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Bucharest and Ivir Monastery on Mount Athos**

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## **Relationships between Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest and Ivir Monastery on Mount Athos**

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### **Abstract**

The type of relationships established between two Orthodox settlements, one representative for the Romanian territory below the Carpathians, the other gaining its renown prestige from its membership to the monastic complex on Mount Athos, takes shape in the political-social context of the spirituality and mentality of the 16-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Born from a hierarchical subordination and a mark of religiosity with multiple implications, the relations established between the representatives of the two geographical areas are determined by the initiative of committing the religious buildings from the Romanian area to important centers of Eastern Orthodox Christian spirituality. The duties and benefits for each party, as established by the act of worship, give shape to these relations, while the documents arising from the relationship between the two settlements, over the passage of time, fill in the gaps and are able to aid us in understanding better the complex mentality of this period of time. The link created, in the name of God, between the two monastic settlements, now allows the writing of a common history: a history not only of the relations between the Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest with the Ivir Monastery on Mount Athos, but also the durability and the evolution of the two monastic settlements.

**Keywords:** Radu Vodă Monastery, Ivir Monastery, Mount Athos, dedicated monastery.

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There aren't many moments in which history has connected two geographical areas located so far away from each other, for a period of several centuries and with such important implications for both sides. The reasons for such an approach can be explained through the common religious beliefs they shared, under whose legitimacy the ever changing connection was born, has existed and has managed to secure its continuity. At the same time, the connection was motivated by a clear and decisive context of mutual benefits in facing the adversities of the times. And, in completing the set, it needs to be said that these triggering factors took, aside from political, social and economic shapes, also spiritual shapes, while the consequences of this beginning were spread and diversified on long-term.

It is the case of the connection created, for more than a quarter of a millennium<sup>1</sup>, between sacred Athos, through the monks of Ivir Monastery, and the Romanian territory South of the Carpathians, through personalities of the age, but also through persons not as well known, yet representative for the history of the Radu Vodă Monastery from Bucharest. Born from a hierarchical subordination and mark of religiosity, with multiple implications, the relations established between the representatives of the two geographical areas are determined by the initiative of committing religious buildings from the Romanian area to important centers of Eastern Orthodox Christian spirituality. Located in a larger area subscribed to the act of donation, the dedication of a religious establishment has appeared and has developed in the 16-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, becoming an important component of religious life and practice. In the beliefs of the Christians, in a hierarchy of good deeds, essential in the relationship between human and the divine, in which the most important act was the erection of a church, the dedication of a religious establishment certainly took a second position<sup>2</sup>.

In this context we can place the act of dedicating the Radu Vodă Monastery to the Ivir establishment, committed by Radu Mihnea, voivode of Wallachia. Starting from the significance of this act, in the following lines I propose the analysis of the reports generated by the dedication act, in the timeline between the years 1613-1863, from the initiation until the end the above named relationships. The interest for this subject is determined by the consequences of the link that resulted, first on the evolution of the two religious establishments and then on the expansion of these relationships in the region North of the Danube river. As one of the first monasteries in Wallachia built by a voivode, dedicated to another religious establishment located outside the country and the first dedicated to Ivir Monastery<sup>3</sup>, the interpretation of the sources has led us to the conclusion that the Radu Vodă Monastery was a role model in the development of the phenomenon of dedicating religious

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<sup>1</sup> From 1613 to 1863.

<sup>2</sup> Lazăr, 2012, 59.

<sup>3</sup> To Ivir Monastery was dedicated another church, act made by a Greek noble named Stelea, in the year 1582, according to Cotovanu, 2014, 253-254.

establishments in the Romanian Country to Ivir Monastery, and, above, to the monasteries from Mount Athos.

We were able to reach these conclusions by analyzing the archive documents resulted from the initiation and development of these ties, by analyzing certain representative works referring to the phenomenon of dedicating religious establishments in the region South of the Carpathians and from the comparative analysis of the consequences of dedicating the Radu Vodă Monastery to Ivir Monastery with those resulted from previous acts of dedication.

