

Andreea-Mihaela Badea

Nicolae Mavrocordat's Scholarly Preoccupations as Reflected in the Correspondence of Antonie Epis with Jean le Clerc

1 The Mavrocordat Family Library: An Encyclopedic Project in the Spirit of the Western Enlightenment

Nicolae Mavrocordat's bibliophilia, his passion for reading, and his desire to have the latest international editions in his library are attested by the books that have been preserved to this day, which contain his handwritten ex-libris. Fortunately, some important documentary sources have been preserved as well.

The major changes in the European mentality, particularly in France, England, the Netherlands, and Germany, which manifested at the end of the 17th century and throughout the 18th century, determined by the primacy of reason, which was meant to free man from superstition (the "disenchantment of the world", as Ritchie Robertson calls it in his work *The Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness, 1680–1790*)¹ and to rationally explain phenomena on the basis of empirical knowledge. This also resonated in the Romanian lands, precisely because of the reading interests of some Phanariots who adopted, *avant la lettre*, the Kantian concept of *sapere aude*.

Scientific breakthroughs, starting with Newton's law of gravity, the invention of the compass, of the printing press, of gunpowder, as claimed by Francis Bacon, but also William Harvey's theory of blood circulation, or the discoveries of the botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778), helped to shape a new philosophy, as did the changing perception of the monarch's role in pursuing the common good. The new ideas were disseminated in journals such as the *Philosophical Transaction*, the journal of the Royal Society, *Acta eruditorum*, *Journal des Sçavants*, the *London Gazette*, *Tatler* and Richard Steele and Joseph Addison's *Spectator*, with a French version published in Amsterdam. All these periodicals were devoted to cultural news and publications, such as the *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne* published in Amsterdam by the Geneva-born Dutch humanist, philologist, and theologian Jean le Clerc (1657-1736).²

Nicolae Mavrocordat (1680–1730) was born in Constantinople. He was the third child of Alexandru Mavrocordat, the grand dragoman from the Constantinople

1 R. Robertson, *The Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness, 1680–1790*, London, 2022, p. 200.

2 Editor of the famous bibliographical journal published from 1686 to 1693 as *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, from 1703 to 1713 as *Bibliothèque choisie*, and from 1714 to 1730 as *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne*.

quarter of Fener, professor at the Great School of the Nation and the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople, privy counsellor to the sultan, ἐξ Ἀπορρήτων, mediator of the Treaty of Karlowitz (January 26, 1699), and author of *Ἱστορία ἱερὰ ἥτοι τὰ Τουδαϊκὰ* (*The Holy, or Jewish History*), published in 1716 in Bucharest, at the printing house of the Monastery of All Saints (Antim Monastery), by the printer Dionisie Floru.

Nicolae Mavrocordat's mother was of Greek and Romanian descent. Sultana was the daughter of Ioannis Chrysoskolaïos and Cassandra Mușat, the daughter of Prince Alexandru Iliș.³ Scarlat, the first son of Alexandru Mavrocordat, had married Ilinca, daughter of Constantin Brâncoveanu, and his daughter Ruxandra married Matei Ghica Vodă, son of Grigorie Ghica.⁴

Nicolae had a good upbringing, as his first years were guided by Professor Iakovos Manos from Argos and the Jesuit Jacques Pipéri from Chios, with whom he learned Latin. Thus, when he was appointed great logothete of the Great Church of the Patriarchate in Constantinople on July 1, 1698, aged 18, he became an associate of his father at the rank of grand dragoman. He later became ruler of Moldavia (November 1709 – November 1710, 1711 – January 1715) and Wallachia (January 1715 – November 1716; March 1719 – September 1730). Nicolae Mavrocordat's reign in Wallachia was interrupted on November 14/26, 1716, for a period of three years because, following the boyars' intrigues and the incursion of Captain Dettine von Pivoda, under the command of General Steinville, he was taken prisoner and sent to Brașov, Sibiu, and Alba Iulia. He was released after the Treaty of Passarowitz,⁵ on September 13/24, 1718.

His three marriages produced ten children. By his first wife, Lady Casandra Cantacuzino, Nicolae Mavrocordat had three children, namely Tarsia, Scarlat, and Ruxandra. Scarlat, born in Constantinople in 1701, died young, in 1726. Nicolae Iorga published a relevant exchange of letters between Ioan Scarlat and the Patriarch Chrysantos Notaras that demonstrates Scarlat's cultural preoccupations.⁶ Nicolae Mavrocordat's second marriage, to Pulcheria Tzoukis, produced four children: Maria, born in 1706, who married Ioannes Scarlatos, treasurer of the Patriarchate of

³ Alexandru Iliș, son of Alexandru Lăpușneanu, was the ruler of Wallachia between 1616 and 1618, and of Moldavia between 1620 and 1621, then 1631 to 1633. See also E. Legrand, *Généalogie des Maurocordato de Constantinople rédigée d'après des documents inédits*, Paris, 1900, p. 10; M. D. Sturdza, *Dictionnaire historique et généalogique des Grandes Familles de Grèce, d'Albanie et de Constantinople*, Paris, 1999, p. 319–328.

⁴ Elected twice as ruler of Wallachia (1660 to 1664, and 1672 to 1673).

⁵ July 21, 1718.

⁶ E. de Hurmuzachi, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. XIV/1. *Documente grecești privitoare la Istoria românilor publicate după originale, copiile Academiei Române și tipărituri de N. Iorga*, Partea I. 1320–1716, Bucharest, 1915, p. 671, no. DCXLI, and p. 673–674, no. DCXLIV.

Constantinople; Constantin, born 1711, Bucharest, who reigned in Wallachia and Moldavia for a total of 24 years; Ioan, born 1712, Fanar, ruler of Moldavia between 1743 and 1747; and Toma. From his last marriage to Smaranda, the daughter of the great cupbearer (Rom. *paharnic*) Panagiotakis, were born Alexandru, Sultana, and Ștefan.

Among Nicolae Mavrocordat's important works, the best known is the treatise *Περὶ τῶν καθηκόντων* (*On Duties*) written during his imprisonment in Sibiu, which started on November 14, 1716. It was edited by Popa Stoica Iacovici in Bucharest at the printing house of the Monastery of All Saints, in December 1719, during Nicolae Mavrocordat's second reign in Wallachia. *Περὶ τῶν καθηκόντων* received international acclaim, leading to subsequent editions in Latin, Greek and Latin (bilingual edition), and German.⁷ The text reflects a political vision in line with Enlightenment ideas, specifically emphasizing the importance of the “common good” and “enlightened despotism”. It echoes the thoughts of influential Enlightenment thinkers such as Francis Bacon (1561–1626), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), Samuel Puffendorf (1632–1694), Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), David Hume (1711–1776), and François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon (1651–1715). Works by these authors appear in the three surviving catalogs of the Mavrocordat family library.⁸ They are also mentioned by the Phanariot prince in his extensive correspondence with European scholarly figures, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Περὶ τῶν καθηκόντων was said to be “the first Phanariot manual to deal with both sovereignty and the supremacy of law, as well as the duties of princes

7 Historiography records four editions of this work in the 18th century: the 1st edition, continued by the Greek-Latin one at Leipzig, 1722, translated by the Hellenist Ștefan Bergler, the London Greek and Latin one in 1724, and the German translation of Nuremberg, 1739.

