THE PHANARIOTES IN PRE-SCIENTIFIC ROMANIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY: TWO RHYMED CHRONICLES ON NICOLAE PETRU MAVROGHENI

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Abstract: The article explores how the oral/folklore sources on a Romanian Phanariot prince, Nicolae Petru Mavrogheni, acts as a pre-scientific history resource for historians, as well as a way to understand Romanian collective mentality in relation to the Phanariotes rule. It relies on two rhymed chronicles, examining the ways in which otherness, as well as cultural intimacy, were perceived in the process of shaping modern Romanian identity.

Keywords: Nicolae Petru Mavrogheni, Phanariotes, Romanian identity, Oriental, otherness, folklore, oral, rhymed chronicles.

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Historiography and Anecdote: how Romanians "wrote" the Phanariot prince

The approach of the historic and symbolic roles of the Phanariotes in the Romanian Principalities in the 18th century still combines objective historic data, and much of what we can now relate to modern mythology and folklore. It is in the peri-urban folklore and traditional folklore where *the second representation* of the Phanariotes princes and rulers lie: this time it is dark, the ultimate form of *otherness* that present the epoch of the Phanariotes as one of the most unfortunate in the pre-modern and modern Romanian history. Obviously, this approach is connected to the identity complex of the modern Romanian nation-state. As the intellectual elite shaped the modern collective identity by giving preference to certain non-Romanian models, to the detriment of others, the Western models, mainly the French one, could not be compatible to the old Ottoman/Byzantine legacy. The Phanariotes were doomed to have been understood as the Byzantines who had sold out their legacy to the Ottomans, as well as the representative of a rigid, cruel type of authority. Very few of the merits of the Phanariotes legacy were acknowledged, either in politics, or in culture. The cleansing of everything Ottoman/Oriental caught that time in the middle. Along the decades, the representation of the Phanariotes varied from N. Iorga's approach[1], which relied on the thesis of the Romanian society/culture as the `second Byzantium`, to the Western-oriented ones, that looked at the Phanariotes time in a manner that lacked nuance. I would say that Pompiliu Eliade's book on *The French Influence on the Public Spirit in Romania*[2], the author a vocal supporter of the role of the French in civilizing Romania and freeing it from under the negative influence of the Ottoman Empire and Oriental `behaviors` played an important role in the future demonization of that age. Recent books on "small history", most of them written by historian Constanța

[1] N. Iorga- *Byzantium after Byzantium*, Center for Romanian Studies, Iași, 2000.

[2] Pompiliu Eliade- *Influența franceză asupra spiritului public în România*, Humanitas, 2000 (Romanian translation of the original, published in French)

Vintilă-Ghițulescu[3] cast a different light on mentalities and behaviors in the age of the Phanariotes and during early "modernity". Other relatively recent extensive studies by Leonidas Rados examine the matter from a more nuanced perspective, I would say, as commented further on.

Perceived as "intermediary" oppressors- they, themselves being at the mercy of higher authorities of the Ottoman Empire that assigned them as administrators of the Romanian principalities-, they have made the subject of controversial historic accounts, of fictionalized narratives and, nonetheless, of semi-oral productions, that culminated with the "rhymed chronicles" in the early 19th century. This "folklore" about the Phanariotes age, either consisting of "rhymed chronicles", or of semi-fictional accounts that were later integrated in credible texts written by those authors who are considered "the founders of modern Romanian historiography": A.D. Xenopol, Nicolae Iorga, etc. The collection of rhymed oral histories or subjective accounts on the Phanariotes age also resulted into the "contamination" of purely folklore species, such as the epic about the local brigands (*balade haiduceşti*) or the "popular theater"[4] in which Biblical characters coexisted with contemporary administrators, outcasts and "the Romanians", i.e. the ordinary people, usually perceived as a collective victim of those previously mentioned. Some of the first sources, the 18th century chronicles, written at the request of one or another *voyvoda*, and seasoned with the chronicler's subjective views on the *other* (the Turk, the Greek or other "foreigners), exposed, for example, caricatures of the Phanariotes princes. One of these, Ion Neculce's *Letopisetul Ţării Moldovei*(The Chronicle of Moldova) presented Dimitrie Cantacuzino, whom the author disliked profoundly, as a duplicitous Greek from *Tzarigrad*, wearing a rabbit skin around his lower back, "being so old, he no longer had any of his own teeth left, but glued a denture every morning with starch and had a young mistress, Aniţa (…), whose mother kept a liquor shanty in the poor quarters of the city and he bought her nice clothes and jewelry and took her in his coach with the wives of the boyars"; (…) he had no shame, and ate meat during Lent, together with the Turks"[5]. This is probably the most widely-known anecdotic account on a Phanariot prince, and it is a short history of how the Phanariotes were perceived or even invented in the Romanian principalities. The anecdote contains all the ingredients of the relations between the Romanian subjects and the rulers: the latter showed no or little respect to morality and borrowed some of the despicable Turkish practices, even if they were Christian Orthodox. As I will try to argue, this history of "small gestures" informed the historiographic discourse in Romania and created a type of *other* "nearer and dearer" to locals. The Phanariot was the recognizable "oppressor", the scapegoat and yet someone who belonged to the cultural intimacy of the Romanians more than "the remote other".

