying brethren, in distress, in vigils, in fastings, in invasions, in care for the Church, in care for the people of the Church, in care for commoners, in care for myself; for who is helpless and I am not, and who is offended and I burn not?”²⁵.

However, in the midst of heated debates, of tensions generated by inflamed polemics or corrosive pamphlets, of scheming and reprehensible duplicity (when everything seemed close at hand and allowed when it was desired to compromise and annihilate opponents), Metropolitan Veniamin’s plea to understanding and unity stands out. A father of all, called upon to be a man of steadfastness and balance, as

²¹ N. Iorga, *op. cit.*, 68; Constantin N. Tomescu, *Mitropolitul Grigore IV al Ungrovlahiei*, Tipografia Eparhială Cartea Românească, Chișinău, 1927, 103.

²² Constantin Erbiceanu, *op. cit.*, 61.

²³ Miron Costin, *De neamul moldovenilor, din ce țară au ieșit strămoșii lor*, in *Opere*, vol. II, critical edition by P. P. Panaitescu, Editura pentru Literatură, Bucharest, 1965, 16.

²⁴ Teodor Codrescu, *Uricariu, cuprinzător de hrisoave, anaforale, tratate și alte acte de-ale Moldo-Vlahiei*, part IV, Tipografia Buciumului Român, Iași, 1857, 354; Vasile Vasilache, *op. cit.*, 126.

²⁵ *Buna murire* by Evghenie Vulgaris, translated by Metropolitan Veniamin when he withdrew to Slatina Monastery, and printed in Iași in 1845 (*Preface*, written in 1844, in Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 216-225).

well as a promoter of the common cause (“when some sided with one, others with another and few, very few with the Country”²⁶), he urges, like the Psalmist, to “unity and love among brothers”, considered as “the most useful thing in this life and in the afterlife”. He keeps in mind that “brothers are those of a faith and of a Country, not only by the same parents, and their mother is the Country”. And the “Eparchy” is “undoubtedly happy” when “all those who inhabit it think of themselves as brothers and are bonded by unity and love”, not when they “have dis-unity and persecutions with each other”, and the Country suffers. The call is: “let’s set aside, my dear ones, all enmity and persecution in these critical days, when we need to be united and think of the common good of our Country, and to embrace the honest, straightforward love, leave personal interest and embrace the common good, for it leads to the personal good, as it is impossible to accomplish anything good otherwise”²⁷. These principles, as well as the fruit of his cultural endeavors, determine Iancu Nicola to dedicate to Veniamin, “God’s chosen Archbishop”, known for the “patriotic feeling” as a “patriot Archbishop” and a “model of patriotism (...) in our country”, his *Patriotism Coursebook* printed in Iași in 1829, at the Metropolitan Press, with “the blessing and at the expense” of Metropolitan Veniamin²⁸. We can also add here that the justifications for various kinds of divisions and schemings were often accepted as due to overwhelming external pressure. Of course, the archbishop was also against the Turks. However, no one can argue that he, with a long and proven record of pastoral qualities and devotion to the community, and who had suffered so much because of those who believed that they were under the Russian protection, would fit Nicoale Iorga’s description that “back then, one who didn’t love the Turks had to love the pravoslavnic Russians, for no one dared believe that we could exist independently, without any master”²⁹.

²⁶ Andrei Vizanti, *Veniamin Costaki, Mitropolit Moldovei și Sucevei. Epoca, viața și operele sale (1768-1846)*, Iași, Buciumul român, 1881, 19.

²⁷ Text in Constantin Erbiceanu, *op. cit.*, DXLVI, 474-475 (speech held either before the Greek uprising of 1821 or, in all likelihood, in 1831, before the works of the Community Gathering, whose President he was).

²⁸ *Bibliografia Românească Veche 1508-1830*, tome III 1809-1830, 631.

²⁹ N. Iorga, *op. cit.*, 62.

3.2. *Corruption of morals and “non-development of culture”*

This topic is present in several prefaces. It is developed in very different contexts, and after giving an overview of the situation, he always establishes its causes and proposes solutions. For decades, he invested much energy in this mission that he took upon himself, and which he believes falls under a priest's service to the community. In the “Foreword to the reader” that prefaces “Oglinda celui dinauntru/ Mirror of the inner man”, printed at his expense in 1833 at Neamț Monastery, the Metropolitan writes about the importance of learning, which is not given to man at birth but it is his duty to cultivate³⁰: “man is not born as someone who knows, like the spider, to knit webs and nets (...)”, but by learning and striving he completes this natural knowledge (...) forming such thin fabrics that to the ignorant, it seems hard to believe that they are woven by human hands”³¹ (elsewhere he also argues that “a minstrel is not born singing harmoniously, like the nightingale; yet learning and practice helped him” to become “more skilled than all those birds”³²). Similarly, the archbishop continues, “man can transform himself, can feel what he is and know his duties, how he ought to be, can know the condition in which he is and choose the one in which he ought to remain forever; (...) in short, one can turn from a man of the flesh into a spiritual man and from a sinner he can set himself right”³³. Therefore, freedom and the cultivation of one's vocation (together with good judgment and responsibility) are divine gifts, and as “learning raises and glorifies man, so does lack of learning

