

Vasile-Lucian V. GOLDAN
Faculty of History, History Doctoral School,
University „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iași

THE DONATION IN THE METROPOLIS OF MOLDAVIA AND SUCEAVA, IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY. „PANTAHUZELOR DOSSIER”

Keywords
Pantahuză;
Metropolis of Moldavia and Suceava;
Metropolitan Iosif Naniescu;
The second half of the 19th century

Abstract

The donation or the practice of aid collection, in order to build or rehabilitate a place of worship, is an old habit in Romania, and during the arch-shepherding of Metropolitan Iosif Naniescu (1875-1902) in Iași, this was one of the most common options. In order to ensure the transparency of this action, the fundraising action had to have the blessing of the bishop of the place. This blessing was called „pantahuză” (gr. πανταχοῦσα), a document issued by the metropolitan or episcopal chancellery, signed by the bishop and given to a community, in response to an initial request. The present paper attempts to present in an objective and systematic manner the main issues of financial aid collection, both in villages and cities, by virtue of the document called „pantahuză”.

INTRODUCTION

The donation or the practice of collecting aid, during construction or rehabilitation in places of worship, is an old one in the Romanian countries. At the time of Metropolitan Iosif Naniescu (1875-1902) in Iași, from a financial point of view, the donation was the most common form of assistance, regarding the construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of a place of worship. In order to provide transparency to this action and a guarantee that the collected income is used for nothing else, except for the purpose of carrying out an activity of general interest, the collection of funds had to have the blessing of the bishop of the place. This blessing was called „pantahuză”, and was a document issued by the metropolitan or episcopal chancellery, signed by the archbishop and given to a community, in response to an initial request. The practice was so common in Romania at the end of the 19th century, that on 18 December 1879, Prince Carol the First sanctioned by a decree with number 3216: „Regulations for mercy carriers, to gather offerings from Christian pious people in favor of poor churches and other charitable establishments”ⁱ. The legislative regulation is born as a natural reaction of civil society, regarding the conduct of a wide and common customary activity that had only the turn of the clerical institution.

The present paper aims to present objectively and systematically, the main aspects of collecting financial aid, in villages and cities, in the virtue of the document named „pantahuză”.

In the elaboration of the paper I used mainly the analytical and comparative working method, by analyzing the two volumes of the dossier "Pantahuzelor" from the Romanian National Archives, the Iasi branch, the Metropolitan Fund of Moldova and Suceava, from 1895 and by comparing the different situations encountered.

The concept of „pantahuza”, its meaning and semantic evolution in the Romanian space

From the etymological point of view, the term „pantahuză” comes from the Greek "πανθαχούσα", which is translated by „encyclical” or „circular” and designates a subscription list that is used for collecting pecuniary goods, in order to carry out a work of charityⁱⁱ. In the Romanian space the term has retained its meaning, but over the years, it has acquired a pejorative meaning – „to walk from place to place carrying words, lies”ⁱⁱⁱ.

In the Kingdom of Romania, the practice of collecting aid, in order to maintain, build or rehabilitate a place of worship, is a common one, and this fact is based on two historical events, both having financial substrate. Most of the churches and monasteries built during the Romanian Middle Ages were built by rulers, boyars, and later by craftsmen guilds. The moment of the abolition of the noblemen

ranks and the dissolution of the guilds led to the impossibility of the old noble families and the craft guilds to maintain the churches, monasteries or parishes built by them or their ancestors. The situation became really difficult during the secularizing of the monastery assets, and for these reasons, the monks, priests and their parishioners were forced to appeal to the mercy of other Christians.

In the tumult of this difficult economic situation, it was desired to maintain a transparency of the collection and use of the donated pecuniary amounts, and this was possible through a centralization of the dates and an agreement from the bishop of the place. „Pantahuza” or the blessing of the hierarch to collect pecuniary funds, was nothing more than a document, signed by the bishop in which it was allowed, on the basis of a prior request and checks in the territory - as far as possible - to collect a specified amount of money, in a determined period of time.

The practice of collecting aid for churches was so common in nineteenth-century Romania that on 18 December 1879, Prince Carol I sanctioned it by a decree with number 3216. The regulation has 11 articles and presents the steps to be taken in order to collect aid. The last article explicitly states that if the person who collects these aids violates one of the provisions of the regulation must be denounced to the government^{iv}.

THE DOSSIER „PANTAHUZELOR”

In order to understand better this phenomenon of public collection, which was intended to help the churches, we present in detail, the steps that a community had to go through in order to receive financial assistance in order to carry out the works they wanted to carry out. In this historiographical journey we will use both the aforementioned regulation, as well as conclusive examples from volume I, of the Pantahuzelor dossier, from 1895. The aforementioned file includes no less than 286 files, in which there are cases of walking with the „pantahuza”, in the Metropolis of Moldova and Suceava.