The history of "smaller" gestures or people is not the privilege of modern and contemporary views in historiography. The examination of less frequented sources, such as oral accounts or other types of historical accounts that today may count as "trivia" are of use especially when we want to examine how common consciousness represented a certain *otherness* and I believe that is exactly what these semi-oral accounts provided at the time.

This rough assimilation of the Phanariotes with the Ottomans (the former being a weaker, yet more venal version of the latter) persisted for a long time in Romanian

[3] C. Vintilă-Ghițulescu- *În şalvari şi cu işlic*, Humanitas, 2012 *Evgheniți, ciocoi, mojici*, Humanitas, 2015 *Patimă şi desfătare*, Humanitas, 2015

[4] "Popular theater" covers a number of repetitive plays that were performed usually between Christmas and January, 7(St. John the Baptist's Day, this ending the Winter Holiday Season in the Romanian traditional society). Partly similar to the medieval mysteries and partly to commedia del'arte, they displayed characters borrowed from the court of Phanariot princes, mostly law enforcers that punished the good haiduk. In some of the plays, even the prince himself becomes a ridiculed character. See, for this Horia Barbu Oprişan, *Teatrul popular românesc*, Editura Meridiane, 1987

[5] Ion Neculce – *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei*, any edition

historiography, and it served the purpose of ideologies that were otherwise very different from one another. For example, whereas those who militated for the creation of a modern, independent nation-state ruled by Romanians had obvious reasons for an exaggeratedly critical view on the Phanariotes, the leftist historians in the 20th century used the same view to argue for the necessity of a non-interventionist and somehow isolationist approach of history. Even the attribute "national" that has accompanied the identity construct along modern history pleaded in favor of a negative image of the Phanariotes princes who were "foreign". Although they shared the same religion with Romanians and they contributed significantly to the modernization of the principalities[6], they were seen as agents of the Ottoman Empire, that is, *enemies*. Their lives and deeds made the object of narratives and later on, films that educated the public in the spirit of "good, but persecuted Romanians" vs. "bad and corrupt Phanariotes"[7].

Thus, we may say that the role of Phanariot princes/voyvoda[8] in the Romanian principalities has been documented by historians, appears paradoxical: he was both the oppressor and the initiator of progress, as politics and/or the personal views of the historians required. The rediscovery of the Roman/Latin roots of the rising modern Romanian society brought a rapid abandonment of the recent or remote history. This included a rather blunt labeling of the Phanariot administration as the only one guilty of the corruption that plagued the principalities. Just two decades after that, the first generation of modern historians admitted that the Phanariotes had been directly responsible for progress in the Romanian principalities. It seemed a bit unusual that in the age of overt Francophilia, Romanians admitted that the Phanariotes were those who had actually introduced the learning and use of French in the principalities.

From Modern Accounts Back to Semi-Oral Sources

In order to see how the semi-oral accounts and the respected historiographic text contributed to the creation of a special *other* and how this shaped the profile of the modern Romanian historiography, it is important to see how one of the most authorized contemporary historians sees the problem.