8 Three book catalogs of Nicolae Mavrocordat's library at the Văcărești Monastery are known: 1) *Κατάλογος τῶν βιβλίων τῆς σεβασμίας καὶ αὐθεντικῆς μονῆς τῆς Παναγίας Τριάδος τοῦ Βακαρεστίου, Ἐτεῖ 1723, μηνὶ Ἰουνίου* (*The Book Catalogue of the Holy and Princely Văcărești Monastery Dedicated to the Holy Trinity, 1723, June*), ed. by N. Iorga, in E. de Hurmuzaki, *Documente grecești privitoare la istoria românilor publicate după originale, copiile Academiei Române și tipărituri*, vol. XIV, 3, 1560–1820, Bucharest, 1936, p. 145–156. This catalog of 237 titles represents the voivod's inaugural donation to the Văcărești Monastery; 2) The book catalog of Constantine Mavrocordat's library, containing 625 titles, *Κατάλογος τῶν βιβλίων πάντων ἑλληνικῶν, γραικολατινικῶν, λατινικῶν, ἰταλικῶν, γαλικῶν καὶ ἄλλων Κωνσταντίνου Μ. [sic] Μαυροκορδάτου τῶν εἰς χρῆσιν αὐτοῦ, [...], ἀψκε* (*Constantine Mavrocordat's Catalogue of all the Greek, Greek and Latin, Latin, Italian, French, and other Books for His Use, 1725*), ed. by N. Iorga, “Pilda bunilor domni din trecut față de școala românească”, p. 85–120, in *AARMSI*, S. III, t. XXXVII, 1914, Mem. 2, p. 9–44; 3) The third is a book catalog in two sections found in the Greek and Romanian Miscellaneum MS 603 (B.A.R.) and titled *Κατάλογος τῶν βιβλίων τοῦ βακαρεστίου: πρῶτον μῆκος κατὰ ἀφάβητον* (*The Book Catalogue of the Văcărești [Monastery]: First Alphabetical Part*), p. 221r–225v, *Κατάλογος τῶν ἑλληνικῶν βιβλίων* (*The Catalogue of Greek Books*), p. 271r–289r, with manuscripts at p. 289r–294r.

and citizens”.⁹ The review published in volume XIV/1 of *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne pour servir de suite aux bibliothèques universelle et choisie* of 1720 sparked the beginning of a correspondence between the secretary Antonie Epis and the Swiss scholar Jean le Clerc.¹⁰ Mavrocordat’s *Περὶ τῶν καθηκόντων* was a very popular work at the time of its publication. We will have a look at other recorded testimonies of the international echoes of this work in the historiography dedicated to the subject, known to the Dominican scholar Michel Le Quien (1661–1733), author of the work *Oriens Christianus*. We are aware that Nicolae Iorga¹¹ found in the collections of the Marciana Library in Venice a letter of gratitude from Le Quien to Prince Nicolae Mavrocordat for a copy of *Περὶ τῶν καθηκόντων*. The same library holds the manuscript of the Latin translation of the work made by Forrosia (1723–1758), curator of the Imperial and Royal Library in Vienna.¹²

Regarding the Phanariot prince’s second important work, *Φιλοθέου Πάρεργα* (*Philotheos’s Diversions*), composed in the year 1718 and published only in the 1800,¹³ we learn from the same correspondence that Antonie Epis intended to send a copy of the manuscript to the philologist in Amsterdam for a French translation.¹⁴

As an epistolographer, Nicolae Mavrocordat remains in the collective memory as the author of a corpus of six letters composed in the manner of Phalaris from Agrigentum, discovered in the 18th century Greek Miscellaneum 334, originating from the collections of the Central Seminary Library and edited by Jacques Bouchard.¹⁵

These letters were first mentioned by Ștefan Bergler¹⁶ in his review of the work *Περὶ τῶν καθηκόντων* in the 1722 issue of *Acta eruditorum*, the academic

9 J. Bouchard, *Nicolae Mavrocordat. Domn și cărturar al Iluminismului timpuriu (1680-1730)*, Bucharest, 2006, p. 69.

10 Jean le Clerc, *Epistolario*, vol. IV. 1719–1732 e indici generali, ed. M. Grazia Zaccone-Sina, M. Sina, Florence, 1997, Epistle no. 672, p. 55–60.

11 N. Iorga, “O scrisoare a lui Le Quien către Neculai Mavrocordat”, *Arhiva Societății Științifice și Literare din Iași*, 10, 1899, p. 132.

12 V. Cădea, *Mărturii românești peste hotare. Creații românești și izvoare despre români în străinătate*, New Series, ed. I. Feodorov, vol. III. *India-Olanda*, Bucharest, 2011, p. 187.

13 The first edition came out in Vienna in 1800.

14 Letter of May 27, 1721. The French edition was achieved by J. Bouchard, *Les Loisirs de Philothée, texte établi, traduit et commenté*, preface by C. Dimaras, Montréal, 1989.

15 Bouchard, *Nicolae Mavrocordat*, p. 41–44.

16 Ștefan (Stephanus) Bergler (1680–ca. 1738), born in Hermanstadt (Brașov, present-day Romania), a Hellenist who studied in Lipsia. Editor of the classics, he collaborated in the period 1712–1713 on the famous *Acta Eruditorum*. He became Nicolae Mavrocordat’s secretary and translated for him into Latin the work *De officiis*, Leipzig, 1722. There is also his testimony, in a letter of July 7, 1723, that he had compiled the catalog of Mavrocordat’s library.

journal founded in 1682 in Leipzig to promote the Enlightenment. The series could be completed with 71 letters composed by Nicolae Mavrocordat, preserved in a miscellany,¹⁷ and the two corpuses of Greek manuscripts containing 98 letters of Nicolae Mavrocordat¹⁸ that were published by Émile Legrand in *Epistolaire grec* (Paris, 1888).

A manuscript of the prince devoted to meditations, containing the text *Νικολάου βοεβόδα γνῶμαι καὶ φροντίσματα* (*Prince Nicolae's Thoughts and Meditations*), is mentioned by Constantin Litzica.¹⁹ The same work, with an abbreviated title, *Γνῶμαι καὶ φροντίσματα* (*Thoughts and Meditations*), is also present in the second section of Nicolae Mavrocordat's catalog of his library at Văcărești, included in the Greek and Romanian Miscellaneum MS 603 of the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest.

Among Nicolae Mavrocordat's other works, we should mention the small study *Λόγος κατὰ νικοτιανῆς* (*Speech against Smoking*), which is a response to *Ἐπαινος νικοτιανῆς* (*In Praise of Smoking*)²⁰ by the erudite Greek monk Metrophanes Gregoras from Dodona. Several other writings authored by Nicolae Mavrocordat,²¹ considered lost by Jacques Bouchard, are mentioned by the secretary Antonie Epis in a letter to Jean le Clerc dated February 10, 1721.²²

2 The Mavrocordat Family's Library: Configuration and Location of the Library and Ways of Enriching its Collections

The Mavrocordat family's library was held in the Monastery of Văcărești near Bucharest. This information is present in the three library catalogs that have been preserved.²³ The construction started in 1716 but was interrupted during

17 See A. Pippidi, "Un manuscris regăsit al Epistolarului lui Nicolae Mavrocordat", *Sud-Estul și Contextul European. Buletin*, 5, 1996, Bucharest, p. 123–150.

