

THE ROLE OF ROYAL RESIDENCE FROM TARGOVISTE IN CREATING A NATIONAL UNIFORM LEGISLATION

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Abstract: Târgoviște is one of the earliest princely residences, known as an important economic, political and cultural center. In this context the translation and printing in the seventeenth century of the first Romanian legal texts fits into the cultural history of the city, being a phenomenon which was absolutely necessary, to put human existence under the protection of Christian morality. This is an act of remarkable significance for the culture of Romanian countries and for their legislation, which pursue to combat some deterioration of morals time trends, but also the control conservation over certain events in the medieval Romanian society, not always in accordance with Christian morals.

Keywords: Târgoviște, Wallachia, Îndreptarea Legii, Matei Basarab, Dealu Monastery

1. Introduction

One of the most intensely debated issues on the history of Wallachia is that which concerns princely residences. They have been generally defined as establishments where the princes would temporarily settle down in order to rule the country, places where they issued the royal charters. According to Ion Donat, the prince would settle his residence in the locality where he had his properties, therefore the Princely Court, which was a property, would not thus trench upon the interests of the boyars, of the Church or of townspeople.

A princely residence was first mentioned in 1369, in a document issued by Vladislav I. This shows that people had a certain mentality regarding the quality of a settlement. This residence is Curtea de Argeș, so the town is located and the charter, which was given to a Catholic hierarch as a privilege, issued.

2. The Princely Residence of Târgoviște

Târgoviște is one of the first royal residences, known as an important economic, political and cultural centre. In the early 17th century, the city had the shape of an isosceles triangle, with the base located on the Ialomița river and the other two sides marked by the routes connecting the main roads surrounding the city. Towards the south-west, the side would follow Calea Câmpulungului, while the north-western side consisted of the present-day streets Bărăția, Maior Brezișanu, Liniștei, reaching the A.I.Cuza street; the city was crossed by Ulița Mare which the alleyways connecting all districts gave onto.

The population of Târgoviște was mainly of Romanian origin, but, as it was a princely residence, there was also a mixture of peoples (Hungarians, Saxons, Bulgarians from Chiprovtsi, Germans and Poles, Turks) that was due to the mercenary soldiers that made up the prince's guard, the merchants, the craftsmen, the doctors, etc. According to approximate calculations, at the end of the 16th century there were more than 5,000 people in the city, while around 1640 "its

population did not probably exceed 10,000 stable inhabitants. After the capital was permanently moved to Bucharest, the number fell rapidly". It is to be noted that the population of Târgoviște varied according to the status of residence. Until the reign of Matei Basarab, the city had numbered no less than 20,000 people, while at the end of the century, during Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu's rule, it exceeded 30,000 people. Târgoviște became a princely residence once more in the 17th century, immediately after the restoration of the Princely Court during the reign of Petru Cercel.

In this period a number of princes had their residence at Târgoviște, of whom we can mention Simion Movilă, Radu Șerban, Radu Mihnea, Al. Iliș, Gavril Movilă, Leon Tomșa and naturally Matei Basarab, who would change its appearance and thus the city would enter a new stage of development. Starting with 1639, the city life became tumultuous and magnificent. Paul of Aleppo described the city of Târgoviște of those times as being "the most important place in Wallachia", located at a day and a half's journey from the Transylvanian borders; "in this city, the prince had a fine palace surrounded by walls... for his protection, he would permanently keep 100 harquebusiers who changed every Saturday." The Princely Court, as described by Paul of Aleppo, "is large and surrounded by a stone wall; a river flows at its end". In the centre, there was the Church "that one could reach by climbing a very big staircase". Inside the Princely Courtyard there was also "a large high stone tower which amazed us through its height; the city horologe is also there and several guards are on the watch".

Matei Basarab attached particular importance to the voivodal residence of Târgoviște, which is proved by the foreign travellers' notes that described the city as being on the rise, comparing it to Aleppo or Damascus. The voivode consolidated the princely residence by building fortifications around the city, serving as defence; thus, in 1653, Paul of Aleppo described the entrance to the city which was "surrounded by a wooden wall and a ditch dug with great effort". Matei Basarab also found the "old and deserted" Metropolitan Church and had it restored "at his own expense" "as charity on his behalf."

The Princely Court during the reign of Matei Basarab comprised: a church "that has no match in all the country, except the metropolitan church of the Cossacks, which resembles the Saint Sofia Church", the palace that also included the Wallachian metropolitan's abode, "which is very large, with three wooden enclosures and three courtyards" and with walls "covered with marvellous paintings depicting land and sea animals, with a picture of Jerusalem and its monasteries, of the God's Mountain", and an additional area that could measure up to "those of a great city".