Our demonstration can only begin by presenting the general context in which Radu Vodă has chosen to dedicate his monastery to a representative religious establishment from Mount Athos. His gesture has an even more complex meaning in the political ambience of the time, for he acted, to a certain point, just as those before him did. This statement is related to the *example of the old emperors, kings and voivodes from before*, which appears in many acts of worship signed by the Romanian voivodes, in the periods of time before and after the act of dedication the Radu Vodă Monastery to Ivir Monastery, and is important in understanding the context. That is because, in the case of the charters dedicated to the Holy Places, through which certain aid was offered (consisting of gold, religious artifacts, domains, animals, income resulting from taxes etc.) the act of worship expands to new meanings, in the context of the decay and even the disappearance, under the Ottoman rule, of the former supporters of prestigious Orthodox communities<sup>4</sup>. More exactly, because the Ottoman Empire has granted a large autonomy to the Romanian Countries, the Romanian voivodes have played an important part in prolonging this tradition<sup>5</sup>. This has only meant an extension of the policy of supporting religious establishments outside the borders of their own countries, as a new and superior stage of manifesting their support, the political, social, material and spiritual implications being entirely diverse. In this so called policy of erecting, centred on prestigious religious establishments located outside the country, that has taken different shapes and levels of collaboration and has extended to every social category, the dedication of religious establishments has taken a central role<sup>6</sup>. Things can be seen more clearly if we take into consideration the fact that it has been one of the most generous forms of aiding the Holy Places, given the long period of time in which it was activated, namely to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> The Byzantine Empire, the Bulgarian and Serbian states; see Căndea, Simionescu 1979, 7-9.

<sup>5</sup> Of this contribution, with its significant political implications, wrote: Iorga, 1972; Năsturel, 1973; Georgescu, 1980; Pippidi, 1983; Moldoveanu, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> For more information regarding the religious deeds of erecting and dedicating religious establishments, see the works of the following authors: Lazăr, 2012, 59-60, Brezoianu, 1861; Bolliac, 1862; Popescu-Spineni, 1936.

<sup>7</sup> The legislative act of Alexandru Ioan Cuza from 1863, regarding the confiscation of monastery goods, also brought in the property of the state the properties of the dedicated monasteries; see Giurescu, 1959.

The initiation of the ties between the Radu Vodă Monastery to Ivir has another cause. Radu Mihnea also dedicated his monastery to the Ivir establishment as a gesture of gratitude. In order to assure his protection, his father, Mihnea the second, sent him to Ivir when he was young. He did so because in the Romanian countries not only the first born had a right to occupy the throne, but also all the descendants of royal blood. For that reason, in the period of time we are referring to, existed an uncertain political context, in which every new ruler tried to eliminate all the possible other contestants as soon as possible<sup>8</sup>. But Mihnea the second did not send his son to Ivir only to make sure he would be protected, but also to make sure he received an education worthy of a future voivode. So naturally, very soon after he has gained the throne, Radu Mihnea did not forget to repay the place where he was raised and decided to aid the Ivir Monastery with a part of the income resulted from the Radu Vodă Monastery, a monastery that was representative to his family<sup>9</sup>.

The analysis of the Greek-Romanian connection is, in fact, very important, mainly because it has tied the destinies of two emblematic religious establishments: the Radu Vodă Monastery, on one hand, one of the most representative for the Romanian territory South of Carpathians, and the Ivir Monastery, on the other hand, a prestigious settlement part of the monastic complex of Mount Athos. If we consider that the Ivir Monastery, with its known prestige, needs no further introduction, about the Radu Vodă Monastery we need to say that it was rebuilt on the ruins of another much older religious settlement, called Holy Trinity. This was once a metropolitan church in the capital of Alexandru II Mircea. Burned by the Turks led by Sinan Paşa, the monastery was rebuilt by Radu Mihnea voivode, as “the most beautiful and the most important” of all “the wall monasteries” of the city<sup>10</sup>. Through the care of its founder and numerous givers, this monastic edifice was to become, in a relatively short period of time, not only “one of the most beautiful” monasteries but, “more importantly, one of the richest monasteries of Bucharest and even of the Romanian Countries”<sup>11</sup>.