18 C. Litzica, *Catalogul manuscriselor grecești*, I, Bucharest, 1909, p. 23, no. 29 (84); p. 419, no. 683 (217).

19 Litzica, *Catalogul manuscriselor grecești*, I, p. 128, 263 (494).

20 C. Erbiceanu, "Catalogul istoric a ômenilor însemnați din secolul XVIII, dintre cariî marea majoritate au trăit în Țările Române Valahia și Moldova, de Chesarie Daponte", in C. Erbiceanu, *Cronicariî greci cariî au scris despre români în epoca fanariotă*, Bucharest, 1888 [facsimile edition Bucharest, 2003], p. 125.

21 *Apparatus sobriae Imitationis, De Enthusiasmo specimen propositis exemplis ex sacra et prophana Historia, Temptamen concinnandae solidae Theologiae moralis ex genuinis Patrum Orientalis Epistolis, Norma vivendi mores, eruditio Photii ex ipsius Epistolis editis, et ineditis concinnata.*

22 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 70–71, letter no. 677.

23 See above, n. 8.

Mavrocordat's imprisonment. From 1719 to 1722, the first enclosure of the monastery was completed.

Nicolae Mavrocordat's foundation was a *metochion* of the Holy Sepulchre granted in 1721 by a charter issued by the great logothete Gheorghe Crețulescu and the second logothete Constantin Văcărescu.²⁴ The monastery was completed and consecrated several years later, on September 13, 1724, according to the testimony of the chronicler Radu Popescu, who mentions the fifth year of Mavrocordat's rule in Wallachia as the time when the construction was completed:²⁵

Întru al cincele an al domniei Măriei sale lui Nicolae vodă, săvârșindu-se mănăstirea Măriei sale de la Văcărești și înfrumusețindu-se cu toate podoabele și pe din lăuntru și pe den afară, praznic mare au făcut domnul în zioa de șfeta Troiță, ce iaste hramul mănăstirii și mergând cu toți arhieriei și egumenii și cu toți boiarii și neguțătorii și cu alt feliu de oameni din toată rânduiala. Pre toți i-au ospătat, după cum să cade.

In the fifth year of the rule of His Majesty Nicolae vodă, when the monastery of His Majesty at Văcărești was completed and adorned with all the embellishments both inside and out, the lord held a great feast on Holy Trinity Day, to which the monastery is dedicated, and going with all the bishops and hegumens and all the boyars and merchants and other sorts of people of all walks of life. They all feasted, as customary.

Affected by the earthquakes of 1801 and 1804, the Monastery of Văcărești was later transformed into a jail for convicts of the Revolution of 1848. From 1921 until 1944, it was a prison for communist detainees. Here, the same political regime also incarcerated representative figures of cultural life: Ioan Slavici, Tudor Arghezi, Liviu Rebreanu, etc. The monastery was demolished in 1986.²⁶

The expansion of the library's book collection was done systematically through the transfer of books from other collections, fact-finding in the catalogs of publishing houses, printers, and bookstores, and research of annotated bibliographies, library catalogs, in letters exchanged, and the press of the time.

The core of the library was composed in Constantinople by the learned dragoman Alexandru Mavrocordat. The book collection was transferred from Constantinople to the Văcărești Monastery. Here, it was continuously enriched due

24 E. de Hurmuzaki, *Documente grecești privitoare la istoria românilor publicate după originale, copiile Academiei Române și tipărituri*, vol. XIV/2. 1716–1777, ed. by Nicolae Iorga, Bucharest, 1917, p. 872–875, no. DCCCL.

25 R. Popescu, "Cronica lui Nicolae Mavrocordat", in D. H. Mazilu (ed.), *Cronicari munteni*, Bucharest, 2004, p. 820–821.

26 O. Dumitru-Marinescu, *Mănăstirea Văcărești din București de la origini până astăzi*, Bucharest, 2012, p. 102.

to the care of Nicolae Mavrocordat. With the help of his secretaries, who were responsible for the maintenance and expansion of the collection, the Phanariot ruler proceeded systematically, integrating the collections of other existing libraries, researching the catalogs of publishers, printers, and booksellers in Western Europe to acquire books, but also based on information obtained from the letter exchanges with illustrious personalities of the European cultural circles.

As for the holdings of the great libraries that were incorporated into his own collection, according to the anonymous chronicle discovered and edited by Nicolae Iorga *O descripție a Țerii Românești* (*A Description of the Romanian Lands*), Nicolae Mavrocordat's collection was enlarged by the transfer of part of Constantin Cantacuzino's library of Mărgineni in 1720.²⁷ Subsequent research has shown, following the analysis of the bibliographic sources, that the collection also included books that had been part of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu's collection at the Monastery of Hurezi (Vâlcea County). Constantin J. Karadja published some rare excerpts from a work by Jencquel Kaspar Friedrich, *Museographia*,²⁸ published in 1727 in Leipzig and Bresslau, which contains references to the rich book collection of the Mavrocordat family, its location near Bucharest, and the transfer of books from Constantin Brâncoveanu's library in Hurezi to Mavrocordat's library at Văcărești.

Corneliu Dima-Drăgan compiled a rich list of catalogs of publishers, printers, and booksellers of Leipzig, Vienna, Leiden, the Hague, London, and Amsterdam,²⁹ but without mentioning notes or ownership marks, except for a few titles that clearly indicate their provenance from Nicolae Mavrocordat's library.

From a letter dated July 30, 1727,³⁰ written by Nicolaus Wolff,³¹ we learn that Nicolae Mavrocordat was in possession of a catalog of the Marciana Library book collection, published in 1712, when this library was sold.³² On August 12, 1724,

27 N. Iorga, *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, Vol. III. *Fragmente de cronici și știri despre cronicari*, Bucharest, 1901, p. 56.

28 The respective excerpts from the *Museographia, oder, Anleitung zum rechten Begriff und nützlicher Anlegung der museorum, oder Raritäten-Kammern [...] von C. F. Neickelio mit einigen Zusätzen und Anhang von D. Johann Kanold*, Leipzig/Bresslau, 1727, p. 384 and 396, were published by C. Dima-Drăgan, *Biblioteci umaniste românești: istoric, semnificații, organizare*, Bucharest, 1974, p. 194 (available online at: https://books.google.ro/books?id=YGLDwKMKQ_gC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ro&source=gbg_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=Hures&f=false, accessed June 10, 2024).

29 Dima-Drăgan, *Biblioteci umaniste*, p. 150–152.

30 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 379, letter no. 817.

31 Secretary to Nicolae Mavrocordat, who corresponded with Jean le Clerc from 1724 to 1727.

32 *Bibliotheca Marckiana, continens Theologicos, Oratores, Juridicos, Poetas, Politicos, Grammaticos, Philosophicos, Philologicos, Medicos, Criticos, Historiam Naturalem, Epistolographos, Mathematicos, Antiquarios, Geographicos, Symbola, Chronologicos, Emblemata, Historicos, Insignia*,

Nicolaus Wolff sent Jean le Clerc a letter from Nicolae Mavrocordat asking him to send the Wallachian ruler, who was very interested in the sale of the famous library of Cardinal Du Bois, the auction catalog prepared up by Abbot Bignon, which was probably circulating as a manuscript and was due to be published in 1725, according to an announcement in the *Journal des Sçavants* in October 1724.

