

# The mission of the Romanian Orthodoxy during the reign of Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521)

Rev PhD Std Marian Bădulescu,<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract:

After 1453, the center of the Byzantine culture is preserved in Wallachia, where it takes place a similar phenomenon to the Western Renaissance. The Romanian Orthodoxy had in the person and in the work of the voivode Neagoe Basarab the main missionary exponent outside and inside the country. His main work, *Teachings to his son Theodosius*, follows the Byzantine tradition and it depicts the model of a prince called to incarnate the first Christian moral ideas, then the political ideal. Compared to similar works in the West, Neagoe's work is the proof that the medieval Romanian Orthodoxy has largely influenced the political thinking of the Romanian rulers in a profoundly human manner.

## Keywords:

internal mission, external mission, Byzantium, Italian Renaissance, humanism, baroque, theological culture, ancient literature, Slavonic language, diplomatic relations, state-church relationship.

The Romanians formed as a distinct people and civilization under the cultural and religious influence of Byzantium. The byzantine politics was one of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, racial tolerance under the umbrella of the Orthodox faith (an "Orthodox Commonwealth"). Following this model he managed to keep the Romanians as an oasis of Orthodox Latinity in a great glory. "Every race, which

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<sup>1</sup> Rev PhD Std Marian Bădulescu at St. „Andrei Şaguna” Orthodox Faculty of Theology from the University „Lucian Blaga” from Sibiu.

possesses its own customs and laws, it must be allowed to preserve its own characters," said Constantine the Porphyrogenetus in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>

The Orthodox Church in the two Romanian provinces manifests during the Middle Ages "as a state church, official – an inheritance from Byzantium - having an important role in the political life of the country and guiding all the cultural and social-humanitarian activity, wrote pr. Prof. Mircea Păcurariu.<sup>3</sup> After the fall of Constantinople (1453), the center of the Byzantine culture is preserved in Wallachia, where the Romanian voivodes will be the illuminated exponents of the spiritual synthesis between the East and the West. At European level, the 16<sup>th</sup> century marks the rise of the power of the national states and the diminution of the religious life, amid the abuses of the papal authority in the West. "A new nucleus is created, around which, due to the fact that Wallachia preserves a wide autonomy that allows it to have an uninterrupted state life, a *new Orthodox order* will be structured in the *South-East*. While the South-Danube world ... falls under the Turkish rule, here comes to life, on the brink of *the modern times*, a new energy that will, for hundreds of years, constitute *the moral and the material center of all Orthodoxy in the South Eastern Europe and in the Near East*," wrote Dan Zamfirescu<sup>4</sup>. The point of reference and salvation in an age marked by dramatic events was the Orthodoxy, and within it the Tradition, adapted to the historical times. "Over time, there were times when the Orthodox people were deprived of a national state, but of the Church, never," wrote Georgios Mantzaridis.<sup>5</sup>

The Romanian Orthodoxy had in the person and the work of the voivode Neagoe Basarab the main missionary exponent outside the country and inside it, with influence among the boyars. The cultural and the religious personality of the Romanian ruler is no less than of his counterparts in the West and in the Orient, proving their equal by affirming his Orthodox identity.<sup>6</sup> His main work, *Teachings to his son Theodosius*, is "one of the works that absorbs and elevates to the height

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<sup>2</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Sinteza bizantină*, BPT Collection 685, Minerva, Bucharest, 1972, p. XIX and XXI.

<sup>3</sup> Pr. prof. dr. Mircea Păcurariu, "Short History of the Romanian Orthodox Church", in the volume \*\*\*, *Orthodox Faith and Christian Life*, Paper printed with the blessing of the Bishop Dr. Antonie Plămădeală, Metropolitan of Transylvania, Sibiu, 1992, p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism in the specifics of their historical existence*, Roza Vânturilor Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992, p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> Georgios Mantzaridis, *Globalization and Universality*, Bizantina Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> Dan Horia Mazilu, "A Dracula that the Occident missed", Floarea Darurilor Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p.135-141

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of the masterpiece all the ideas, the trends and the spiritual directions of their time."<sup>7</sup>

The Slavonic church language has reached its stylistic boundaries in the Romanian cultural space through the political and the spiritual masterpiece of the ruler Neagoe Basarab. According to Prof. Dan Zamfirescu, the voivode of Wallachia imprinted to the Slavonic of the *Teachings*, "as over centuries Emil Cioran to the language of Voltaire, the vibrations, the swirls and the emotional charge of an unmistakable human nature: that defines the Romanian in the whole of humanity."<sup>8</sup>

