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ASPECTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN MONASTERIES: THE PRESENCE OF PRISONS IN THE MODERN PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

Monastic detention has existed since the 6th century, but the transformation of monasteries into prisons and other institution of confinement such as houses of correction, psychiatric hospitals, sanatoriums, asylums etc., arose at a time when the ideas of the Enlightenment were embodied in the society. This was a point of inflection of the pre-modern and modern world. The paradigm shift gradually began, in the 17th century in Western Europe, until the 19th century in the Romanian Principalities. With the secularization of monastic property in 1863, and delayed construction of new prisons, a number of monasteries changed their full function, becoming prisons. The consequences were disastrous: monastic ensembles, most of them of a priceless spiritual, architectural and historical value were in many cases irreversible destroyed and their mission altered.

Keywords: 19th century; Romanian Principalities; secularization; prison, monastery; Snagov; Văcărești; Cozia; Tismana;

INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates a painful moment in the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church, essential in birth of the modern Romanian society, by following the process of transforming monasteries into prisons in the 19th century.

The capital moment that spread this process is the secularization of the monasteries fulfilled by Al.-Ioan Cuza. It began in the first half of the 19th century, through the Organic Regulations and was not limited to 1863, but continued until the end of the century. The study identifies the key stages in this process, the circumstances and their spiritual, historical, and architectural implications by presenting four cases: Snagov Monastery, which was programmed as a prison in the Organic Regulations (1831), and functioned until 1861, until it was abandoned; Văcărești monastery, which became a political prison in the context of the Revolution of 1848 and a prison of the capital city after the secularization; Cozia monastery, which functioned as a prison between 1879 and 1893 and Tismana monastery, with a large unrealized prison project, proposed in 1887.

1. THE CONTEXT. A Brief History of Monastic Detention

In the 6th century, in the various regions of the post-Roman world, emperors, kings and bishops discovered the monastery as a governing tool. In particular, the monastic reclusion changed from a form of voluntary penance to legal punishment. Thus, the 6th

century monastic detention was the first mode of deprivation of liberty in church and civil law, replacing the surge.¹

Sovereigns recognized the spiritual authority in matters of discipline and dogma establishment in communities led by archbishops, and in many cases also recognized the authority of bishops in civil matters. The bishops had a judicial responsibility in all that belonged to Christian clergy, church properties and immoral behavior in their pastoral communities, being responsible for the salvation of those who were under their leading.² In western space, the monastic prison also used the detention of the secular (non-monastic) clergy for disciplinary purposes. The process was known as *detrusio in monasterium* ("detention in the monastery") and meant a life under normal monastic discipline, or imprisonment in a monastic prison.³ The disciplinary attributions of the bishops were not restricted only to the clerical body. The laity who sinned had to repent for the sins, hence nobility and sovereigns were, in theory, also under the clergy's jurisdiction. In all cases, the duty of the clergy was to impose penance.

Following the same line, in the Romanian Principalities, detention in the monastery had the role of obliging the convict to "meditate for the committed sins"⁴, being used for noblemen, clergy, but also for women, generally adulterine or prostitutes⁵. Not a few times, however, it was the case of political detention. The monasteries that housed convicts were Dintr-un Lemn and Viforâta for women⁶, and for the men, Tismana, Snagov, Arnota, Cernica, Căldărușani, Mărgineni and Secul⁷ (especially for the priests and monks).

The Prison Reform in the 19th Century

As previously seen, detention in monasteries has existed since the 6th century, but the transformation of monasteries into prisons and other institution of confinement such as houses of correction, psychiatric hospitals, sanatoriums, asylums etc., arose at a time when the ideas of the Enlightenment were embodied in the society. This was a point of inflection of the pre-modern and modern world, first in Western Europe, then (later in the 19th century) in the Romanian Principalities. The new humanitarian spirit of the time demanded a less bloody treatment of the delinquents than it had been before.⁸ The punishment was more subtle, personal, of the psyche and of the inner self, achieved through discipline and uniformity. The prison became a representative institution for the industrial society, the perfect realization of the modern state.⁹

¹ Julia Hillner, "Monastic Imprisonment in Justinian's Novels" in *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 15, nr. 2 (2007), pp. 205-208

² Norval Morris, David J. Rothman (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Prison. The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995, pp.26-32

³ Megan Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces and Their Meanings: Thirteenth-Century English Cistercian Monasteries* Brepolis, Belgium, 2001, p.123