The list of examples goes on. At Christ Church Library in Oxford, Jacques Bouchard researched a collection of 18 letters signed by Jean le Clerc and addressed to William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury. In the Library of the University of Amsterdam, 13 letters signed by Wake are also preserved.³³ Among them are two letters in Latin sent by Antonie Epis on behalf of Prince Nicolae Mavrocordat, supplemented by four drafts addressed to Mavrocordat by the Archbishop William Wake. The intermediary of this new relationship had been Jean le Clerc, who had asked the help of William Wake to acquire for the Phanariot ruler the Oxford edition of the Psalms of David published in Greek. This was a successful undertaking, as we learn from a subsequent letter, dated February 11, 1722,³⁴ that Nicolae Mavrocordat had indeed obtained the Greek edition of the Psalms.

An important source of information on the acquisition of books for the Phanariot ruler is provided, as I mentioned, by the auction catalogs of libraries sold in Western Europe. Based on the hypothesis formulated by Corneliu Dima-Drăgan,³⁵ I succeeded in identifying in the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest a copy of the *Catalogus Bibliothecae Thuanae* [...], Paris, 1703, as an item in Mavrocordat's collection.³⁶ Indeed, in a letter dated September 17, 1721,³⁷ Antonie Epis asked Jean le Clerc once again for a universal catalog of all books, very likely an edition of the famous catalog of Latin books *Catalogus Universalis librorum tam compactorum quam incompactorum in quavis facultate et lingua*, a catalog with monthly issues from January 1713 to May 1720, published at Amsterdam in 1711 by the printers Janson and Waesberg, an issue of which, we understand from the context, had already been sent to the Phanariot ruler via Hoffman.³⁸

In the absence of an ownership mark, the presence of the ex-libris stamp of the St Sava College Library in Bucharest, to which many books were transferred from

Genealogicos Pompas, Heraldicos, Ceremonias, Vitas et Elogia, Lexicographos et Bibliothecarios. Quorum omnium Publica fiet Auctio. In taberna libraria Abrahami de Hondt., Bibliopolae. Ad diem 31 October. Et sequent, 1712, the Hague, 1712.

³³ Bouchard, *Nicolae Mavrocordat*, p. 24–35.

³⁴ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 149–152, letter no. 709.

³⁵ Dima-Drăgan, *Biblioteci umaniste*, p. 154.

³⁶ B.A.R. Bucharest, call number I30149.

³⁷ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 96–100, letter no. 686.

³⁸ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 114, letter no. 693.

the Metropolitan See³⁹ by a decision of Petrache Poenaru, director of the Ephorate of the Schools (Rom. “Eforia Școalelor”), provides clear proof of the journey of this book, and of the fact that it came most likely from the Mavrocordat family's collection. Nicolae Mavrocordat's son, Constantin Mavrocordat, who held the throne of Wallachia and Moldavia ten times in a row, had to pawn part of the library's books to pay off a debt of 16,000 *groshen*. In his *Testament* signed on February 20, 1748, the metropolitan of Wallachia Neophyte of Crete, or the Cretan (Rom. “Cretanul”), bequeathed his book collection to the library of the Metropolitan See.⁴⁰

In 1833, Petrache Poenaru ordered the inventory of the Metropolitan See's books, an operation completed in 1836. An amount of 5,000 volumes, out of the total 8,200 registered in the catalog, had been transferred to the library of the St Sava National College and the Central School of Craiova, today, the “Carol I” National College.⁴¹ The rest were transferred to the Central Seminary of Bucharest in 1868. The catalog completed in 1836⁴² was drawn following a decision in the *School Regulations*⁴³ that required the transfer of the Metropolitan Library's collections to the St Sava National College library. A book collection from the Metropolitan See was taken to the Central State Library, which was founded in 1864 and operated until 1901, when the books were transferred to the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the Library of the Romanian Academy holds a copy of the library catalog of the Swiss naturalist Conrad Gesner, *Bibliotheca instituta et colecta, primum a Conrado Gesnero* [...].⁴⁴ In the center of the title page, the ex-libris in black ink of the treasurer Ioannes Scarlatos, Nicolae Mavrocordat's son-in-law, a passionate reader, and the ex-libris stamp of the St Sava National College library are sufficient evidence for the theory that the book came from Nicolae Mavrocordat's library.

39 Therefore, the books that were transferred from Mavrocordat's library bear the new ownership stamp of the St Sava College.

40 See C. Dima-Drăgan, “Biblioteca Mavrocordaților de la Mănăstirea Văcărești. Între legendă și adevăr”, *BOR*, 115, 1977, 9-12, p. 1042; Marinescu, *Mănăstirea Văcărești*, p. 238. Surveying the manuscript that contains Neophyte the Cretan's *Testament*, I have not found this information.

41 Romanian MS 4978, *Catalog de cărțile ce s-au găsit în biblioteca Sf. Mitropolii*, in G. Ștrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor românești*, IV. 4414–5920, Bucharest, 1972, p. 169; M. Anineanu, “Din istoria bibliografiei românești. Catalogul sistematic din 1836 al bibliotecii Mitropoliei din București”, *Studii și Cercetări de Bibliologie*, 1, 1955, p. 118.

42 Anineanu, “Din istoria bibliografiei românești”, p. 117.

43 *Regulament al Școalelor publice din Prințipatul Țării Românești*, Bucharest, 1832, p. 115–116, art. 246–249.

44 B.A.R. Bucharest, call number III 30588.

Furthermore, Corneliu Dima-Drăgan stated that a copy of the *Catalogus Bibliothecae Publicae Universitatis Lugduno-Batavae*, published in Leiden in 1716 at the printing press of Pieter van der Aa,⁴⁵ holding the ex-libris stamp of the St Sava College Library and the same notation system as that used in the *Catalogus bibliothecae Thuanae* (Paris, 1679), came from Nicolae Mavrocordat's library.⁴⁶

Another confirmation of the way acquisitions were made is the preservation in the B.A.R. collections of bibliographies annotated by Nicolae Mavrocordat, such as that of the German scholar Johannes Henricus Boeclerus, *Bibliographia Historico-Politico-Philologica Curiosa* [...], [Frankfurt am Main], 1577, a copy that we had the opportunity to see and which has on the flyleaf Alexandru Mavrocordat's handwritten ex-libris. The book is profusely annotated in black ink. Most likely, as already hypothesized,⁴⁷ the comments belong to Nicolae Mavrocordat. On the title page, in a different ink from that used by Alexandru Mavrocordat, is the following note: *utilissimus Liber ad dirigendum studium, et ad eligendos meliores probationes quae authores*. The second book, authored by the humanist Daniel Georg Morhof, *Polyhistor literarius philosophicus et practicus*,⁴⁸ with a handwritten note by Alexandru Mavrocordat (according to C. Dima-Drăgan), could not be identified in the B.A.R. collections.

