



MUSICAL EDUCATION IN DIMITRIE CANTEMIR'S FAMILY

TRADIȚIA MUZICALĂ ÎN FAMILIA LUI DIMITRIE CANTEMIR

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Artele frumoase, muzica în primul rând, au ocupat un loc de cinste în viața familiei Cantemir. Studiul de față încearcă să urmărească tradiția muzicală a acestei faimoase dinastii, vizibilă pe parcursul a cel puțin trei secole. Primele informații cu privire la aptitudinile artistice ale neamului cantemiresc sunt atestate la Constantin Cantemir, domn al Țării Moldovei (1685-1693) care, în pofida culturii sale modeste, avea toată considerația pentru arte, poseda arta improvizației, manifestându-se ca interpret, dobind cu multă măiestrie la caval. Fiul său, Dimitrie (1673-1723) a fost un muzician de vast orizont artistic – compozitor de prestigiu, teoretician erudit, instrumentist de excepție și pedagog de vocație, afirmându-se, în primul rând, pe făgașul muzicii turcești, dar și în sânul familiei. Talentul și predilecțiile muzicale, atmosfera din familia lui D. Cantemir au avut reflexe benefice asupra copiilor săi - Maria, Antioh și Ecaterina. Astfel, conform unor surse documentare, Maria a practicat la un bun nivel arta vocală și pe cea instrumentală (poseda clavicordul). Preocupări muzicale serioase a avut și Ecaterina, care, aidoma surorii sale pe linie paternă, poseda și ea clavicordul, dragostea pentru muzică fiindu-i altoită, bineînțeles, în familie de tatăl ei. O activitate prolifică în perimetrul artei sunetelor a avut-o fiul mai mic al lui D. Cantemir – Antioh. Concomitent cu studiile muzicale particulare făcute în străinătate, relația acestuia cu muzica s-a desfășurat și pe alte itinerare. În spectrul preocupărilor lui Antioh s-a aflat nu doar simpla admirație pentru această artă (era bine familiarizat cu creația lui N. Pórpóra, G. B. Pescetti, G. Fr. Händel), ci și componistica și lexicologia muzicală, fapt ce relevă intersul sporit pentru domeniul de referință. Prezentul demers dorește să sublinieze faptul că muzica a făcut parte organică din hrana spirituală a familiei Cantemir pe parcursul a câtorva generații, servind ca un mijloc puternic de educația estetică și de formare culturală în spiritul iluminismului european.

Liberal Arts, music in particular, occupied a major place in Dimitrie Cantemir's family. The famous dynasty's artistic traditions can be tracked over several (at least three) generations. The contribution of special D. Cantemir's descent to spread and promote cultural and artistic values stimulated the old life and artistic emancipation at the national and international levels. Dimitrie Cantemir's family created

pieces of art under various forms. Musical predilection was highlighted firstly.

Constantin Cantemir (1612-1693), the head of the state of Moldova (1685-1693) was an adept of knowledge and science, having predilection for the arts. His youngest son, the biggest Antioh (1670-1724), twice prince of Moldova (1696-1700, 1705-1707), made great efforts to support written culture by encourag-

ing the edition of books. Educated in a special atmosphere Dimitrie Cantemir continues the tradition of his descent. His children were part of a particular complex education, being favoured by family cultural environment and accurate education of the artistic development.

His father had a crucial role in the development and the emergence of artistic skills of Dimitrie Cantemir's descents. The wise prince enrolled Greek, German and Russian teachers, who taught classical and modern languages, history and other disciplines for guiding children. Those had beneficial effects on their intellectual perspective.

A special interest for the arts, Maria, the daughter of the greatest Dimitrie Cantemir, manifested a strong interest in painting, architecture and jewellery. He portrayed his brother Antioh, both being fond of art. Ecaterina, Dimitrie Cantemir's daughter, from the second marriage, was a fervent admirer of beautiful arts, preferring, particularly, the collection of pictures. Other D. Cantemir's descendants got the taste for painting. Music had a special place in family life. Consequently, we can pursue to the discussion and analysis of the role of art in D. Cantemir's family.

The information that helps us to investigate this issue is provided by the work of Franz Joseph Sulzer (? - 1791) *The History of the Transalpine Dacia* (1781). A passage taken from the paper reads (referring to the life and order of the court of Moldova), that Constantin Cantemir used to skilfully interpret on *caval* traditional songs such as *doina* [1]. This story is significant from several points of view.

