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**ECONOMIC STATUS OF MOLDAVIAN MONASTERIES
IN THE 18th CENTURY.
NOTES ON INCOME AND EXPENSE LISTS****

In this paper, I will not insist on the importance of income and expense lists for studying the economic structure of orthodox monasteries. I will only state that for the period before the nineteenth century, such documents are scarce. The small number of income and expense lists within archives is a consequence of the character of this type of documents. Indeed, they had limited utility: they were used for keeping record of the incomes and expenses within a short period, usually a year. Therefore, compared to ownership documents, inventories and income and expense lists – which were, I may say, accounting documents – were no longer considered useful, not long after they were drafted up; hence, they could be removed from the archives. However, their destruction is not the only reason for the small number of income and expense lists preserved in the archives. Another one would be that, as long as there was no obligation to elaborate income and expense reports periodically, they were drafted up only sporadically, in exceptional cases¹.

In the Romanian archives, I have identified numerous inventories of movable and immovable property, belonging to monasteries in the eighteenth century. Their contents provide indications on the income sources of ecclesiastical foundations, such as estates, fields cultivated with vines and orchards, apiaries, forests, animals, urban lands, rented for the construction of shops and workshops, as well as buildings rented in commercial areas². Along with inventories, archives also kept solemn documents through which

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** Research within the project entitled: *Documente și manuscrise românești din arhivele de la Muntele Athos: mănăstirile Zograf și Dohiar (Romaniathos)*, funded by UEFISCDI, PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0557, no. 133/12.07.2017.

¹ Dan Dumitru Iacob, *Importanța inventarelor de avere pentru istoria vieții cotidiene din epoca modernă* [The Importance of Probate Inventories for the History of Everyday Life in the Modern Age], in vol. *Avere, prestigiu și cultură materială în surse patrimoniale. Inventare de averi din secolele XVI-XIX* [Property, Prestige and Material Culture in Patrimonial Sources. Probate Inventories from the 16th-19th Centuries], edited by Dan Dumitru Iacob, Iași, Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2015, p. 19-36.

² ANI, Documente, 371/7-8, 12; *ibidem*, 390/20, 27, 29, 30; *ibidem*, 391/26; Marius Chelcu, *Mănăstirile Precista din Roman și Prorocul Samoïl din Focșani și un catastif de avere din anul 1830* [The Monasteries Immaculate Mother of God in Roman and Samoïl Prophet in Focșani and an Inventory of Assets from 1830], in vol. *Avere, prestigiu și cultură materială*, p. 635-668.

voivodes granted to ecclesiastical establishments the right to collect certain fees, such as customs fees, fees for crossing rivers or for the permanent and temporary functioning of fairs on the lands administered by the Church³.

The document I am about to present is neither an inventory nor a privilege, but an income and expense list, which represents, as I say, a quite rare document for the eighteenth century. The document was drafted up in the month of June 1785; it's preserved in The National Archives of Iași⁴. The context of writing this document is rather interesting and I will briefly present the situation that entailed the elaboration of them.

In the 1756, after a collaboration between the bishop of Roman Ioanichie and the Moldavian voivode Constantin Racoviță led to the full endowment of the *Immaculate Mother of God* monastery in the city of Roman. The buildings were constructed mostly with contributions of the bishop, but the material resources necessary for the functioning of the foundation were ensured mostly by the prince, both from public funds and from his personal wealth. The prince's participation in the foundation of this monastery led to an increase in the incomes received by the foundation, but it also generated concerns regarding the future of the foundation. One of these concerns regarded the possibility of a subsequent contestation of the donations made to the monastery from the wealth of the Racoviță's family. Constantin Racoviță had no children, but his brothers and his nephews could contest his pious acts for the Roman-based monastery. Moreover, during the same period of collaboration between the bishop Ioanichie and the Moldavian voivode Constantin Racoviță, due to the increased influence of Greek clergy in Moldavia, there was a possibility of transforming the monastery of Roman into an *metochion*-annex of another monastery, in Moldavia or abroad⁵.