As mentioned above, from the letter dated July 30, 1727,⁴⁹ signed by Nicolaus Wolff, we learn that Nicolae Mavrocordat owned a catalog of certain books that had been part of the Marciana Library, sold in 1716. Corneliu Dima-Drăgan, referring to the catalog of this publishing house dated 1716 and held by the B.A.R., stated that it came from Nicolae Mavrocordat's collection. It is just a supposition, as is not sure that the handwritten notes on its pages were written by the Phanariot prince.

The list of titles in Nicolae Mavrocordat's library can be completed by surveying the correspondence with Jean le Clerc carried out from 1720 to 1727 by Nicolae Mavrocordat's secretaries, Antonie Epis, Nicolaus Wolff, Ștefan Bergler, and the physician Daniel de Fonseca,⁵⁰ preserved in the Library of the University of Amsterdam. Interesting for the information they provide on requests and acquisitions, these letters were accompanied by sums of money to pay for the requested books. The transport from Vienna to the Romanian Principalities was initially

⁴⁵ B.A.R., call number III 30551.

⁴⁶ Dima-Drăgan, *Biblioteci umaniste*, 140–143.

⁴⁷ Dima-Drăgan, *Biblioteci umaniste*, p. 141.

⁴⁸ Lubecae, *Sumptibus Petri Böckmanni*, Anno MDCCXIV.

⁴⁹ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 379, letter no. 817.

⁵⁰ Daniel de Fonseca (1672-1740), born in Oporto, Portugal, of Jewish parents, was a physician to the French ambassador in Constantinople, then to the Sultan. He became Nicolae Mavrocordat's secretary in 1719, familiarizing him with the Hebrew language and culture.

facilitated by Hoffman, and later by the publisher Thomas Fritsch and a certain merchant Ninu.⁵¹

The Dutch publications edited by Jean le Clerc and the scientific journal *Acta eruditorum*, where reviews of his work were published, were part of Nicolae Mavrocordat's book collection and constitute veritable sources of bibliographic information. From *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne*,⁵² Nicolae Mavrocordat learned of a new edition of Cicero's work, most likely the Oxford edition, which he requested for his collection. On July 24, 1721,⁵³ Antonie Epis thanked Le Clerc, on behalf of Nicolae Mavrocordat, for the second part of volume 15 of the *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne*, which he had already received.

3 The Correspondence between Antonie Epis and Jean le Clerc: The Years 1720-1721

These letters written in French, Latin, and Italian, whose signatories, as we have already mentioned, are four of the scholars who served as secretaries in the Bucharest princely administration at the beginning of the Phanariot epoch, provide information on the composition of Nicolae Mavrocordat's library. Thus, they contribute not only to form a complete image of the titles known to us from published and unpublished documentary sources, but also to compose a picture as close as possible to reality concerning the literary pursuits of the Phanariot ruler. The correspondence between Antonie Epis and Jean le Clerc is also a rich source of bibliographical information.

The collection relevant to us comprises, in chronological order, 28 letters in French, exchanged by Antonie Epis and Jean le Clerc: several written between 1720 and the beginning of 1722; a letter signed by Ștefan Bergler in 1723; another letter sent from Constantinople in the year 1724, written by Daniel de Fonseca; 14 letters signed by Nicolaus Wolff, two dated 1722, two – 1724, one – 1725, one – 1726, and six – 1727.

The correspondence between the chancellery of Prince Nicolae Mavrocordat and Jean le Clerc begins with the letter of November 8, 1720.⁵⁴ Antonie Epis, at the

⁵¹ Bouchard, *Nicolae Mavrocordat*, p. 17.

⁵² The editors of *Epistolario*, Maria Grazia Zacccone-Sina and Mario Sina, stated that in *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne*, tome XI/1, 1719, one may find a review of the 1706 edition of Cicero's speeches and letters: M. Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore ad Quintum fratrem. Ex Mss recensuit Tho. Cockman e Collegio Universitatis A. B. Editio Secunda*, Oxford, 1706.

⁵³ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 104, letter no. 688.

⁵⁴ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 55–60, letter no. 672.

request of the Phanariot ruler, clarifies the confusion related to the authorship of *Περὶ καθηκόντων Βιβλος*, wrongly attributed to Alexandru Mavrocordat by the editor of the journal *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne* in his review published in volume XIV/1 of 1720, Part II, p. 113–131.

This group of letters exchanged by Antonie Epis and Jean le Clerc is dated between November 1720 and April 24, 1722. As it is also the most consistent group, in which the bibliographical references are numerous, and as space does not allow me to carry out an exhaustive analysis of the entire corpus, I will discuss henceforth only the letters dated 1720 and 1721, focusing on the requested books of the most famous representatives of the Enlightenment and on books printed in Arabic, or by Arab authors.

The discourse in Antonie Epis's letters sent from Bucharest is that of an erudite. Rather than providing dry lists, Epis constantly makes scholarly comments, in a way that brings him closer to the well-known European concept of the *Republic of Letters* (*Res publica litterarum*).⁵⁵ He provides details regarding the requested writings, the contents of Nicolae Mavrocordat's library, the ruler's tastes for certain types of reading, and his own works. Of course, administrative issues related to the payment and transport of the requested volumes or ordinary issues could not be avoided. Accounts of daily events at the princely court, such as the conflict with the court physician, Michael Schend Vanderbek of Cefalonia,⁵⁶ grandson of the preacher Ioan Avramie, who conspired with a certain monk Spiridon in organizing a plot against the ruler,⁵⁷ are rooted in a cultural confrontation between the two, Nicolae Mavrocordat and Michael Schend Vanderbek. The purpose for which this story was disseminated in Western Europe by the *Gazette d'Amsterdam*,⁵⁸ with the help of the same Jean le Clerc, was not so much to inform on the plot itself, but to popularize the name of Nicolae Mavrocordat as a man of letters.

By analyzing the lists of books requested by Antonie Epis on behalf of the Phanariot ruler, with reminders at certain intervals, we can get a general idea of his taste for a certain type of reading: religious works, ancient authors, editions of the books authored by great representatives of the Enlightenment, studies on the Hebrew language and literature, especially bilingual dictionaries of Hebrew and

55 The concept defining an intellectual community in a constant dialog on cultural themes flourished from 1650 to 1750, but its origin lies in Renaissance Humanism. Erasmus of Rotterdam was an important personality involved in this discussion. See Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, p. 374.

56 Schend Vanderbek published a pamphlet against Nicolae Mavrocordat. See D. Russo, *Studii istorice greco-române: Opere postume*, t. II, Bucharest, 1939, p. 454.

57 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 138, letter no. 702, dated November 28, 1721.

58 A publication that, like the journal *Gazette de France* edited by Théophraste Renaudot, also reflected elements of foreign and home politics. We refer here to the issue of January 23, 1722.

Latin. As early as 1719,⁵⁹ the prince's passion for Hebrew, which he studied under the guidance of his doctor and secretary Daniel de Fonseca, was notorious.

The selection of works was dictated by Nicolae Mavrocordat's affinity for a certain literary genre and the linguistic criterion, since, as the doctor Demetrius Procopius Pamperi⁶⁰ testifies, he was familiar with Hebrew, in addition to Ancient and Modern Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Arabic, and Persian.⁶¹

An enthusiast of numismatics, the prince requested treatises in small editions, with images reproduced in the *taille-douce* technique.⁶² Nicolae Mavrocordat's preoccupation with antiquities is reflected in the meticulousness with which he follows the editorial aspects of the ancient authors' published works, which he wants to have in his library, alongside the latest editions of modern authors' books.