Leonidas Rados in *Influenţa greacă în disputele istoriografice din spaţiul românesc în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea*[9]*[The Greek Influence as Topic for Controversies in the Romanian Historiography in the 19th Century]* examines firsthand sources of the time and other critical accounts and reaches to at least two interesting conclusions:

1.The Phanariot "otherness" was beneficial to the creation of the Romanian modern public sphere, as well as to the crystallization of national consciousness; the presence of the Phanariot rulers coagulated the hostility of people towards a unique enemy, the Greek alogenes from Fanar and thus stifled the struggles between various boyar groups; at a lower level of society, the *enemy* acted as an incentive toward a nascent "national consciousness" that marked the age of emergency of new nation-states.

2. The anti-Phanariot attitude is not to be found only in the texts of Romanian historiographers, or in the attitude of the locals who had finally found a convenient otherness against which they projected their barely sketched new nationhood. Western European travelers depicted the Romanian principalities under the Phanariotes rule in terms similar to

[6] Under Nicolae Petru Mavrogheni, for example, clean drinking water was brought to all the neighborhoods of Bucharest, every two or three streets, through a pipe system and became available for drinking and cooking even to the less favored inhabitants. Alexandru Ipsilanti, before him, contributed to the development of education.

[7] The series of films *Haiducii* (directed by Dinu Cocea) opposed the good brigand (Anghel Şaptecai) and his group to the"bad" Phanariot prince, who spoliated the hard-working Romanian peasants and humiliated the patriot boyars; although the *haiduc* was an outcast and his methods of serving justice less than orthodox, the message of the films is that " anything goes", as long as the Phanariot is punished.

[8] This is the term that Christine Philliou preferred in her study, see *infra.*

[9] Published in: „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie «G. Bariţiu» din Cluj-Napoca", tom. XLVII, 2008, pp. 123–142, available in electronic form at: http://history-cluj.ro/Istorie/anuare/AnuarBaritHistorica2008/07%20Leonidas.pdf

those used by Romanians: the rulers were held accountable for all the unpleasant situations they encountered while traveling the countries, such as the Oriental outlook of the society, the resistance of the people to modernization, laziness, corruption. In other words, the Phanariotes were the object and subject of the typical nineteenth-century "Orientalist" discourse. The Romanian principalities were an Orient within reach, and the former agents of an ancient empire were conveniently transformed into the agents of the epitome of Orientalism (the Greeks, acting in the name of the Ottoman Empire) filled the desired profile.

Another historian, Mihai Chioveanu argues that the term "Phanariot" was used, after the regime had changed, as an accuse or as a demeaning attribute that stigmatized uncivil behaviors; at a collective level, it served as a cause/effect explanation for negative stereotypes ("we are lazy because as a result of the Phanariot influence") and failures. According to Chioveanu, "Phanariot" represents a "fictitious otherness"[10] that functioned as a reflection in the mirror for the "discourse generating groups" that illustrated the "national forces" after the Phanariot regime had ended.

It is thus a necessity to examine, from the point of view of the identity construct, how the Phanariotes were reflected in the collective consciousness of their own time. For this, I used a collection of popular accounts on the Phanariotes age, known as "Chronicles and stories in rhymes", edited by Dan Simonescu[11]. Among these, there are two long rhymed chronicles about Nicolae Petru Mavrogheni, a rather controversial personality, who ruled in Walachia between 1786 and 1789. If one perceives things and events at a larger historical scale, then it may be relevant to mention that Mavrogheni ruled between the Russian rule of Walachia and the Austrian rule. A hypocrite ruler, yet proud soldier, he organized and led a campaign meant to prevent the Austrian expansion in the principalities. He led the Ottoman soldiers with valor but with less effect.

There are two rhymed chronicles that present approximately the same events and generally agree upon the controversial personality of the prince. He was inconsistent, hypocrite, cruel with the boyars but kind to the poor people, a good administrator, rather harsh on priests and on Turkish soldiers, whom he punished if found pillaging and plundering peasants. Both authors admit that his brief reign was masterminded by two "counselors", Greeks, Perticari and Dumitrache Turnavitu. These two - one a pretended astrologer, the other a personal adviser cultivated the prince's weakness for praise and did not do anything to stop him from taking decisions that led him to peril. In accordance with the status and relations of the Phanariot princes with the Ottoman Empire, Mavrogheni was beheaded and then replaced by Alexandru Ipsilanti.