In order to prevent unwanted situations, the text of founding documents included certain restrictive observations. In order to discourage certain members of the prince's family from contesting the donations made by him to the monastery of Roman, in the founding act an explicit mention was introduced, namely the contribution of each of the two founders – the bishop and the voivode – to the edification of the foundation. Thus, the monastery could not be considered just a princely foundation. In order to avoid the second reason for concern – namely the transformation into an annex –, an imperative provision was added, stating that the monastery of Roman may never be submitted to another monastery⁶.

Despite the safety measures expressed in the text of the founding acts, both fears became reality after the death of Prince Constantin Racoviță.

First of all, in 1764, a few months after the death of Prince Constantin Racoviță, his brother Ștefan Racoviță ignored the founder capacity of bishop Ioanichie and he declared himself unique successor of the founder. From this position, Ștefan Racoviță,

³ For example, exemption documents for all the monasteries dedicated to the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem; ANI, Documente, 49/1-3.

⁴ ANI, Documente, 390/25.

⁵ Mihai Mârza, *Încălțări ale dreptului de ctitorie: procesele dezînchinării mănăstirii Precista Mare din Roman (secolele XVIII-XIX)* [Violations of the Foundational Right: the Trials of Un-dedicating of the Monastery of Immaculate Mother of God in Roman], LII, 2015, p. 105-107.

⁶ Epifanie Căzărescu, *Istoricul bisericii Precista Mare din orașul Roman* [History of the Immaculate Mother of God Church in Roman], II, in *MMS*, XLI, no. 11-12, 1965, p. 636; Mihai Mârza, *O ctitorie și doi ctitori din secolul XVIII. Dosarul zidirii, înființării și înzestrării mănăstirii Precista Mare din Roman* [An Eighteenth Century Foundation and two Founders. The File of the Construction, Creation an Endowment of the Monastery of Immaculate Mother of God in Roman], in *AIIX*, LI, 2014, p. 93-109.

despite the interdiction stated in the founding document, submitted the monastery of Roman to the monastery of St Spiridon from Iași⁷. The purpose of such submission was for the incomes generated by the monastery in Roman to support the maintenance and functioning of the hospital founded in the yard of the Iași-based monastery. Moreover, I mention at this point that the St Spiridon monastery in Iași was directly subordinated to the Constantinople, thus under the supervision of the Greek clergy⁸.

The situation was met right away with opposition from the other founder, who was still alive, namely bishop Ioanichie of Roman. The bishop saw how, while he was still living, his grimmest views regarding the status of his foundation – which he helped construct along with the late prince Constantin Racoviță – came true. His greatest discontentment was the transformation of the Roman monastery into an annex of another monastery, mostly because the latter was under the control of the Greek clergymen in Constantinople.

Bishop Ioanichie tried to oppose some powerful rivals, among whom the princes of Moldavia and Walachia, as well as the Greeks, boyars and clergymen who backed the interests of the Patriarchate in Constantinople. They all allied in order to turn the monastery of Roman into an annex of the monastery in Iași, which was in its turn, as mentioned above, submitted to the Patriarchate. The stake was high: the substantial wealth of the Roman monastery (mostly after endowment from public funds and estates by Prince Constantin Racoviță) would support the functioning of St Spiridon Hospital in Iași, where the new Moldavian prince Grigore Ghica had become invested⁹.

After facing numerous cavils and pressures, the bishop eventually realized that he had nothing to gain by opposing. Thus, he was glad to merely obtain a special status for the monastery of Roman. This special status allowed the monastery to preserve a certain degree of autonomy from the monastery in Iași. Bishop Ioanichie was granted the right of appointing the abbots of the monastery in Roman, and of limiting the financial contribution of his foundation for the hospital of Iași to a fixed annual amount¹⁰. The special autonomous status of the monastery in Roman was preserved until the dissolution of the Epitropy of St Spiridon Hospitals in Iași, in the year 1948.

However, the founders' concern of turning the monastery into an annex was not the only one that became reality; another one also came true, namely contesting the new status by the family members of the late prince Constantin Racoviță. The most significant such action took place in 1784, when Ioniță Racoviță, another brother of voivode Constantin Racoviță, claimed the position of unique founder successor of the monastery in Roman. Ioniță Racoviță, benefitting from the support of the then Moldavian prince, received the right to manage the wealth of the Roman foundation himself. Consequently, Ioniță Racoviță administered the foundation of Roman for approximately one year¹¹.

