

II. HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

ROMANIAN-GERMAN INTERFERENCES DURING CONSTANTIN BRÂNCOVEANU'S REIGN

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ABSTRACT. It is well known that Constantin Brâncoveanu's reign represented an apogee in the development of Țara Românească, having at the same time influences upon the other Romanian principalities.

One of the most interesting chapters is the links with different German cities, among which we can mention Halle too. In the following research we are going to refer to a few moments of the Romanian history relations with the University of this town.

Key-words: Constantin Brâncoveanu, Romanian principalities, University, Halle.

Halle University had submitted a strong interest for the Orthodox people of the South East of Europe since its foundation (1694)¹, among which there are included the Romanians of the three principalities too. This explains the presence of numerous documents regarding our people in this library. We remind, for instance, that there is a portrait of Mihai Viteazu, dated since 1675². Then, the German historian Edward Winter stated that in 1954 there existed in the same library „a prayer book written in Romanian with palaeoslavonic letters, namely in cyrillic with the title „Proces cum calendario in lingua valachica”³.

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¹ Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 1988. For Constantin Brâncoveanu see also: Paul Cernoveanu, Florin Constantiniu și Andrei Busuioceanu, *Constantin Brâncoveanu*, (București: Editura Academiei, 1989).

² Ioan-Vasile Leb, *Un portret al lui Mihai Viteazul la Halle-R. D. Germană*, in „Telegraful Român”, (33-34)1988, 3.

³ Eduard Winter, *Die Pflege der west-und sudslawischen Sprache in Halle im 18 Jahrhundert*, (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1954), 147.

The long reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu, which represented an age of prosperity in all areas for Vallachia, was not omitted by the enterprising spirit of the great Halle schoolmaster, August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) and his pietist collaborators⁴. It was a period of cultural prosperity, but it was also an epoch when the orthodox and the protestants had to face a strong Jesuit propaganda.

In this circumstances, Francke sent two of his collaborators, Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf and Cristian Voigt in England, in the Austrian Empire and in Orient, to get in touch with the protestants and the orthodox, in order to contract the Jesuit activity. Therefore, they will also get in touch with the Romanians of Transylvania, Vallachia and Moldavia.

The start was made by H. W. Ludolf who, in the nineties of the 17th century, undertook a journey in England, Russia and Orient. During his stay in Russia (1692-1694), Ludolf discussed with Hrisant Notara, who was the nephew and the descendant of the Patriarch Dositei of Jerusalem, both being known at Brâncoveanu's court. On this occasion, he soon realised the important role that Vallachia played at that moment, it being the bridge between the East and the South of Europe, between Russia and the slavs of Balcani, between Russians and Greeks⁵. That is why during his stay in Constantinople, Ludolf got in touch with the „representative vlach”. In a letter sent to Francke, dated from the 2nd of September 1700, Ludolf expressed his regrets that he had not succeeded in having closer relations with this „representative vlach” yet. Ludolf describes this person, who is no one but Ianache Porfrita, the Romanian diplomatic representativ of Brâncoveanu at Constantinople, as an important man, a Greek Orthodox, appreciated by Turks, who brought great benefits to the Romanian ruler during the last war and who spoke Italian⁶. In the same letter, Ludolf advised his protector from Halle to send professors to teach in the Romanian schools, and most of all in Bucharest, where he knew that there had been „a kind of University”⁷, namely the Royal Academy from Saint Sava⁸. His efforts remained without any result.

⁴ Kurt M. Jung, *Weltgeschichte in einem Griff* (Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht in Gottingenm, 1975), 424-425.

⁵ J. Tetzner, *H. W. Ludolf, der Kennerdes petrinischen Ruselands und das Vorderen Orients. Dissertation der Philios, Fak. Der Humbold Universitat*, (Berlin: 1953); Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 147 and 157.

⁶ The letter of H. W. Ludolf to Francke, dated from the 2nd of September 1700, from Amsterdam, la Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 148; Ștefan Ionescu, *Epoca Brâncovenească*, (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1981), 92-95 and N. Ciachir and Gh. Berca, *Diplomația Europeană în Epoca Modernă*, (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1984), 169.

⁷ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 148.

⁸ N. Iorga, *Commemoration des deux cent cinquante ans de la fondation d'une Faculté des lettres a Bukarest*, (Bukarest: 1928); Panait I. Panait, *Constantin Brâncoveanu*, (București: Editura Științifică, 1969), p. 324 and the next ones; *Învățământul superior din București înainte de înființarea Universității (1694-1864)* in „Universitatea din București”, 1964, 9-12.