³⁰ Text by Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 180. He also shows that “man can take heed of his inner bodily impulses and use them for his soul, because all human impulses give an understanding of some future thought”; thus, man builds a house so that he has a shelter in meagre, harmful days, sets and decorates it so that he can live in it in good health for many a year; he makes a wagon so he can travel from here to there faster and without effort, and takes a book to read so he can gather in it his own thoughts; and any human idea explains a future thought of useful deed”.

³¹ *Foreword to Istoria Scripturii Vechiului Testament*, in Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 160-161; Andrei Vizanti, *op. cit.*, 124. See also Nicolae Isar, *Trăsături iluministe în gândirea și activitatea lui Veniamin Costache* in the volume *Din istoria gândirii social-politice românești (sec. XVII-XIX)*. Studii, Editura Universitară, Bucharest, 2013, 150-151.

³² *Ibidem*, 161.

³³ *Foreword to Oglinda omului celui din lăuntru*, in Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 180.

demean and destroy man more than animals”³⁴. On the one hand, learning helps man become, in his community, “a good painter, a good astronomer, a good physicist, - through learning he sees, understands and learns it all”³⁵. On the other hand, addressing the ruler of the country and “all who love Christ, the church and politics, the great and the small”³⁶, Veniamin writes that learning shapes a moral man, for “men’s behaviors are adorned and the soul comes closer to perfection”. This occurs according to the natural moral law, because “God, rich in mercy, out of the abundance of His mercies, planted the divine seed in each man’s heart, so that he could know what is good and what is bad, and gave him understanding and natural curiosity, to understand everything rightly and discern the truth, and to use curiosity to search every useful thing and stick to it (...); and all human inquiry has an insight into a future thought and a useful deed”. As for discernment and responsibility, Veniamin writes that “similarly, man can learn from another’s distress and suffering (...) to awaken and feel the weight of his sins” and “fearing what is to come, God’s rightful judgment and the sinners’ never-ending torment, he rushes to repent, whole-heartedly hating sins and all harming passions”. Then, through a clean confession and true repentance (...) man can, with God’s help, transform himself and make himself again as a new man (...)”³⁷. He considers this situation to be intrinsically human and mentions that the work that he translated is addressed to all men. This is why he writes that “this little book”, “which is laid before your love like a spiritual feast (...) contains no other secret monastic asceticism but real repentance; the estrangement of a sinner who, through many sins, distanced himself from God, and his return, with true repentance, to God, and God’s unspoken mercy, Who after receiving the sinner to repentance not only forgives him, but also dwells within him and eventually makes him heir to His Kingdom”³⁸. In fact, this is the spiritual remedy of all times which, by

³⁴ *Foreword to Istoria Scripturii Vechiului Testament*, in *Bibliografia Românească Veche 1508-1830*, tome III, 1809-1830, 441; here he also shows that “if man is gifted by God with a talent (...) yet if he doesn’t use it to acquire any kind of knowledge or skill, he can’t be deemed worthy of other name but that of a sly, lazy servant”.

³⁵ *Ibidem*; Andrei Vizanti, *op. cit.*, 124.

³⁶ *Foreword to Oglinda omului celui din lăuntru*, in Ilie Gheorghîță, *op. cit.*, 180.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, 180-181.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 181.

its constant actualization, can help contemporaries overcome the deplorable condition of society, caused by corruption and moral degradation.