In regards of its evolution, under the new identity given to it by the reconstruction, we must accentuate a particular trait of the information passed down by the documentary sources: its status as a dedicated monastery. It needs to be said that Radu Mihnea has dedicated his foundation without waiting for the work to be finalised<sup>12</sup>. And this deed has marked not only its beginning, but

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<sup>8</sup> Regarding the succession to the throne of the Romanian countries see Rezachievici, 2001, 24-26.

<sup>9</sup> Iorga, 1928, 272-273.

<sup>10</sup> About the beauty of the church of the monastery, rebuilt by Radu Vodă on the ruins of the Holy Trinity, we learn, in 1636, from a member of the Polish mission led by G. Krasinski. See Panaitescu, 1930, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Ionnescu-Gion, 1899, 40-41. About the history of the establishment we learn from a series of studies and articles, from which we mention: Săndulescu-Verna, 1930; Nicolaescu, 1939; Ionescu, Popescu 1992, 70-92; Chiţulescu, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> *DIR*, B, XVII, II, no. 147, 150-152.

also its evolution. The status generated by the act of worship finds a better foundation in the relations established with the beneficiary establishment, more exactly in the tasks and benefits assigned to each of the two parties, as they are enumerated, in the act of dedication, by the founder of the said establishment.

According to the charter of the Romanian voivode, which was signed at 10 February 1613 and is kept, to this day, in its original form, by the beneficiary<sup>13</sup>, the act of dedication inaugurated a period of strict dependence of the Romanian monastery to the beneficiary establishment. The founder bestowed on the beneficiary monastery the authority to name the superior fathers, of the “parents and priests and monks”, known as “priests and good and wise people” and worthy of administering the dedicated establishment. The incomes of the monastic domain, that the superior father was to manage “as honourably as possible”<sup>14</sup>, were meant to insure the proper functioning of the establishment, as well as maintaining the function of the philanthropic institution established to the monastery by the founder: in our case, the task of welcoming and accommodating the foreign<sup>15</sup>. This duty of the beneficiary of the dedication deed was in connection with the duty of increasing the wealth of the dedicated monastery. At the same time, it was in contradiction with that of estranging the monastic goods, as the income should have sufficed to cover all the expenses necessary for fulfilling the religious purpose of the foundation. The religious function of building appears in the document as: “in order not to ruin the charity of the founders”<sup>16</sup>.

A comparative analysis of the rights and obligations of the beneficiary with those of the founder of the religious settlement, as they were set by the founding act, entitle us to conclude that, through this act, the founder transferred to the Ivir Monastery a part of the benefits, but also of the tasks and responsibilities which resulted from this quality. More specifically, we are referring to the right of recommending clerics and taking part, under different forms, to the administration of the goods of the foundation. Also, we are referring to the obligation to ensure the material resources – this time through a wise management and development of the monastic properties – necessary for maintaining the well functioning of the religious foundation<sup>17</sup>.

The wise administration and extension of the monastic domain were, for the superior father, main tasks. In exchange for the obligations we have named earlier, the beneficiary settlement was to receive, after all the expenses of the dedicated monastery were covered, the entire annual surplus of the income. Being, mainly, an act of expressing religiosity, the act of dedication was made towards a superior religious establishment, as set in an hierarchical order, as an expression of aid to one of the most representatives Houses of God, in hopes of eternal mentioning. In addition to this motivation, the act of dedication was made towards a grand and prestigious religious establishment for other

<sup>13</sup> Marinescu, 2007, no. 37, 154-155.