Another collaborator of Francke, namely Christian Voigt, showed an even greatest interest for Romanians. Being called in Transylvania from Halle in the year 1711, Voigt became professor at the evangelical Gymnasium in Sibiu, and he was helped by the administrative Saxons leader Andreas Teutsch and by J. H. Roth, the official of the imperial chancellery in Vienna. His activity in Sibiu was quite short because after some Jesuit intrigues, at general Steinvill order, Voigt had to leave the city, and at the end of 1713 he arrived in Vienna⁹.

During this short period available, Voigt had enough time to inform himself about the Romanian population of Transylvania and about the way in which things were going on in Vallachia. This can be easily seen from his correspondence with Francke. Thereby, on the 23rd of June 1712, Voigt wrote to Francke from Sibiu, giving him information about the Romanians, which he used to call „Greeks” because of their Orthodox religion. He also informed him that he got hold of a bilingual New Testament, namely a Greek- Neogreek edition, Ed. London 1702- Halle 1710, which he was going to offer to the prince of Vallachia, Constantin Brâncoveanu, with someone’s help. We do not know who this man was, but it is possible to be one of the Saxon doctors or teachers from Transylvania who were activating at the noblemen’s courts in Bucharest.

Voigt knew also to send information to Halle that the Romanians of Vallachia had a great interest in education and that „they really began to build schools and poor houses”, thus conforming what Ludolf said. He showed that the prince, as well as „the bishop” (Metropolitan) of Vallachia were eager to counsel with „wise people ... how to best organise different things”.

Voigt’s information about the fact that the prince and the Metropolitan (Antim Ivireanu) „study both daily” is also a very interesting one. He says about Brâncoveanu that „he had recently ordered a New Greek Testament to be bound, for which he had sent 700 ducat coins, and he gave 100 gold coins to the jeweler who executed the bundle between the 700 ducat coins”¹⁰.

Chr. Voigt knew a number of Romanian traders too, through which he got and sent letters to Halle, as it is obvious from his correspondence with Francke. Thus, in his letter from the 17th of July 1812, Voigt thanked Francke for „a little parcel of books” which he got by the help of some Romanian traders who were coming back home from the Leipzig fair¹¹. This was possible, because it had also

⁹ Carl Gollner, *Geschichte der Deutschen auf dem Gebiete Romaniens*, Erster Band, (Bukarest: 1979), 336 and 143; H. Jekeli, *Die Entwicklung des siebenburgischsachsischen höheren Schulwesens von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, (Mediasch: 1930), 20-21; Fr. Teutsch, *Geschichte des ev. Gymnasiums in Hermannstadt*, in „Archiv des Vereins für siebenburgische Landeskunde”, XVII (1882), p. 71-78; Fr. Teutsch, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Siebenbürgen*, Bd. II (1700-1919), (Hermannstadt: 1992), 77-82 and 86-87.

¹⁰ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 151.

¹¹ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 152.

become a habit for the Saxon and Romanian traders of Transylvania to make little commissions for the young Saxon students from Germany. Especially the annalists from Braşov, in their writings, mention the amiability of some Romanian traders from Şchei and the help given to the young saxons who were studying in Germany¹².

To maintain closer and direct relations with Brâncoveanu represented a permanent wish for Francke because the prince was opening him a large perspective in the East and the South of Europe. That is why he tried to accomplish it by the help of the former Greek students from Halle, who established, for a while at least, in Bucharest.

On this line, he advised a former theologian student from Halle University to become a teacher in one of Brâncoveanu daughter's house, at the beginning of 1714. In a letter dated from the 8th of February 1714, the disciple wrote to Francke from Bucharest that he was „in domo Celsissime Dominae Stanke, filiae sci(icet) malore natu Celsissimi Principia Valachiae”¹³.

The author of the letter was someone with the name *Basilus Theodorus*, whose identity is not entirely clarified. He enrolled as a student in theology at Halle University on the 3rd of March 1714, appearing in the transcripts as coming from „the Ponte Euxino”, namely from the Black Sea, between 1702-1703. The same Basilus Theodorus from „the Ponte Euxino” was enrolled at „The Greek College at Oxford” from where he came to Halle¹⁴.

Eduard Winter considers him to be of Russian origin, namely „a slav from the South-East of Moldavia”, somewhere else calling him Macedonian instead¹⁵. The same author identify him lately with one of the Greeks who arrived in Halle in 1703 in order to study in the well-known „Collegium Orientale” and who enrolled there with the name „Theodorus the Greek” (der Grieche Theodorus)¹⁶ on the 3rd of March 1704, (N. Vătămanu considers him to be of Greek origin too)¹⁷.

