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THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTIES/ RELIGIOUS MEDITATIONS
(SIMEON MARCOVICI, 1839). THE TROUBLED FATE OF CERTAIN
ROMANIAN TRANSLATIONS
FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19th CENTURY
(Summary)

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This article follows two lines of research. The first one aims at restoring the truth regarding the origins of the book *The Christian's Duties* (1839), erroneously believed by some researchers to have been an original work of Simeon Marcovici, due to a series of errors, omissions and misinterpretations. In fact, this is a Romanian translation of some chapters from *Méditations religieuses* ("Religious Meditations"), the French version (1830–1837) of the extensive work of German Lutheran writer and thinker Heinrich Zschokke: *Stunden der Andacht*.

The second line aims at explaining the interest that mid-19th century Romanian intellectuals, especially Simeon Marcovici, have shown for this work. We believe that, at least in its case, this interest can be traced back to the *Meditations'* explicitly religious nature, considering that in the Romanian Principalities, as well as in other Ottoman dominated territories in the Balkans, religion was an important part of the discourse pertaining to identity and modernization. As such Orthodoxy played an essential role in creating the patriotic citizen. What Marcovici himself was proposing was to educate the citizen, taking its status as a Christian as the starting point of this process, because this was the most important individual and group identity quality. The *Meditations* state that patriotism should be understood as the logical result of correctly practicing religious commandments (Christian patriotism). Thus, respecting Christian values and adopting religious teachings would guarantee the citizens' devotions to the process of modernizing institutions determined by the spread of Enlightenment.

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