What culture had the Wallachian voivode? The Historian P.P. Panaitescu believes that, being married to a Serbian woman, he knew Slavonic, and, as a spiritual son of the Patriarch Nifon of Constantinople, he had acquired the Greek language and culture, as well as the art of writing.<sup>9</sup> His relationship with Nifon had spiritual and political support, because, being banished from Wallachia by Radu cel Mare, the patriarch was hagiographically rehabilitated during the reign of Neagoe Basarab. The Romanian Orthodoxy pointed the historical encounter between a distinguished personality of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the brightest exponent of the medieval Romanian cultural space<sup>10</sup>. Neagoe Basarab "had all the conditions for an education more than that of a prince", wrote Dan Zamfirescu,<sup>11</sup> as the spiritual son of Patriarch Nifon, initiating in the mysteries of the Byzantine and hesychast theological culture.<sup>12</sup> However, some contemporaries

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<sup>7</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab and the Teachings to his son Theodosius. Controversial Issues*, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1973, p. 87.

<sup>8</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *The Great Book of the Romanian Identity in the Renaissance Europe and in the Universal Culture*, in *The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to His Theodosie*, Facsimile edition based on the Only Manuscript Preserved, Transcription, Translation in Romanian and Introduction by Prof. Dr. G. Mihăilă, Corresponding Member of the Romanian Academy, with a by Dan Zamfirescu, Roza Vânturilor, Bucharest, 1996, p. XVI.

<sup>9</sup> D. P. Bogdan, "Old Romanian Literature", vol. I, Tineretului Publishing House, Bucharest, 1969, p.70-71, "Nifon drew close to them, feeding himself from the handicraft of the letter, as he was writing very well and beautifully."

<sup>10</sup> Gavril Protul recorded the meeting between the two, around 1520, when, although Neagoe Basarab was sick, he met the relics of his mentor in Târgoviște; in *The Life and Liveliness of His Holiness our father Nifon, patriarch of Tarigrad, who shone in ardors and temptations in Tarigrad and in Wallachia; at Dan Horia Mazilu, The Voivode Beyond ...*, p. 558.

<sup>11</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab...*, p. 90-91 and 88.

<sup>12</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *The teachings of Neagoe Voda (Basarab) to his son Theodosius, with a preface by N. Iorga*, The Publishing House of the "Neamul Romanesc" Society, Vălenii de Munte, 1910, pp. V-VI "Neagoe, nephew of the Craiovești ... has acquired in his youth the knowledge of the Slavonic language and literature. It is believed that he stayed with the scholar

considered him more a military than a scholar. Of his complex temperament, Dan Zamfirescu states that "Neagoe had the Christian humility in prayers and the ruler's pride in action."<sup>13</sup> The appearance in history of the ruler, "exemplary in all respects", was based on the establishment of privileged relations with the Church (the voivode being "the anointing of God") and on the "perceived intrusion inside the ideological system" in order to dominate it.<sup>14</sup>

The ruler's theological culture is far from being unilateral<sup>15</sup>. From the pages of the *Teachings* a layman is heard, not a hesychast monk. The ruler proves to be an informed Christian, not a practitioner of "the prayer of the heart"<sup>16</sup>. Among the Church Fathers preferred and studied by Neagoe Basarab are: Saints John Chrysostom, Ephrem the Syrian and John Climacus. Dan Zamfirescu notes fragments of the fragmentary hesychast literature that circulated in the epoch, specifying that the author used "first-hand information, essential texts, and not a narrow specialization in the ascetic readings."<sup>17</sup>

In 1510 he patronized the printing of the Slavonic *Gospel* of the hieromonk Macarie. The Voivode traveled to Constantinople and Transylvania, having Catholic sympathies, which is why he sent a message to Pope Leon X. <sup>18</sup>Two foreigners were part of Neagoe Basarab's diplomatic apparatus. The doctor Jeronim Raguzan (Matievici) is sent to Venice to buy expensive things, the appreciation of which he enjoyed at the doge materializing in the awarding of a noble title (March 1518). The other messenger, Antonie Policalas, is mentioned in the papal papers.<sup>19</sup> Granting the "diploma of Aurata Knight" confirms the friendly

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monks of Bistrita ... more secure from the investigation and persecution of the enemies. ... So Neagoe came to know all the Scriptures, some of its Interpretations, some religious compilations, and a chronograph, which included the history of the pagan and Christian mankind ...and of the history of the Romanians, of the Byzantines, and of the Slav countries; it may even have found in his readings a treaty of tactics ...".

