

## **MOLDAVIAN MANUSCRIPTS IN THE RESEARCH LIBRARY OF SARATOV STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Khachayants Anzhela**

**Saratov State Conservatory**

**named by L.V. Sobinov,**

**head of history music department,**

**Ph.D. in History of Arts**

**assistant professor**

*Abstract: A rich library stock of Saratov State University includes several manuscripts of Moldavian origin which, at the time, used to be collected by old believers. There are neum notated manuscripts among them. The present paper presents the features of the manuscripts, as well as their possible connection with the monastery of Bisericani (Joseph's Skete).*

*Keywords: archeography, Moldavian manuscripts, church chant manuscripts, Monastery Bisericani, Saratov State University*

The last decades see the processes of the accumulation of knowledge about historical and artistic monuments and artifacts, including manuscripts, which present a range of common features. This can also be referred to the creation of the collections of books representing a certain national culture. The processes of globalization and technological progress contribute to the plentitude of these collections. However, there still are some remote funds that conceal the sources unknown to the scientific world.

As for the Department of rare books and manuscripts of the Research library of Saratov University, it keeps Slavonic writings of Moldavian origin, the oldest one dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Moldavian manuscripts kept in Saratov have already attracted scolarly attention (А. Турилов [5], А. Паскаль [2]). Some of those manuscripts are also stored in the form of microfilms in the library of the Columbian University, Ohio (no. 1017, 23, 208).

This paper is aimed at a more detailed characterization of these manuscripts. At the same time, their thorough historical-philological evaluation may present a prospect for future research.

The following four books are the monuments written in Cyrillics:

1. *Monks' collection* – the third quarter of the 15th century
2. *Monks' collection* – the late 16th and early 17th century
3. *Syntagma* by Matthew Blastares (1611)
4. *Interpretative Psalter* (1616).

All those books had been part of the book collection of old believer Paisy Mikhailovich Maltsev, a rich man and a collector from the city of Balakovo, Saratov region, who lived on the verge of the 19th and the 20th centuries. Maltsev's collection represents a rich selection of

manuscripts and rare print books; it was nationalized in the first years of the Soviet regime. Afterwards it laid the foundations for the Department of rare books and manuscripts of the Research library of Saratov University. Maltsev used to buy his books in big Moscow bookshops, especially in the place owned by Shibanov, one of the most influential book sellers in pre-revolutionary Russia.

**Monks' collection (inventory number 1017)** on 187 pages of a quarter of a leaf probably dates back to the **third quarter of the 15th century**; it was written in Moldavian uncial writing and bound at a later time. Most of the volume of the book (102 pages) is taken up by the hagiography of St. Basil the Younger. The manuscripts also contains the hagiographies of St. Onuphrius, St. Macarius the Roman and Isaac of Nineveh, Canons of the Apostles and a fragment from a text about verbosity. All hagiographies are surely connected to the life of monks and were meant for them to read. Interestingly enough, the manuscript includes the name of the scribe – a rare phenomenon in Medieval practice, including books of Moldavian origin. At the back of page 102 (at the end of the hagiography of St. Basil the Young) scribe wrote the following: [“Christ is the beginning and the end of any good deed . Written by Chiriac” – “Хѣ е (ѣ) зачало и коне (ц) въському дѣлоу блѣгоу . іспіса Кириякъ”]<sup>1</sup>. Chiriac also left his signature with an etiquette request on page 103: [“those who have read this book, pray for me, sinful monk Chiriac” – «...прочитавшее сію книгу помянете и мене грѣшна(г)[о] монаха Кирияка»] and at the end of the manuscripts, on the reverse of page 186: [“Christ is the beginning and the end of any good deed. Be redeemed by the name of Jesus and forgiven sinful monk Chiriac the scribe. Written by a feeble and earthly hand” – «Хѣ е (ѣ) зачало и коне (ц) въському дѣлу блѣгу . Сп(с)ень буди и [?] помилованъ буди писавы(и) Кирия(к) мно(г)[о]грѣшны(и) и послѣ(д)нии въ иноцѣ(х). Писа немо(ш)но(ю) и тлѣнно(ю) рукою»]. Scribe Chiriac should be taken into consideration by scholars alongside another 15th-century scribe, Gavriil Uric, known to the researchers of Slavonic Moldavian writings.

