

Political history represented the subject of the fourth generation of Annales School. Jacques le Goff¹ and René Rémond brought back the topic of this history investigated through ceremonies, symbols², vocabulary, rites³, behaviors, gestures⁴. On Romanian territory, the recent medieval research has rewritten a few reigns, like the reign of Stephen the Great⁵, Lady Maria Asanina Paleologhina⁶, the Movilești⁷, Vasile Lupu⁸ or of Neagoe Basarab. The mentioned

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¹ Jacques le Goff, *Pentru un alt Ev Mediu*, vol. I-II, translation Maria Carpov, Meridiane, București, 1986; Idem, *The Medieval Imagination. Essays*, translation by Marina Rădulescu, Meridiane, București, 1991. Idem, Jean Claude-Schmitt (coord.), *Dicționar tematic al Evului Mediu Occidental*, Iași, Polirom, 2002.

² Michel Pastoreau, *A symbolic history of the Occidental Middle Age*, translation by Glaicu Păun Emilian, Ed. Cartier, Chișinău, 2004;

³ Arnold van Gennep, David Kertzer, *Ritual, politics and power*, translation by Sultana Avram, preface by Florescu Radu, Ed. Univers, București, 2002.

⁴ Jan Bremer, Herman Roodenburg (ed.), *A cultural history of humour: from antiquity to the present day*, with an introduction by Sir Keith Thomas, translated by dr. Tatiana Avacum, Ed. Polimark, București, 2000; Jean Claude Schmitt, *Rățiunea gesturilor în Occidentul medieval*, translated by Doina Marian, preface by Alexandru Duțu, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1998.

⁵ Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior. O istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare*, Ed. Mușatinii, Suceava, 2005; Liviu Pilat, *Între Roma și Bizanț. Societate și putere în Moldova (sec XIV-XVI)*, Ed. Universității „Al I. Cuza”, Iași, 2008.

⁶ Idem, *Maria Asanina Paleologhina. O prințesă bizantină pe tronul Moldovei*, printed with the blessing of Înalț Prea Sfințitul Pimen, archbishop of Suceava and Rădăuți, Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2006.

⁷ *Movileștii. Istorie și spiritualitate românească*, vol. II, *Ieremia Movilă. Domnul. Familia. Epoca*, book printed with the blessing of Înalț Prea Sfințitul Pimen, archbishop of Suceava și Rădăuți, Sfânta Mănăstire Sucevița, 2006; vol. III, *Artă și restaurare*, Sucevița, 2007.

⁸ Dumitru Năstase, *Coroana împărătească a lui Vasile Lupu*, in *De potestate semne și expresii ale puterii în Evul Mediu românesc*, studies and articles by Dumitru Năstase, Ștefan S. Gorovei, Benouît Joudiou, Sorin Iftimi, Maria Magdalena Székely, Petronel Zahariuc and a note by Petre Ș. Năsturel, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 2006, p. 131-143; Idem, *Din nou despre coroana lui Vasile Lupu*, în *ibidem*, p. 143-161.

studies are supplemented by rich bibliographies both in the French and in the Saxon setting.

In the Romanian historiography, the approach of the topic concerning the church foundation as an act of power, the titles and the images is only partially charted and uncovered in the directions of the investigations led up to this day. The reasons why such discussions have not been favored are due mainly to the conjectural historical elements and secondly to the difficulties posed by the lack of certain research methods.

An entire monography⁹ has been written about the reign of Alexandru Lăpușneanu and it describes the Moldavian social life, the foreign policy of the 16th century¹⁰, the financial situation, administrative, legal and military organization and also the relationships with the boyars, church and cultural activity. This completes and improves the studies, synthesis papers¹¹, or older special papers¹² and it corrects the image of the prince which has

⁹ Gh. Pungă, *Țara Moldovei în vremea lui Alexandru Lăpușneanu*, Iași, 1994.

¹⁰ About the 16th century relations with Poland, Veniamin Ciobanu has also written two articles: *Vasalitate-suzeranitate în raporturile româno-polone din a doua jumătate a secolului XVI: interpretare juridică și practică politică (I)*, in the Institute of History and Archaeology Annual of Iași (**IHAAI**), XXII, 1985, vol. 2, p. 409-420 and *Vasalitate-suzeranitate în raporturile româno-polone din a doua jumătate a secolului XVI: interpretare juridică și practică politică (II)*, in **IHAAI**, XXIII, 1986, vol. I, p. 131-142; D Ciurea, *Relații externe ale Moldovei în secolul al XVI-lea*, in **IHAAI**, X, 1973, p. 1-47; Ileana Căzan, *Formule de protocol și clauzele tratatelor de pace habsburgo-otomane între 1533-1562* in **SMIM**, vol. XV, 1971, p. 161-171.

