

## DOSITHEOS, THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM. HISTORICAL AND TRAVELER NOTES ON THE CAUCASUS

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Since the 1930's, when N. Iorga pointed out to "an interesting and completely forgotten description"<sup>1</sup> of the Caucasus written by Dositheos, the patriarch of Jerusalem, and up to the present, the narration has little been employed in Romanian historiography.

The fragment containing the description of the Caucasus area is included in the book *The History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem*<sup>2</sup> written by Dositheos in Greek.<sup>3</sup> For this description, the author used his own travel impressions as well as information provided by some Byzantine historians, so, from this point of view, the text is very valuable, as it merges archival research with the investigation on the spot. Dositheos reached the Caucasus before becoming a hierarch, on the occasion of the trip of Paisios, the former patriarch of Jerusalem, and again in 1680, during a new journey to Russia, Georgia, and the Balkans.

The book entitled *The History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* is an impressive work, with more than 1,200 pages, which was printed in Bucharest, after 1715, by Chrysanthos Notaras, the successor of Dositheos, who had been commissioned to perform this task.

As we can read at the beginning of the book, the purpose of his work was not to present in an exhaustive and exclusive way the serial inventory and the history of the patriarchs of Jerusalem, but to integrate them in the larger frame of Christian events. So, the book is conceived as a history of the Church, but we can also find information about the Byzantine emperors, descriptions of important medieval battles or oecumenical synods, and some presentations of peoples and regions as well. However, all these events are linked with the history of the Church, which is regarded as the main line of human history, a characteristic feature of Byzantine chronicles.

I. V. Dură studied the activity and the personality of Patriarch Dositheos in an interesting article,<sup>4</sup> in which he emphasized the important data regarding the Romanian Principalities included in the book written by Dositheos, and gathered by the latter during his frequent visits to Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> N. Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance*, Bucarest, 1935, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> Dositheos, *Historia peri ton en Hierosolymois patriarkheusanton*, Boukourestio, 1715.

<sup>3</sup> In a letter to Peter the Great, Dositheos says that the Greek language is the real instrument of the reason and wisdom of the soul: P. P. Panaitescu, *Patriarhul Dositei al Ierusalimului și Mitropolitul Dosoftei al Moldovei*, București, 1946, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> I. V. Dură, *Știri despre Țările Române în "Istoria patriarhilor Ierusalimului" a patriarhului Dositei al Ierusalimului*, in "Studii Teologice," 1976, nos. 1-2, pp. 120-129.

<sup>5</sup> Dositheos visited Wallachia in 1670, 1673, 1677-1678, 1680, 1686-1687, 1692-1693, 1697-1698, 1702, 1704-1705, and Moldavia in all these years, except 1697-1698 and 1702. For this subject, also see I. V. Dură, *Patriarhul Dositei al Ierusalimului (1669-1707) și ierarhii Râmnicului Ilarion și Antim Ivireanu*, in "Biserica Ortodoxă Română," CXXIV, 2006, nos. 1-3, p. 475.

Dositheos spent a long time in the Romanian Principalities, so he had the possibility to make contact with the Romanian realities. He described some events from the reigns of Petru Șchiopul, Matei Basarab, Vasile Lupu, Radu Mihnea, Gheorghe Duca, Radu Leon, Șerban Cantacuzino, and Constantin Brâncoveanu. He underlined the relations between these Romanian sovereigns and the patriarchs of Jerusalem or of Constantinople. He also described the synod of Iași of 1642, presided by Vasile Lupu, and he related about the Romanian monasteries, such as Galata and Barnowschi, which were under the rule of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Therefore, one should point out to the special value of this work for the Romanian history, which, unfortunately, has not been analyzed enough up to now.