Another interesting aspect is the 18th-century note indicating the presence of the manuscript in Bisericani monastery. It surrounds the end of the basic text on the same page (102): [“I, sinful hieromonk Gedeon, read this book by St. Basil the Young during my first exile; afterwards I stayed in Bisericani” – “аз многогрѣшнѣнии е(р)монах Гедио(н) прочита(х) сию книгу стаго Василия Нова(г)[о] въ (л)то 7221 [1713]. Бывшаго пе(р)вие отсолки потомъ сѣдель въ Бесериканѣ». At the back of page 187 Gedeon exclaims: [«woe unto us, brothers, who have lived in this world without... repent repent, the Last Judgement is coming. Year 1713” – “горе, горе на(м) братіе живѣши(м) въ мире без... покайтеся покайтеся, при дворе(х) естъ судъ въ (л)то 7221 [1713]”]. This manuscript collection was included into the volume “Предварительный список славяно-русских рукописных книг XV в., хранящихся в СССР”, no. 2250.

**Monks' collection (inventory no. 2618)** on 213 pages of an eighth of a leaf, bound in board and leather, presumably dates back to **the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century** (water marks in the small-format manuscript are fragmentary and can hardly be seen). This is an interesting volume, possibly a convolute. It comprises four units. The handwritings of the first and the last ones have common features (even though there are several of them); these units might have been attached to the main part. The first unit (pages 1-25) contains the fragment “From the elderly” (“От старчества”) and “Useful word on the lives of monks on earth” (“Слово полезно о иноческом житии, иже на земли”). However, the most remarkable feature is the only case of the Moldavian language in the manuscript: page 10 “Scazanie la moartea omului creștin”<sup>2</sup>, being one of the earliest records. It was written by two scribes, the second one imitating the handwriting of the first page of the manuscripts.

<sup>1</sup> Here and in what follows transcriptions of records, conversion of dates and missing letters are introduced in square brackets. All dates originally given as *anno mundi* are converted to *anno domini*. The original in Slavonic is presented too.

<sup>2</sup> This fact is also mentioned by A.A. Turilov and A.D. Paskal.

The reverse of the last blank page of this book was used by one of its owners for writing a fragment of the Easter canon.

The central main sections – units 2 and 3 – have their own numbering of gatherings. Pages 26-73 contain a copy of “On monks” (“О иноках”) by St. Basil the Great. The total number of gatherings amounts to 6 (1-6). From page 74 they are followed by the Canons of the Apostles: selected chapters concerning monks’ ethics. The count of gatherings is 1-5, 12-23 (gatherings 6-11 are lost). This part also includes code indications regarding fasting and Psalter reading (pages 144-150).

The handwritings of the first part reappear in the fourth unit of the manuscript (from page 206). It contains “Questions and answers of Holy Farthers” (“Вопросы и ответы святых отцов”).

Unfortunately, the notes on the reverse of pages 212 and 213 have a chronical character and have no connection with dating: [“In the year 1554, in the lifetime of our master voivode Alexandru” – “В лѣто 7062 при дни г(д)ноу нашему... александръ воево(д)”]<sup>3</sup> and [“In the year 1574, in the lifetime of our master Ioan Vodă” – “В год 1574 при днях господина нашего Иоана Воеводы”].

A unique piece of Slavonic Moldavian writing is the *Syntagma* by Matthew Blastares (1611) (inventory number 208) on 332 pages *in folio*. The contents of the manuscript is typical of this code of laws and regulations. It also contains calendary table on page 249 – circles of lunar and solar year, as well as “Latin speeches”: Latin-Slavonic dictionary of pages 331-332. The manuscript is decorated with gilt initials and intricate cinnabar headpieces. Thus, it can hardly be called an ordinary piece. However, the inscriptions in this manuscript are quite ambiguous, posing questions rather than solving the issue of its origin.