¹² Johann Filstich, *Încercare de istorie românească*, (Bucureşti: Adolf Armbruster, 1979), 10, note 16.

¹³ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, annex 256.

¹⁴ E. D. Tape, *Alumni of the Greek College at Oxford 1690-1705*, in *Notes and Queries*, March 1995, 110-114; N. Vătămanu, *Învăţaţi greci formaţi la Oxford şi la Halle şi legăturile lor cu românii la începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, in *Contribuţii la istoria învăţământului românesc. Culegere de studii*, (Bucureşti: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1970), p. 190-205; Paul Cernovodeanu, *Din legăturile Bisericii Răsăritului cu ambasadorul Angliei la Constantinopol, lordul William Paget (între 1693-1702)*, in „Biserica Ortodoxă Română” (1-2)1976, 217, note 20; Paul Cernovodeanu, *Contacte din ordin ştiinţific şi cultural între intelectualitatea engleză şi cărturari din Ţara Românească şi Moldova în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea şi primele decenii ale celui de-al XVIII-lea*, in *Studii. A History Journal*, tom 23 (4)1970, 719.

¹⁵ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 149 and 159.

¹⁶ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 149.

¹⁷ N. Vătămanu, *De la începuturile medicinei româneşti*, (Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1996), 232.

In 1706 Theodorus left Halle and passed through Venice, in order to get in Greece lately¹⁸. Then, he walked to Bucharest, where he arrived after a dramatic voyage. He wrote to Francke lady Stanca's house where he professed as „aducatoe” on the 8th of February. Lady Stanca was a widow, sick and without children at that time¹⁹, so that the role of the „teacher” was to talk on certain moral and scientific issues²⁰, a very significant fact for the level and the requests of Brâncoveanu's court²¹.

In Bucharest, Theodorus met and cooperated with doctor Samuel Kölzer, the latter being himself a former pupil and admirer of Frankie²². This one, a famous doctor and naturalist from Sibiu, being called at Brâncoveanu's royal court, would help Theodorus to send a letter to Halle²³, letter that emphasizes the close links of this Greek with Francke and Breithaupt, his former professors²⁴. Francke considered his disciple's letter to be of such importance that he attached it to his diary, which he had done with the most important letters only²⁵.

We have not had any other reliable information about Basilius Theodorus since then. Maybe he had still stayed in Bucharest for a while. Eduard Winter supposes that Theodorus could be that priest who was activating at the South Russia frontier with the Tatars, serving as a military preacher and who used to tell long stories about the Collegium teachers. It seems that later he became a monk at Athos, and we have no known anything about him since then²⁶.

Another student at Halle, who we meet at Constantin Brâncoveanu's court, is *Alexandru Helladius*, a theologian, historian and doctor whom we have the richest information about.

¹⁸ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 149; N. Vătămanu believes that Theodorus finished his studies in Germany in 1708. Cf. N. Vătămanu, *Învățați greci formați la Oxford și Halle și legăturile lor cu românii la începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, in *Contribuții la istoria învățământului românesc*. Culegere de studii, (București: 1970), 197.

¹⁹ Lady Stanca had been married with Radu Beizadea since 1692, who was the son of Alexandru Iliș the prince of Moldavia, and not with a „Romanian nobleman called Stanca” as Ed. Winter writes (149). Radu died on the 29th of March 1714, and Stanca on the 15th March 1714. See C. Gane, *Trecute vieți de doamne și domnițe*, vol. I, IInd edition, (București: 1933), 443-445; Dan Simionescu, Ed. Winter: *Studiul limbilor slave apusene și sudice la Halle, în veacul al XVIII-lea*, în „Studii”, A History Journal, anul IX (1)1956), 172-173.

²⁰ Dan Simionescu, „Studiul limbilor slave...”, 172-173.

²¹ Dan Simionescu, „Studiul limbilor slave...”, 172-173, N. Vătămanu; *Învățați greci...*, 197.

²² Fr. Teutsch, *Siebenburgen in Halle*, in *Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins für siebenburgische Landeskunde*, II (7)1879, 66.

²³ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 149 and 255-256. See also Sigismund Jako, *Legăturile bibliofile și științifice cu Muntenia ale lui Samuel Koleseri*, in *Revista Bibliotecilor*, anul XXII (6)1969, 374.

²⁴ The saxon historian Johann Flistich studied at Breithaupt too, between 1706-1709. Cf. Johann Flistich, *Încercare...*, 46.

²⁵ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 149.

²⁶ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 148, N. Vătămanu, *Învățați greci...*, 198.