Moreover, the statistical balance between the number of volumes of ancient authors' works – many of them lost, as Antonie Epis notes in a letter of September 9, 1721, without giving the reason⁶³ – and the modern authors' works is visible. The ancient vs. modern confrontation is part of an earlier controversy revived in the Western literary world as a feature of the new current, the Enlightenment, through the writings of Charles Perrault, the poem *Siècle de Louis le Grand*, Paris, 1687,⁶⁴ and Jonathan Swift in his satire on the "Battle of the Books".⁶⁵

59 Bouchard, *Nicolae Mavrocordat*, p. 16. Citing the catalog of A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη ἢτοι κατάλογος τῶν ἐν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις* (vol. IV, St. Petersburg, 1899, vol. V, St. Petersburg, 1915), the author draws attention to the existence of a colligate containing the Scriptures in Hebrew and the translation and transliteration into vernacular Greek, probably the work of Nicolae Mavrocordat. The manuscript, which contains Mavrocordat's monogram, is held by the library of the *metochion* of the Holy Sepulcher in Constantinople. A similar manuscript was discovered by Papadopoulos-Kerameus at the Goumera Monastery in the ancient region of Chaldia (Gr. Χαλδία), in northeast Anatolia (today in Turkey). See Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική πληροφορία*, t. IV, St. Petersburg, 1899, p. 198.

60 A Macedo-Romanian scholar, Nicolae Mavrocordat's secretary.

61 D. Procopiu, "Επιτετμημένη ἐπαρίθμησις τῶν κατὰ τὸν παρελθόντα αἰῶνα λογίων Γραικῶν, καὶ περὶ τινων ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι ἀνθουντων", in C. N. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη ἐπιστάσαι*, t. 3, Venice, 1872, p. 497. See also I. Th. Hoelber, *Oratio de litterarum studiis Ioann Nicolai Maurocordati Principis Valachiae*, Jena, 1755, p. VII. Accessible online at: <http://kvk.bibliothek.kit.edu/view-title/index.php?katalog> (accessed June 24, 2024).

62 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 150, letter no. 709, dated February 11, 1722.

63 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 112, letter no. 692, dated September 9, 1721.

64 See Th. Graesse, *Trésor de livres rares et précieux ou Nouveau dictionnaire bibliographique*, vol. V, Milan, 1950, p. 206.

65 J. Swift, *A Tale of a Tub: with an Account of a Battle between the Ancient and Modern Bookes in St James Library*, London, 1704. See Th. Graesse, *Trésor de livres rares*, t. VI, p. 535; M. Călinescu, *Cinci fețe ale modernității: modernism, avangardă, decadență, kitsch, postmodernism*, Iași, 2005 (2nd ed.), p. 35; Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, p. 50.

The major works of European representatives of the pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment were strongly requested. In a letter of February 11, 1721, Epis requests a copy of the French edition of a journal edited by David Mortier (1673–1728), published at Amsterdam in 1714, *Le Spectator, ou le Socrate moderne, ou l'on voit un portait naïf des mœurs de ce siècle*,⁶⁶ the Dutch version of the famous English periodical founded by the essayist Joseph Addison (1672–1719) and the writer Richard Steele (1672–1729). Epis included in the list of requests composed on behalf of Mavrocordat the major work of the French essayist Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630–1721), a commentator on Origen's work *Demonstratio evangelica*, probably the Paris edition of 1679. I have identified in the catalog in MS 603 of the B.A.R. another work of the same author, *Origenis in S. Script. Commentaria* (Cologne, 1685). In a letter of May 10, 1721,⁶⁷ the prince's secretary expresses his regret upon learning the news of the death of Pierre-Daniel Huet from Jean le Clerc's letter of April 11.

A French edition of the seminal work of the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) *Le Droit de la guerre et de la paix* was requested by Epis for the Phanariot ruler. However, the year of the edition is not very clear. He definitely referred to one of the three editions published before 1724, i.e., of 1687, 1703, or 1721.

A representative of the Enlightenment educated in theology and law, the German publicist and essayist Samuel Puffendorf (1632–1694) was a professor of natural law in Lund, Sweden.⁶⁸ It was there that he published in 1672 his *magnum opus*, *De iure naturae et gentium*. Nicolae Mavrocordat wanted to acquire another edition of the translation of Puffendorf's work, noting that he already owned the Dutch version of 1706, in two volumes, achieved by J. Barbeyrac, with which he was not satisfied.⁶⁹

From the work of the famous 17th-century orator, translator and commentator of the Psalms Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1628–1704), Antonie Epis requested, on behalf of the Phanariot prince, a copy of *Les Pseaumes de David en rime, revues par Jean Diodati* (Geneva, 1646).⁷⁰ This is just another significant example to illustrate the importance of the lists included in this epistolary exchange.

While studying this debut of an epistolary dialogue between scholars, our attention was also drawn to the identification of the titles of Arab authors' works that Nicolae Mavrocordat requested for his library. It is known from the accounts of Athanasios Comnenus Ipsilanti that his father was also "very learned in the

⁶⁶ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 73, letter no. 677, dated February 10, 1721.

⁶⁷ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 93, letter no. 683.

⁶⁸ F. Hofer, *Nouvelle biographie générale: Depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours*, vol. 41, Paris, 1842, col. 170.

⁶⁹ From the content of the letter, we learn that the second edition of Samuel Puffendorf's work was known to the Phanariot prince.

⁷⁰ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 71, letter dated February 10, 1721.

Hellenic language, Latin, Arabic, and Persian, and in medicine" (*foarte învățat în limba elinească, latinească, arabă și persană și în medicină*), a statement reinforced by Alexandru Papadopol-Calimach, who in turn claims that Alexandru Mavrocordat knew Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Classical Greek, Latin, French, English, and Slavonic.⁷¹ The book orders inserted in these letters demonstrate that Nicolae Mavrocordat, who mastered Arabic, also read the works in the original. Moreover, the information provided by the letters completes the overall picture of the Mavrocordat family library, since Arab authors are under-represented in the surviving library catalogs.

In the letter signed by Epis and dated 1 September 1721,⁷² Jean le Clerc is asked for a copy of the *Omnia opera* by the Arab philosopher Averroës (Ibn Rushd, 1126–1128), a well-known commentator of Aristotel's works, in a bilingual edition, Arabic and Latin, published in Argentorati (Strasbourg).

The prince was also interested in a copy of the *Geographia Nubiensis*, the Latin edition of the renowned Arab geographer and cartographer Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Idrīsī (1099–1166).⁷³ As the editors of the *Epistolario* have established, the letter most likely refers to the famous 1619 edition of Gabriel Sionita and Ioannes Hesronita *Geographia Nubiensis, id est Accuratissima totius Orbis in septem Climata divisi Descriptio [...] recens ex Arabico in Latinum versa a Gabriele Sionita et Ioanne Hesronita* (Paris, 1619).⁷⁴

In the letter he sent to Jean le Clerc on September 9, 1721,⁷⁵ in which he mentioned the loss of many early printed books, Antonie Epis conveyed the request of the Phanariot ruler to acquire, in addition to the ancient authors, of whom he would prefer bilingual editions in a small, easy-to-handle format, an Arabic-Latin edition of the *Annales* of Eutychius of Alexandria.⁷⁶ This was Eutychius's work commented in Latin by the famous English scholar of Arabic and theologian Edward Pococke

71 Al. Papadopol-Calimach, *Despre Alexandru Mavrocordat și despre activitatea sa politică și literară*, Bucharest, 1884, p. 13.