<sup>13</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab* ..., p. 93.

<sup>14</sup> Dan Horia Mazilu, *The Voivode beyond the throne room. Scenes from his private life*, Polirom, 2003, p. 523

<sup>15</sup> Antonie Plămădeală, "Theological Content of the *Teaching of Neagoe Basarab*", *ST XXI* (1969), no. 3-4, p. 245-262.

<sup>16</sup> Idem, *Teachers of Romanian consciousness and sensibility*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1981, 40, note 96.

<sup>17</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab* ..., p. 102-103.

<sup>18</sup> P.P. Panaitescu, "*The Authenticity of Neagoe Basarab's Teachings*" in *Convorbiri literare* 77 (1944), p. 733-739.

<sup>19</sup> Virgil Cădea, "The First Document of the Medieval Romanian Diplomatic Experience: *The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab*", in vol. Virgil Cădea, Dinu C. Giurescu, Mircea Malița (coord.), *Pages from the Past of the Romanian Diplomacy*, Bucharest, 1966, p. 106.

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diplomatic relations between the Republic of Venice and Wallachia. In 1502, the Doge of Venice awarded the same title to Stefan cel Mare's ambassador. Neagoe Basarab's messenger conveys the adherence of the voivode of Wallachia to the new crusade planned by Pope Leon X, and a year later (1519), the Pope replies that the "Christian League" will not make peace with the Turks without the participation of the Princes of Wallachia.<sup>20</sup> The preserved epistolary documents have a reflexive role in addition to their informative value, as they help contemporary readers to overcome the historical medieval prejudices about the Romanians "inferiority" in European political and ecclesiastical history. On the contrary, they present the major, material and spiritual contribution to the defense and the progress of the European Christianity.

From his book, *Teachings to his son Theodosius*, the sympathy for the Roman Catholic Church emerges, a thesis formulated on the basis of the deduction that from the text "does not emerge... the smallest wave of confessional polemic. On the contrary, in the *Epistle to his mother's bones* we encounter a fervent cult of the Virgin, accustomed at his court, and even a surprising Franciscan influence: the cult of the wounds of Jesus. Târgoviște, the capital of Wallachia, sheltered in Neagoe's time even a *monastery of the Franciscans*."<sup>21</sup> Neagoe calls for the opinion of a dogmatic authority, of the Greek cleric Manuil of Corinth, to clarify the differences between the Orthodox and the Catholics, "when he was preparing to propose to Pope Leo X the unification of the churches."<sup>22</sup> In 1519, the Wallachian voivode called upon Pope Leon X to count him and his son Theodosius, "through a perpetual alliance" with the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>23</sup>

A famous Western contemporary of Neagoe Basarab was the Florence's secretary, Nicolo Machiavelli, the author of the political manual *Il principe*. The strength, the value and timeliness of Neagoe's book is revealed when we compare it with similar works, representative in the human history. Even if it deals with the same subject of the *Teachings*, the differences between the two are fundamental. The historian, I. Sandu, notes that Machiavelli's model is Caesar Borgia, an unscrupulous character, acting with cold blood to achieve his goals, using abject means: lies, poison, cunning, and dagger. The moral ideal of the prince of Renaissance is the autonomous man, free in thought and action. Neagoe Basarab follows the Byzantine tradition and portrays the model of a prince called

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<sup>20</sup> B.P. Hașdeu, *The historical Archive of Romania*, vol. II, nr.16, p. 69.

<sup>21</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab...*, p. 92.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 229. The pope's answer to the union proposal of the churches published in \*\*\*,*Hurmuzaki Codice* XI,3, doc. 224, p. 308.

<sup>23</sup> Alexandru Piru, *History of the Romanian Literature from Origins to 1830*, The Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1977, p. 34-35.

to incarnate the first Christian moral ideas, that labors and trusts his subjects and who self-perfects as a man and artist. The relations between the ruler and his subjects frame within the open limits of the allegory of the gardener (the ruler) and the "garden" (boyars and servants), a mirror reproduction of the evangelical parables about "Christ the Grapes Wine" and "the branches".<sup>24</sup>