The skill of the art interpretation on *caval* by Constantin Cantemir had been acquired before his reigning. The most likely that happened when he was in direct contact with the traditional environment of his country. Based on Sulzer's study we can state that Constantin Cantemir had an apparent musical talent, since *doina* as a type of lyrical musical genres, requires skills and special interpretive art. Indeed, the creative and interpretive versions occur simultaneously through the improvisation act. The improvisational music is a way to exploit a creative fantasy of a performer, which generates rich, various and complex melodic forms. It calls on both a moment of performer's inspiration and imagination during his interpretative act. Therefore, Constantin Cantemir's musical skills appear to be obvious, he being presented in a double hypostasis: as a creator and as a performer. Unfortunately these are the only documents that we have on this matter which could describe the degree of his relationship with native music of that period – the second half of the XVIIth century.

More is known about Dimitrie Cantemir's musical concerns, particularly about his occupations with Turkish music. His proper musical education was started relatively late, at the age of 18 years, when his father called him to Iași to Jeremiah Cacavelas – one of the most outstanding personalities of neohellenic culture during that period. For two years (1691-1693) the young prince Dimitrie studies Byzantine and Gregorian music under the direction of J. Cacavelas. Later, in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, his musical knowledge is extended at the

Orthodox Patriarchate Academy, studying such instruments as *kemânçe* and *tanbour* with two famous music teachers – *Kiemane* Ahmed and *Tanburî* Angeli. Also, in Constantinople, Dimitrie Cantemir studies the ancient Greek music with *Iacomî* and *Meletie de Arta*. Musical education continues in Turkey for the period of 15 years, during which he studies the East artistic culture, the religion of Islam and theoretical and practical rules of musical arts from the Turko-Persian area. Dimitrie Cantemir spends nearly 22 years in the Islamic Oriental center marked by the confluence of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries – a historically prosperous period of Ottoman arts. The sultans were protectors of music. Accepted, cultivated and encouraged by dignitaries and stayed-officials, the art of sound is honoured and privileged, and those who practice it, are especially promoted. Dimitrie Cantemir also benefited of a favourable spiritual environment of musical education. Under such circumstances he managed to manifest himself entirely. He fulfilled his musical talent in several areas of music. We refer to his achievements in the field of music theory. He developed the famous Turkish music treatise, known in the Turkish historiography as *The Book of the Science of Music through Letters* (*Kitâb-ü'ilm-the-mûsikî'alâ vedjh it hurûfât* or *Edvâr-Kantemir-oğlu*; 1695-1700?). Another theoretical treatise on Turkish music – *Introduction to Turkish Music Written in Moldovian* (*Introductione in musica turcica idiomatici moldavi*, 1711-1720) is considered lost.

Dimitrie Cantemir also had exceptional achievements in the field of musical composition and instru-

mental performing arts. Moreover, he dealt with music pedagogy. Wishing to express himself in artistic level, Dimitrie Cantemir generalised the experience of his predecessors that he combined with his own knowledge and personal practice. Through work and talent he obtained notoriousness of virtuoso of the *tanbour* raising musical culture of his time at exceptional greatness, a performance for which he is considered one of the most famous musicians from the capital of Turkey. As a big performer of the instrumental art, he was invited to give music lessons. The work *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman or The History of the Ottomam Empire* (1714-1716, posthumous) reports that Dimitrie Cantemir had six disciples, among them: *Tastci Oglî*, *Mehmed Senik*, *Bardakci Mehmed Célebi*, *Ralaki Eupragiote* (noble Greek from Constantinople), and two well-known Turkish officials - *Davoul Ismail Etfendi* (the greatest treasurer of the Empire) and *Latif Célebi* (treasury cashier) [2].

In his practice, Dimitrie Cantemir proceeds from idea of continuity. The tradition of classical Muslim education was teaching the principles of classification of knowledge, skills and science from an encyclopaedic perspective. This concept was carried by the previous Oriental thinkers *al-Kindi* (about 801 - m.873?), *al-Fārābî* (872 - 950), *Ibn Sina* (980 - 1037), *Ibn Rusd* (1126 - 1198).

Music was one the main components of the educational process. In the Ottoman Empire they made the most of music as a subject of study in schools, particularly, its special elements in the civic – moral

formation of the personality, his/her spiritual culture. The contribution of music was also noticed in the formation of a harmonious state, designed to promote the ideas of social time. Therefore, music was considered an exceptionally educational art.

