

**DIMITRIE CANTEMIR „KING AMONG PHILOSOPHERS  
AND PHILOSOPHER AMONG KINGS”<sup>1</sup> -  
AN OUTSTANDING PERSONALITY  
OF THE EUROPEAN CULTURE**

**Prof. PhD. Ion IONESCU**  
**Lecturer PhD. Mihaela MOCANU**  
Universitatea Creștină “Dimitrie Cantemir”  
București, România  
[cercetare@ucdc.ro](mailto:cercetare@ucdc.ro)

**Abstract:** *On the occasion of the anniversary of 300 years since Dimitrie Cantemir acceded to the throne of Moldavia, the paper presents briefly the ruler’s place – a scholar in the European culture, an appreciation he gained among the erudites of his time, and his main contributions in this respect. **Dicționar - Afişați dicționarul detaliat***

*Here follows a presentation of his main works in the following fields: geography, philosophy, literature, history, encyclopedic activities, folklore and traditions, etc. The reputation of the erudite ruler is acknowledged by the contemporaries, and the previous analyses reveal its first place within the “Romanian novel”, his historical and philosophical conceptions in the analysis of the “growth and decay of the Ottoman Empire”, his contribution to make Moldavia and its values known across Europe, etc.*

**Key words:** *Moldavia, ruler, the Sublime Porte, capuchehaie, entronemet, autotitarian rule, a*

*member of the Berlin Academy, serfs, socio-historical development, allegory, chroniclers, chronicle, political organization, monarchs, radical reforms, historical work, philosophical work, literary work, economic transformations, encyclopedic education, unicorn, raven, humanistic style, Baroque style, tragic, etc.*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION: Z19**

Dimitrie Cantemir, Prince of Moldavia (March – April 1673 and 1710-1711) author, scholar, encyclopedist, ethnographer, geographer, philosopher, historian, linguist, musicologist, composer, politician and Romanian writer, is one of the most prominent representatives of the Romanian history and culture, with a particularly complex activity concerning the entire field of cultural and spiritual values, due to its role as a constant and ardent

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<sup>1</sup> Mention of the Berlin Academy on the DIPLOMA OF HONOUR awarded to Dimitrie Cantemir

ambassador of Romanian culture and values. An encyclopedic scholar, Dimitrie Cantemir is the most important promoter of the Romanian humanism and pre-enlightenment during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Dimitrie Cantemir was born on the 26th of October 1673, in **Silișteni - Fălciu**, which today is called **Cantemir village** of Vaslui district, situated in the south of the town of Husi. He was the son of Constantin and Ana. At the age of 15 he was forced to go to Constantinople (1688-1690), where he spent 17 years as his father's pledge at the Sublime Porte, replacing Antiochus, who was later Prince of Moldavia.

Between March and April 1693, after his father's death, he became Prince of Moldavia but, not being confirmed by the Sublime Porte, he returned to Constantinople to continue with his studies. On the occasion of a Turkish-Austrian war, he made a trip to Central Europe, arriving in the Banat region in Timisoara. He had the opportunity to become aware of the linguistic unity of the Romanian people. Antiochus, the elder brother, got hold of the entire inheritance, leaving him in a precarious financial situation. Starting with 1695 he was "capuchehaie"<sup>2</sup> in Constantinople for his brother Antiochus, who had become the ruler of Moldavia.

He married the daughter of Serban Cantacuzino, Casandra, who gave him two children Maria and Antioh (the future poet, writer and Russian diplomat Antioh Dimitrievici Cantemir (1709 - 1744).

The Turks enthroned Dimitrie Cantemir in Iași in 1710, trusting him, but the new Prince-scholar concluded at *Luțk* in Russia, between 2-13 April 1711, a secret treaty of alliance with Peter the Great in the hope of getting rid of the Turkish domination. In the foreign policy he was oriented towards Russia. Alternatively, it is even claimed that he tried joining Moldavia to the Russian Empire. He was a proponent of the authoritarian rule, an enemy of the almighty nobility and opposed turning the free peasants into serfs.

After only one year of reign (1710 - 1711), he joined Peter the Great in the Russian-Turkish war and placed Moldavia under Russian suzerainty. After being defeated by the Turks in the battle of Stanilești - Fălciu county on the river Prut, unable to return to Moldavia, he emigrated to Russia, where he stayed with his family. He became intimate adviser of Peter I and carried on a fruitful scientific activity. He was given a large feudal estate near Harkov and was invested with the title of

Serenissim Prince of Russia on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1711.

He died on his estate Dimitrievka in Kharkov in 1723 and was buried in Russia. Today, his remains rest in the Three Hierarchs Church in Iasi.

Dimitrie Cantemir was the first Romanian elected member of the Berlin Academy in 1714. His work, influenced by the Renaissance humanism and forward thinking of Russia, reflected the most important issues raised by the socio-historical development of Moldavia in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**The Divan** (Divanul) or **The Wise Man's Parley with the World** (Gâlceava înțeleptului cu lumea) or **The Judgement of the Soul with the Body** (Giudețul sufletului cu trupul), written in Romanian and printed in Iasi in 1698, is the first Romanian philosophical work. In this work we find medieval disputes about time, soul, nature or conscience. Dimitrie Cantemir suggests the superiority of the human being over the other creatures, makes man a master of the world, upholds the superiority of the spiritual life over the biological condition of man, trying to define philosophical concepts and to set up a philosophical terminology.

**The Image of the Sacred, Undepictable Science** (Imaginea tainică a științei sacrosante) 1700 is another philosophical work that attempts to integrate physics into a theist system, a kind of reconciliation between science and religion, between scientific determinism and medieval metaphysics. Cantemir showed a keen interest in astrology and occult, sacred sciences, specific to the Renaissance.