Leaving aside the information on Romanian history, which deserves a special research, I would like to focus on a text referring to the Caucasus area. The description contains the history of a number of peoples located in the Caucasus region (the Georgians, the Pechenegs, the Abasgoi, and the Zichoi), and includes the presentation of some events from the past, of their customs and beliefs, as well as many geographical details. The geographical location is made using different methods. One of them is to indicate the cardinal points, towns, rivers, seas or mountains, like in the following examples: “In the north part lies Alania, which stretches from the Caucasus Mountains to the Caspian Sea,” or “Abasgia is situated between the Nikopsis river and the town of Soteriopolis, at a distance of 300 miles.” Another way used by the author to indicate the geographical position is to mention a fortress nearby, like in the following example: “Matraha lies at a distance of 18 miles from the fortress of Pantikapaion.” One should notice that the distance is expressed in miles or in days: “at a distance of 18 miles” or “the space of 60 days.”

The author enumerates many fortifications or towns, like Sarkel, Chersonesos, Pantikapaion, Turkanerh, Tzerverni, Soteriopolis, Matraha, and Sebastopol.

The text mentions that Pantikapaion is situated in the Bosphorus, at 18 miles distance from Matraha. This is the only piece of information about Pantikapaion, but one may also use the geographical book written by Strabon, in which there are many details concerning this fortress. Strabon<sup>6</sup> mentions several times the Pantikapaion citadel, talking about its commercial value or its origins. On the ruins of the old town of Pantikapaion will later develop the fortress of Bosphorus, which will play in its turn an important role as a commercial and strategic center of Byzantine civilization in the Middle Ages.

Matraha, a fortress also known as Tmutorokan, represented, during the Byzantine times, one of the most important contact points between the Byzantines and the Russians. It had two names, one from the Greek language, Matraha, and one from the Russian documents, Tmutorokan. Located not far from Crimea, the

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<sup>6</sup> Strabon, *Géographie*, vol. II, Paris, 1873, pp. 37, 38, 394.

Tmutorokan citadel was mentioned for the first time with its Russian name, in the eighth century, when medieval documents mention the bishop's residential seat in Tamatraha.<sup>7</sup>

Dositheos also speaks of the town of Soteriopolis, which was noticed as a boundary point of Abasgia: "Abasgia is located from the Nikopsis river to the town of Soteriopolis." This town was also described by Procopius of Caesarea, a famous Byzantine author of the sixth century, whose works were frequently used and mentioned by Dositheos. Procopius<sup>8</sup> notes that Soteriopolis (in former times Pityus) and Sebastopol (Dioscurias) had been erected by the Romans near the sea, and not far from each other. Thus, Soteriopolis and Sebastopol were built in ancient, not medieval times, and they were known by their former names Pityus and Dioscurias.

Dositheos often used the works of Procopius, but he also consulted the books of Menander Protector, Zonaras, and Kedrenos. Of all these Byzantine authors, Procopius is the most frequently mentioned, as one may notice in the following examples: "In the north, there is Alania, which stretches from the Caucasus Mountains to the Caspian Sea, as Procopius wrote in the fourth book of his work about the war against the Goths," and, "Indeed, Procopius said about the territory inhabited by Alans that it is located from the Caucasus Mountains to the Caspian Sea."<sup>9</sup>

One should also note that Dositheos selects the information. For example, he employs some important sources, like Strabon<sup>10</sup> and Procopius<sup>11</sup>, and he mentions certain paragraphs, but chooses only historical, geographical or religious events, avoiding the mythology. So, Dositheos does not reproduce the tales about the mythological women warriors living in the region of Caucasus, in spite of their popularity in the ancient historical works. I would like to emphasize this sober character of the text written by Dositheos and notice that in the same period, at the end of the seventeenth century, other religious works did not exclude the mythology. For instance, the manuscript translated in Braşov by Costea Dascălu, containing a cosmography, very often makes use of mythological elements. As noted by C. Velculescu and V. Guruianu<sup>12</sup>, this text is the oldest cosmography

<sup>7</sup> D. Obolensky, *Un commonwealth medieval. Bizanţul*, Bucureşti, 2002, pp. 40, 231; N. Bănescu, *Stăpânirea bizantină în Matraha (Tmutorokan), Chazaria şi Rusia în timpul Comnenilor*, in "Analele Academiei Române," *Memoriile Secţiunii Istorice*, s. III, t. XXII, 1941, pp. 113-132.

<sup>8</sup> Procopius din Cezareea, *Războiul cu goţii*, Bucureşti, 1963, pp. 208-209; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, vol. II, London, 1962, p. 156.