First of all, Dimitrie Cantemir points out that everyone who wants to have a good musical education must possess the theoretical and practical rules of this art. On this basis, his teaching principles included two constituent sides of one and the same teaching process – *theoretical and applied*. Otherwise, the potential musician needs a complex training. Dimitrie Cantemir makes the methodological concept laconic in *Mahomedane Religion System* (1722, anonymous), focusing particularly on the performer's need for music tonality, rhythms, the prosody of Oriental art and the modal organisation of the melody (called *Usul*).

A methodological hint can be considered the following assertion: that who will perfectly know the so-called *Usul*, may perform a piece of music without a mistake and without the aid of those notes, by hearing it two or three times carried out by the author or his teacher [3]. Among the methods proposed and used by D. Cantemir in teaching music the following are emphasized: *explanation, demonstration, exercise, individual work*, etc. These ideas constitute a direct, indirect or deductive forms his of works, having a historic, ethnographic, philosophical and artistic character. The role of music was seen as a complex art, an aesthetic education, a cultivation of high status, or human feelings.

Setting the objectives of musical art, D. Cantemir formulates some elements of methodology, expressed in theoretical studies with musical-didactic purpose. The principles of artistic training (*systemic, unity between theory and practice, conscious of skills training*, etc.) are also pointed out consistently and convincingly by D. Cantemir.

As a form of music educational organization, along with independent achievements, two other educational activities are effectively addressed by the musician: the environmental and the one organized under the teacher's guidance. They complete each other, making a strong cohesion between these chains of artistic musical training. Certainly, Dimitrie Cantemir's talent, his musical predilections and the artistic atmosphere of his family influenced his children. The art of sound was in of D. Cantemir and his successors' attention even after 1711, when he was forced to take refuge in Russia. We can realize this continuous passion for music by studying his works, for example, *The Description of Moldova* (1714-1716, posthumous), *The history of the Ottoman Empire* or *Mahomedane Religion system* and, of course, by researching other documentary sources. Family environment was permanently maintained by various forms of artistic musical education, thus they could develop skills, hobbies, and musical tastes, stimulated since early childhood. In the twenties of the XVIIIth century, musical soirée, with musicians of the tsar Peter the Great Court were often organized in the family apartments of D. Cantemir in the Russian capital where "fashionable" dances were

shown. Russian tsar often participated in these events [4].

As for Dimitrie Cantemir's heirs, music meant a constant concern and a clear choice in their artistic and cultural interests.

According to documentary sources, Maria Cantemir (1700-1754) excellently practiced the vocal and instrumental arts. She mastered the clavichord and she had the necessary skills to interpret complex concerts, to accompany from the first musical reading songs with harmonic aid of general bass and to sing difficult arias. Her interest for music results from the correspondence with Antioh. In one of the letters, dated from September 1736, when he served as Russia's ambassador in England, Maria asked her brother to purchase from West a "*clavichord with a good tone*" [5].

In another message to her brother, she regretted the fact she had no acquaintances among musicians who could compose music for her lyrics, with the hope that the problem would be solved. That was brief, but convincing information from different points of view. Maria Cantemir possessed exceptional musical skills. She had certain preferences for the art of sound, knowledge of the music world of Western Europe, being able to distinguish, to select and to accept Western values, she was opened to new elements in music - this was confirmed by her belonging to a cultured dynasty, with old artistic and irrefutable musical traditions.

The continuity of predilection for music is maintained by the interests of Ecaterina Cantemir-Golitzyn (1720-1761). Love for music and knowledge was inspired by her father, Dimitrie Cantemir. Just as

Maria, her sister, Ecaterina had a clavichord. A remarkable illustration was published by the French portraitist Louis-Michel Vanloo (1707-1771). As it seems, music accompanied her throughout lifetime. Subsequently, she solemnized the religious marriage with Dmitri M. Golitzyn (1721-1793), who would hold the position of Russia's ambassador in Vienna. Passionate by music and being a great fan of W. A. Mozart's talent (1756-1791), Golitzyn attended the concert of the young musician, in 1762, who showed up for the first time (with his family) in the Austrian capital. Mozart and D. M. Golitzyn's meetings continued later, including the residence of the ambassador, a fact constantly reported by the Master of Salzburg in his correspondence with his father, Leopold Mozart (letters of 17 and 24 March 1781; 21-December 1782; 3 and 20 March 1784). Unfortunately at the time of those concerts, Ecaterina Golitzyn-Cantemir was no longer alive.