¹¹ A. D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia traiană*, vol. V, ediția a treia îngrijită de I. Vlădescu, Bucharest, s.a; N Iorga, *Istoria românilor prin călători*, ediția îngrijită de Adrian Angheliescu, Bucharest, 1981; Idem, *Istoria românilor*, vol. V, Bucharest, 1937; Idem, *Locul românilor în istoria universală*, Bucharest, 1985; Constantin C. C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor* vol. II/I, ediția a IV-a, Bucharest, 1943; Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Mușatinii*, Ed. Albatros, Bucharest, 1976.

¹² N. C. Bejenaru, *Politica externă a lui Alexandru Lăpușneanu*, Tipografia „Presa Bună”, Iași, 1935; I Minea, *Inceputul domniei lui Alexandru Lăpușneanu* în **CI**, an I, No 1, 1925, p. 100-113.

been painted by the literature. Our intention is not to discuss the topic exhaustively but to reread the documents of the epoch in order to understand the act of church foundation in the 16th century¹³, the changing of the main residence from Suceava to Iași¹⁴ and the role of the image during the epoch of Lăpușneanu.

As we have specified in the title, we will only discuss certain aspects of Lăpușneanu's reign and our research aims at getting familiar with the political anthropology terminology, at understanding this field's terms in the context of studying the 16th century; recognizing the conjunctures in which terms like *despot* or *tsar* appear and illustrating their meaning by referring to the previous centuries and other places; analyzing the act of church foundation during the two reigns: identifying the meanings of Slatina (the only founded church that received support during both reigns), Bistrița and the thresholds that put the prince in the traditional line of the princely family; delimitating the role of the church in Liov and of the bell named after the prince during the 16th century reform; highlighting the beneficences for Mount Athos, especially at Dochiariu where Lăpușneanu becomes new founder; identifying the historical context and the models and symbols of the altar curtains given by Lăpușneanu as a gift to Slatina monastery; comparing the two epitaphs both to each other and to the embroideries previous to the reigns of Alexandru Lăpușneanu, analyzing the epitaph inscriptions, the mentioned donors and integrating that information in the time period of the donations; describing the votive paintings and heraldic markings; determining the role of Suceava and Iași in the 16th century; determining the importance of Iași – prepared to become a capital (main center)

¹³ A synthesis of the 16th century orthodox church founder has been made by G. Baș, *Bisericile și mănăstirile moldovenești din veacul al XVI-lea (1527-1582)* with a summary in French, Bucharest, 1928; Jeno Bartos, *Pictura murală medievală din Moldova (secolele XV și XVI)*, în „Byzantion”, vol. II, Iași, 1995, p. 209-213.

¹⁴ For the role that Iași played during the period immediately after Alexandru Lăpușneanu's reign, see Gh. Băileanu, *Iașul în secolul al XVII-lea, partea a doua. Evenimentele, bisericile, cultura și arta în timpul domniei lui Vasile Lupu*, in **MMS**, an XLIV, no. 1-2, January-February, 1968, p. 64-82; V Neamțu, *Stabilirea capitalei Moldovei la Iași* in **AȘUI** new series, section III, 1968, p.111-123.

during the reigns of Alexandru Lăpușneanu and Petru Șchiopul, drawing up the itineraries of the ruler for an easier examination of his circulation and of the places where the prince used to stay for longer periods of time and from where he issued clerical documents, determining the comparative landmarks between the beginning of his first and second reign, and the models that the prince followed when he put together his political agenda, analyzing and integrating the year 1567 in this political context and researching Alexandru Lăpușneanu as a person during the 1567-1568 period.

Our research has been carried out using written and visual sources. Belonging to the written sources category, we mention the narrative and the descriptive ones (especially the internal chronicles of the 15th and 16th century or the notes of the foreign travelers from the same period of time).