The temporary administration by Ioniță Racoviță of the wealth belonging to the monastery in Roman represents the period and the context of the document which contents

⁷ Mihai Mârza, *O ctitorie și doi ctitori din secolul XVIII*, p. 112-116, no. 2-3; idem, *Încălcări ale dreptului de ctitorie*, p. 115-118.

⁸ Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* [Documents Relating to the History of the Romanians], XIV, II, *Documente grecești* [Greek Documents], edited by N. Iorga, București, 1917, p. 1154-1159, no. MCXLV; Mihai Mârza, *Încălcări ale dreptului de ctitorie*, p. 114-116.

⁹ Mihai Mârza, *Încălcări ale dreptului de ctitorie*, p. 105-108.

¹⁰ Idem, *O ctitorie și doi ctitori din secolul XVIII*, p. 104-109.

¹¹ Idem, *Încălcări ale dreptului de ctitorie*, p. 118-125.

I will present in the following lines. At the end of the year when Ștefan Racoviță was administrator of the foundation constituted by his brother, he had to submit a detailed report of the incomes obtained and the expenses incurred.

The document was elaborated in the month of June 1785¹². It have two sections covering four pages. In the first and shorter section, incomes were written down, while the second one (more complicated) contained the expenditures. The content of the list is impressive mostly in terms of the accuracy of expenses written down to the least significant ones. I do suspect, however, that incomes were not noted in as many details as the expenses.

Nonetheless, despite the aforementioned suspicion, I believe that this list is useful because it provides an image of the economic structure of the monastery Immaculate Mother of God from Roman in late eighteenth century. I state that in the list of both incomes and expenses, the sources of incomes and the destination of expenses were not grouped, because both incomes and expenses were registered as they were received or, respectively, as they were made.

Thus, my observations concerning this list were elaborated after I made an effort of ordering the sources of incomes and the destination of expenses on several main chapters.

I present as follows several details concerning the incomes that – in the period when the list was elaborated – made up the total amount of 3,734 lei. As I previously stated, I tried to group the sources of income noted in the list, which led to the pie chart featured below (chart 1):

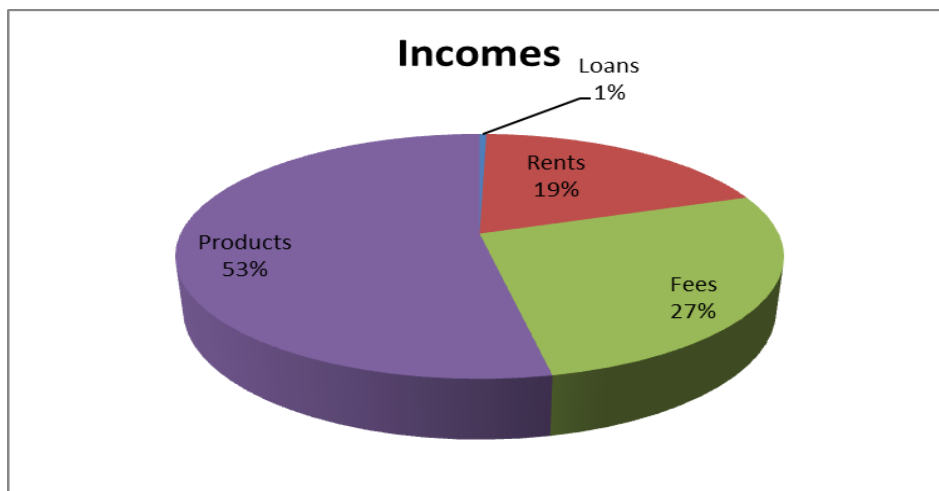


Chart 1.

The smallest percentage, accounting for less than 1% of the total amount of incomes obtained, is a sum of money retrieved by a merchant. However, I don't know whether the amount represented a credit, a rent or a service that the merchant failed to render.

¹² ANI, Documente, 390/25.

The following source of income for the monastery of Roman was represented by cashing in the rents. The list indicates that incomes were obtained by merchants who rented out small shops situated in commercial areas of the cities of Roman and Focșani and a store situated in Roman, in the yard of the monastery. Rents were also cashed in from places where buildings, houses and small shops or workshops were constructed, in the commercial area of cities.