Pages 1-4 contain the following note: [“These great holy Laws were created by a humble archbishop Anastasie Crimca, the metropolitan bishop of Suceava, in memory of himself and his parents, Ioan Crimca and Cristina, who gave it to the monastery skete called Bisericani, which has a Church of Annunciation, in the days of pious master Constantin Movilă, the voivode of the Moldavian land. If someone wants [to take it away] from the holy skete... may our Lord Jesus Christ and His Most-Pure Mother and all saints be his adversaries on the Judgement Day. Amen. Year 1611, June 22” – “«Сія стаа великаа Правила, сътвори смѣрениі архіепѣкпѣ Ана(с)тасіе Кри(м)кови(ч) И митрополи(т) Суча(в)скіи въ памя(т) себѣ и родителе(м) своего Іоа(нн) Кри(м)ка и Кр(с)тина и даде я въ монастирьскому скитоу рекоміи Бесѣрекани. Иде(ж) е(с) хра(м) Блговѣщеніе. Въ дни бл҃гоч стива(г)[о] гсп(д)на Іо Ко(н)ста(н)тінъ Могила воево(да) Гспдръ земли мо(л)да(в)скои. И аще кто хоше(т)... от стаго скита... да има(т) съперникъ са(м) Гѣ на(ш) Іс Хс и Прч(с)туя Его Мѣрѣ и въсѣ(х) стѣх на стра(ш)нѣм Е(г)[о] Судици аминь. В лѣто 7119 [1611] мѣца ию(н) 22»”]. The reference to the rule of Constantin Movilă confirms the dating of 1611. The fact that the manuscript belongs to Anastasie Crimca surely increases its significance. Anastasie Crimca, the founder of Dragomirna Monastery, also established a scriptorium there. If the book was elaborated in Dragomirna, according to the note, it was meant to be passed on to the monastery of Bisericani.

However, the text of the colophon on page 332 at the end of the manuscript testifies to another creator: (the letters of each consecutive line are reduced in size) [“These Laws of saint and divine fathers of the seven ecumenical councils were written by young, sinful and humble Pavel who came to the Joseph’s monastery which is usually called Bisericani from the same places. In the solar year seven thousand one hundred nineteen, in the first days of the thirty-day April. In the years of pious and devout master and ruler of the Moldovlachian land Constantin Movilă, voivode and son of Ieremia Movilă, in the third year of his rule, and in presence of the spiritual leader of this holy place Varnava. That is why I pray you, fathers and brothers, when reading and copying this God-inspired book, pray for me, a sinful man, and if I sinned or was rude or talked with another monk or thought of some other incomprehensible things, you, honest fathers, correct me and do not

<sup>3</sup> Alexandru Lăpuşneanu

curse me, since it was not angel who wrote it, but a frail and earthly hand” – “Сіа Прави(л)ница стѣи(х) и вселе(н)скыи(х) бжѣтныи(х) отцѣ седмыи(х) съборо(в) исчрѣтана бы(с) многогрѣшны(м) и смѣренны(м) имене(м) Павло(м) нѣкыи(м) от отро(к) и пришелце(м) от тоуж(д)еи змлѣ въ монастырѣ Іосифовѣ еже обычнѣ нарицае(м) е(с)[тъ] Бесерикани. Лѣта слнцу тогда отдающу по се(д)мосоугоубнѣи лѣ(т) тысящ и единосуубнѣи паки сътници еще же и десятица сугубнаа и девятое ношеніе познавашес явествнѣ въ тридесятих апри(л)скыхъ каландо(х). Въ лѣта бл҃гоч стиваго и хрѣстолюбиваго г҃дна и самодръжца земли мо(л)давлахійской Іо Коста(н)тіна Могила воеводы с҃на Іереміа Могила воево(ды) въ третіе и вѣще тенущее лѣта цр҃ства его и при оучители и наставницѣ ст҃аго мѣста сего ки (р) Варнавѣ. Тѣмже моля вас отци и братія прочитающе и прѣписающе сію б҃годѣхновенную книгу поминайте и мене грѣшнаго въ млітвах своих а идеже аще буду погрѣших или въ помыслех погрѣбих или съ другом гл҃ахъ или иныя нѣкыя неприкла дныя вещи помышлѣах вы отци чѣстніи исправлѣите и мене грѣшнаго неклѣнѣте понеже бо не агл ь писа ну рука брѣнна и тлѣнна”]. The reverse of the same page no. 332 partially repeats this note (until “Master Varnava” – “Кир Варнавы”) with a later handwriting. Thus, a young monk of the Joseph’s skete Pavel is yet another possible (and the more likely one) scribe of the manuscript. Anyway, the manuscript was created in 1611 at latest, and the record of its elaboration in the monastery of Bisericani (rather than a contribution of Anastasie Crimca) seems to be more verisimilar. More precise data on the subject might arise after a thorough study of the codicological characteristics of the manuscript. We will assume that it was elaborated by monk Pavel, following the example of the book given to the monastery of Bisericani by Anastasie, and that the note was copied from the original together with the rest of the text. At the same time, some doubts may arise concerning the same year of the creation of both the model and its copy (1611).