<sup>9</sup> Procopius din Cezareea, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

<sup>10</sup> Strabon, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 405.

<sup>11</sup> Procopius din Cezareea, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

<sup>12</sup> C. Velculescu, V. Guruianu, *Povestea ţărilor Asiei. Cosmografia românească veche*, Bucureşti, 1997, p. 142; Idem, *Cosmographies in Roumanian: "Laus Asiae" or "Laus Europae"?*, in "Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes," 1995, nos. 1-2, pp. 153-170.

translated into Romanian and was inspired by some works also used by Sebastian Münster. The text from Braşov also mentions some important things concerning the Armenians and their territory.

Dositheos wrote about the Keraunios mountains, locating them not far from Zichia: “Caucasus stretches from Zichia to the Keraunios mountains.” In order to identify the above-mentioned mountains, one can resort to the work of Strabon, who says that the Caucasus mountains were called Keraunios near the shore.<sup>13</sup> Strabon also mentions Iviria of Asia, situated on the north side of the Caucasus Mountains, like Albania or Colchis (also known as Phasos).<sup>14</sup>

When describing the northern region, with the Sarkel fortress and the Karacul river, Dositheos does not mention the historical sources employed, unlike with the rest of the text. One may suppose that he knew about the book written by Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, the Byzantine emperor, and he used some fragments concerning Karacul, the building of the Sarkel fortress, and some other important elements from the Pecheneg history.

One can find important similarities between the description of Constantine Porphyrogenetos and the text of Dositheos. For example, Dositheos says that the Pechenegs were the inhabitants of the space from Pannonia to the Sarkel castle and that this space could be crossed in 60 days, and one may find this information also in the text written by the Byzantine emperor.

It is important to pay attention to the fact that Dositheos began the description of the region of Caucasus from the Tanais river (nowadays the Don), abiding by the tradition that Asia was separated from Europe by this above-mentioned river.<sup>15</sup>

Dositheos also wrote about some rivers, like Ucruh, Karacul and Nikopsis.<sup>16</sup> Nikopsis was also the name of the fortress situated near the homonym river, and this castle was known as Anakopia as well.<sup>17</sup> All these rivers and also the Turhanesh and Tzervgeni castles are marked on a map dating back to 1729, which was printed in Greek and Latin, in Venice.<sup>18</sup> The map which accompanied the work of Constantine Porphyrogenetos, presented “Imperii Orientalis et Circumiacentium Regionum sub Constantino Porphyrogenito et eius praedecessoribus Descriptio” and it was drawn by Guillemo Del’Isle. The region of Caucasus was well drawn and presented Zichia,

<sup>13</sup> Strabon, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 406.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, p. 398; and vol. I, Paris, 1886, p. 103, Strabon employs the name of Iviria for the territory situated in Asia and for the country in Europe, and explains this coincidence.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, pp. 39, 94, 386. Strabon also says that the river Tanais was the boundary between Europe and Asia.

<sup>16</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, p. 64. The author discusses about a river and a fortress called Nikopsis, located not far from Zichia. Near Zichia lay Panaghia, Casalia and Alania.

<sup>17</sup> W.E.D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People*, London, 1932, p. 28.

<sup>18</sup> *Byzantinae Historiae Scriptores*, vol. XXIII, Venetiis, 1729.

situated on the northeastern shore of “Ponticum Mare”; the region of Casalia and Papaghia was also sketched out. In the north, there were the rivers Tanais and Karacul, and also Crimea and Maeotica Palus. The territory of Lazica, also represented on the map, was known as Egeria, Mingrelia or Colchis, the last word being used especially by the Greek historiography. This territory was situated in the western part of the Caucasus area, near the sea, and in the southern part of Abasgia. Dositheos used the term Colchis and also Mingrelia and quoted Procopius, the Byzantine author, who mentioned the important role of the Suanoi population in defending the Byzantine Empire and Colchis from the attacks of the Scythians.