Târgoviște had an elevated cultural milieu consisting of significant representatives of the "Hellenic Renaissance", while the youths of the age were trained at Dealu, Viforâta and Gorgota Monasteries and also in lesser-known private schools. The school of Slavic studies that "functioned at Târgoviște was led, among others, by master Staicu and aimed to help the students to manage their accounts in their trades and businesses and to understand the scriptures and religious writings". This final aspect is extremely important as it enabled the people to read and understand all written texts, so they could distance themselves from the church monopoly on the written word and thus they moved to a higher stage of understanding and communication through writing.

Summoned by the prince of Moldavia, Vasile Lupu, Pantelimon Ligaridis halted at Târgoviște and, prompted by the Great *Postelnic* Constantin Cantacuzino, founded *Schola greca e latina* in 1646. Numerous original letters provide important details on the intellectual activity he carried out on the territory of Wallachia, which was two-folded: didactic and theological, on the

one hand, and juridical, on the other. Ligaridis arrived at Târgoviște having been employed by the *postelnic* Constantin Cantacuzino (who was paying him 50 reals a month, including clothing) as a teacher for his sons Drăghici și Șerban, but later he was also required by other noble families who wanted him to educate their children.

Along with Ignatie Petriș, Ligaridis founded, in the old Wallachian capital, the humanist school of higher education called *Schola greca e latina*. Only one internal document mentions the school activity of the two teachers, namely the annotation of Daniil Andrian Panonianul in *Îndreptarea legii* (1652), which referred to the assistance provided by the two in translating the *Pravila*.

3. The Princely printing works of Târgoviște during Matei Basarab's rule and the printing of *Îndreptarea legii*

In the 17th century, written law spread throughout Europe, which was but natural, for literacy had disseminated to such an extent that the written law was no longer a mystery exclusively in the hands of the initiated. Written codes were a necessity, as they prevented the abuses of those relying on the law of the land or on collective memory, often exploited through inaccurate proofs.

The new status reached by princely residences led to the foundation of printing offices which served the interests of the Church, hence of the Prince. Târgoviște, the capital of the country and a representative city in all fields of culture, distinguished itself through the printing works that functioned here throughout the time. The prince would support the development of an intense cultural movement at Târgoviște by founding schools, establishing a printing press and supporting the growth of a library. As for the printing of books in Romanian, it should be mentioned that this did not mean the official introduction of the Romanian language as a holy language instead of the Slavic. Printing in Romanian in the new printing works of Târgoviște encouraged both Matei Basarab and the metropolitan Ștefan. This trend was also supported by Daniil Panonianul (the Transylvanian), a learned theologian who became the bishop of Romanians of Făgăraș in 1662 and the Orthodox metropolitan of Alba-Iulia in 1668.

The printing works, established at Mănăstirea Dealu, functioned as a princely printing office, which is also attested by the prefaces to **Liturghierul slavonesc** (1646) and in **Imitatio Christi** (1647): "*Cu binecuvântarea și porunca prea puternicului Dumnezeu, a prea luminatului și drept credinciosului Domn Io Mateiu Basarab, Voevodul și Domnul Ungro-Vlachiei transalpine, cu sfatul și binecuvântarea prea sfințitului Mitropolit Domnului Teofil, arhiepiscopului aceleiași țări, au poruncit să se scoată aceste sfinte cărți, Slujebnicul și Liturgia, din tipografia sa din Mănăstirea Dealul...*" (which roughly translates as "With the blessing and by order of God Almighty, of the blessed and humble orthodox Prince, I, Matei Basarab, Voivode and Prince of transalpine Ungro-Wallachia, at the advice and with the blessing of His Holiness Metropolitan Teofil, archbishop of the same country, have ordered that these holy books, the Slujebnicul and the Liturgy, be printed in his printing works at Dealu Monastery...").