<sup>14</sup> *DIR*, B, XVII, II, no. 147, 151.

<sup>15</sup> *DIR*, B, XVII, II, no. 147, 151-152.

<sup>16</sup> *DIR*, B, XVII, II, no. 147, 152.

<sup>17</sup> See the rights and the tasks of the builder at Cronț, 1960, 7 and 30-32.

motives. For it meant, through the protection it granted a guarantee of perennally for the dedicated monastery<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, the more prestigious the religious establishment was, the more important and consistent were the contributions and donations towards the dedicated monastery. In our case, it is well known how valued and appreciated the Holy Places of Mount Athos were by the Romanian believers. Therefore, it is possible to enunciate that this form of manifesting faith, evaluated through the significance of including the Radu Vodă Monastery in the hierarchy of representative monastic communities, through the material support of one of them, has also influenced its development.

In consideration of everything we presented, we have to remark the contractual form of the act of dedication. This results not only from the enumeration of the obligations and benefits that were delegated to each party, but also from the express mention of the haggle that the founder had had, before the act had been indicted, with the beneficiaries. In this way, in the founder act, Radu Mihnea writes, before enumerating the obligations of the Ivir Monastery, these words: “And when I gave and I dedicated the holy and heavenly Holy Trinity Monastery, I considered and haggled as to be known” the precise duties and rights of each party involved. At the same time, when establishing the obligations of the beneficiary of the act of dedication, the voivode also notes: “So I also, in this way, gave and dedicated the holy and heavenly monastery that is mentioned above”. In the end, through the curse, Radu Mihnea demands of the future voivodes: “you yourselves must haggle and strengthen and renew this act of mine and this haggle that is mentioned above”<sup>19</sup>. From here, we can safely conclude that, in the event of not fulfilling the tasks mentioned in the charter of worship, the cancellation of this charter became possible. Observing the way the provisions of the act of dedication were respected can be considered a fundamental right of the founder that dedicated the monastery, as a form of watching and establishing if the conditions had been met and if the establishment has preserved its religious purpose. At the same time, the transfer of monastic responsibilities to the successors<sup>20</sup> included and guaranteed the compliance of the act of dedication.

The archive documents (from which we were able to gather information regarding the superior fathers sent by the Radu Vodă Monastery, like registers of income and expenses, inventories with the mobile and immobile properties) prove that the Ivir Monastery has watched closely if the conditions stipulated in the act of worship have been met. Thus, in the case of the Radu Vodă Monastery, considered one of the greatest dedicated establishments, important superior fathers were named, for a period of five years, each of them arriving accompanied by a suite<sup>21</sup>. At the same time, the activity of those that were sent

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<sup>18</sup> We can exemplify the case of Glavacioc Monastery, dedicated by Alexandru Coconul to Ivir Monastery, in order not to let “destruction take over this holy monastery... and to perish the charity of the founders and of my late parents”, according to *DRH*, B, XXI, no. 26, 40.

<sup>19</sup> *DIR*, B, XVII, II, no. 147, 151-152.

<sup>20</sup> Cronț, 1960, 8.

<sup>21</sup> See Marinescu, 2007, no. 1183, 45-46.



to the Radu Vodă Monastery has been strictly watched. A proof in supporting this statement are numerous registers of income and expenses<sup>22</sup> or inventories with the mobile and immobile properties<sup>23</sup> that belonged to the Romanian monastery and that are now in the archives of the monks from Ivir. The results of the activity of each superior father determined if he would continue to exert his function or if he would be revoked<sup>24</sup>. By analysing the periods of time for each superior father invested by the Ivir Monastery, which at times can go beyond the interval of five years, we can conclude that most of the superior fathers have carried out their attributions excellently<sup>25</sup>. But at the same time, the sources mention certain periods of time that were less favourable for the development of the Radu Vodă Monastery, as a direct consequence of the superficiality or of the corrupt practices of some superior fathers, that have failed to rise to the challenges of their position<sup>26</sup>.