In that same category we have also included the inscriptions written on blocks of stone (*pisanies* – inscripted block of stone or metal typically found in cemeteries or at church entrances – and funeral stones) and those painted or engraved on cult objects (icons, books) or on the mural surfaces of the *pronaos*, which we have studied both at the scene and by analyzing the papers of researchers like Nicolae Iorga¹⁵, Alexandru Elian¹⁶ or the first volume of *Bibliografia românească veche* (Old Romanian Bibliography).

Beside these source categories, an important role is played by the visual evidence (the fresco iconographic representations, the votive paintings). The study of these sources has been realized using materials found on the field or in the albums, monographic papers, art history and architecture history studies realized by researchers like: I. D. Ștefănescu, Vasile Drăguț, Virgil Vătășianu, Anca

¹⁵ *Inscripții din bisericile României*, adunate și adnotate de N. Iorga, vol I-II, București, 1905.

¹⁶ Al. Elian (red.), *Inscripții medievale ale României I. Orașul București (1395-1800)*, București, 1965

Vasiliu, Maria-Ana Musicescu, Carmen Laura Dumitrescu, Anca Lăzărescu, Corina Nicolescu, Mihai Berza.

Having this vast material at our disposal, in order to decrease the risk of speculation, we have proceeded to observing, correlating, comparing and joining all the information obtained from the various source categories (narrative, documentary, visual) which we have examined in a manner that was as diverse as possible. The analysis, correlation, comparison with other source types and the systematization of the information together with our critical study of them represent the main work methods.

Tackling a subject such as this one, so complex and with multiple analytic possibilities cannot imply a unique methodology, but different methods and thinking models. To that effect, in order to have a perspective that is as wide as possible and to establish a general direction of evolution of the researched phenomenon, we took into account the following theoretical and methodological aspects: reading and assimilating the content and terminology of some of the contemporary theories concerning the following source categories: *The New Testament*, the internal documents emitted by the ruling chancellery, the inscriptions on the altar curtains, epitaphs, churches, gravestones, diplomatic reports, worship documents, chronicles. We have used comparison when analyzing the ruler's titles, a method that allowed us to understand the origins but also the meaning assigned by the ruler to those terms. In order to determine the meaning of the image in the epoch of Lăpușneanu, we chose to analyze the iconographic source. In the case of the consecration of Slatina, we used the regressive method which filled the voids of the 16th century, due to some information found in later sources.

Because of the complexity of this research, we have also needed foreign bibliography where the consecrated studies of visual anthropology and imagology of power and elite are much better delineated in the context of a reality more clearly expressed at the source level. These syntheses and case studies have constituted a

true methodological example and helped me to articulate and bring consistency to this research.

Our paper achieved, in accordance with the purpose and methods of the research, the following structure: The first chapter, named *For a history of power*, presents the main directions in the research of the history of power and the findings of the most important researchers of the topic. The second chapter, *The act of church foundation as an act of power for Alexandru Lăpușneanu*, aims at understanding the acts that put the prince within the old founders, but also those distinct acts that differentiate him from the founders of the previous centuries and put him in the political actualities of the 16th century. Every chosen foundation, with the exception of the one in Liov, contributes with a load of symbols given by the previous founder and that is why, Lăpușneanu, having become new founder, defines his status as a legitimate prince, descendant of the previous princes. The foundation program, put into practice especially during the beginning of the first reign, strengthens what the prince himself has claimed in the *pisanie* and the *diptych* of Bistrița, that he is the son of Bogdan I of Moldavia and then what he called himself on the beneficence at Dionisu, the grandson of Stephan the Great. The identification with the previous princes contributed to the building of his own necropolis too, which has, at a symbolic level, the same role as Bistrița and the church of Rădăuți, but which receives a unique configuration because of the type of architecture and materials that are reminiscent of the 16th century.

The third chapter, *Titles and places of power for Alexandru Lăpușneanu*, analyses the main titles and appellations assumed by the prince but also the places where he displayed his princely power during his two reigns. The chosen titles follow the political princely tradition, on the one side and on the other, define the prince relative both to the *family* and the *home* which he came from and to lady Ruxandra. The places of power are those centres chosen by the prince invested with imperial attributes and from which the majority of the princely documents are emitted ever since the 15th century.