⁴ Dan Horia Mazilu, *Lege și fărădelege în lumea românească veche*, Polirom, Iași, 2006, p. 487

⁵ Constanța Ghițulescu, *În șalvari și cu ișlic. Biserică, sexualitate, căsătorie și divorț în Țara Românească a sec. al XVIII-lea*, Humanitas, 2004, p.367

⁶ Dan Horia Mazilu, *Lege și fărădelege...*, p. 487

⁷ Gr. I. Dianu, *Istoria închisorilor din Romania, studiu comparativ, legi și obiceiuri*, Tipografia Curții Regale Göbel și Fii, București, 1901, p.39

⁸ Michael Foulcault, *A supraveghea și a pedepsi. Nașterea închisorii*, trad. și note de Bogdan Ghiu, Editura Paralela 45, p. după *Surveller et punir*, 1975

⁹ Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain. The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, Penguin Books, 1978, p. 207-215

In the Romanian Principalities, secular prisons lacked special functions and adaptations, and until the beginning of the 19th century, detention conditions were terrible: lack of security arrangements, hunger, cold, illness, promiscuity¹⁰. Intense criticism of the poor state of the prisons¹¹ has generated a serious concern for the leaders and legislative changes. Both in Moldova and Wallachia, on the occasion of the Organic Regulations, Prison Regulations were also drawn up, in which the preoccupation for the moral / religious recovery of the detainees appeared for the first time outside the administrative measures¹². Prince Grigore Ghica (1849-1856) called on France to supervise the application of the new regulations and Ferdinand Dodun of Perrier, an official in the prison of France, was nominated. He composed the penitentiary regulations in Moldova in 1855 and remained as an inspector until 1876, introducing the Moldavian penal system into the United Principalities.¹³ At the same time, several prisons were proposed to be built: Tg. Ocna (Moldavia), Telega, Craiova, Brăila, Giurgiu, Telega, Ocele Mari (Wallachia). However, due to the financial difficulties these were built-up only towards the end of the century.

The reforms of the state during the reign of Al-Ioan Cuza produced a major change: the secularization of the monasteries and the regulations for the organization of penitentiary establishments in 1862 were drafted, but they were not applicable due to the lack of adequate detention facilities.¹⁴ The state came into the possession of a substantially built fund, confiscating from the Church buildings, lands and wealth. As the state's capability to build new and modern prisons was more than limited, the transformation of monastery assemblies into prisons was relatively convenient, especially those that already were accommodating prisoners (Ostrov, Snagov, Rătești, Văcărești).¹⁵

In the second half of the 19th century, prisons mostly functioned in the old monasteries.¹⁶ Meanwhile, several projects have been proposed for Ocele Mari and Doftana prisons, but they were not erected until the end of the century. The crisis of detention places was getting worse due to the lack of space, but also due to the lack of specialized staff, who was not able to implement thoroughly the modern punishment methods.¹⁷ Thus the poor results led to the Law of Prisons in 1874, during the time of Carol I¹⁸. Unfortunately, the situation did not considerably change.

Secularization of the Monasteries

There are scholars who admit some positive effects of secularization, by observing that large religious buildings survived due to their conversion in army and penitentiary establishments, such as Avignon Papacy, the Mont-Saint-Michel, or Clairvaux and Fontevraud Abbeys¹⁹. Perhaps in a society that has undergone such a radical and bloody revolution as the French one, this kind of transformation may have saved the buildings, but

¹⁰ Horia Moldovan, *Jochann Schlatter. Cultură occidentală și arhitectură românească (1831-1866)*, Simetria, București, 2013, p.180

¹¹ Constantin Moroiu, *Disertație pentru îndreptarea pușcăriilor din București*, 1829

¹² Gr. E Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar în România, cu referințe la trecutul penitenciarelor din Europa și America*, 1934, p.62

¹³ Gr. I. Dianu, *Istoria inchișorilor...*, p.64

¹⁴ Gr. I. Dianu, *Raport general asupra inchișorilor centrale și areșturilor preventive pe anul 1897*, Imprimeria Statului, București, 1898, p.6

¹⁵ Gr. I. Dianu, *Istoria inchișorilor...*, p.64

¹⁶ Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.126

¹⁷ Gr. I. Dianu, *Raport...*, p.6

¹⁸ Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.127

¹⁹ Rene Remond, *Religie și societatea în Europa. Secularizarea în secolele al XIX-lea și al XX-lea*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2003, p.163

in the Romanian Principalities, the secularization of the monasteries underwent disastrous consequences, both for the spiritual life and for the buildings. They have lost their appearance through the changes brought about by the new functions or have been ruined by the poverty of the remaining monastic communities.