72 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 109–110, letter no. 691, dated May 10, 1721.

73 An Arab geographer born in Sabtah, Morocco, also known as Ceuta, a city administered at the time by Spain. He resided and composed his works at the court of Roger II of Sicily.

74 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 93, n. 20.

75 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 111–114, letter no. 692.

76 Eutychius of Alexandria (Ar., Saʿīd ibn Biṭrīq, 877–940), Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt. He studied medicine and history. He is famous, among others, for his Latin chronicle of universal history, *Nazm al-Jawhar* (*The Row of Jewels*), also known by its Latin title *Eutychii Annales* (*The Annals of Eutychius*).

(1604–1691). The request for this work was reiterated in the letters of September 27 and October 29, 1721.⁷⁷

In the letter of September 28, 1721, there are further requests for Arabic books. Two or three grammars were requested, as the prince wished to learn “Chaldean” (i.e., biblical Aramaic), Hebrew, and Syriac. He had also asked for the work of the famous astronomer al-Farghānī, known in the Western world as Alfraganus,⁷⁸ *Elementa astronomica Arabice et Latine* (Amsterdam, 1669).

The synthetic bibliographical reference used by Antonie Epis, *Drusii quae edidit Arab. Latine, vel Hebr. Lat.* was interpreted by the editors of the collection of letters as a reference to the first edition of the valuable anthology of Arabic and Hebrew literature by the Dutch orientalist Iohannes van den Driesche (1550–1616), *Apophthegmata Ebraeorum ac Arabum. Ex Avoth R. Nathan, Aristea, Libro selectarum Margaritarum et aliis auctoribus collecta, latineaque reddita, cum brevibus scholiis* (Franeker, 1591).

The same list includes the Arabic-Latin edition of the Elzevier editors, *elegantissimis typis*, of Georgius Elmacinus,⁷⁹ *Historia Saracenica*, in the translation of the Orientalist Thomas Erpenius (1584–1624): *G. Elmacinus, Historia Saracenica [...] Latine reddita opera et studio Thomae Erpenii* (Leiden, 1625). Corneliu Dima-Drăgan has drawn attention to the copy in the Library of the Romanian Academy of *Bibliographia Historico-Politico-Philologica Curiosa*, a work by the German humanist Johannes Henricus Boeclerus, with the ex-libris of Alexandru Mavrocordat. In this catalog, next to the above-mentioned title of the book, which was erroneously attributed to Erpenius, a correction by the reader, Alexandru or Nicolae Mavrocordat, is visible.⁸⁰

Among the works of Arab authors requested by the Wallachian prince is *Philosophus Autodidactus*,⁸¹ a composition of the philosopher Ibn Ṭufayl.⁸² The editors of the letters have determined that the book referred to is most likely the Oxford edition of 1671, which was translated by Edward Pococke.⁸³ The title of this

77 Jean le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 126–128.

78 Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Kathīr al-Farghānī (ca. 820–861), born in Trasoxiana, in northeast Uzbekistan, author of works on astronomy, the best-known being *Elements of Astronomy of the Celestial Motions*.

79 Ibn al-‘Amīd, a 13th-century historian.

80 Dima-Drăgan, *Biblioteci umaniste*, p. 141.

81 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 128, letter no. 696, dated October 29, 1721.

82 Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭufayl al-Qaysī, known in the medieval times as Abentofal, or Abubacer (1105–1188), was a contemporary of Averroes active in Morocco and Spain, author of medical treatises in verse.

83 Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 128–129, letter no. 696, dated October 29, 1721.

work is: *Philosophus autodidactus sive Epistola Abi Jaafar Ebn Tophail De Hai Ebn Yokdhan [...]. Ex Arabica in linguam Latinam versa ab Eduardo Pocockio.*

One of the few letters preserved in the library of Amsterdam, signed by Jean le Clerc and addressed to Antonie Epis, dates from April 11, 1721.⁸⁴ In addition to other useful information, the philologist expresses, under the motto *Non omnia possumus omnes*, his regret that he did not persist in the study of Arabic, the knowledge of which would have been useful in his exegesis of the Old Testament. From the same letter we learn that he had in his collection a manuscript of the Qur'an copied by Davidus Clericus and a manuscript of *Nubii geographia*, mentioned in the *Catalogus librorum Joannis Clericis* (Amsterdam, 1735).⁸⁵

The survival of this correspondence, in which the literary interests of the Phanariot prince Nicolae Mavrocordat are clearly expressed, represents a fundamental source of reflection both on his erudition and on the encyclopedic character of his book collection. An analysis of the entire correspondence from the point of view of the book requests sent by his secretaries to Western European scholars would help draw a more comprehensive picture of Mavrocordat's literary tastes. Even in the year that marks the beginning of their correspondence, there is a balance in the demand for works of ancient and modern authors, demonstrating both a taste for reading and a desire for acquiring encyclopedic knowledge. The prince's interest in the works of contemporary authors shows his strong attachment to the European cultural scene.

When assessing the content of the works requested by Nicolae Mavrocordat through his secretary Antonie Epis, according to his fields of interest, we notice a correlation between the useful and the pleasant, considering also the way he understood his political role.

The letters examined in this study demonstrate not only that Nicolae Mavrocordat was aware of the latest publications in Western Europe, but also the fact that he was in permanent contact with prominent figures of the Western academic circles. At the same time, the letters reveal the pragmatic approach of the prince and his secretaries to arranging the purchase, payment, and shipping of the books, until they reached the princely library at the Monastery of Văcărești.

⁸⁴ Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, p. 80, letter no. 680.

⁸⁵ *Librorum Joannis Clericis*, p. 2, no. 8 and 9. Accessible online at: <http://picus.unica.it/documenti/Catalogus%20librorum%20Joannis%20Clerici.pdf> (accessed March 17, 2024).

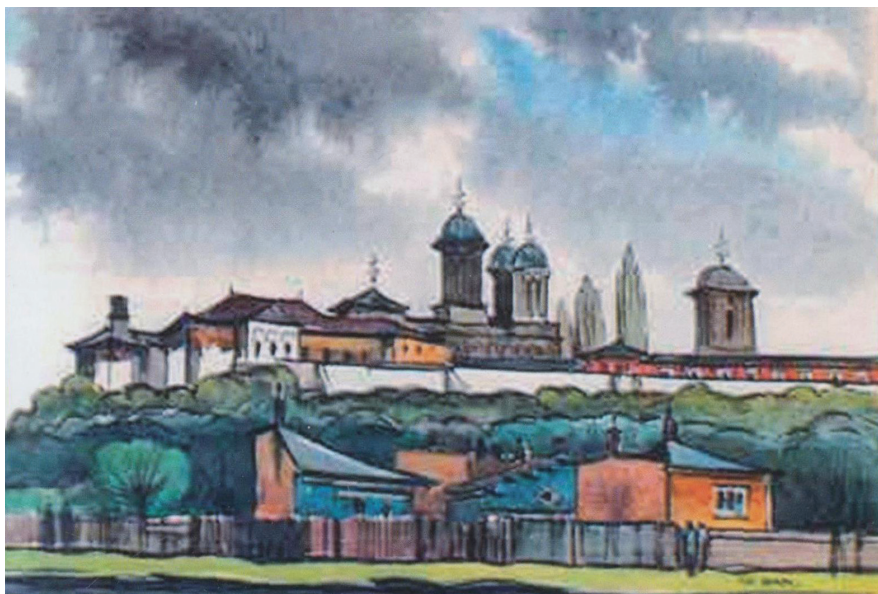


Fig. 1: Gheorghe Leahu, *Văcărești before the Storm*, watercolor, 1976 (in N. Mavrocordat, *Răgazurile lui Filotheos*, ed. J. Bouchard, Bucharest: Omonia, 2015, Fig. [3r]).