More "learned" sources of philo-Greek orientation see Mavrogheni as a person who contributed to certain improvements of social life but diminished these by his eccentricity and corruption. The accounts on Nicolae Mavrogheni come both from authorized, learned sources, and from the so-called *rhymed chronicles,* a semi-oral series of epic accounts that were passed on to general use and that are very difficult to study from the point of view of genealogy, as there may be more than one the declared author.

Two chronicles and one extravagant prince

The genesis of the rhymed chronicles was in itself a subject of debate among scholars. Dan Simonescu, the editor of the largest collection of such texts considered that their origin can be traced back in the folk ballads (oral epic). The *heroes* in the oral epic are replaced by historic characters with a known identity, such as the princes and their court, or those in the order forces (serdar, arnaut) who did not enjoy much sympathy from people. The dual structure of the oral epic is preserved (good vs. evil, the confrontation between hero and villain) and the

[10] Mihai Chioveanu - *Acuza de fanariotism:atitudini post-politice şi alterităţi fictive în structurarea identităţii naţionale şi culturii politice la români*, în „Xenopoliana", VIII, 2000, nr.1-4, p. 63.
[11] Dan Simonescu –*Cronici şi povestiri româneşti versificate*, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei, 1967.

real characters pass on to the collective imagination as belonging to either of the above categories. If we admit that Simonescu's theory is valid, and the rhymed chronicles are nothing but particular cases of a generic scenario, then it means that:

a.the rhymed chronicles follow the form and function of the Homeric epic, mixing the mythical and the historical, as far as the conception on time and perspective are concerned; they provide useful information on the relation between scientific historiography and folklore during the early stages of modernization of the Romanian principalities; this is why I believe that the examination of these texts can help us understand the pre-scientific phase of modern Romanian historiography;

b.there was a certain need for appropriating *otherness* and thus minimizing the effects of a foreign rule that met opposition and resent. In other words, the rhymed chronicles are a way of wiping off the differences between *the official* and *the popular*. This can also lead to the supposition that

c.the Phanariot prince and his court was thus undermined and turned into a pathetic local figure, most of the times one depicted in less than flattering terms

Another theory, that of Mihai Moraru advances the idea that the rhymed chronicles are a localization of the medieval Slavonic and Greek chronicles and they should not be considered as products of oral/folk culture. The theory is supported by Tudor Dinu[12], who identifies a tradition of the rhymed chronicle in the Greek sources, thus raising an interesting problem: were the chronicles written by the Romanian authors about the Phanariot princes a discourse "consistent" with the nature of the subject?

As we try to demonstrate, the representation of the Phanariot princes is directly connected with Romanian modern historiography. The subtle analysis made by Leonidas Rados focused only on the scientific, acknowledged state of modern historiography. The question is whether these disputed quasi-oral documents can explain why modern Romanian historiography is so close to the Phanariot stage of our history.

Unlike the majority of accounts on Phanariotes princes, the rhymed chronicle written by Pitarul Hristache appears favorable to Nicolae Mavrogheni. Whereas other contemporaries insist on the *portrait* of the prince, recalling mainly his "ugliness and monster-like appearance and behaviors" (his eye defect, his rather unflattering complexion and his expensive and outrageous ways of spending leisure time), Hristache is more interested in the *events*. In other words, he seems a historiographer whose aim is to leave an accurate account of the beneficial changes that occurred during the Mavrogheni's rule, as well as of his political role in the region. Such minute accounts came as no surprise at the time, as the post-medieval tradition this type of "court documents", frequently requested and paid for by princes or highly-ranked officials.