The causes of secularization are various. In the 16th century, monasteries began to be dedicated, along with their properties, in order to support the Orthodox Christians under Ottoman rule. The only obligation was to conserve and cultivate the spiritual life in the home-country and to provide for the local religious buildings. In reality, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, the monasteries were only exploited, neglected and the incomes and assets were sent out of the country.²⁰

On the background of the secularization in the Western Europe, that began with the Reformation and became stronger with the Revolution of 1789, the Romanian Principalities became the main financier for Oriental churches under the Ottoman Empire.²¹ This financial pressure was increased politically, so that after the restoration of the reigns of the Romanian rulers, during the reign of Gregory Dimitrie Ghica (1823-1828) and Bishop Grigory Dascales (1823-29, 1833-34), were made numerous attempts to replace Greek abbots with Romanian ones. The foreign Greek and Russian constraints have not allowed these changes to be long-lasting, despite the French support²².

With the adoption of the Organic Regulations, a number of measures have been taken in this direction. For example, a part of the revenues (i.e. a quarter) had to return to the country's treasury or a nine-year term was established, during which the dedicated monasteries had to be repaired.²³ However, these provisions did not apply, and negotiations involving French, Greek and Russian representatives failed every time.²⁴ The situation was firmly settled with passing in 1863 of the Law on the secularization of the monastic property proposed by Mihail Kogălniceanu in the Legislative Assembly of Romania. Unfortunately, besides the dedicated monasteries, the secularization applied to all the domains of the Church, also to the undedicated settlements: dioceses, monasteries, hermitages.²⁵

It was a great challenge for the Church. Church ministers (bishops, priests, and monks) have remained in many cases without livelihood and this situation has opened the way for the total functional transformation of church settlements to the benefit of the state in its boom of modernization. Thus, some of the monasteries became hospitals, shelters, hospices, schools, orphanages or prisons, and their survivors either became part of the staff of the new establishments (nurses, supervisors, guardians) - their function of spiritual service becoming secondary²⁶.

²⁰ Patriarhul Daniel, "150 de ani de la adoptarea Legii secularizării averilor mănăstirești din 1863", din *Secularizarea averilor mănăstirești (1863). Motivații și consecințe*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2013, p.4

²¹ Dan Berindei, "Motivații contextuale europene și românești ale secularizării averilor mănăstirești din 1863", in *Secularizarea averilor mănăstirești (1863). Motivații și consecințe*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2013, pp.14-15

²² Patriarh Daniel, "150 de ani...", p.4

²³ *Idem*, p.5

²⁴ Dan Berindei, "Motivații contextuale...", pp.16-18

²⁵ *Idem.*, p.19

²⁶ As is the case of monks from Cozia monks, who, during the monastery's transformation into prison, withdrew to a nearly ruined and damp building, near the monastery hospital. Although they had been promised proper housing, they did not receive it even after 8 years, as PPs Ghenadie, the bishop of Ramnic Noul Severin, reported in an address to Culture Minister in 1888, A.N.R, Fond Vornicia Temnițelor, dosar 1/1887, f.36

1. MONASTERIES TURNED INTO PRISONS

Snagov Monastery

Attested for the first time in the 15th century²⁷, the Snagov Monastery was used, apparently, as a prison from the beginning. The isolated position on the island and the bloody reign of Vlad Țepeș have fueled the collective imagination, giving clues about such use. There even circulated legends about floors that opened under the feet of the arrested, or about the existence of a torture chamber in the south of the ensemble.²⁸ In the 17th century, there are being mentioned tortures of certain opponents of Constantin Brâncoveanu.²⁹

A French traveler, Benjamin Nicolas Marie Appert, former general manager of the French prisons, visited in 1851 several prisons in Wallachia, noting the pitiful living conditions of the arrested and criticizing the poor administration of the respective settlements. At that time, at Snagov there were 160-170 convicts, with sentences of between 2 and 8 years, held together, "in misery and dampness, lying on rags and mats without ever getting undressed."³⁰ A few monks attended the arrests, with no infirmary service, no spiritual assistance from a "capable and merciful" priest³¹. Another testimony can be found in Alexandru Odobescu's report about his trip to Snagov, in which he records the status of pauperism both of the arrested, but especially of the monks who were in a spiritual decline:

