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ORIGIN, EVOLUTION AND FINALITY OF AN IDEA:
ARMENIANS' LANDED PROPERTY RIGHTS IN MOLDOVA
(Summary)

Keywords: Armenian community, civil rights, economic rights, political rights, property rights.

Our research starts from the contents of a document preserved in the *Manuscripts* collection of the Romanian Academy Library. The most important document is a manifesto entitled *Memoir about the grounds that indisputably entitle the Armenian Nation to all civil and political rights to buy landed properties in the Principality of Moldova*. The document is a declaration by which the Armenian community of Moldova require, in ten paragraphs, for its members to be acknowledged equality in terms of civil, political and economic rights. The ten points are completed with a paragraph entitled *A Supplement*, including references to the historical and bibliographic sources which the requests of the memoir rely upon. Then, in an *Annex*, the dates of some princely deeds for the ethnic Armenians of Moldavia are enumerated; these are documentary evidence which, at the time of the memoir, were the property of some of the community members.

Thus, taking into consideration the wording of the *Memoir* and the bibliographic references that it indicates, we believe that the text was written and printed between 1856-1857, during the ad-hoc Assembly and the reunion of the ad-hoc Divans in Moldova. A proof of the fact that the document was known by the participants in those consultative assemblies is one speech that Mihail Kogălniceanu gave on the floor of the Moldavian Assembly on 12 November 1857.

A point by point analysis of the solicitations of the memoir, on the basis of documentary and narrative information dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, offered us an answer related to the righteousness for the Armenians to invoke older rights in the field of landed property that they would have had and which would have been violated before. The proofs show that the Armenians, beyond the hopes and the requests they had in the mid-1800s, had never enjoyed before, as they pretended, full landed property rights.

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