As I mentioned earlier, both chronicles agree on the strange behavior of the prince, known for his eccentricities, and also on the fact that he was feared. However, they admit that he was feared mostly by the boyars and less by the simple subjects, who benefited from some of his contested decisions. They both highlight the fact that the prince behaved inconsistently, which explains the suspicions and eventually the hatred of those who had to collaborate with him directly. Sometimes generous and kind, other times ruthless to the boyars, he punished them for wasting time in endless balls and parties and for overspending on luxury items. His attitude towards the clerics and the Ottomans are retained with sympathy. He acted more like an efficient administrator in respect with the activities of the Orthodox priests, as he obliged them not to leave the church during daytime and to offer religious assistance whenever

[12] Tudor Dinu –*Tradiţie epică şi inovaţie în poemele lui Stavrinos şi Gheorghios Palamedes despre Mihai Viteazul*[Epic Tradition and Innovation in the poems of Stavrinos and Palamedes about Mihai Viteazul], Ph.D. dissertation available online at http://www.unibuc.ro/studies/Doctorate2007/TUDOR%20DINU-Traditie%20epica%20si%20inovatie%20in%20poemele%20lui%20Stavrinos%20si%20Gheorghios%20Palamedes%20despre%20Mihai%20Viteazul/Rezumat%20teza%20Tudor%20Dinu.doc

required. As a result, the churches were heated for the first time during his rule, and the Romanian priests were obliged to adopt the *kamilafki*, specific to the Greek vestments (before they covered their heads with a simple peasant-style fur cap). Other administrative measures retained by the chronicles and transmitted by the oral tradition were: he ordered that the neighborhoods (*mahalale*, at that time) of Bucharest be supplied with fresh drinking water, and thus a piping system was created, together with a system of *cişmele* (drinking water fountains or pumps) for the principal neighborhoods. He is also the founder of the church "Theotokos of the Life-Giving Font" and of the Hospital now known as Filantropia.

Apart from these practical and still visible accomplishments during his rule, Nicolae Petru Mavrogheni used his intelligence and ruse to develop a strategy that allowed him to balance among Ottomans and Austrians and Russians during the wars at the end of the 18th century. His imbalanced personality helped him in this respect, although it rendered him unpopular among his collaborators and subjects.

A comparative approach of the two accounts is particularly relevant, as it is of extreme importance to see how the "pre-scientific" phase of modern Romanian historiography dealt with this common *alter*, that is the Phanariot prince. The two texts, the *Anonymous*(hereafter cited as A) and the one written by *Pitarul Hristache* (hereafter cited as H) will be compared from the point of view of:

a.the position of the narrator towards the events
b.the ratio *narration of events*/ *description*
c.the choice of the facts and events
d.the degree of orality in the two historical accounts

It appears obvious that the author of H is a sustainer of Mavrogheni's, and this appears quite transparently in his account. At a first glance, H seem to rely more on facts and on Mavrogheni's accomplishments and failures as a military strategist, as well as a more or less skilled negotiator with the local aristocrats and clergy. Text A displays a thorough preoccupation with the *collective self* and the religious/archaic culture beliefs according to which a ruler is "the payoff" for the behavior of the group[13]. Also, its author(s) records in detail how Mavrogheni behaved with the locals and how he exploited the negative personality traits of Romanians during the war. In short, Mavrogheni's rule seems to be yet another illustration of folk wisdom, the kind that we find in ballads, fairy tales and folk theater.

Variant A:

Mavrogheni's coming as a ruler in Wallachia is a result of collective guilt and sins:

„Ne făcurăm la firi grei
Ca când eram dumnezei
Toţi cu firile schimbate
Cu tabeturi grele foarte
/.../
Vrajba şi cu pizmuirea(...)

Literal translation: "Our hearts turned into stone/and we saw ourselves as gods, maybe/Our good habits changed/ Enmity and envy ruled over our lives/…

[13] It is worth mentioning that even today, many Romanians believe that the ascension of a certain politician is determined by "collective worthiness", or its lack thereof; almost all newspapers resort to this old adage when commenting on the performance of politicians and administrators: "we have the politicians/administrators that we deserve, nothing more, nothing less"