In order to obtain a fundraising approval, the priest of a parish had to address to his hierarch first. For the use of the „pantahuza”, the meeting of the council of a parish was requested, which together with the parish priest asked the metropolitan the right to raise money for different works and appointed one, two or more persons, to deal with the raising of funds. The request, along with the signature process, reached to the Deanery, and from there a report was prepared and an address was sent along with the other documents to the Metropolitan Chancellery which, by the voice of the hierarch,

granted or not a blessing, offering this right for a certain period (the pantahuza itself).

In the request that was made to the metropolitan, the following aspects had to be mentioned: the delegation of one or two members, who were empowered by the communal and parish seals, the amount of money that was aimed to be collected and the signatures of those who recommended the bearers of the conditions of mercy^v. For example, the priest of Iasi county, Vasile Creangă sends the address 39, from January 20, 1895, to the metropolitan chancellery to request the archdiocese of blessing, following the request with the number 107 - a white registry destined for the pantahuză - of the mayor from the Popești village, in Bahlui place. He wants to raise the amount of 3,000 lei, needed to repair the church in Bojila, from Harpășești village. The Metropolitan responds to the same address with „it is approved to carry the required condition for which the appropriate works will be done”^{vi} and signs it.

Another example is the one from the Deanery Neamț. The members of the communal council of Dochia village, Roznov Square, in the meeting from 27 August 1895 establish in seven points those necessary for the repair of the parish church, the document is signed by the members of the communal council, mayor and a notary.^{vii} The priest Gh. Popovici sends the address with the number 1 127 from 31 August 1895^{viii}, and the hierarch releases on 18 September 1895, by the address with the number 1747, the pantahuza itself: „by this Chiriarchical Book we grant the blessing and the blessings to the inhabitants, Alexandru Lupu, member in the epitropy of that church and Dimitrie Dascălu, both elected by the inhabitants of the mentioned municipality, on their responsibility to walk with this condominium for five months from this date”^{ix}. At the end of the paper, in this case the five months, another report was drawn up in which the amounts of money raised were mentioned^x. A new document called "Sama" is attached to this report. It was basically an account, in which the paper included the incomes and expenses during the repair work. From the report of the parish of St. Voievoz from Dochia village it is observed that, those who walked with the pantahuza were paid – „Paid to the gentlemen Dumitru Dascălu and Alexandru Lupu for walking with the conviction of miles for 5 months - 418 lei and 90 bani”^{xi}. This file was submitted to the dean who sent a new address to the metropolitan chancellery in which he explained in detail the entire course of the work, the sums collected and the result of the action^{xii}.

Estimates of the architects could also be attached to the file addressed to the metropolitan to justify the demand for the pantheon and the amount to be collected. An example in this case is the construction of a porch in the Church of St. Elijah^{xiii}, from Alecsandri street, from Iași^{xiv}.

Pantahuza from the monastic space

The use of the pantheon was not characteristic only for parish churches, the practice being common in the monastic world. One of the examples is the address of the Prodromu Chinovial hermitage, with the dedication "Sf. John the Baptist", from the Holy Mountain Athos. By the address with the number 33, from 4 March 1895, the superior of the monastery, the Hieronymite Ghedeon writes to the metropolitan of Moldova the following: „Our building has three properties in Urba Iași: one in Socola street, one in Păcurari and another near Saint Mitropolitan Church, the latter two given by Lady Catinca Bălănescu^{xv}. All three are in a state of decay, demanding the new construction. The undersigned have decided to do this in the current year, from the iconography of the Schit's methods from Galați, Bucharest and Bucium. I also asked Father Iuvenalie (Juvenalie) the hieromonah, with the permission of Your Holiness to walk through the counties of Neamț, Suceava, Dorohoiu, to gather offerings from our Romanian brothers which will be used at the mentioned construction...”^{xvi}.

Naniescu replies by address with the number 649, of 18 April 1895, blessing the intention of the Podromul Hermitage, as well as the Hieronymite Iuvenalie Manolescu, to whom he gives „Kiriarchiceas Book and blessing to walk with this present for one year from this time in order to collect money aid (...) provided that the so-called hieromonah complies precisely with the Regulation of the Holy Synod for the bearers of the conditions of mercy”^{xvii}.

There are two aspects that can be observed from the metropolitan response. The Holy Synod was the one who regulated this practice by decision and the bishop had the right to set the period when the paper could be used, that is, the period when aid could be collected was limited and fixed by the archer. It could also walk with the pantahuza into a neighboring diocese, having the blessing of the two hierarchs. The Hieronymite Bishop of Huși responds to the address with the number 679, from the year 1896 of the hierarch Naniescu, by the address with the number 739, from 25 April 25 the same year „with great thanks we will give the proper approval and the authorization to the inhabitants Gh. N. Ciobanu and V. Moisiu, from the village of Siliștea, Neamț county to walk with the pantahuza inside our diocese”^{xviii}.