Through wise management and outlasting such periods of time, the demands of the founder of the Romanian monastery, as well as the interests of the Greek monks have been carefully watched and met in regards of increasing the wealth of the establishment. The documents show, in abundance, how the Radu Vodă Monastery has managed to own a vast domain, result of the numerous donations from its protectors – founders and their successors –, from believers or from different exchanges or purchases of lands and goods<sup>27</sup>. We conclude that the exploitation of the monastic domain meant not only plentiful resources for maintaining in function the Romanian monastery, but also opulent revenue for the beneficiary of the dedication, especially because the voivode had not established the quantum of income that was to be sent, each year, to Ivir. The annual income of the Radu Vodă Monastery has been evaluated as similar to those of the Cotroceni, Mihai Vodă, Mărgineni, Sărindar, Cozia and Hurezi monasteries<sup>28</sup>. Thus we can conclude, from the point of view of the size of the monastic domains and the income of each, but also from the point of view of the social and religious role of the superior father of each monastic establishment in the Romanian monastic hierarchy – most of which had the title of archimandrite<sup>29</sup> –, the position of the Radu Vodă Monastery amongst the main religious institutions of the country. Furthermore, the high position of the superior fathers of the Radu Vodă Monastery is

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<sup>22</sup> Marinescu, 2007, no. 1109, 16-17; no. 1225, 63; no. 1277, 80; no. 1408, 129-130; no. 1549, 179; no. 1551, 180.

<sup>23</sup> Marinescu, 2007, no. 708, 420; no. 1618, 203-204; no. 1619, 204-206; no. 1632, 210-211.

<sup>24</sup> Lazăr, 2012, 60.

<sup>25</sup> See the list of superior fathers at Chițulescu, 2009, 13-14.

<sup>26</sup> An example at Marinescu, 2007, no. 2054, 351.

<sup>27</sup> Important information about the wealth and the vastness of the monastic domain we learn from the Manuscript no. 256 in the accounts of the Central Service for the National and Historical Romanian Archives (further called A.N.I.C.). These indicate, in the year 1794, that the monastic establishment possessed approximately 80 estates, parts of estates, shops, ponds, mills, tolls, vineyards etc.

<sup>28</sup> Lazăr, 2012, 254 and 296.

<sup>29</sup> Lazăr, 2012, 40-41.

underlined by the fact that two of them have been named metropolitans<sup>30</sup>. Based on these facts, we can establish that the evolution of the Romanian monastery, which in a short period of time became one of the most important owners of monastic domains and gave two metropolitans to Wallachia, is in agreement with the relation established with the Ivir Monastery, a relation that offered benefits to both of the parties involved<sup>31</sup>. Moreover, the conclusion that the development of the Radu Vodă Monastery was aided by the act of dedication to the Ivir Monastery is strengthened by the numerous documents in which the donors demand the mention of their deeds not only during the ceremonies held in the Romanian religious establishment, but also in those held in the Ivir Monastery<sup>32</sup>.

The initial relations, as established by the act of dedication, soon grew stronger as the Romanian monastery started to gain more and more importance on the local religious front. The importance of the monastery grew as it acquired vast domains, its superior fathers were named metropolitans of the Romanian church and because the Radu Vodă Monastery was a representative of the Ivir Monastery on the local religious front. This development has led to a diversification of the relations between the two monasteries. We reach this conclusion if we analyse the hierarchical position that the Radu Vodă Monastery held in account with other religious centres from south of the Carpathians. The sources mention the dominant statute of the Radu Vodă Monastery in comparison with other religious establishments from a double perspective: as a holder of smaller dedicated monasteries, but also as a centre of administering of some directly dedicated establishments to the Ivir Monastery. This double role is noted in the sources of the time, from which we can mention in the first category the Tutana (Argeş)<sup>33</sup>, Izvorul lui Voievod (Târgovişte)<sup>34</sup>, Săcuiani (close to Bucharest)<sup>35</sup> monasteries, Fundul Sacului Hermitage (Vlaşca)<sup>36</sup>, Foişor Church (Bucharest)<sup>37</sup> and, probably<sup>38</sup>, Bucur (Bucharest)<sup>39</sup> and Măneşti (Ilfov)<sup>40</sup> churches, and, in the second category, the