The Church of the Arges Monastery and the *Teachings* make Neagoe "the greatest artist and writer who has ever sat on the throne of Wallachia"<sup>25</sup>. What distinguishes them is the "two diametrically opposed conceptions: ... the Byzantine conception, which sees the ideal in the incarnation of the Christian virtues and the conception of Renaissance presenting a new model of ruler, the man of Renaissance who unleashes the moral obligations giving free rein to his domination impulses". There are also common elements of the two authors, exponents of the East and the West, which are especially of form. "What draws Neagoe ... close to Machiavelli ... is precisely the presumption that there is a science of handling the political realities and the human soul, a technique of ruling the others ... The care for attitude, for every gesture and word, for each act, self-supervision, the art of uncovering the others (if necessary, even giving them to drink), directing their own prestige, keeping their own thoughts secret and guessing the others," wrote Ion D. Sandu.<sup>26</sup>

Another Italian author contemporary with the voivode from Wallachia was Giovanni Pontano. His work, *De Principe*, was published in editio princeps in 1490, and then knowing numerous reprints<sup>27</sup>. The similarities and the differences follow the same medieval humanist patterns (interest in classical culture, the encyclopedism, the syncretism of the historical sources, moral interest for political, pedagogical and religious issues), reflecting the "common model of

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<sup>24</sup> Ion Pop, *Analytic Dictionary of the Romanian Literary Works*, vol. I, Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj, 2007, p. 460-461.

<sup>25</sup> Ion D. Sandu, *Neagoe Basarab defender and supporter of Orthodoxy*, Sibiu, 1938, p.23.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 143 and Edgar Papu, "The teachings of Neagoe Basarab in the context of Renaissance", in *Luceafărul* no. 4, 1971.

<sup>27</sup> Giovanni Pontano, *De principe*, a cura de G.M. Capelli, Editrice Salerno, Roma, 2003. Also to see the study of Nicolae Luca, „Virtu cardinali nel Gli insegnamenti di Neagoe Bassarab per suo figlio Teodosie e nel De principe di Giovanni Pontano” în vol. \*\*\*, *La cultura romena tra l’Occidente e l’Oriente: gli umanesimi greco-bizantino, latino e slavo*, Università „Al. I. Cuza”, Iași, 2004, p. 77-86 and the critics of Dan ZAMFIRESCU, *Contributions to the history of the old Romanian Literature*, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981 Adolf Armbruster, *The Romanity of the Romanians*, The Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, Dr. Antonie Plămădeală, *Teacher of consciousness and sensibility*, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., Bucharest, 1981.

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education of a Renaissance prince"<sup>28</sup>. His mission calls for the possession of secular and religious virtues, of several languages of European culture and circulation, the integration into the spirit of time, but the ultimate virtue remains the love for God, which is the source of humaneness.

In 1516, Erasmus in Rotterdam printed the paper *Institutio Principis Christiani*, in which "the evangelism" offered arguments for a Christian society and government. But the West ignored this part of Europe, in which a post-Byzantine Orthodox genius, knower of the Slavonic as a language of culture, "leaned in a more similar mood over the historical books of the Bible, from where he drew for his son the teachings of ruling the state and the people, and the foundations of a doctrine of absolute monarchy, through which he proves to be a true precursor of Bossuet in the *Politique tirée de l'Écriture Sainte*."<sup>29</sup> Neagoe's work is the proof that the medieval Romanian Orthodoxy greatly influenced the political thinking of the Romanian rulers<sup>30</sup>, in an organic and profound human manner, superior to the influence of religion on the political thinking in the West.

The historian Edgar Papu identifies in the *Teachings* the "secret man" of the Baroque, who, constrained by the historical conditions to "a minus of essence," will compensate "by a maximum of appearance".<sup>31</sup> The glory of weapons will be replaced during Neagoe Basarab in Wallachia and during the reign of Petru Rares (1527-1538; 1541-1546), in Moldavia, with great church buildings, adorned with splendid mural paintings and a courtyard literature meant to mitigate and to mask the atrocities committed by the Ottoman imperial power. The "Romanian Baroque" was a similar and parallel trend to the Renaissance and to the European Baroque, which places Neagoe Basarab in the environment of Machiavelli and Erasmus, but distinguishes him from them by "the intensity of its Christian vibration, of a true crowned hesychast", by his profound humaneness. "Humaneness (to be a good man, *Menschheit*, *humanité*) is a condition contrary to Machiavelli's definition, which justified non-humaneness as a political principle, but also to the Russian-Oriental mentality (Tsar Ivan the Terrible will prove it a few decades later, and Stalin will resurrect it in the twentieth century), by which

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<sup>28</sup> Dan Horia Mazilu, *Romanian literature in the epoch of Renaissance*, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1984, p. 131.