It is in this context that a work of real importance for the further development of the science of law in Wallachia appeared in 1652, namely **Îndreptarea legii**. Unlike **Pravila de la Govora**, in which secular law norms appeared only accidentally, in this work secular law occupies, in its first part, a predominant place, representing, from this point of view as well, an unprecedented legislative work in Wallachia. Its regulations rely on Greek sources of Byzantine law, known through Slavic channels. Daniil Andrianul, also called Panonianul (i.e. the Transylvanian) was the one who translated the sources and compiled **Îndreptarea legii**, in

collaboration with Pantelimon Ligaridis, a humanist and theologian, and Ignatie Patrutzidis, both of them teachers at the Greek school of Târgoviște, “accomplished masters”, as mentioned in the Predoslovie (the preface). This is a translation made by the metropolitan “*Ștefan, cu mila lui Dumnezeu alu Târgoviște, Exarhul Plaiului și a tot Ungro-Vlahia...*” (“Ștefan from Târgoviște, by mercy of God, Exarch of the country and of entire Ungro-Wallachia”), “*ca să fie de folosul tuturor de obște*” (‘to serve the entire community’); as a matter of fact, the *pravila* displays the heraldic insignia of the metropolitan, to whom the translator’s verses and epistle are dedicated, and not the prince’s emblem. It is interesting that the work includes data on the Slavic alphabet, a definition of grammar, the list of dignitaries and their duties and something which is of particular value, namely a treatise of epistolography, a kind of manual with models of formal letters between the clerical and lay aristocracy. There are also articles refuting superstitions and others which reflect social feudal states and mores. Far from being a mere juridical corpus, **Îndreptarea legii** was therefore meant to restore order in all areas, starting with the spiritual and ethical ones, a book of teachings whose purpose was well put by the metropolitan Ștefan: “*Citind, îndreptați viața voastră*” (‘By reading, you will better your lives’).

This code of laws is made up of two distinct parts. The first is a laic legislation which also comprises many regulations of canonical law, as indicated by the title: “*judicata arhierească și împărătească de toate vinile*” (i.e. ‘churchly and princely judgement of all faults’). The laic law provisions of the first part have a penal character, punishing such crimes as helping the culprit, blood intermixing, lechery, kidnapping, sodomy, robbery, and a civil one as well comprising norms regarding deeds and social life relationships such as baptism, engagement, marriage etc. We can state that **Îndreptarea legii** is the first code of laws which contains the most numerous rules dedicated to the defence of the family, emphasising the idea of family as “the basic unit of society” which underlies the development of the entire Christian society.

The second part of the Code, entitled “*Nomocanon with God*”, consists only of provisions and elements of canonical law, starting with the canons of the seven *soboare* ‘synods’, the canons of the so-called *nameasnice* synods and finally the canons of St. Basil, commands, questions and answers of other church fathers, the teachings of St. Anastasie. *Pravila cea Mare* ensures the mutual support between the state and the church which is characteristic of the feudal system through the plentiful laic law provisions and churchly canons. It also contains law norms which are specific to the feudal society, sanctioning the state of dependence of the subdued peasantry and the preferential treatment before the law according to social classes; the inequality of social categories also results from the punishments inflicted on criminals.

Penalties are sometimes based on the law of talion and aim to intimidate, as they are varied and severe, almost cruel, including: burning, pouring molten lead down someone’s throat. For example, the kidnapping of a maiden was, according to *glava* ‘law’ 259, *zaceala* ‘article’ 1, punishable by death. This punishment could also be inflicted by the victim’s parents or brothers, as stipulated by *zaceala* 6 of the same *glava*.

The applicability of the *Pravila* is proved by numerous examples, such as the trial of Staicu the *Paharnic* ‘Cup-Bearer’ for the offence of treason against the prince during Constantin Brâncoveanu’s rule, the *paharnic* being punished by death under the *Pravila*. Similarly, a document during the reign of Alexandru Moruzzi mentions that in 1796, in the trial of an enticer who had refused to marry the victim and could not pay the compensation of *o litră de aur* (roughly ‘a pound of gold’), the judges applied the penalties of the *pravila*, more specifically those stipulated by *glava* 251 *zaceala* 2.

4. Conclusions

The importance of this penal code for the Romanian society is also given by its long-lasting applicability and circulation. The text was used in the legal system of Wallachia at least until the emergence of *Regulamentele Organice* 'Organic Regulations' (1831). It was also referred to in sentences of courts in Moldavia, for it was completer than *Cartea românească de învățătură*.

We may conclude that **Îndreptarea legii** acquires a national feature, for it became the first code of laws for all Romanians outside the Carpathian arch and succeeded in achieving the unity of juridical conception and practice on the Romanian territory. Mediaeval legislations emerged in order to provide more safety to the people and stop abuses. Until the appearance of **Îndreptarea legii**, the Church had managed family-related issues, but after its printing family matters depended on the provisions of the new law code. As emphasis shifted from the rural to the urban environment, **Îndreptarea legii** became a basic legislative norm that corresponded to the stage of development of the Romanian society.

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