Helladius is of Greek origin, born in 1686 in Larissa, in Thesalia, and later he arrived in Constantinopol in a family related to the Mavrocordats, being related with Ianachi Porfirita too, the Romanian diplomatic representative of Brâncoveanu at Constantinopol. Although he was but 16 years old, Helladius, accompanied by the deacon Franciscus Prossalentis, went to Oxford together with lord W. Paget, where he studied intensively Medicine and Mathematics. During this period he was going to meet H. W. Ludolf who was travelling to England, on this occasion he being invited to study at Halle. In order to answer this invitation probably, Helladius went to Hamburg in 1706. He will leave England in 1701 forever and he will wander many years in the European Academies: Amsterdam, Halle, Praga, Altdorf, near Nürenberg.

Helladius was in Germany between 1712 and 1714, and maybe he had arrived there long before. Meanwhile, he went to Bucharest too where he informed himself well regarding the way the things were going on, and he described everything in a work printed at Altdorf in 1714 dedicated to Petru cel Mare. It is a very interesting history about the situation of the Greek Church²⁷ where there can also be found some information about Vallachia. As he talks about Constantin Brâncoveanu, whom he calls „Dominus meus longe clementissimus”²⁸, N. Vătămanu believes that Helladius worked for the prince, serving as teacher, but not as a titular one, at Saint Sava Academy²⁹.

It is not known if Helladius established himself in Bucharest after the publication of his book, after the year 1714. In his work, *Status praesens Ecclesiae Graecae*, trying to explain the reason why the Greek Church does not accept the translation of the Bible from the old Greek in the modern one, he attacked, accusing it of serious errors, both Maxim Calliopolitul version from 1638 and the revised re-edition made by his colleague Serafim from Mitilene (London, 1702)³⁰, and the pietist version from Halle (1710). On this occasion, he criticizes his former professor A. H. Francke who consented the translation made by the greek Liberie Golletti, in spite of his italian name.

Anyway, Helladius avoids to criticize the Romanian Bible translation made by Șerban Cantacuzino (1688) and that of the New Testament consented by Brâncoveanu, which he talks about when he presents the printing activity of the country.

He does not also mention anything about the purchase of the *New Testament* by Brâncoveanu (London, 1702-Halle 1710), a work that had been criticized by him, but which had been bought by the prince with 700 ducat coins as we have already mentioned³¹. It probably happened because he did not want to upset Brâncoveanu who was „too generous” with him.

²⁷ Alexandru Helladius, *Status Praesens Ecclesiae Graecae*, (Altdorf: 1714).

²⁸ Al. Helladius, *Status...*, 11-12.

²⁹ N. Vătămanu, *Învățați greci ...*, 199.

³⁰ N. Vătămanu, *Învățați greci ...*, 191-195.

³¹ Ed. Winter, *Die Pflege...*, 151.

Another problem which arises regarding Alexandru Helladius, is that of his activity in Bucharest. As he seems to have been familiar with typography, a fact which results from the work mentioned above³², it determines N. Vătămanu to believe that Helliadius had been activated, except practicing medicine, at Saint Sava Academy or at the typography as a collaborator of Ignatie Phitianul³³, the successor of Antim Ivireanu in conducting the printing house.

We can explain in the same way the rich information he had given to us regarding the activity of Saint Sava Academy. He tells us that in this school there were taught philosophical and philological doctrines at the level of literary arts faculty from the Western Universities, and therefore, it really deserves the name of *academy*, (*neque mirum est Bucarestium Academiam vocari*). The number of students were over 150, sometimes even exceeding 200.

The same Helladius says that medicine had not been taught in any other high school or University of Orient, except the Royal Academy of Bucharest and that among its professors we can mention the three doctors from Brâncoveanu's court, together with his personal doctor of Italian origin³⁴.

The knowing of so many details regarding the Bucharest realities designates therefore that this gifted doctor and historian was really present in the capital of Vallachia. He could have probably been in Bucharest after 1714 too, even if we cannot be sure about it. The last information about him has dated since 1722³⁵, even though we do not know where he was then and what was he doing.

It seems that the last student of Halle who settled in Bucharest is *Fustatius Placcicus*. He was a Macedo-Romanian doctor from Sibiu³⁶. In 1702, while lord W. Paget was coming back from Constantinopol to London, he found the young Placcicus as „doctor at Brâncoveanu's court”. He joined Helladius and Prossalentis, accompanying lord Paget in England and going to the same College at Oxford that we have already mentioned. At Oxford, Placcicus attended intensively the grammar, medicine, logic and Mathematics courses which were taught by professors Roger

³² Al. Helladius, *Status...*, 10 and 17.