The following chapter of incomes – as indicated by the groups above – is represented by various fees paid to the monastery. This category includes the payment in cash of the “tenth” tax for the agricultural cultures on the estates of the monastery, then fees paid by the servant Gypsies of the monastery and fees requested from the merchants who sold their merchandise in fairs organized on the estates of the monastery. Out of the total values of revenues, those obtained from taxes and fees account for 27%.

However, the highest weighting in the structure of the incomes belonging to the monastery of Roman was represented by the sale of products obtained on the estates, namely animals (horses, oxen and sheep), sheep wool, honey, wine and grains (chart 2).

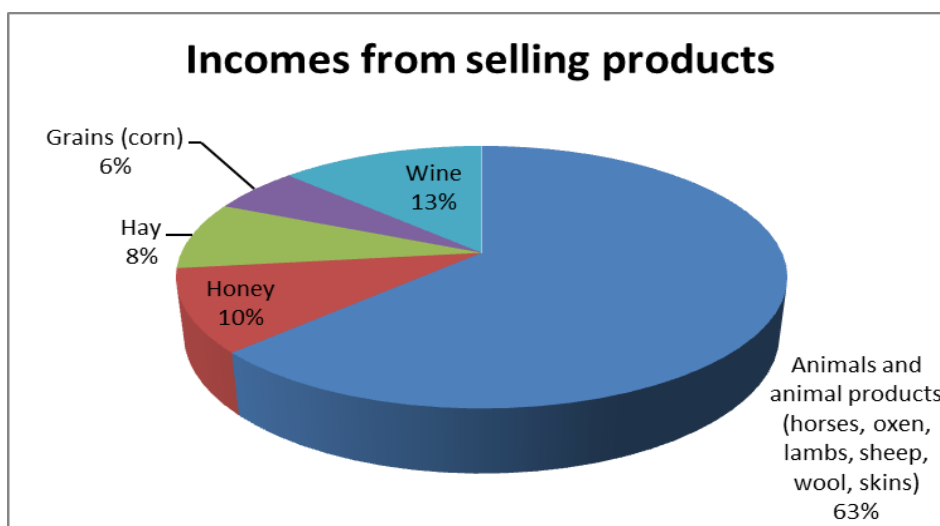


Chart 2.

Upon analyzing this subcategory of revenues obtained from selling the products on monastery estates, I realized that the highest value pertained to selling animals and animal products (horses, oxen, sheep and lambs, wool and skins). Moreover, 10% of the income obtained by selling products was represented honey sales. Selling grains (millet and corn) led to 6% of the revenues. Then, the selling of haystack accounted for 8% of the sum, while the wine produced in the vineyards of the monastery represented 13% of the total amount.

Hence, grains account for a rather low percentage in the income obtained by selling their own products; the most significant income was brought by selling animals and animal products, wool and skins. Therefore, production for the market focused on animal breeding, honey and vine, and less on cultivating grains.

Let us pass to the second section of the document, namely the list of expenses; in this case, too, I tried to sort things and to group expenses on several chapters, which led to the pie chart illustrated below (chart 3).

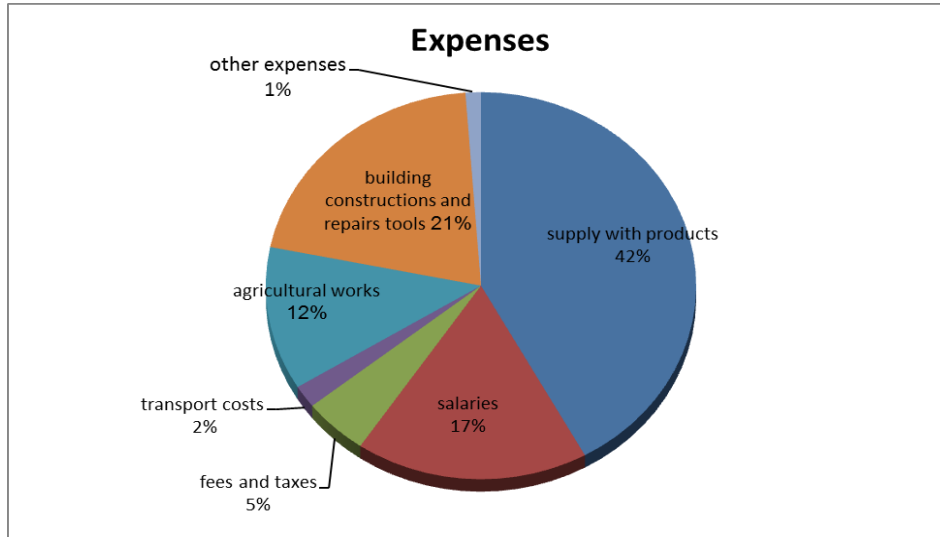


Chart 3.