This transformation for the worse attracts in the first place a series of *signs and omens*, in a good medieval tradition: draught, plague, earthquakes, flooding, mudslides. It is obvious that these had not happened all at once, nor had they all affected Wallachia, but the chronicler uses the resources of the collective memory in order to create the rhetoric tension necessary to introduce the well-deserved mishap, Mavrogheni's rule. In an attempt to mimic objectivity, the author creates an ad-hoc chronography that brings together "the good Phanariotes", such as Alexandru Ipsilanti (Hypsilantis), Nicolae Caragea, Mihai Şuţu (Soutos), all of whom had been scorned by the people. Post-factum, they have become good, generous and decent. The fact that they were deposed from the highest dignity in state is seen as a "karmic" effect of bad collective behavior: Romanians are never content with what they have got or with the current ruler. Mavrogheni's eccentricity is also constructed via rumors "they say/ people thought/we had heard that…"Long before he was nominated as the Voyvoda of Wallachia, the public opinion knew that he had to be a "bad Phanariot". However, as first hand experience counts more, people went to pay homage to the new prince ("firitisire", "hiritisire") and this is what they saw:

Îl văzum domol la stare
Cu ghimpoasă căutare
Cum şi domnescul său tarz
Cu semne de om viteaz;
Vorba cam cu prelungire
Şi graiul cu îngrozire/.../

Literal translation: He was quiet/and cast a thorny look/ a scar on his face/he spoke drawlingly/and scared us accordingly

The prince, who is depicted in terms analogous to the dragon in Romanian folk tales has a court that is equally strange:

Ehpaia avea prea mare
Dar toţi haramini de mare,
Tot spânzuraţi chisagii,
Cu port de galaongii,
La cap legaţi cu peşchire,
N-avea dă turci osebire

Literal translation:

His court was numerous
But all seafarers
Sword-bearers
Wearing Turkish uniform
One couldn't say where were from

The oral tradition adds more to the "negative" portrait of the Greek, by insisting on the impossibility to tell between his court and the real Turks. This heterogeneous army, consisting mainly of pirates from Morea disguised as Turks stands proof for the confusion that has been transmitted to the collective consciousness on Phanariotes, who were assimilated with the Ottomans[14]. As I mentioned in the beginning, the representations of the Phanariot voyvoda

[14] For this, see Christine Philliou- Communities on the Verge: Unraveling the Phanariot Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance, in: Comparative Studies in Society and History(2009), 51: 151-181. Although the interest of the authors is concentrated more on the idea of the "empire within an empire"operated by the Phanariotes, it is important for us to retain the "confusion" that led to the symbolic synonymy Phanariotes= Turks. The oral tradition supports the author's conclusions, as the "bad allogene" was, for a long time in history, "the Turk"

and/or his court as "Turks" resulted into their slow but steady migration towards the popular theater[15], performed during the Winter Holiday Season, where the Turk/Phanariot/Serdar was the unpopular messenger of the power, always in conflict with the *haiduk* (brigand). Later in the chronicle this image of a heterogeneous court finds its analogy in the depiction of his ragtag army (*oastea de strânsură*), consisting of Romanians, who are no better than the "pirates": they were pastry and bread makers, all of them with strong legs, so they could run better when the enemy arrived. The irony of the author is obvious and the prince appears caught between the eccentricity and uncertain origin of his court and the cowardice and shallowness of his soldiers. As he knows the psychology of his subjects, Mavrogheni manages to gather another army, this time by promising the Romanian exemption from taxes. This new army proves to be a group of revelers that do not seem to care that ordinary people came out in the streets to greet the brave soldiers. An image worth of medieval farces and scenes from *commedia dell'arte* stands as a definition of the army: the soldiers are "corn mush and milk monsters", dressed in rags, sharing guns ("there was a pistol for every three or four soldier) and using sticks and clubs instead of guns. The Romanian see the war as an opportunity to get even with those whom they perceive as spoliators (the boyars) and they spare no effort in beating or attacking them, instead of protecting their own homeland.

Caught between the Phanariot voyvoda, the "Germans"(Austrians) and the "Moskali"(the Russian army), Romanians do not seem to care much about principles, their military honor or patriotism. History is understood in terms of "hearsay", and as result the locals are constantly disappointed by all non-Romanians.

The variant written by Pitarul Hristache, obviously more favorable to Mavrogheni, focuses more on the the *facts* and on the fact that the prince civilized Bucharest. His extravagance and weakness for admiration pushed him to gather a large group of corrupted boyars who contributed to Mavrogheni's failure. Although not so preoccupied with the past and with the merits of former princes, H documents the flight of Romanian aristocrats.