Fig. 3: Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, *Περὶ τῶν Καθηκόντων Βιβλος*, Bucharest, 1719, title page (Biblioteca Centrală Universitară "Carol I", Bucharest. By permission of the Library).

Bibliography:

- Anineanu, Marta. "Din istoria bibliografiei românești. Catalogul sistematic din 1836 al bibliotecii Mitropoliei din București". *Studii și Cercetări de Bibliologie*, 1, 1955, p. 113–128.
- Bouchard, Jacques. *Nicolae Mavrocordat. Domn și cărturar al Iluminismului timpuriu (1680–1730)*. Bucharest: Editura Omonia, 2006.
- Bouchard, Jacques. *Les Loisirs de Philothée*. Text établi, traduit et commenté, preface by Konstantinos Dimaras. Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montreal, 1989.
- Catalogus Librorum theologicorum, historicorum, philosophicorum, philologicorum, tum typis expressorum, tum manuscriptorum Joannis Clericis*. Amsterdam: Ex officina J. Wetstenii et Smith, 1735.
- Călinescu, Matei. *Cinci fețe ale modernității: modernism, avangardă, decadență, kitsch, postmodernism*. Iași: Polirom, 2005 (2nd ed.).
- Cândea, Virgil. *Mărturie românești peste hotare. Creații românești și izvoare despre români în străinătate. Serie nouă*, ed. Ioana Feodorov, vol. III. *India-Olanda*. Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2011.
- Dima-Drăgan, Corneliu. *Biblioteci umaniste românești: istoric, semnificații, organizare*. Bucharest: Editura Litera, 1974.
- Dima-Drăgan, Corneliu. "Biblioteca Mavrocordaților de la Mănăstirea Văcărești. Între legendă și adevăr". *BOR*, 115, 1977, 9–12, p. 1035–1045.
- Erbiceanu, Constantin. "Catalogul istoric a ómenilor însemnați din secolul XVIII, dintre cari marea majoritate au trăit în Țările Române Valahia și Moldova de Chesarie Daponte". In Constantin Erbiceanu, *Cronicarii greci cari au scris despre români în epoca fanariotă*. Bucharest: Tipografia Cărilor Bisericești, 1888 (facsimile ed., Bucharest, 2003), p. 87–233.
- Graesse, Theodore J. G. *Trésor de livres rares et précieux ou Nouveau dictionnaire bibliographique*, vol. V–VI. Milan: G. G. Görlich, 1950.
- Hoelbe, Johann Theodor. *Oratio de litterarum studiis Ioann Nicolai Maurocordati Principis Valachiae*. Jena: Johann Friedrich Schill, 1755.
- Hurmuzaki, Eudoxiu de. *Documente grecești privitoare la istoria românilor publicate după originale, copiile Academiei Române și tipărituri*, vol. XIV/2. 1716–1777, ed. by Nicolae Iorga. Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Instrucție, Stabilimentul Grafic I. V. Socecu, 1917.
- Iorga, Nicolae. "O scrisoare a lui Le Quien către Neculai Mavrocordat". *Arhiva Societății Științifice și Litere din Iași*, 10, 1899, p. 132–134.
- Iorga, Nicolae. *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, t. III. *Fragmente de cronici și știri despre cronicari*. Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Instrucție, Stabilimentul Grafic I. V. Socecu, 1901.
- Iorga, Nicolae. "Pilda bunilor domni din trecut față de școala românească". *AARMSI*, S. III, t. XXXVII, 1914, Mem. 2, p. 85–120.
- Iorga, Nicolae. "Știri nouă despre biblioteca Mavrocordaților și despre viața muntească în timpul lui Constantin Vodă Mavrocordat". *AARMSI*, S. III, t. VI, 1927, p. 569–640.
- Le Clerc, Jean. *Epistolario*, vol. IV. 1719–1732 e *indici generali*, ed. by Maria Grazia Zaccane-Sina and Mario Sina. Florence: Leo S. Olschi editore, 1997.
- Legrand, Émile. *Généalogie des Maurocordato de Constantinople rédigée d'après des documents inédits*. Paris: J. Maisonneuve, 1900.
- Litzica, Constantin. *Catalogul manuscriselor grecești*, vol. I. Bucharest: Institutul de Arte grafice "Carol Göbl", 1909.
- Marinescu, Octavian-Dumitru. *Mănăstirea Văcărești din București, de la origini până astăzi*. Bucharest: Editura BASILICA a Patriarhiei Romane, 2012.

- Papadopol-Calimach, Alexandru. *Despre Alexandru Mavrocordat și despre activitatea sa politică și literară*. Bucharest: Tipografia Academiei Române, 1884.
- Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Athanasios. *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη ἤτοι κατάλογος τῶν ἐν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου ἀποστολικοῦ τε καὶ καθολικοῦ ὀρθοδόξου πατριαρχικοῦ θρόνου τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ πάσης Παλαιστίνης ἀποκειμένων ἐλληνικῶν κωδίκων*, vol. 1. St. Petersburg: The Russian Imperial Orthodox Society for Palestine, 1891 (facsimile ed., Brussels, 1963).
- Popescu, Radu. "Cronica lui Nicolae Mavrocordat". In Dan H. Mazilu (ed.), *Cronicari munteni*. Bucharest: Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă/Univers Enciclopedic, 2004.
- Procopiu, Dimitriu. "Ἐπιτετμημένη ἐπαρίθμησις τῶν κατὰ τὸν παρελθόντα αἰῶνα λογίων Γραικῶν, καὶ περὶ τινων ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι ἀνθούντων". In Constantinos N. Sathas (ed.), *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη ἐπιστάσαι*, t. III. Venice: Types toa chrónoy, 1872, π. 480–503.
- Regulament al Școalelor publice din Prințipatul Țării Românești*. Bucharest: Tipografia Ion Eliade, 1832.
- Robertson, Ritchie. *The Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness, 1680–1790*. London: Penguin Books, 2022 (2nd ed.).
- Russo, Demostene. *Studii istorice Greco-române: opere postume*, vol. II. Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă "Regele Carol II", 1939.
- Sturdza, Mihai Dimitrie. *Dictionnaire historique et généalogique des Grandes Familles de Grèce, d'Albanie et de Constantinople*, vol. 1–3. Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1999.
- Ștrempele, Gabriel. *Catalogul manuscriselor românești*, vol. IV. 4414–5920. Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Pedagogică, 1972.