<sup>30</sup> Grigorie (1629-1636) and Dionisie (24 June-December 1672); see Chiţulescu, 2009, 14.

<sup>31</sup> Edifying is the fact that, immediately after the dedication of Radu Vodă Monastery, the Ivir goes through some major works of reparations or extensions; see Bodogae, 1940, 142.

<sup>32</sup> see A.N.I.C., *Colecția Manuscrise [The Collection of Manuscripts]*, no. 256, passim.

<sup>33</sup> Dedicated at 02 June 1621, according to *DIR*, B, XVII, IV, no. 34, 31-32. It had, also, a dedicated establishment, called Matei Hermitage (Argeş); see Marinescu, 2007, 26-28.

<sup>34</sup> According to the voivode act of strengthening of the dedication, from 12 April 1630; see A.N.I.C., *Fondul Mănăstirea Radu Vodă [The Radu Vodă Monastery Fond]*, I/9.

<sup>35</sup> The statute of dedicated institution to Radu Vodă Monastery is mentioned in a previous document, dated 11 January 1631; see *DRH*, B, XXIII, no. 193, 318-319.

<sup>36</sup> About this dedicated establishment we learn from a document dated 02 October 1637; see *Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului (1633-1639) [The register of the documents of Wallachia from the Archives of the State (1633-1639)]*, 1981, no. 1082, 486.

<sup>37</sup> Dedicated at 17 October 1745, according to A.N.I.C., *Fondul Mănăstirea Radu Vodă [The Radu Vodă Monastery Fond]*, XLIII/12.

<sup>38</sup> We would like to mention here the lack on information from the archival fond of the direct mentions regarding the quality of dedicated institutions in the case of these two churches.

<sup>39</sup> Built, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, near Radu Vodă Monastery, probably as a church for the graveyard of the monastery, according to Stoicescu, 1961, 178.

Stelea (Bucharest)<sup>41</sup>, Iezerul (Ilfov)<sup>42</sup>, Glavaciocul (Argeş)<sup>43</sup> monasteries, Bălteni (Ilfov)<sup>44</sup> and Flămânda (Ialomița)<sup>45</sup> hermitage and Silvestru Church (Bucharest)<sup>46</sup>. The difference between these two roles of the Radu Vodă Monastery was meant to shape the development and the complexity of the connection between the two religious institutions as time passed. For, without any doubt, this strong link was materialised through an extension of the main attributes of the superior father sent to the Radu Vodă Monastery over the above mentioned religious establishments. At the same time, the type of relations established by the Radu Vodă Monastery with the dedicated monasteries it administered for and in the name of Ivir were basically the same with the relations established in the dedication act made by Radu Mihnea. That is because the acts of dedication were issued under the same rules.

It also needs mentioning the fact that the Radu Vodă Monastery was one of the first religious establishments from Wallachia founded by a voivode that was dedicated to a foreign institution: the third, after the Plumbuita Monastery and the Mihai Vodă Monastery<sup>47</sup>. Although it has been already shown that the first acts of dedication outside the country were results of private initiatives and that those acts were tightly connected to the foreign origin of the founding fathers of those monasteries<sup>48</sup>, we believe the "example of the voivode" should not be ignored in regards to this religious practise. What distinguishes the Radu Vodă Monastery in this succession of acts of dedication<sup>49</sup> is its unique

<sup>40</sup> The statute of dedicated establishment is based on the mentioning, at 20 July 1752, of a wooden church built on the estate Mănești of Radu Vodă Monastery; see A.N.I.C., *Colecția Manuscrise [The Collection of Manuscripts]*, no. 256, doc. 223, 207-208.