"... the road (...) had caused me hunger and (...) my first concern was to ask the monks (...) to give me something to eat. The monks, with merciful air, stepped all back, swearing that they had nothing, that since the secularization of their monasteries, they have nothing to live with; that they are short of all things, that they have no clothes, neither dwelling, nor food; finally, the poor parents in all manner how sorry they felt, (...) that their monastery, turning into a prison, had been transformed in a more useful establishment."³²

In the official provisions, the monastery was provided by the Organization of Monasteries of the Organic Regulation (1832) to accommodate 30 convicts³³, and in 1840, the old buildings, apart from the church, were demolished and replaced with new ones for the arrested, guardians and monks³⁴.

The report from 1850 of Johann Schlatter, a monastery architect, revealed that the construction works were of poor quality and, in the absence of concrete measures of the abbots, the monastery went into ruin altogether. Thus the convicts were transferred to the Mărgineni Monastery.³⁵

Văcărești Monastery

Built during the two reigns of Nicholas Mavrocordat³⁶, the Văcărești Monastery was dedicated in 1721 to the Holy Sepulcher³⁷. Due to its robust fortifications, it was used in the

²⁷ The foundation is not very clear, some historians assigning it to Vlad Țepeș, others to Mircea cel Bătrân

²⁸ Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.35

²⁹ Dan Horia Mazilu, *Lege și fărădelege...*, p.488

³⁰ Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.108

³¹ Daniela Bușă (coord.), *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. VI (1852-1856), București 2010, pp. 694, translation of the original text: Le Chavalier Appert, *Voyage dans le principautes danubiennes*, Mainz, 1854, apud Horia Moldovan, *Johann Schlatter...*, p.182

³² Alexandru Odobescu, *Câteva ore la Snagov* (1862), Tipografiile Române Unite, București, 1936, p. 120

³³ Nicolae I. Serbănescu, *Istoria mănăstirii Snagov*, București, 1944, p. 79

³⁴ Alexandru Odobescu, *Câteva ore...*, p.50

³⁵ Nicolae I. Serbănescu, *Istoria...*, p.83-92

³⁶ Alexandru Falcoianu, *Călăuză istorică a mănăstirii și închisorii centrale "Văcărești"*, Legătoria Închisorii Centrale "Văcărești", București, p.37

³⁷ Octavian Dumitru Marinescu, *Mănăstirea Văcărești din București, de la origini până astăzi*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2012, p.19

Russian-Turkish battles of the late 18th century, but also as a royal residence after the damages of the Princely Court following the earthquake of 1801³⁸. The buildings of the monastery were turned into prison in the context of the Revolution of 1848, when the authorities (Russian at that time) discovering that the old prison at the Plumbuita Monastery, where initially have been imprisoned the heads of the revolution (Ion Eliade Rădulescu, the Golești Brothers, the Brătianu, C.A. Rosetti, Ion Ghica, Popa Șapcă, Colonel Magheru, Cristian Tell, Nicolae Bălcescu etc.) was not large enough, decided to imprison them in Văcărești.³⁹

The transformation of the Văcărești monastery into the prison of the capital city occurred after secularization, in 1865, in a wider context of circumstances. Following the fire of 1847 (which remained in the history as the Great Fire), the Bucharest Capital Prison, which functioned at the beginning of the century in St. Anton Square, in an improper and inconvenient building, was transferred to Spirei Hill. As a typhus epidemic broke out in the prison in 1865 due to excessive crowding, the transfer of the condemned to the Radu-Vodă Monastery was taken into consideration. A school was already functioning there, but the cost of setting up detention facilities was too high, so the convicts were moved to Văcărești, where there was already a police arrest department.⁴⁰

Since 1865, various workshops have started to be established⁴¹: shoemaking (1865), bookbinding (1874), printing (1892), and new sections and functions were built: the hospital (1868)⁴², the barracks of the guard detachment (1884) which turned in 1898 into the section for the alienated, the baths (1890), the offices and dwellings of the staff (1892).