³³ Al. Helladius, *Status...*, 13; N. Vătămanu, *Învățați greci...*, 200.

³⁴ Al. Helladius, *Status...*, 17; Ariadna Comariano-Cioran, *Academiile domnești din București și Iași*, (București: Editura Academiei, 1971); Ștefan Pascu (collective), *Istoria învățământului din România*, vol. I, (de la origini până la 1821), (București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1983), 162, 179 and 317.

³⁵ N. Vătămanu, *Învățați greci...*, 200.

³⁶ Paul Cernoveanu, *Contacte de ordin științific și cultural...*, 718. As regarding his origin, we know that in Sibiu there existed in 1639 a „magistrate” of the Greek companists, having an identical name Eustatio Placico. He was probably the father of the future doctor, N. Iorga considering him to come from an Albanian village Alvanitocheri. As long as Eustatio Placico was „magistrate” of the companists, the well-known trader and broker Nikos Papa was the counsellor. Later he became one of the most trusted man of Brâncoveanu, which explains the presence of „the young doctor” in Bucharest. Cf. N. Vătămanu, *Învățați greci...*, 201. Vezi și Olga Cicanci, *Companiile grecești din Transilvaniași comerțul european în anii 1636-1746*, (București: Editura Academiei, 1981), 45 and 102; N. Iorga, in *Studii și documente*, XII, VI, consideres that Placico is Serbian or Bulgarian.

Bourchier and Eduard Eden³⁷ from Queen's College. He soon became a „reputed doctor in the arts and in the sciences he professes”, becoming famous through the treatments prescribed to some patients with eye diseases³⁸.

Although he was advised to remain in England, Placcicus, together with Prossalentis, were enrolling at Halle University in 1705, where the young Bucharest medic was registered with the name: „Eustachius Placcicus, Medicus, 14 X, 1705”, with the mention that „he did not pay”³⁹.

After completing his studies at Halle, Placcicus returned to Bucharest where, between 1713-1714, was activating as a doctor, being also mentioned by Helladius in his book, with the indication that: „Eustachius Placica, medicus, Bucharest”⁴⁰. It is very probable that Placcicus should have remained in Bucharest, without having such a rich activity as Helladius had, but activating as a very good ophthalmologist. That he enjoyed some reputation is certificated by the fact that his name appears in a list of „skillful Eastern men of this age” (namely the XVIIIth century), written in Greek by Metropolitan Meletie of Athens († 1718) and translated in Romanian by the Metropolitan of Moldavia, Veniamin Costachi in 1843. He is thus mentioned: „Eustatie Plakida from Bucharest, doctor, voyager through England for studies”⁴¹.

A sucesor of the doctor, a certain Iovan Placcicus, was the proprietor of a house in Bucharest in the first decades of the XVIIIth century, which later, the Metropolitan of Heraclea and Rodosto gifted it to an unknown woman with the name Mariara, Hrisocoleus' widow⁴².

The very desired links of those from Halle with Brâncoveanu's family were interrupted with the martyrdom of the great ruler. But the fact that the intellectual circles of Halle manifested a keen interest in these links, indicates once again the charm which Brâncoveanu's age exercised upon its contemporaries. There also had been done now the first steps for a future closer links, which implied the sending of Romanian students to Halle University⁴³ and to other German Universities too.

³⁷ E. D. Tappe, "Alumni of the Greek College...", 89-99; Paul Cernovodeanu, *Contacte de ordin științific și cultural ...*, 718.

³⁸ Paul Cernovodeanu, "Contacte din ordin științific și cultural...", 718.

³⁹ Fr. Juntke, *Matrikel der Martin Luther –Universität Halle ...*, 334.

⁴⁰ Al. Helladius, *Status...*, at *Index auctorum quorum in hoc opusculo mentis tacta est*.

⁴¹ Meletie, Metropolitan of Athens, *Istoria Bisericească*, translated by Veniamin Costachi, vol. IV, IInd part, Iași, 1843, p. 67; Paul Cernovodeanu, *Contacte de ordin științific și cultural ...*, 719.

⁴² Fr. Legrand, *Recueil de documents grecs concernant les relations du patriarchat de Jerusalem avec la Roumanie (1563-1728)*, Paris, 1895, p. 329-330; N. Vătămanu, *Învățați greci ...*, 302.

⁴³ See: Antonie Plămădeală, *Apărarea limbii și promovarea culturii române în Lipsca la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea*. „The dominated language will be the national one”, in *România Liberă*, anul XXI (13)1988, 19; Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. II, (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1981), 469 and 535; Eugen Preda, *Note zilnice*, in *Magazin Istoric*, anul XXII (10)1989), 40.