The fourth chapter, *Images of power for Alexandru Lăpuşneanu*, reveal a few considerations on the visual anthropology and image of the prince and the princely family from the votive paintings, altar curtains and the role of iconography. During the past decades, a new discipline starts to appear as a distinctive element in the framework of historical anthropology: the visual anthropology (trend started by G. Duby, J.-Cl. Schmitt, Jérôme Baschet and others) which starts from the premise that the image, even though it represents an autonomy, cannot be separated from the context in which it has been created. According to this discipline, the images are anchored in the social imaginary, containing elements of the power mentality and the collective memory but not as a simple translation of texts in the language of painting but with a relative semantic and communicative autonomy capable of producing knowledge and power through image. This way, the image will exceed the status of illustration, being considered a material product of a socio-political and cultural world which can use, through a logic of its own, the elements of the socio-political life without neglecting the fundamental purpose of images, that of illustrating the theological values and the relationship between man and divinity. The image was analyzed in its distinctiveness without neglecting to reference it to the text and context.

The relationships and networks established by the medieval mentality were much too complex to be simplistically reduced to either text or image. One could not understand the past from just one perspective anymore: text or image, *litterati* or *illiterate*. The medieval text and image work together to give a meaning, between them being a series of connections which were not seen as simple coincidences but as witnesses through which material (verbal and figurative images), mental (dreams) and anthropological aspects could be recovered.

In what the study of Byzantine votive image is concerned, the research will generally start from the findings of André Grabar included in his analyses of the inheritance of Roman imperial art and the reception of the Christian themes in the Byzantine imperial art and will continue with interdisciplinary approaches that will

combine historical and visual anthropology with the Christian theological concepts on politics and art (J.-Cl. Schmitt, Elka Bakalova, Daniel Barbu, Tania Velmans, Tania Kambourova and others).

In the Romanian historiography framework, the religious medieval art (14th–17th century), in a general agreement with the Byzantine tradition, will be approached, as a first stage, from the perspective of a visual object, a work of art, a historical document which needs to be registered, described.

Only after the Second World War, historians and art historians will focus their attention on interpreting the image of the laic in the religious environment, an iconographic structure, typologies, style-based groupings, pictorial evolutions correlated with various princes beginning to stand out. In the same time frame, a series of elements emerge that concern determining some details about certain portraits (crediting, dating, etc.), trying to find meanings for these types of representation.

Therefore the research methods for the votive image study have been structured later, being organically bound by the historic research itself. The studies or the articles which focused exclusively on this type of image, were a few and they followed by choice the influences, the style evolution and less the pointing of the comparisons between the two Romanian countries on East and South of the Carpathians.

In the Romanian historiography framework, the approach of medieval portraits will follow an opposed direction which means a denial of their artistic value. If in the description period the image was considered a work of art, in the '80-'90 the attitude is more discreet, the votive image being estimated both from the perspective of social-cultural documents and from some style elements which answer to symbolic elements.

The politic approach from the teleology world got in many ways of interpreting, especially religious, politic, and less social, the

majority of the studies starting from the idea that the monarchic meanings of the iconographic programs are secondary related with those theological, liturgical, hagiographic which answer directly to the worship function of the church. The way in which the historians will explain the votive image will be in keeping with the theological accounts of the politic theories (Byzantine and post Byzantine tradition) which do not forecast an autonomous profane cultural speech, assigned by the religious one. So the image will be seen as the result of two wills: one of the Church and the other of those who build and paint the church/the monastery.

In general the studies which point the votive image from the medieval period present this type of image as a legalization and permanence of the beneficence, without step over that they represented an account between the person represented and the holy power and his Christian commitments. Therefore the historians considered that the right to this type of image *jus imaginis* consists in the foundation itself. Only with the church frame on his hand, the founder can sit down alongside the saints, the building and the church abilities meaning the Church edification itself, an act which is considered apostolic, rewarded by the image right. The votive image becomes that of the virtues, of the harisma and of the actions of person who is represented.

All chapters of the thesis have been shaped alongside the prince Alexandru Lăpușneanu. He is the unifier element of the thesis. His reign indicates on the one hand the approval of his statute as a bastard son, and on the other hand he accomplished his function of Mușatin prince, but he also knew to create his image of *homo novus* of the 16th century. The first reign has constituted the accomplishment of a multitude of gestures alongside the princely foundations by that time, from the country and from abroad, the second reign, much more tumultuous, have lapped more with the exclusive concern for the family foundation, for the capital changing from Suceava to Iași, with the repeated demands towards the people from Bistrița for the doctor Andrei, with the beneficences made for the prince's health which climax with the big prayer to the Mileșevo monastery in 1567.