**The Hieroglyphic History (Istoria ieroglică)**, written in Constantinople in Romanian (1703 - 1705), is considered to be the first attempt of political and social novel. Cantemir satirizes the struggle for the throne between the boyars' parties from the Romanian Countries. This allegorical struggle is reflected by a philosophical dispute between two principles, symbolized by the Unicorn and the Raven. The paper contains thoughts, proverbs and poems that reflect the influence of folk poetry.

**The History of the Ottoman Empire - The History of Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Court** (Istoria Imperiului Otoman - Istoria creșterii și descreșterii curții otomane), written in Latin (Historia incrementorum atque decrementorum Aulæ Othomanicæ) between 1714 and 1716 which presents the history of the Ottoman Empire and examines the causes that could lead to its fall.

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<sup>2</sup> ambassador – prisoner at the Ottoman Court

Dimitrie Cantemir also insisted on the opportunities of oppressed peoples to regain their freedom. The work was translated and published in English, French and German.

**The Chronicle of the Durability of Moldavians-Wallachians (Hronicul vechimei a romano-moldo-vlahilor)**, first written in Latin and then translated into Romanian by the author himself (1719 - 1722), which covers the history of our people from its origins to the dismounting period, supports the chroniclers' idea: the common origin of all the Romanians. In order to write this paper, Dimitrie Cantemir consulted more than 150 Romanian and foreign sources in Latin, Greek, Polish and Russian.

**Descriptio Moldaviae** (Descrierea Moldovei), written in Latin (1714 - 1716), while Dimitrie Cantemir was living in Russia, at the request of the Berlin Academy, is made up of three parts:

- The first part is devoted to the geographical description of Moldavia, its mountains, waters and plains. Dimitrie Cantemir drew up the first map of Moldavia. He presented the flora and fauna, the fairs and country's capitals over time.
- In the second part of the work he depicted the country's political and administrative organization. He referred in detail to the form of state, to the enthronement or dethronement of the Lords, to the customs triggered by these events or by other important events in their lives such as engagements, weddings or funerals.
- The last part contains information about the Moldavians' dialect, about the kind of letters they used originally, the Latin ones, following the example of all the other peoples whose language is still made of this type of letters, being later replaced by the Slavonic ones. The work arouses the interest not only by the well-documented geographical and political description, but also by its folk and ethnographic observations. Dimitrie Cantemir was our first scholar who included ethnography and folklore within the scope of its research.

**Other works:**

- *Compendium universae logices institutionis* (Abbreviation of general logics system)

- *Monarchiarum Physic Examinatio* (The Natural Research of Monarchs)
- *Sistema religiae mahomedane* (The System of Mohammedan Religion)
- *The Book of the Science of Music* (Kitab-i-Musik)

*Kitab-i-musiki*, The Book of Music, written in Turkish, is one of the first works of the scholar ruler, conceived during his life in Istanbul.

The work includes a thorough study of the Ottoman secular and religious music, the scholar pointing out the importance of the religious music and the influence the Byzantine church music had upon it. The study refers to the Ottoman composers, including the illustrations of trends and themes exemplified by a presentation of the notes and musical ranges in a note system.

It is the first work dedicated to music, conceived in a scholarly style. The end of this study is accompanied by a collection of tunes belonging to various compositions, as well as by a number of 20 creations belonging to the author himself. Owing to this work, Dimitrie Cantemir entered into the musical history of Turkey as the founder of its secular music and a keen researcher of the religious one under the name Cantemiroglu (Cantemir's son).

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Are there any living philosophers? From philosophy of mind to language, from logic to feminism, get to know some of the world's brightest intellects. West is also among the most public living philosophers appearing on several talk shows, including CNN and the Colbert Show, and has even been parodied on Saturday Night Live. He is currently a Professor of Philosophy and Christian Practice at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. © Michaela Pointon | Culture Trip. Slavoj Žižek (b. 1949). Spivak is a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University, where she teaches. © Michaela Pointon | Culture Trip. Judith Butler (b. 1956). A prince and a musicologist, an encyclopaedist and a historian, a composer and musicologist and a linguist as well, an ethnographer and philosopher at the same time, Cantemir is one of the most significant intellectual figures of late 17th-early 18th century Europe. The present study aims to reveal a part of his philosophical thinking, which places him, on the one hand, in the thick of humanism, and, on the other, in early Enlightenment. Cantemir's philosophical thinking is a unique form of combining oriental and western thinking, logico-rational thinking and the esoteric one, it is, in fact, Cantemir was also a prolific writer, variously a philosopher, historian, composer, musicologist, linguist, ethnographer, and geographer. His son Antioch, Russia's ambassador to Great Britain and France and a friend of Montesquieu and Voltaire, would go on to be known as "the father of Russian poetry". Contents. 1 Name. His name is among those who were considered to be the brightest minds of the world on a plaque at the Library of Sainte-Genevieve in Paris, next to those of Leibniz, Newton, Piron, and other great thinkers. Musical Works[edit]. In late 1710 Dimitrie Cantemir took the Moldovan throne with strong support from Peter the First. Dimitrie Cantemir – King Among Philosophers and Philosopher Among Kings 1 - An Outstanding Personality of The European Culture. Author & abstract. Download. On the occasion of the anniversary of 300 years since Dimitrie Cantemir acceded to the throne of Moldavia, the paper presents briefly the ruler's place – a scholar in the European culture, an appreciation he gained among the erudites of his time, and his main contributions in this respect. Here follows a presentation of his main works in the following fields: geography, philosophy, literature, history, encyclopedic activities, folklore and traditions, etc.