For those who wish to understand and use the benefits of studying and grow spiritually, sometimes some practical advice is offered: amongst others, in the *Preface to Lives of Saints Commemorated in the Month of September*, printed at Neamț Monastery in 1807, Metropolitan Veniamin advises that “the money you spend on playing cards, on feasts and other useless expenses and which ruin your soul (...), use it to pay for these books and you shall have payment from God and praise, as you haven’t spent it badly; the time spent playing Pantarolii and Lot and other vanities, use it to do good and read the Holy Fathers’ books and you will be rid of those empty vain words you speak while playing (...). For what use is to a man that he builds with one hand, if he destroys with the other?”³⁹. In another *Preface* he introduces his readers to the ascetic exercise of reading: “he who wants to gain benefit from his reading must follow this rule, meaning after he reads in silence and attentively (...), he should close the book and ask himself what he has read; and while repeating all of this in his mind, he should proceed, as far as he thinks he is able to digest in his mind, and in this way he has a real benefit, for as everything settles neatly in his head, he can impart to others his knowledge anytime, and then his mind also starts to function well, storing in good condition all he has heard or read”⁴⁰. Elsewhere, in the preface to an opuscle “printed with his blessing and at his expense,” he writes: “this little book that you are holding, beloved reader, you couldn’t name it anything else but spiritual food and spiritual delight (...) as it is compiled from all that the Holy Scripture has as most sacred”⁴¹.

In the teachings addressed to his spiritual sons, father Veniamin highlights how important it is for the faithful to cultivate virtues, for “true glory, true greatness only in virtue lies” and “not only one’s

³⁹ *Pastoral - preface to Viețile Sfinților pe luna septembrie (Lives of Saints Commemorated in the Month of September)*, in *Bibliografia Românească Veche 1508-1830*, tome II, 1716-1808, edited by Ioan Bianu and Nerva Hodoș, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1910, no. 731, 519; Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 115.

⁴⁰ *Foreword to Istoria Scripturii Vechiului Testament*, in *Bibliografia Românească Veche 1508-1830*, tome III, 1809-1830, 441; Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 168.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*; Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 172.

⁴¹ *Preface to Învățăturii hristianești folositoare de suflet*, Tipografia Sfintei Mitropolii, Iași, 1823, in Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 159.

name or dress make one a Christian”, but “also his faith and the good deeds that follow it”. Virtue is what gives life value and meaning, and the important thing is “not how many years, but in which manner we live”, and “the language of wisdom convinces us that genuine living does not consist in a long life but in a virtuous life, useful to mankind, even if only for one day, which is: when we die to sin and are reborn to God, working to renew our life, cleansing ourselves (...) and striving saintly under the fear of God (...)”⁴². Added to this is the idea that one should “learn that greatness, wealth and real glory lie not in outside pomp, in shiny thrones and the number of material treasures, which succumb to rust, worms and thieves, and which don’t last after one’s death, nor do they join us in our tomb; but they lie in sharing them through good deeds extended to our speaking brothers, and even to the cocreations of our world, sharing and giving to the poor according to the size and number of the talents that God has bestowed upon us and of which we are going to give an account, so that our justice would stand before us unto the ages of ages”; also, it lies in that “we (...) should heal the heartbroken, preach forgiveness to slaves and eyesight to the blind, to call God’s bountiful year, to comfort those who weep, giving them glory instead of ashes, and the ointment of joy instead of sadness, to make it possible that our nation be called the people of justice and that what God has planted should grow towards His glory”. Veniamin concludes that “only such a life, which results in such purposes, can be called life”; otherwise, “our body, in which lie hidden the burning coal of passions, can only be a prison to the human being where, in the darkness, lie the divine gifts”⁴³ and then “we wouldn’t be a limb set in its right place in the body of society, but we’d be ‘the abomination of desolation stand[ing] in a holy place’”⁴⁴. From here

⁴² *Preface to Buna murire*, Iași, 1845, in Ilie Gheorghită, *op. cit.*, 221.

⁴³ Metropolitan Veniamin, following the “words” of St. John Chrysostom, writes that then “the crown of conceit that we wear to persecute other nations would not adorn, but bind our head; the throne raised on the steps of ruins wouldn’t lift, but demean us; the sceptre that doesn’t advise, but crushes nations like a potter’s vessels, would not bring us glory and power, but shame to the people and defamation to nations” (*ibidem*, 222).

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 221-222. Elsewhere the Metropolitan asks the readers to: “also pray for me, as one who values more the common good than my own life-sustaining breath. For all the body and spiritual powers in harmony like strings have I stretched, which, whenever the community’s fingers touch them, are ready to make the sound