Out of the entire amount spent, namely 3,827, the highest weighting of 42% was represented by produce supplies for the church, the household and the estates. Compared to the incomes chapter, where we saw that the monastery sold products such as animals, honey or grains, produce expenses do not comprise many raw materials, but mostly processed items. The most numerous items are clothing and footwear items purchased by the monastery for the priests and for the people working for the monastery. Workers means both Gypsy servants and persons working based on an employment agreement. Besides clothes, they also purchased household items, such as clay and wood vessels necessary for preparing and storing food, as well as knives, rope and crude oil. Furthermore, for masses they bought ecclesiastical books, candles, oil, frankincense and myrrh.

By my classification method, salaries represent another chapter of the expenses. The expense list contain sums paid by contract to certain administrators of monastery estates or to specialized workers, such as herders, cattlemen, shepherds, apiarists, coachmen, as well as sums for people working in the monastery household, such as cooks, cellar men and coopers. I included in the salary category the payments for the mass officiated by priests all year long.

For the clergy and for some of the workers, the monastery paid taxes to the State accounting for 5% of the total expenses. Some people within the monastery were reimbursed for their travel expenses when they had to leave for solving certain matters; such expenses account for 2%.

By cumulating the supply costs, salaries, taxes and travel costs, it becomes obvious that, out of the total monastery expenses, the highest weighting belongs to personnel costs.

Another chapter of the expenses that I managed to identify was the one for agricultural works, namely for seeding, harvesting and winter stay for animals, which accounts for 12% of the total expenses.

The last important chapter of the expenses incurred by the monastery in Roman throughout a year is represented by costs for constructing and repairing buildings and for tools, more specifically 21% of the total expenses. Within this chapter, the most significant amount was allocated for renovating the houses situated in the yard of the monastery. I must mention at this point that all buildings located on the monastery, the church included, had been damaged by an earthquake of 1781. For the rest, smaller amounts of money were allocated for repairing certain buildings situated in the city or on the estates of the monastery; I also included here the restoration of ecclesiastical books and the reconditioning of footwear items.

Finally, by calculating the incomes and expenses and budget, it was concluded that incomes exceeded expenses by 93 lei.

Consequently, it may be stated that despite certain doubts concerning the exhaustive character of incomes obtained by the monastery from mid-1784 to the summer of 1785, the contents of this list provides us with an image of the economic structure for one of the richest monasteries from Moldavia. An extended analysis possible by comparing similar documents, insofar as they are discovered in archives, would provide a better insight into both the structure of monastic economy towards the end of the eighteenth century and the place it occupied in the economy in general.

ECONOMIC STATUS OF MOLDAVIAN MONASTERIES
IN THE 18th CENTURY.
NOTES ON INCOME AND EXPENSE LISTS
(Summary)

Keywords: monastic economy, income and expense lists, taxes, fees, revenues.

The church's right to property is founded on the Holy Scriptures, and particularly on one of Christ's injunctions "to share everything with one's neighbour." It is stated that without material resources, the church could not offer comfort to "the weary and the thirsty" and could not practice the virtue of Christian mercy. Therefore, the Church, regarded as a social organism and in order to meet the needs of the Christian divine service, has always been in need of earthly property for the support of its servants and to help those who needed its protection. "Support of the needy" has actually been the strongest justification for the acquisition of properties, as the protection of the poor, of the sick, of widows and of orphans has led the church towards the accomplishment of one of its primary goals.

The Monastery Immaculate Mother of God in Roman is a religious foundation created in the mid-eighteenth century, during the rule of Prince Constantin Racoviță. Our research starts from the contents of an income and expense lists, a document was elaborated in the month of June 1785. It had two sections covering four pages. In the first and shorter section, incomes were written down, while the second one (more complicated) contained the expenditures.