<sup>41</sup> Dedicated to Ivir by the boyar Stelea, when Mihnea II was voivode. After it was destroyed by Sinan Paşa, it was rebuilt by the metropolitan Grigorie and dedicated again to Ivir, at 10 July 1634; see *DRH*, B, XXIV, no. 322, 423-424. Although in the act of dedication to Ivir, made by the metropolitan Grigorie, is not mentioned if this monastery was to be administered by Radu Vodă Monastery, this matter of fact results from the documents dated after the act of dedication; see A.N.I.C., *Colecția Manuscrise [The Collection of Manuscripts]*, no. 256, doc. 80-115, 108-124. Stelea Monastery also had two dedicated monasteries (Grinduri Church, near Bucharest, and Stelea Church, from Târgoviște), according to Marinescu, 2007, 24-26.

<sup>42</sup> Dedicated to Ivir at 25 April 1625; see *DIR*, B, XVII, IV, no. 525, 502-503 and no. 526, 503-505. The fact that it was dedicated to Radu Vodă Monastery results from a document issued by Matei Basarab at 20 July 1648; *Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului (1645-1649) [The register of the documents of Wallachia from the Archives of the State (1645-1649)]*, 1993, no. 1183, 439.

<sup>43</sup> Dedicated to Ivir at 08 March 1626, according to *DRH*, B, XXI, no. 26, 37-41.

<sup>44</sup> Dedicated to Ivir, according to A.N.I.C., *Colecția Manuscrise [The Collection of Manuscripts]*, no. 256, doc. 238, 223-224.

<sup>45</sup> Dedicated to Ivir at 20 January 1740, according to A.N.I.C., *Fondul Mănăstirea Radu Vodă [The Radu Vodă Monastery Fond]*, XXI/33.

<sup>46</sup> Dedicated to Ivir, according to a document dated 15 January 1794; see A.N.I.C., *Fondul Mănăstirea Radu Vodă [The Radu Vodă Monastery Fond]*, XCVIII/1.

<sup>47</sup> The second, after the foundation made by Mihai Viteazul, according to Iorga, 1929, 217-218. More recent research has shown, however, that the first voivode that dedicated a religious establishment outside the country was Mihnea II, in 1585; see Popa, 1968, 7-8.

<sup>48</sup> According to Cotovanu, 2014.

<sup>49</sup> For religious establishments dedicated of private initiatives until the years 1600, see Cotovanu, 2014, 252-257.

development, a development that has a lot of causes. Amongst them (its quality of being a founding monastery made by the Mihnești family, which ruled the country in those times, the acts of donation made by the founders) the act of dedication to Ivir was one of the most important. This development does not only refer to the wealth of the Radu Vodă Monastery, but also to the position it had in report to other religious establishments located South of the Carpathians, and also the position of its superior fathers in the hierarchy of the Romanian church. The Radu Vodă Monastery, dedicated to Ivir, represented in this existence an example of development and prosperity to the believers preoccupied with the eternal mentioning of their deeds. It is a fact proven by the acts of dedication mentioned here, in our paper. Therefore, the quality of dedicated monastery and the ascension of the Radu Vodă Monastery most certainly have influenced the option of some founding fathers to dedicate their own monasteries and place them under the administration of the Ivir Monastery, as well as other representative orthodox centres. "And I as well have sealed my work where that of my Lord, the deceased Radu voievode, is, and I dedicated myself my holy monastery from Bălteni with all its villages and with all its domains and vineyards, and mills, and cellars, and stores and gypsies and animals, with everything it owns to the holy Monastery of Ivir"<sup>50</sup>, we are told by Hrizea, a local boyar who held an important position. Even if we don't know any other details, only by taking into consideration his name, we can assume that the donor had a Greek origin, and consequently, helping its native lands played an important part in his decision. However, we must take into consideration the meaning of his gesture as it is described in the documents, because, even if he was foreign, he certainly also wanted a social recognition from the society that welcomed and accepted him<sup>51</sup>. For these reasons, we believe that the Greek-Romanian relations also had a function of consolidating the new religious practise<sup>52</sup>. The research has shown that, at the end of the period, more than 100 monasteries and hermitages of the two Romanian Countries were administered by Athos<sup>53</sup>, to which we can add more monasteries, dedicated to other representative religious centres that belonged of the Constantinople patriarchate or other patriarchates<sup>54</sup>. Relevant to our conclusions is the fact that, in the period between the years 1500-1714, most private donations to Athos were made to aid the Ivir Monastery through its dedicated monasteries<sup>55</sup>, and their number grew exponentially starting with the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>56</sup>.