derives the capital role that virtue has in man's life. As far as the effort to cultivate virtues is concerned, Metropolitan Veniamin believes that "nothing is more powerful, brighter and more useful under the sun, and at the same time easier to attain, than the goods of virtue". He insists on showing that through virtue "and through faith, not [through] arms and worldly power, all saints (...) have overcome the terrible kingdoms of darkness and the world, wrought justice in the midst of the injustice of tyranny, closed the mouths of lions, set on the redeeming teachings, put out the power of the tartar fire of heresies against the Church, and saved Christ's flock from the sharp sword threatening their existence"⁴⁵. The Metropolitan assures them all of the honesty of his feelings and of his fatherly concern, showing that the heavenly Father knows "the thought of my spirit, He knows that my urge to you stems not from deceit, personal interest, or cunningness, but from purity and love!". He adds that "God is my witness, to Him I bring service with my spirit into the Gospel of His Son, for ceaselessly I mention you in my prayers, wishing to comfort, to rejoice together with you, for your virtuous happiness; and again, as I once swore to be faithful, to confess the truth of the Gospels, so now I speak, with the same truthful spirit, not to be pleasing to men, but to God"⁴⁶. However, humbly and wisely, Veniamin also writes that "given the cleverness of people today", they do not need "a brainless Veniamin, but a Chrysostomos, a Gregory the Theologian, a great Basil, who could teach them with words inspired by the Holy Spirit, and with their God-pleasing deeds, they could persuade the people to live after their Godly departure"⁴⁷.

In the years of his ministry as a Metropolitan, Veniamin strove to found schools and build "public education houses, from the dust of ruins"⁴⁸. He donated to them many of his books, and sometimes he insisted on the idea that his work be carried out in "full certainty that by using it (i.e. the book – *our note*) all ages and walks of life, it will

of the voice which is pleasing to everyone's love" (*Foreword to the Reader in Triod, Mănăstirea Neamț, 1833 in Ilie Gheorghită, op. cit., 179*).

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 222-223.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 224.

⁴⁷ This is written in a letter dated 28 January 1842, notifying Veniamin Costachi's decision to withdraw from his high ecclesiastical position in Moldavia (Constantin Erbiceanu, *op. cit.*, LIII, 57-58).

⁴⁸ *Testamentul Mitropolitului Veniamin*, 60.

bring all people invaluable spiritual and political benefit⁴⁹. And this seems to him a priority of the age, when “almost all the youth (...) lacking knowledge of Christian teachings, have strayed off to wicked conceit, to romantic tales and all kinds of vanities” which “led (...) to the breaking of all laws and the disregard of commandments.” Such “occupations managed to overturn the tower of faith in many parts of Europe, whose foundation hadn’t been laid on the ground of Orthodox dogma”⁵⁰.

There are many writings about Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi’s efforts for the better organization, modernization and endowment of schools, as well as about his efforts to promote Romanian language in the educational system at all levels. He himself placed his efforts within a Romanian cultural tradition, and in the Preface to *The Liturgy* printed in Iași, in 1834, he writes about the Romanian language and bluntly states that it is “... daughter of the Latin language, that we are direct descendants of the Romans, our ancestors”. Wishing to offer his contemporaries a better translation (“in truly Romanian words, which are kept, partly in old books and documents, partly with the people”), he manages to formulate one of the most convincing and percussive exhortations-warnings, in the spirit of modern European culture: “unless we use these instead of foreign ones, like all the nations that wanted to cultivate themselves, then our national tongue will, year by year, become more confined, until it completely disappears, and thus our entire Romanian nation will perish, just like all the nations that abandoned their language”⁵¹.

⁴⁹ *Foreword to Istoria Scripturii Vechiului Testament* in Ilie Gheorghiiță, *op. cit.*, 171.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 168-169.

⁵¹ *Foreword to Dumnezeieștile Liturghii ale Sfinților Ierarhi Ioan Hrisostomul, Vasilie cel Mare și Grigorie Dialogul*, amended according to the Hellenic Greek and Slavonic Russian texts by His Eminence D. D. Veniamin himself, Metropolitan of Suceava and Moldavia, through whose care the second edition has been printed now, during the days of our great ruler, Voivode Mihail Grigoriu Sturdza, in the Press of the Holy Metropolitan Church, Iași, 1834 (the hierarch addresses “all those adorned with the holy grace of priesthood”).

4. *Conclusions*

To conclude, one notices that in the prefaces written by Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi, addressed to the readers whom he considered his spiritual brothers, he remains faithful to tradition, following and preaching the teachings of the Church in the actual circumstances of his time, perceived by posterity as one of “national regeneration” and “European sentiment”. At the same time, one notices the efforts to identify and remove the causes believed to generate a deplorable state in the community that he was ministering, such as social and political instability, moral corruption and “non-development of culture”. The Metropolitan is also known as and referred to as a “patriot archbishop”, close to the people, for whose enlightenment and growth he works. For the latter, especially, he managed not only to be a “man of the age”, but also to lend his name and bright effigy to his age itself, in posterity.

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