Ecaterina Cantemir-Golitzyn next the clavichord. Portrait by Louis-Michel Vanloo (1759).

Antioh, his youngest son, had the most productive activity in the arts, including music among Dimitrie Cantemir's successors. Due to various existing sources we are aware about the broad spectrum of

his concerns, sources that appeared either in his adoptive homeland or abroad. Five years after his premature death, *Satires by Prince Antioh Cantemir* (*Satires by Mr le prince Cantémir. Avec l'histoire de sa vie*, 1749) were published in London. His biographer, O. Guasco remarked that Antioh Cantemir's affection towards music was much more than mere deep attachment towards this art. In fact, he performed music most likely at practical level and composition levels the work "Piece of Its Way" ("des pièces de sa façon").

It must be emphasized that his passion for composition was entirely possible, especially if we take into account the following arguments. Antioh Cantemir's musical horizons were formed, primarily, due to the education obtained in the family, but also by the spiritual atmosphere of the period, marked by the reforming work of Peter the Great, in the field of culture. The illuminist movement was aimed at inserting music in the aristocratic Russia even by legislated constraints of the Tsar. Thus, the art of sound was present at the royal court, at aristocracy salons, at various concerts, recitals, performances, and musical soirées. At the balls, along with the music of local composers, such foreign dances as *minuet*, *gavotte*, *allemande*, and Italian instrumental music, composed by A. Vivaldi (1678-1741), A. Corelli (1653-1713), etc were interpreted. Foreign artists were attending the Court too. Gradually, the music cuts into the everyday lives of Russian nobility as a way of spending leisure time. Concerts are often performed in the families. These were new forms of manifestation of modern music, depicting the cultural and artistic life

of Russia during the first decades of the XVIIIth century. Young prince grew and was educated in a spiritually beneficial atmosphere of music in general, and particularly with Western music.

Antioh Cantemir's (1708?-1744) relationship with music continues throughout his life. The scientific and literary culture, the illuminist spread and the deep European thought led Antioh to translate from French into Russian the *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* by philosopher Fontenelle (1657-1757). The importance of this cultural event is remarkable.



Headline in Russian, *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* (1686) by Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, translated by Antioh Cantemir.

When presenting the volume to readers, Antioh Cantemir makes a number of valuable explanations concerning the text for the completion of the study and also for a better level of understanding. In this way, words, concepts, definitions and other new useful elements are introduced in the vocabulary of Russian language. Along with philosophical and scientific terminology, in notes nr. 26, 28 and 30, A. Cantemir includes some elements of spiritual culture vocabulary, adding annota-

tions, including those with artistic connotation: *décor*, *elegy*, *dray*, *opera*, *stalls*, *poem*, *theater*, and foreign terms at that time in Russian language. For instance, the word *opera* means “a vivid representation of a certain action which differs from comedy by the fact that in the comedy artists are simply talking, while in the opera, speaking is accomplished by singing” [6] or the foreign word *décor* expresses “everything in an opera or a comedy that serves to embellishing the theatre by which the place is presented to the audience as the story requires, that is sometimes plain, sometimes city, sea etc.” [7].

The humanist action of Antioh Cantemir is obvious if we take into account that his explanations are preceding the appearance of the Russian national opera, an event that was to occur much later, in the last quarter of the XVIIIth century. The humanist, linguistic and cultural desideratum of the young prince is presented as an important and innovative contribution to Russian spirituality. Besides this pioneer’s work, he prepares the music fans of Russia, for receipting the opera, awaking interest to this new and complex kind of composition.

From the period of his diplomatic missions in England (1732-1738) and France (1738-1744) there are several stories that inform us that Antioh Cantemir was often present in concert halls, he was personally acquainted with the famous composers Nicolo Pórpóra (1686-1768), Giovanni Pescetti (1704-1766), Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759), but also with the great opera singers of the time Francesca Cuzzoni (1700-1770), Gaetano Majorano (1710-1783), Carlo Broschi (1705-1782),

Francesco Bernardi (1680?-1750). His high appreciation for the Italian music and art in general, is manifested by the fact that Antioh undertook diplomatic efforts in order to organize a tour of those soloists to Petersburg. Antioh Cantemir’s respect for Italian music didn’t prevent him from admiring the creation of other composers, for example, that of the German G. Fr. Händel. On several occasions, the young diplomat and poet asked through letters to his old acquaintances Amiconi, Zamboni, Ossorio, to send notes of the musical works of Händel – the overtures in seven parts, the new concerts for organ. Later, he also asked them for a good teacher to take music lessons [8].