<sup>29</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *The Great Book of the Romanian Identity in the Renaissance Europe and in the Universal Culture*, in *The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to His Theodosie*, Facsimile edition based on the Only Manuscript Preserved, Transcription, Translation in Romanian and Introduction by Prof. Dr. G. Mihăilă, Corresponding Member of the Romanian Academy, with a by Dan Zamfirescu, Roza Vânturilor, Bucharest, 1996, p. IX-X.

<sup>30</sup> Emanoil Bucuta, "A Voivode philosopher in Transilvania", 1943, p. 387.

<sup>31</sup> Edgar Papu, *Baroque as a type of existence*, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1977 and Edgar Papu, *About styles*, Eminescu Publishing House, Bucharest, 1986.

the subjects were terrorized in the name of a Christian-Orthodox God. The Romanian Orthodoxy manifested itself in a balanced and human way in the extremist history (Western and Eastern) of the Middle Ages, keeping the spirit of the Byzantine spiritual tradition.

In the *Teachings* there are presented the main lines of divine monarchy, with obligations to God and to the people. The fundamental moral ideas are *justice* and *humaneness*. For a book accused of preaching the flea from the world, the intrusion of Christian ideas into the political thinking makes it appear in the light of a practical handbook of the art of reigning. "The ruler does not have to treat his subjects as a herd of cattle, where he can come in with the sword. He is due, on the contrary, to help the weak, with a great praise of mercy, "biblically and patristically documented"<sup>32</sup>(Homily to Psalm VIII, Saint John Chrysostom). The Orthodoxy brings to the art of governance the principles of mercy, humaneness and Providence, in a parallel relationship (man-society, interiority-exteriority, generosity-harshness, etc.), whose visible fruits have spiritual roots in the heart of man. A capable leader is firstly a man of prayer, then a man of action, honored by God to be a prince, as long as he allows God in his life. "As in this life came many rulers and they were anointed of God, but those who glorified God were glorified by the Lord God, both here and in the kingdom of heaven," Neagoe taught his son Theodosius<sup>33</sup>.

"In any parenetic writing of the Orthodox Byzantium we encounter such a living, personal, direct relationship between the divinity and the crowned man. No Byzantine emperor appears to us, as an author capable of creating so many prayers,"<sup>34</sup> or so preoccupied with what is happening in the soul of man, wrote Dan Zamfirescu. Writing belongs to the parenetic genre, but the organization of the material forms an unique structure among similar works of the universal literature. Unlike the Byzantine writings, more evolved political and religious ideas appear in the *Teachings*: the ruler is not the subject of the uncontested absolute monarchy, but he is chosen among the boyars as *primus inter pares*; people are equal before the law; diplomacy is the first solution to solve the conflicts, then the armed struggle.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab ...*, p. 291.

<sup>33</sup> Neagoe Basarab, *The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosius*, Chapter VIII "To messages and wars", p. 301.

<sup>34</sup> Prof. Dr. Dan Zamfirescu, "The great book of the Romanian Identity ...", p. XII-XIII and XV.

<sup>35</sup> George Ivaşcu, *The History of the Romanian Literature*, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1969, p. 79-81.



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A tremendous example of the political discernment, framed in a liturgical creation, is the prayer for the raising of weapons for the defense of the ancestral land: "If you see some of the stronger nations pointing their armies against you, do not stand against them ... but go and give them out of your claws from hunting, that is, from your wealth ... And if you see that he does not want to return, do not fear him or his many armies but take God in your hearts and pray, saying, *Lord of all, creator and good God, we are your servants ... And we, Lord, according to Your command, we are not glad of this war, nor to pour out blood ... And we showed our humbleness to them, but they did not want to receive our humbleness, but they resisted, believing themselves stronger than You ... Here our enemy came against us, and we are with nothing to be blamed, but how many sweet words there were, and we sweetened them with these words, and if it was wealth, we gave them, and if it was humbleness, we humbled ourselves. But they did not want to receive neither our sweet words, nor wealth, nor humbleness, but now they came to take my head ... and your heads. That is why I will not leave, but I will lay my head for you, as I have mercy for you ... Let us call on God to our help and with God's help we go against them. For if there were many, God multiplied them, and for their unhumbleness God will humble them and He will give our enemies under our feet.*"<sup>36</sup>