The gestures, the titles, the places and the images of the princely power are those which create the parameters of developing the two reigns. The gestures define the side of the great founder of the prince. Slatina concentrates around it more actions of the prince, becoming a princely necropolis, as the Moldavian tradition has shown. The particularity of this convent is given by the multitude of the beneficences alongside the two reigns, beneficences which define the prince's gestures. Therefore the concern over this monastery can be noticed alongside a few elements: the beneficences and the gestures towards its building, the materials choice and the masters brought from Transylvania, the pompous accomplishment of the monastery consecration, the emphasis of pious gestures when Despot and Ștefan Tomșa were coming in the country, the monastery transformation in a churchyard for the founder. In Bistrița and Rădăuți porch's case the transformations are minors to Slatina, their significance being rather a symbolic one. Each of these two monasteries had a patrimony given by the old prince of Moldavia; this is the reason for which Lăpușneanu chooses these monasteries as place of beneficences. The connection with the old princes was realized by Lăpușneanu for the very beginning of the reign, marking the new reign of Mușatini family. As we saw, the moments of the choice and the abilities with the beneficences are well marked for all the foundations chosen to be modified. Even the beneficences from Athos are especially realized in the first reign, completing those of the country. Dochiariu, the Moldavian foundation from the Mount Athos will be especially equipped on the second reign, this time the beneficences being completed with that of Slatina. At Athos the prince keeps the title from the country, the son of Bogdan I of Moldavia, grandson of Stephan the Great, showing the same legitimation with the old princely family. Here the beneficences in money and the buildings realized are considerable by showing the pomp of the prince and his power. Over the pious gestures, the political one which show the way of legitimation, are trotting out not only with the old princes of Moldavia, but also with those who were becoming bosses to Mount Athos, the Serbians and the Bulgarian.

The titles beside the gestures, replenish the prince's image. The chosen titles follow the same diplomatic tradition created thanks to the Byzantine tradition, or to the influence of the states situated south of the Danube, but their study leads us to a better comprehension of the power institutions and ideologies. Regardless of the time, the titles have been created in order to make a difference and to rank, rewarding in the same time somebody's virtue. In Alexandru Lăpușneanu's case, the *Io* title, besides the religious connotation, is used in the case of big beneficences from Slatina and Mount Athos. The *Io* use directly in these beneficences annexes to the demonstration of the gestures use in the first chapter. Even it is a word specific to Latin diplomatic language, in combination with *verus* and *perpetuus*, *heres* becomes specific to 16th century. To this we add *legitimus*, these titles becoming legitimized for Alexandru Lăpușneanu's reign. The crowd of aspirants specific to this period leads to the use of these titles, their elimination being realized not only through the weapons, but also through the language, the legitimacy. To all these we add *princeps* and *dux* to the detriment of well-known *waivoda* și *dominus*. *Palatin* is especially used in correspondence with the Polish king or in a hidden way when the prince achieves his testament. This title does not have special connotations because he was assigned Despot in the same way by the same king, when he took the reign. *Palatin* seems to be the title which marks the subordination towards the Polish king, the Polish boyars being assigned with the same title.

The *despot* title is rarely used for this prince, only connected with his daughters or his sons. The emperor title, found once in the annals and on the *Sintagma lui Matei Vlastaris*, drawn up also by a historian, reveals the prince's empire. This title is also assigned to Ruxandra, in very definite moments, when she is related to Alexandru Lăpușneanu.

Among the power places, we have chosen Iași and Suceava because these residences are most used by the prince as the prince itineraries have shown. A place of princely power is the place where the majority of acts are emitted, where the prince stayed the most,

when the prince interferes in their improvement (as we shown in the case of Iași).

In the power images' case we have chosen those images which represent the prince and his family, but also the prince's coat of arms which reveal some ideas of Lăpușneanu, as Sorin Ulea has shown, or remind of Stefan the Great' symbols. These coat of arms inscriptions are considered big foundations, built or remade by the prince. The votive paintings and the representations of the inscriptions are always made with the princely family. In this chapter we also talked about the epitaphs problem and we tried to discover their signification relating one to the other but indicating also the year when they were emitted especially their dates.