In the system of relations between religious establishments, born through the act of direct or indirect dedication of Romanian religious institutions to the

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<sup>50</sup> A.N.I.C., *Colecția Manuscrise [The Collection of Manuscripts]*, no. 256, doc. 238, 224.

<sup>51</sup> Cotovanu, 2008, 225.

<sup>52</sup> Our conclusion is sustained by Iorga, 1929, 218, who says: "to Radu Voda Mihnea we keep the role of beginning the acts of dedication (...), for our monasteries".

<sup>53</sup> Moldoveanu, 2002, 18.

<sup>54</sup> Brezoianu, 1861, 134

<sup>55</sup> Cotovanu, 2012, 178.

<sup>56</sup> Cotovanu, 2012, 169.

Ivir Monastery<sup>57</sup> and built on three levels, we can't help but remark the position of the Radu Vodă Monastery somewhere in the middle. The reason must be its statute as one of the most important monasteries from Wallachia dedicated to the Ivir Monastery<sup>58</sup>.

At the same time, a re-evaluation, in these new conditions, of the domain and the income of the Radu Vodă Monastery imposes to also include the properties and the income of all the monasteries that were dedicated to it. All the other Romanian dedicated monasteries to Ivir contributed, at least in theory, to the undivided support of the Ivir complex, as the beneficiary of the dedication act, even if the possessions were administrated by the superior father of the Radu Vodă Monastery.

In the end, we can safely say that the relations between the Radu Vodă Monastery from Bucharest with the Ivir Monastery from Mount Athos, although not unique, have marked an important step in the evolution of the phenomenon of dedicating the monasteries from the territory south of the Carpathians. At the same time, the detailed aspects that have emerged from this connection have emphasized the particularities of the relations generated by the act of dedication. In our case, they have revealed not only the reasons behind this act, but also the progressive route of the relations initiated by the Romanian founder, as well as the consequences that have emerged from the act of dedication. It is important to point out the complex reality in which the religious Greek-Romanian relation has appeared and developed, strengthened on a series of mutual benefits and diversified from the initial contacts between the two. At the same time, this act was meant to underline the identity of the uninterrupted relations, for more than two and a half centuries, of two prestigious religious establishments, located, let's not forget, in two separate geographical areas. All this makes possible a reminder of the strong faith in God, expressed, over time, through diverse methods and means.

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<sup>57</sup> We are referring to the establishments mentioned in this study, which have contributed to the development of the relations between the Radu Vodă Monastery and Ivir Monastery, being known that the Ivir Monastery has had other dedicated monasteries in Wallachia, independent to this history.

<sup>58</sup> We have taken into account the fact that, of the 8 dedicated monasteries to Ivir identified by Marinescu, 2007, 24-45, located south of the Carpathians, 5 are included in the hierarchy of religious establishments dedicated to Ivir listed in our study (Radu Vodă, Stelea, Tutana, Bălteni and Glavacioc monasteries).

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