The monastery was built on the land of the lord and not on that of the episcopacy, who asked for an abbot and monks from the Holy Sepulcher. Under these circumstances, the administration of the monastery was done by the princes, the monks taking up only the liturgical life.⁴³ It seems that the very substantial income and wealth of the monastery took, in fact, the way abroad, which caused great discontent. Lord Caragea recorded in 1813 that the churchwardens sent the monastery's income to the Holy Sepulcher even in the years when it did not suffice for its maintenance.⁴⁴

The public disapproval of foreign abbots and the dedication of monasteries is illustrated in the famous legend around Cuza Vodă, which justified the transformation of the monastery into a prison. Cuza, hearing about the supposed greed of the monks, disguised himself in a poor and tired traveler and asked for mercy at the monastery gate. Facing a refusal, he decided to confiscate the income of the monastery and to chase the monks, bringing in their place the villains:

”... Cuza was at the forefront of the army which hid in the woods. With him he had taken under guard of a lot of thieves, who had plundered and robbed many inhabitants. He moved with this cortege towards the gate of the monastery (...). He inspected the entire monastery and confiscated piles of gold (...). Suddenly the Lord walked through the cells and grabbed each monk, taking him out and introducing in his place a thief or a burglar (...) with the following words: "I pull thieves out of here, and bring back also thieves!"⁴⁵

³⁸ *Idem*, p.20

³⁹ Alexandru Falcoianu, *Călăuză istorică...*, p.37

⁴⁰ Gr. I. Dianu, *Istoria inchișorilor...*, p.151

⁴¹ *Idem*

⁴² A.N. – A.N.I.C, fond Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice, dosar 1/1868

⁴³ Octavian Dumitru Marinescu, *Mănăstirea Văcărești...*, p.67

⁴⁴ Alexandru Falcoianu, *Călăuză istorică...*, p. 30-31

⁴⁵ Octav Gorăscu, “Văcăreștii” manastire. „Văcărești” închișoare, 1930, pp.70-71

The scene was of extreme violence and overestimated the wealth of the monasteries and the supposed non-Christian morals of the monks, precisely to legitimize the forceful, sometimes bloody, intervention of state authorities during the confiscation of fortunes. The situation of the monks of Văcărești monastery after secularization is not known, but given the size of the prison and its importance for the capital city, it can be inferred that they have been moved to other monasteries.

Cozia Monastery

Towards the end of the 19th century, the need for adequate prisons increased as a result of the prison reform in 1872, which improved the legal framework of 1856 and varied the type of prisons in an attempt to align detention conditions with modern Western standards. As the construction of new prisons was delayed (such as the case of Ocnele Mari, discussed since 1868)⁴⁶, the authorities have returned to the previous solution to turn more monasteries into prisons, compared to those already operating since 1864.

Thus, in 1879 the Cozia monastery was temporarily transformed into a prison⁴⁷. The damage to the kneed Church was already huge, and the Episcopate of the Râmnic-Noul Severin Diocese, through the Bishop Ghenadie, repeatedly tried to improve the deplorable conditions in which the remaining monks lived:

"... from 1880 until now <1888>, no dwelling has been given to the church servants of Cozia Monastery, and the present ones live in wet and totally ruined stone buildings nearby the church of the infirmary <Bolnița>; so the sufferings of the staff of this monastery, imprinted on their faces, provoke compassion in all the visitors, and it is not a person who passes and walks over there, that does not come to the Episcopate to defend these sufferers, each, of course, according to their temperament and view."⁴⁸

At the same time Bishop Ghenadie tried to achieve the conversion of the monastery into a gentler and more suited function to monastic life. Invoking the historical value of the settlement and the popular piety, the hierarch asked for the transformation of Cozia into a hospital, and suggested the transfer of the penitentiary to other places, second-class monasteries (Surpatele or Mamu) or to the salt-pit⁴⁹. The unfavorable response came in the year 1889: the funds were insufficient for the construction of another penitentiary, especially because a workshop had been built, and the proposed monasteries were inadequate, ruined and improper.⁵⁰

This is probably the context in which the authorities have tried to move the Cozia prison to another location⁵¹, coming up with the idea of building a central penitentiary in the Tismana monastery. Finally, the inmates from the Cozia monastery were transferred in 1893 to the Pângărați Monastery in Neamț County.⁵²

Tismana Monastery

Built at the end of the 16th century (1375-1378), the Tismana Monastery was partially rebuilt between 1520 and 1540 and suffered damage during the offensive of the

⁴⁶ A.N.-A.N.I.C. Fond Vornicia Temnițelor, Dosar 2/1868

⁴⁷ Between 1879-1893, the Cozia Monastery functioned as a prison. Mihai Eminescu, the poet, has written an article in *Time (Timpul)* Magazine in 12 sept. 1882 about the situation: "Cozia, where Mircea I, the greatest ruler of Wallachia, was buried, Cozia where the family of Mihai the Brave was buried, a historical monument almost as old as the country, what happened to it? It became a jail!"

