

MIRCEA THE GREAT'S MOTHER

Radu Ștefan VERGATTI*

Abstract. The present paper highlights that the prince of Wallachia Radu I - Negru Vodă (1377-1383) had two wives, namely Ana and Calinichia. His second wife Calinichia was the mother of the voivode Mircea the Great (Mircea the Elder). Calinichia was mentioned in the documents papers as the lady of the country and mother of voivode Mircea cel Mare, not of his brother the voivode Dan I, respectively grandmother of the voivode Vlad Dracul and great-grandmother of the voivode Radu the Frumos. The term "lady" (doamna) was used in the Middle Ages exclusively for the voivode's official wife. Given the properties donated by her to the monasteries, one can say that she came from a Romanian great boyar family of Oltenia. So while both Mircea's parents were Romanian, the voivode was also Romanian, among other achievements being the creator of several cities, such as Târgoviște, Pitești, Ramnicu-Valcea, Giurgiu.

Keywords: *lady of Wallachia, Mircea the Great, ethnic origin, local boyars*

This year we commemorate six centuries since the departure to another, better world on 31 January 1418¹ of Mircea the Great, Ruler of Wallachia from 1386 to 1418.

In numerous instances during the latest 150 years, there have been discussions about the ascendants of the Ruler Mircea the Great. An answer has been attempted to an apparently simple question: what was his mother's ethnic origin, an essential question towards shedding light on the roots of the great Ruler.

For many years it was believed that Mircea the Great's father, Ruler Radu I, surnamed Negru vodă (1377-1383), had just one wife, with the double name Ana-Calinichia². However it has lately been proved that in reality he had two wives. The first of them was named Ana, mother of Ruler Dan I (1383-1386), step brother after his father of Mircea the Great³. From Dan I descendants there will be

* Ph.D. field - History. Senior Member of the Academy of Scientists in Romania.

¹ Mircea the Great, Ruler of Wallachia, died on 31 January, 1418 and was buried on 4 February, 1418 at Cozia Monastery, which he had founded. A piece of the grave slab, now exposed in the museum within the Monastery, was rediscovered and returned into the scientific circuit by Dr. Florin Epure, Director of the Culture and Patrimony Direction in Vâlcea county.

² Cf. Ilie Minea, *Urmașii lui Vladislav I și politica orientală a Ungariei*, in "Convorbiri Literare", L, 1916, p. 857; Sergiu Iosipescu, Balica, Dobrotiță, Ioancu, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1985, p. 124-125.

³ "Sfântărașul părinte al domniei mele, Io Radul voievod (...) și sfântărașul fratele domniei mele, Io Dan voievod" (*Documenta Romaniae Historica*, B, Țara Românească, vol. I, 1247-1500.