One more monument of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is the *Interpretative Psalter* (inventory number 23) of 1616, the *in folio* format on 218 pages, in wooden binding created at the same time as the manuscript itself. The Psalter is remarkable by its colourful Balkan-style decorations. Another interesting aspect is the notes it contains. On the reverse of page 145 we encounter inscriptions in the Slavonic language in Latin letters: “tolcovaa psaltr”, “sia psaltr, Prfenu Mihilovu Bcovu [sic!]”, on the reverse of page 206: “sia psaltir prenadlejit Parfenu Mixailovu Bicovu” (the last letter is followed by a flourish with a figure of a bird). The back of the last page contains an important note made by the scribe: [“Father permit, Son help, Holy Spirit admonish, the Holy Trinity one in essence and indivisible, reigning unto ages of ages. Amen. I, a slave worshipping the Trinity, hieromonk Parthenius, worked hard and did my best with the help of God and His Most-Pure Mother; I chose from God-inspired writings and created this Psalter with interpretation and the Acathistus and the Paraklisis with the Selected answers and rules on various sins and the canonical Gospels and the New liturgy and one Psalter, also new, with an Acathistus and a Paraklisis and an Acathistus to Sweet Jesus. I left them in the monastery of Bisericani, which has a Church of Annunciation, where I prayed to God and His Most-Pure Mother for our souls and for the sins of my parents. If I die in vain, let no one daringly conceive to separate any of the 5 books or to take them, let them be in the place where they were left, let no one be enticed and think that I created them for gaining monastery’s or someone else’s property, but because of my misery and work, as hard as my powers allowed me, if anyone tries to take them away from the holy place by means of a cunning trick, let him be cursed and anathematized from God and His Most-Pure Mother and holy apostles and holy Nicene fathers, and let him receive communion with Judah the betrayer and with thrice-cursed Arius and let him be forgiven by us neither in this century, nor in the following ones. Amen Year 7124 [1616]” – “Отц бл҃гои(з)воли и Сн҃ по(с)пѣши и дхъ стѣи нс[т]ви Троица Единосу(щ)наа и нера(з)дѣльнаа цр҃ствующуя в вѣкы вѣком. Се а(з) раб и троическыи поклони(к) Е(р)мона(х) Па(р)феніе потуща[х](с)[я] и оусрѣствова(х) помощія Бжї(я) и прч҃стію Его мтре и збра(х) от б҃годѣ(х)новенны(х) писани(х) и сътвори(х) сіа пса(л)ти(р) с тълкованіе и съ акафи(с) и съ паракли(с) съ отѣвты и съ правилу избраннаа от мно(г)[о]различны о грѣся(х) и еди(н) тетроев(г)ль и в Летоу(р)гии нови. И едина пса(л)ти(р)

ти (ж) ново и съ акафе (с) и съ паракли (с) и съ Исоусе Сла (д)кы. И оставих их мона (с)ти(р) Бесерекани иде (ж) е(ст) хра(м) бговѣщеніе. Иде(ж) и Боу обща (х)ся от младе(х) но(к)теи (моих) и Прчѣтѣи его мѣтри и за до [у](х) и(х) и за наша дѣша и за грѣхы родители моя . стѣи цркви аще ли (ж) приклоучи(т)мися напраснаа съмр(т)ь никто (ж) оубо да не смѣ(т) дръзосне некий мудрованіе расипати нѣкаа от ти(х) ѣ кни(г) или възяти ню да буде(т) иде(ж) обща(х) и(х), и да не прѣльстится нѣкто или възмнистся ему яко сътвори и(х) от стѣжаніа мона(с)ти(р)ска(г)[о] или от имѣніа некое(му) да не блюде(т) ню от моею нищети и троу(да) елико възможесиловати ащели же кто покоусится и(з)нести и(х) или продати от стѣго мѣ(ст)[а] нѣкыи(м)[а] оухыщренны(м)а таковыи да е(ст) проклѣ(т) и анафема от Ха Ба и от Прѣчстаа и от стѣ(х) апсѣл и от стѣи отц и(ж) [в] Некеи и да имае(н) причястїе со Іоуда прѣдателя(м) и съ трѣклятіем Арие(м) и от на(с) да е(с) непроше(н) ни въ ин въкъ ни въ будущи и въ безконечниа въкы ами(нѣ). в лето 7124 [1616]”].

This record states not only the name of the scribe, who left a typical protective spell inscription, and the date of the elaboration of the Psalter, but also the fact that his contribution included 5 books, four of which will hopefully be found by researchers in the future.

