ON THE EDITING OF A „MOLDAVIAN NUMISMATIC LEXICON (1359-1859)” (I)

(Summary)

Keywords: numismatic lexicon, laic and ecclesiastic sovereignties, laic and ecclesiastic authorities, mints, specific legislation, numismatists’ gallery.

For the research of the numismatic finds identified on the territory of Moldavia – country whose history is delimited by the beginning of the Golden Horde’s decline, together with the change of the local dynastic lineage by Bogdan who founded the voievodate of Moldavia, and, respectively, the union of the two Romanian principalities at mid 19th century – the specialist must use specific investigation means, such as numismatic text books, treatises and studies, usual determinators and collection catalogues, dictionaries and thematic lexicons. These work instruments were elaborated on the basis of the repertoire of numerous discoveries and the study of great numismatic collections from abroad.

Unfortunately, Romanian historiography has been increasingly facing the need of a Repertoire of Numismatic Finds in the last decades. Whatever the epoch or the collections in which they are preserved, ancient, Byzantine, medieval or modern emissions are waiting for being published in a Corpus, which has not exceeded the project phase since almost half a century.

Another absolutely necessary work instrument, in the form of a general encyclopedia, which would cover the whole numismatic spectrum of Romania, is The Romanian Numismatic Encyclopedia. This project was started decades ago by renowned specialists, who designed a plan, compiled a glossary and distributed the terms to each author. Like the Corpus, this encyclopedia has not evolved from the project phase. Throughout the years, the individual effort of several distinguished authors, although it proved to be beneficial, led to results which may rather assure a stimulating effect on those interested in such a topic. Undoubtedly, this is a regrettable situation caused not by the lack of sources, or by people’s unawareness as for their availability, but rather by the approach manner – such sources being especially dedicated to ancient coins – and also the communication manner of the available data – only rarely in international languages. Fortunately, time has brought about a considerable increase of

* Cercetător științific, Institutul de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol” Iași.
the monetary finds, whose systematical valorization led lead to the dissemination of the specialized knowledge and the increase of the people interested in numismatics.

As for us, our opinion is that both projects may become viable, as long as the current conditions are understood by those willing to implement such projects. First of all, one should take into account that the numismatic material of the great collections is currently being studied, and, recent discoveries which have only lately entered the numismatic collections of museums, are almost unknown or even not at all known.

For easily understandable reasons, during the last two decades we have narrowed down the investigation of the monetary finds to those identified on the territory of Moldavia, whose past is told, to a great extent, by two separate histories. Starting on this road, we considered it would be useful for everyone to refer to the same past on the basis of the same sources. This is how, in 1991, we started checking the determination of several published hoards, an initiative which opened the way to a durable and successful collaboration with numismatics specialists in Bucharest and Chisinau. When the collaboration was at its beginning, a volume was published, presenting 41 hoards in a new light. Since 2000, this group focused on the research and publication of the entire numismatic material – from Antiquity to contemporary times – in every single public collection. This is how the series *Corpus Nummorum Moldaviae* was published, with the collaboration of other specialists from research institutions and local museums. On the basis of the acquired experience, on a different occasion we showed that such a long-term project required a sustained effort and was conditioned both by local management’s understanding and the financial support of the local authorities. These things had already been gained. This was already an accomplished fact, confirmed later on by the two volumes which followed within the series. Following the same pre-established structure, written in an international language, these volumes were exhaustively valorizing the collections of two museums in of Moldavia.

We have good reasons to state that whatever the manner of approaching the numismatic material – according to historical or administrative regions, to large public collections studied entirely or partially – the results obtained so far correspond to decisive steps the Romanian numismatic research has undertaken so far on the way of the elaboration of a *CORPUS NUMMORUM*, consisting until now in a set of “Repertoires of Numismatic Finds”. Closely related to other sources, the numismatic material provides specialists multiple possibilities of evaluating the monetary systems of each epoch, the nature of the commercial relations, the evolution of prices, the typology of decorative items and of
vessels, as well as of noticing the importance of the monetary policy in the deployment of the forces in the east and south regions of Europe. At the same time, a solid and diversified database was created, useful in the elaboration of treatises, syntheses and encyclopedias.

In order to point out the connection between the “Repertoire of Numismatic Finds” and the “Numismatic Lexicon”, we should stress that both volumes are work instruments elaborated starting from the available numismatic sources. In other words, the numismatic glossary is meant to provide detailed knowledge on the monetary material which it summarizes and, also, to explain its terminology. This is why hoards remain the main source of the treatise, where they have to be shortly described in an annex.

Taking into consideration the immensity of the numismatic material, its particularities (historical epochs and regions), as well as our educational background and professional training, we tried to elaborate a project of a Numismatic Lexicon for the historical region of Moldavia (since its founding until the union to Walachia). In elaborating it, we took into account the variety of sources, the multitude of the pieces of information and the contribution of certain specialists. For this reason we grouped the data we provide in categories of terms, according to the case, specifying also the lexical variant.

[I] Laic and ecclesiastic sovereignties. In the Middle Ages and the Old Regime, considering the vassal relations between states, with certain exceptions, one can speak of sovereign authorities. In the broad sense, the term expresses the juridical relations between the laic fields – such as free cities, principalities, counties, duchies and baronies – and the ecclesiastic ones – archbishoprics, bishoprics, abbeys and monasteries – and also between these and the supreme authority. Like everywhere in that age, the belonging of a territory to the Crown must be construed in relation with the subjects, and less with their confession or ethnicity.

[II] Issuer laic and ecclesiastic authorities, for which we preferred the official denomination in the epoch, without the Latinate form or any other translation. In order to achieve a unitary presentation, capacity of the issuer is specified, according to the case, specifying the date when he was nominated/ elected/ crowned, and the location where the event took place, including the extinction date, followed by the lineage – nephews, sons, brothers (and step brothers, according to the case), father – and the main measures initiated in monetary field.

[III] The nominal value or the name of each coin designates its value by metal, weight, module and type. In the “Repertoire of Numismatic Finds” they are presented in ascending order, while in the “Numismatic Lexicon”, they are alphabetically sorted. Wherever a same nominal
acknowledged multiple names, references are made for each variant. For example, it is recommended that each entry should be accompanied by an image with reference to the source).

[IV] The mints where the coins were made. Each emission carries information as for the location of the buildings with the equipment, workers and corresponding administration, by the specification of the name of the mint (usually in the exergue), by letters, monograms or symbols, by the legend type or distinct heraldic reproductions. As much as possible, we provide, in order, the location of the workshop in the epoch, and the current name, the period when it was functional and the nominal values struck here.

[V] Concepts and notions contain the basic elements and general ideas in this domain. By the multitude of forms and endless addresses, constituent data form a complex message determined by the nature of the studied phenomenon.

[VI] Specific legislation, by which the issuing authority guaranteed the own emissions – technical characteristics, symbols, legends – and determined severe punishment for fraudulent or abusing deeds regarding the coin.

[VII] Mentions in chronicles and documents form a «mass medium» sui generis, a complementary source of coin knowledge under various popular names and expressions.

[VIII] Numismatists’ gallery refers to those specialists who, by the scientific interest in medieval and modern Moldavian numismatics, decisively contributed to a better knowledge of the Romanians’ history.

For a better understanding, there are presented a few entries belonging to the categories specified above, each accompanied by the main bibliography.