Antioh’s training as a musician is shown very convincingly in his *Satires*. Music appears there either as an object of comparison, either to reveal the deep senses of music and its cognitive-formative role, either as a rhetorical element or as a social phenomenon of the human spirit modelling.

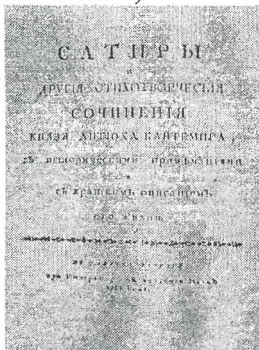
In *The First Satire. To My Mind: On Those Who Blame Education* (1729) the musical vocabulary is used as a method of depicting the manners and characters. It intended to highlight the author’s option choosing advancing on the path of culture. The following verses illustrate his judgement: *One may interpret 3 or 4 songs on flute, already wants to step on the highest social level...* [9].

Following the idea of *The fourth Satire. Towards Muse. About Satirists poetry* (1731), we can find interesting biographical data about the poet’s activities, including those relating to his musical concerns. The

poet wrote about his composed songs in his youth which he subsequently destroyed, because he considered them unsuccessful.

The entire content of *The fifth Satire. Satyr and Perierg* (1731) contained different musical phrases such as “wonderful song”, “songs to God”, “playing psalm reader”, and others. The musical vocabulary was used in other satires as well.

Antioh translated the poetry of Horace and Anacreon into Russian. In the Russian version of *The Song by Anacreon (Анакреонтовых песен, 1736)*, the translator explains musical words, extracted from the Hellenic poet’s lyrics such as: *gusla* (monocord archaic tool with bow), *lauta* (ancient musical instrument with pinched cords) and others [10].



Headline of the first edition of *Satires by Antioh Cantemir's* (1762) in Russian

Summarising, we may say that pleading for the beauty of the sound art and practicing music (in its various forms) had continuity during years in the D. Cantemir’s family. Music was always present in this dynasty life. From the available sources we found that arts were highly appreciated in D. Cantemir’s family, and the honorific status of music of the noble heredity could be confirmed also by the inventory Act of the fam-

ily’s wealth. “Old organs with wooden body” (possibly *clavicine*), “old *gusles*”, “two *bandures* of wood” (probably *tanboure*) [11] were found among the inventoried goods, after Constantine’s death, Dimitrie Cantemir’s eldest son. A *gusla* of English origin, a largely popular instrument in the middle of the XVIIIth century [12], was found in Antioh’s dining-room.

Music was an organic part of D. Cantemir’s family spiritual life for several generations, serving as a powerful mean of aesthetic education and training in an European culturally enlightened spirit. The musical genres practiced by the D. Cantemir’s dynasty were diverse - from the music of oral tradition to Oriental and European academic music.

Music activities of this family can be included in two major categories specific to the art of sound: on the practical level, music was manifested in different hypostases: *creation, interpretation and reception*, while its theoretical category found its expression in the musicological work made by Dimitrie Cantemir. Music education was introduced in D. Cantemir’s family as part of an education with humanist function.

The analyzed documentary materials are different in terms of their importance for the study. They have, however, a common element, namely: the majority of them certify consistent old musical roots and traditions of the famous dynasty. They reflect only a part of the musical concerns of D. Cantemir’s dynasty in the homeland and abroad. A more comprehensive study of archival materials, which fail to attract the attention of researchers, would supplement the

information and arguments on diversification of the debated matter and would allow a disclosure of other aspects of the investigated topic.

History takes into account the irrefutable merits of D. Cantemir's family in creating and promoting spiritual values in the country and abroad, music being a necessity in the education of D. Cantemir's gen-

erations, which succeeded in time. In fact, music education was designed to correspond to requirements of a society in which cultural values govern the educational activity. The model of this dynasty remains viable today as a way of promoting the beauty at the junction between music, Arts, Humanities and civic, moral culture education.

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