CONCLUSIONS

Pantahuza represented a form of social-economic expression, with features based on Christian-moral, with economic-legal and socio-cultural effect. An important aspect of the evolution of this customary practice is that of recognizing the pantahuza by the state institutions themselves, in this case the

Ministry of Cults. An example is the address with the number 1504, of the Ministry of Cults to Naniescu from 9 May 1897: „The Council of Ministers in its meeting of May 7 a.c. by agreeing in the Journal n. 17 that the Hieronymites Ilia Gheorghe and Ilia Constantin collect money from the pious Christians in the country for their church and, because the petition they addressed to the Ministry on March 26 a.c. it was sent from Iași, I have the honor to ask you to order to give these hieromonks a pantahuza invested with the proper forms to be able to serve them in the High Diocese of Your Holiness”^{xix}.

From the presented ones it is possible to observe how a customary practice of the Church, based exclusively on the sensitivity of the laity towards the religious one acquires in time, by using legal character. The donations represented a true source of income of the Orthodox Church, not only the Romanian one during Naniescu's time, but this practice is characteristic of all Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity for all time.

Acknowledgement

”Doctoranzi și cercetători postdoctorat pregătiți pentru piața muncii!”. Project code: POCU/380/6/13/123623.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arhivele Naționale Române, Filiala Iași, Fond Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei, Dosarul „Pantahuzelor” vol. I, nr. 67/1895;
- [2] Arhivele Naționale Române, Filiala Iași, Fond Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei, nr. 115, vol I/1895;
- [3] Costescu, Chiru C., *Colecțiune de legi, regulamente acte, decizii, circulări, instrucțiuni formulare și programe privitoare la Biserică, Culte, Cler, Învățământ religios, Bunuri Bisericești, Epitropii parohiale și Administrații religioase și pioase*, Institutul de Arte Grafice C. Sfetea, București, 1916;
- [4] *Evenimentul*, anul II, nr. 595/1895;
- [5] Rosetti, Radu, *Amintiri, Ce am auzit de la alți, Din copilărie, Din prima tinerețe*, ediția a II –a, Editura Humanitas, București, 2015.
- [6] <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/pantahuz%C4%83>.

Notes

ⁱ Chiru C. Costescu, *Colecțiune de legi, regulamente acte, decizii, circulări, instrucțiuni formulare și programe privitoare la Biserică, Culte, Cler, Învățământ religios, Bunuri Bisericești, Epitropii parohiale și Administrații religioase și pioase*, Institutul de Arte Grafice C. Sfetea, București, 1916, p. 389, nota 1.

ⁱⁱ <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/pantahuz%C4%83>.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibidem*.

^{iv} Chiru C. Costescu, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

^v *Ibidem*, f. 389.

^{vi} Arhivele Naționale Române, Filiala Iași, Fond Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei, Dosarul „Pantahuzelor” vol. I, nr. 67/1895, f. 17.

^{vii} *Ibidem*, f. 64-65.

^{viii} *Ibidem*, f. 62.

^{ix} *Ibidem*, f. 63.

^x *Ibidem*, f. 104.

^{xi} *Ibidem*, f. 106.

^{xii} *Ibidem*, f. 103.

^{xiii} St. Prophet Ilie from Iași was built at the beginning of the seventeenth century and demolished in 1953. In 1895 part of the parishioners of the parish of St. George Lozonschi ask Naniescu to join the parish of St. Ilie, having as priest Alexander Arion. „We want to be the people of St. Gheorghe Lozonschi in form, but in fact at the Holy Prophet Ilie. „Evenimentul”, anul II, nr. 595, sâmbătă 25 februarie 1895, p. 595 și Arhivele Naționale Române, Filiala Iași, Fond Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei, nr. 115, vol I/1895, f. 39

^{xiv} Arhivele Naționale Române, Filiala Iași, Fond Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei, Dosarul „Pantahuzelor” vol. I, nr. 67/1895, f. 70-71.

^{xv} Radu Rosetti reminds of the house in 1874 „In 1874, after my return from abroad, when I came to spend the winter in Iași, there were only ten houses left that were still welcomed: the house Neculai Roznovanu (...) , the house Nicu Rosetti-Bălănescu ..: ”, Radu Rosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 621

^{xvi} Arhivele Naționale Române, Filiala Iași, Fond Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei, Dosarul „Pantahuzelor” vol. I, nr. 67/1895, f. 35.

^{xvii} *Ibidem*, f. 36.

^{xviii} *Ibidem*, f. 113.

^{xix} *Ibidem*, f. 217.