The relationships with the Muslim religion are subordinated to the medieval aggressive conception, in which the political and the military arguments dictate the religious arguments. In the *Teachings*, Neagoe Basarab recommends that Theodosius should have no relationship with the pagans, "at least if he were your brother, if you had been born by the same mother." The advice may be a masked reference to a relative of the Craiovești, converted to Mahammedanism with the name Mehmed Beg.<sup>37</sup> The beginning of the first part of the *Teachings* is a "theology for the use of the heads of the state"<sup>38</sup>, an example of the success of the mission of the Romanian Orthodoxy among the ruling Romanian nobility. In the second chapter entitled "*About the Fear and the Love of God*", we find excellently formulated the hesychast ideas of Saint Simeon the New Theologian. "One of the original and the defining elements of the cultural current reflected in the writings of the present era, is the synthesis between the religion intensified by the hesychasm and the struggle for the *cross*, that is, for the defense of the country by the assaults of the Sublime Porte," wrote Dan Zamfirescu.<sup>39</sup> The compatibility between the voivodal duties and the religious thought (including the practice of

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<sup>36</sup> Neagoe Basarab, cited works, p. 311-313.

<sup>37</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab ...*, p. 108.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Angel, "Collage and Originality at Neagoe Basarab", in Arges, 1971, no. 11.

<sup>39</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab ...*, p. 86.

hesychasm) it was a common feature in the Christian East, inherited from the Byzantine emperors, for whom the knowledge of the theology was part of the ideology of the state. Such works of the parenetic genre are found at the Russian Tsars Ivan the Terrible and Vladimir Monomakh,, Tsar Simeon of Bulgaria and others, as "Mirrors of Princes" (*Fürstenspiegel, Mirror of Princes*)<sup>40</sup>, but the work of the Romanian voivode proves an amazing originality.

Neagoe Basarab dedicates a generous space to the "systematic transmission of the dominant medieval ideology ". The Romanian society in the three separate political provinces was united by the struggle against the Turkish domination. Thus, Neagoe "was pursuing ... the keeping and the education of the society in the coordinates of the inherited ideology, face to face with another society – of the Islamic feudalism - that wanted to abolish it."<sup>41</sup> The struggle with the ideas was just a secondary plan of the armed struggle. The two extremes between within which the entire life of the medieval world developed, are "the hieratism and the dynamism", that is, between the ascetic ideal and the chivalric ideal.<sup>42</sup> Dan Horia Mazilu recorded the frequency of entrances to monasticism among the boyars and the rulers in the 15th and 16th centuries, a sign that the "monastic ideal" of "hesychast descendance" dominates both the secular and the profane thinking, due to common ascetic and mystical ideals.<sup>43</sup> The historian Dan Zamfirescu, writing about the balanced realism of the Romanian Orthodoxy, believed that *Neagoe Voda Basarab's teachings to his Theodosius* is a work in which the realism and the moral-ascetic idealism are naturally combined into a "humanism about which Neagoe Basarab's work tells us something half a millennium ago", a delayed Eastern humanism, "which has become proverbial and explains in large part the content of the famous *political instinct* that is at the origin of the Romanian *historical miracle*."<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusions

The appearance of the ruler in the history was based on the establishment of privileged relations with the Church, the voivode being "the God's anointed", and on the perceived penetration inside the ideological system of theological origin in order to dominate it. From *The teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son*

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<sup>40</sup>G. Mihăilă, "The Original of *Teachings of Neagoe Basarab. Answer to a hypothesis*" in *Magazin istoric* 10 (67) (1972), october, p. 62-65.

<sup>41</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab...*, p. 289.

<sup>42</sup> I. D. Lăudat, *The History of the Old Romanian Literature*, Part I, Bucharest, 1962, p. 40-50.

<sup>43</sup> Dan Horia Mazilu, cited works, p. 523.

<sup>44</sup> Dan Zamfirescu, *Romania – land of civilization and synthesis...*, p. 131-132.

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*Theodosius* it is heard an informed Christian, a practitioner politician of "the heart prayer." From here, it also emerges the Prince's sympathy for the Roman Catholic Church is, but without any confessional polemics.

Comparing the literary masterpiece of Neagoe Basarab with similar works in the West, there can be seen similarities regarding the shape. The "Romanian Baroque" was a similar and parallel trend to the Renaissance and to the European Baroque, which places Neagoe Basarab in the environment of Machiavelli and Erasmus, but distinguishes him from them through the intensity of its Christian, hesychast vibration and the sense of humaneness.