Apart from these unique monuments of Medieval Slavonic Moldavian writing, the Department of rare books and manuscripts keeps 4 singing volumes with late Byzantine notation. The earlier described manuscripts present a library for monks, whereas singing manuscripts reflect liturgical tradition. All of them have the format of a quarter of a leaf and date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>.

**The Octoechos with everyday hymns (inventory number 1267)** is small (66 pages); however, it contains remarkable decorations: an ornamented headpiece (page 1), paralagia (a scheme of tones-ikoses) in the form of an image of the sun in a circle (the reverse of page 3). On the back of page 4 there is a hand with the blessing gesture with the inscription in Moldavian: “The blessing right hand of John of Damascus” inside a frame with a geometrical ornament.

The beginning of the manuscript contains the materials on musical theory; these are followed by the Octoechos (pages 5-66) with everyday hymns added to it on the last pages. The lining of the upper board there is a pencil inscription “1806”.

**The Octoechos with everyday hymns (inventory number 1266)** on 85 pages. The main text is in the Greek language, but the hymns on the last pages (81-85) are also in the Moldavian language.

The manuscript is decorated by a colourful paralagia: a tree with the designation of tones (page 11 and reverse), the “sun” in the circle (page 12), and refined cinnabar initials on the pages.

The contents of the manuscript is analogous to the previous one (1267): the main part contains the Octoechos (pages 14-79), preceded by theoretical guidance and followed by liturgical hymns (Alleluia, “Milost mira” and the Cherubic Hymn).

**Collection (inventory number 1162)** on 134 pages includes the Hirmologion (canons) and separate hymns such as “Angelsky sobor”, a selection of stichera-automelons, antiphons of the 4th tone and exapostilarions.

The manuscript is decorated with a stamped headpiece, a refined cinnabar initials and painted tailpiece. On the last bound page we encounter the owner’s ex-libris with the image of Christ Pantocrator with the inscription “archpriest Mihail”. This is a later ex-libris of its “Russian” owner.

**Collection (inventory number 1161)** is the most voluminous one (268 pages) – the fact that is accounted for by its contents. The beginning of the manuscript comprises the same sections as in the previous manuscripts: canons and analogous everyday hymns<sup>5</sup>, but they are followed by the part

<sup>4</sup> The attribution of singing manuscripts is presented in the Catalogue [3].

<sup>5</sup> The order of canons is similar to the manuscript from the Russian State Library, fund 379 no. 124.

Razumovsky’s collection: <http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/sobranie-rukopisnykh-knig-protierya-d-v-razumovskogo/124>

in Moldavian which also contains the Hirmologion (canons) and separate hymns. Quite a few canons from the “Moldavian” part repeat the earlier ones in Greek (for example, the Epiphany canon); at the same time, the chants are identical to those from the Greek part. This means that the creator of the manuscript intentionally adapted Bizantine chants to the liturgy in the local language – a response to the hellinization of liturgy in these territories starting from the beginning of the 18th century. Furthermore, the Greek part of the collection sometimes offers the names of canons in both Greek and Moldavian, while in the Acathisti, on pages 150-160, the texts of hymns mix the Greek and the Moldavian languages.

Both Hirmologions (number 1162 and 1161) mention Peter the Lampadarios as the creator of the canons. This title was conferred to him by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople after 1769. Therefore, both manuscripts are dated after the year 1769. The upper limit for the dating of manuscript no. 1161 is the year 1800 mentioned by the granter. A long note takes up pages 1-20 and is written in Moldavian in Cyrillic letter. It reports that the Hirmologion is passed on by humble hieromonk Varsonofy, who begs not to move it away from Moldavia and not to take it outside the church without the preceptor’s blessing. The reverse of page 268 contains another autograph of the granter: [“Signed by hieromonk Varsonofy in the year 1800” – “Варсануфие Иеромонах подписал в год 1800”]. The long inscription contains the phrase «biserică te mare», which is likely to mean “great church” rather than the fact that it belonged to the monastery of Bisericani.

At the same time, there is a possibility that the singing manuscripts belonged to this monastery, as well as the other manuscripts kept in Saratov’s university library, since they probably ended up together in a Moscow bookshop and were later purchased by Paisy Maltsev, a merchant and an old believer from the Volga region.

P. Maltsev was a professional collector who was highly aware of his acquisitions. Among his treasures there were European incunabula and palaeotypes, first printed editions from Russia, including those from the anonymous typography “before Ivan Feodorov” and rare manuscripts. This very fact demonstrates that the Moldavian pieces from his collection, which are presently kept in the Research library of Saratov State University, also have a high historical and artistic value.

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