⁴⁸ A.N.- A.N.I.C. Fond Vornicia Temnițelor, dosar 1/1887, f.36

⁴⁹ *Idem*

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, f.37

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, f.6

⁵² Gr. E. Constantinescu, *Evoluția regimului penitenciar...*, p.119

Transylvanian voivode Gabriel Bathory (1610-1611), being remodeled at the initiative of Matei Basarab (1646-1651). It also suffered major damage during the Russian-Turkish wars (1787-1792) and during the conflicts of 1821, between Tudor Vladimirescu's pandours and the Ottoman army.⁵³

Following the visit of Prince Gheorghe Bibescu in 1844, the decision was taken to rebuild the settlement and to transform it into a summer royal residence, also including the function of political arrest.⁵⁴ The one who carried out the reconstruction project for the Tismana monastery was the same Johann Schlatter, who had evaluated the Snagov Monastery. The function of political arrest was however not likely to be active, since Tismana was not mentioned among the prisons operating in the Principalities in 1865.

In 1888, under the circumstances already discussed, the architect Maimarolu was charged with evaluating the monastery in order to transform it into a penitentiary.⁵⁵

The undertaking moved rapidly forward and a prison project was proposed, having a capacity of 200 inmates, out of which 160 were imprisoned in shared dormitories, separated in sections and 40 in individual cells. The establishment had to be equipped with a laundry room, kitchen and a storehouse of food, served by a separate yard. It would also include an infirmary, a pharmacy warehouse and a bathroom, also separated from the rest of the functions.⁵⁶

The architect who designed the project observed that, although very general, it was impossible to be applied to the existing ensemble and proposed that the monastery and its inhabitants should be used for administration and guarding purposes, while the monastery stables, located between the hill where the monastery lied and the Tismana River, should be turned into a prison.⁵⁷

In the end, the project of the Tismana prison seemed to have been abandoned. The reasons were complex and even until this day one cannot know their true weight. It is certain that no one announced himself at the auction organized on June 20, 1887 to take over the works of the new penitentiary.⁵⁸ Moreover, the answer of the Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries to the Diocese of Râmnic-Noul Severn in 1888, regarding the solicitation of the Bishop Gennady to move the Cozia prison, stated the lack of a budget for any new prison between 1889-1890.⁵⁹

CONCLUSION

Analyzing the cases above, it comes up the question of the underlying reasons behind these transformations. Undoubtedly, economic circumstances have deeply left their fingerprint. The extremely limited financial means of the Principalities have prevented the construction of new prisons and the maintenance under proper conditions of the existing ones. The lack of endowment and adequate separation of the detainees has kept poverty, misery and promiscuity among convicts and the lack of training of guards and administrative staff has led to failure of rehabilitation and recidivism.

⁵³ Horia Moldovan, *Johann Schlatter...*, pp. 170

⁵⁴ *Idem*, p.171

⁵⁵ A.N.- A.N.I.C. Fond Vornicia Temnițelor, dosar 1/1887, f.5

⁵⁶ *Idem*, f.21

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 22

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 15

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 40

Under the same category fall the irreversible losses and changes suffered by the edifices. The transformations brought to the monastery ensembles, the majority of which have had a considerable historical and artistic value, have made invaluable losses, especially for those which have been ruined.

However, the spiritual component was affected the most. The transformation of monasteries into prisons was accomplished with the humiliation of the monks who lived and with their removal from mission and spiritual service. Entire monasteries were deserted, their inhabitants being replaced by delinquents. The monks were in the best case banished or moved away to other settlements and in the worst, forced to take care of the detainees, living among them. From a spiritual point of view, the moral contamination to which these monks were exposed was diabolical indeed, being forced to live among the criminals and often lacking priests and means of survival.

We can understand the shock and the caustic remarks concerning the foreign abbots that "preyed" the monasteries they administered, but these have excessively expanded and generated hostile attitudes, among intellectuals, towards monasticism in general, attitude reflected in the law of secularization, as well. Instead of bringing into the property of the state, only the possessions of the dedicated monasteries, the possessions of all the monasteries, episcopacies and hermitages were confiscated, bringing the Church into a state of material and spiritual fragility.

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Abbreviations

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