What remain constant are the negative character traits of Romanians, who cannot be convinced to engage in a war or in supporting their *voyvoda* otherwise than by bribery or sometimes, false promises.

Let us follow how the two quasi-oral chronicles present the controversial Phanariot prince and how the oral, sometimes anecdotic history can function as an argument for the role of the Phanariot phase into the development of modern Romanian historiography. The oral epic, in this case the rhymed chronicles, demonstrates how the age-old relation *we-the others* delineated options in modern historiography, outraged sensibilities and even developed enmities hard to sustain when using rational arguments.

Synopsis, Table 1, Variant A

The Phanariot Prince	The Subjects
Cruel	Permanently discontent
Good administrator	Disorganized, yet with expectations
Pleased by praise	Believing in rumors and hearsay
Good strategist and unpredictable	Disorganized and irrationally vengeful
Good psychologist	Accept bribery and false promises

[15] See Horia Barbu Oprișan – *Teatrul popular românesc*, Meridiane, 1987. The author records the conversation with one of the occasional actors, who dressed up as a "Turk"/Serdar/Phanariot, that is the bad character in the play

Synopsis, Table 2, Variant H

The Phanariot Prince	The Subjects
Brave	-
Cruel with boyars	Victimized by the prince
Dual personality	Believing in appearances
Good strategist and unpredictable	Obliged to fight a war
Influenced by his close collaborators	Accept bribery and false promises

Going back to the four criteria that I mentioned before, the comparative table of the two variants will appear as follows:

Comparative Table A/H

Criteria Texts	**Position of the narrator**	**Ratio events/description**	**Choice of facts**	**Degree of orality**
Variant A	Implied in the events, homodiegetic	Description dominates	Everyday events and anecdotes	Highly formulaic and oral
Variant H	"Objective", judgmental to the prince	Events and facts dominate	Military facts, the relation of the prince with the boyars	Orality typical to medieval chronicles

The two chronicles are written from two different perspectives: A is oriented more on the relation between the prince and his subjects, and the author is one of the crowd, whereas H explores the relation between the prince and the Romanian boyars, who find themselves persecuted by the Phanariot.

What appears interesting is that a text considered the product of the oral tradition ("the voice of the many") does not incriminate the foreigner as much as does a text written by someone who was a close collaborator of the prince. Variant A counterbalances each negative trait of the prince by exposing more than one negative trait of the Romanians, who are much worse than the Phanariotes. Even if this text concentrates on "depictions/descriptions" of characters, it creates a space of cultural intimacy that legitimates the presence of a cruel and eccentric prince. Variant H appears more balanced from the point of view of what it was long believed to be an objective historiographic discourse: facts, not depictions, a good balance between the narrative and the descriptive and a critical attitude towards the object of investigation, that is the prince and his age.

These two chronicles can be considered proofs of a transition stage between the purely epic(oral) accounts on history and the scientific Romanian historiography in the 19th century. The ideas present in Rados's study, that we invoked at the beginning are sustained by these less known chronicles that circulated at the time. These texts can demonstrate how the creation of an intermediary Other (the Phanariot), different, yet recognizable within the limits and with the instruments of cultural intimacy. Mavrogheni is extravagant and eccentric, yet the boyars expose the same behavior, which he had to tone down; his court dresses in Turkish vestments, yet he is a good orthodox who takes great care in providing proper religious assistance for his subjects, by setting new rules of discipline for priests and by paying incognito visits to churches. Like his subjects, who were perpetually discontent with their rulers, he vacillates between the Ottomans and the Westerners, and appears disoriented and betrayed. He thus

becomes "consubstantial" with his subjects or with his local collaborators. The semi-oral accounts on the Phanariot prince may act here as a way of delayed revenge, as we know that in 1631, the Greeks were expelled from the Romanian principalities, as they were considered the "evil Other", and Jewish traders were invited instead, mainly in the principality of Moldavia[16]. The Phanariot borrows the characteristics of the locals and becomes a part of the oral tradition, an oral tradition that will intertwine with the scientific historical discourse and in which otherness and intimacy are rather difficult to tell from one another.

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[16] This was documented and interpreted by Dan Horia Mazilu in a book on Romanian imagology, *Noi despre ceilalți*[We about the Others], Polirom, 2000.