Dositheos, after the presentation of the geographical frame, describes valuable elements concerning the history and religion of these populations. He writes about the building of the Sarkel fortress and also about the appointment of a Byzantine commander in Chersonesos, information taken mostly from the work of Constantine Porphyrogennetos<sup>19</sup>, or from a common historical source. The Sarkel fortress was built by Peter Kamateros, a well-known Byzantine personage, who played an important role in the Caucasus area. He was appointed chief commander of the Klimata district and was a member of the famous Kamateros family, as we can read on a seal dating back to the ninth century.<sup>20</sup>

The text also describes the most important political and religious events of the populations from the Caucasus area and presents their relations with the Byzantine and Persian Empires, which were in conflict, at that time, striving to gain influence and power in this region. Dositheos writes about the Alans and, using Byzantine authors, such as Menander Protector, Procopius and Zonaras, he makes a short presentation of their history. The Alans were the allies or the enemies of the Byzantines, and very often they used to fight against the Byzantines.<sup>21</sup> There was some information about religious aspects and Dositheos notes that the Alans were in general very pious, but some of them abandoned the faith after the Tatar invasion and became Muslims. In Roman and Byzantine historiography<sup>22</sup> there were many references to the Alans from the Caucasus or Europe, but Dositheos chose the writings of Menander Protector and Procopius;

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<sup>19</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, p. 63: Sarkel was built by Petronas, a famous Byzantine personage, at the request of the Chazaroi.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> Procopius (*op. cit.*, I, 13) says that the Romans were allied with the Alans. And *ibidem*, IV, 4; IV, 3, 4 he says that the territory between the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea was inhabited by the Alans, who used to fight against the Romans.

<sup>22</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus discusses about the Alans of the Caucasus and mentions the fact that the name of the population was borrowed from some mountains. *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae* (hereafter: FHDR), vol. II, București, 1970, p. 131. Nikephoros Gregoras, a Byzantine author of the fourteenth century, writes about the Alans who were located near the Danube (Ister), and he also employs for them the name of “massageton.” *Ibidem*, vol. III, București, 1975, p. 509. Constantin Porfirogenetul, *Carte de învățătură pentru fiul său Romanos*, București, 1971, pp. 20, 64.

thus, for more accuracy, he preferred those authors who lived almost in a contemporary period with the events they related about. The Alans fought against the Abasgoi, who were in conflict with the Byzantines, during the reign of Justinian Rhinotmetos (685–695, and 705–774), who sent a mission to them, led by Leon, a Byzantine sword-bearer. For all these aspects, Dositheos quotes Zonaras, a Byzantine author of the twelfth century.<sup>23</sup>

Dositheos wrote not only about the religious faith of the Alans or Zichoi, but also about the ecclesiastical structures. There were in the Caucasus area many ecclesiastical institutions which depended on the Byzantine Church. Moreover, he mentions the names of some important bishops, such as Theodoros of Alania and the bishops of Soteriopolis and Zichia. These aspects were taken from a list of ecclesiastical structures issued in the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Andronicos Palaiologos, the son of Michael. Dositheos also mentions an act issued by the Synod of 1285, which decided against the activity of Ioannes Bekkos, the Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, Dositheos used not only historical sources, like chronicles, but also religious documents, which were rich in information concerning the hierarchy of the Byzantine Church. He mentions the Synod of 1285, which had important participants, bearing the title of “hypertimos,” such as the Metropolitan Bishop of Zichia, Vasileos, and the Metropolitan Bishop of Alania and Soteriopolis, Niketas.

The bishop’s seat of Sougdaia, mentioned by Dositheos, is evoked by other ecclesiastical documents of the fourteenth century. For example, a synodal act from that period mentions the metropolitan seat of Sougdaia, and also mentions the bishops of Alania, Zichia and Tmutorokan.<sup>25</sup> Another synodal tome, which was issued against Varlaam, was also signed by Eusebios, hypertimos and Bishop of Sougdaia.<sup>26</sup>

Dositheos mentions the ecclesiastical seat of Sougdafulon. This was a compound form, used in order to indicate the bishops’ seats of Sougdaia and Phoulon, and it is attested by the synodal lists of the twelfth century.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, Dositheos underlines the ecclesiastical structures from the respective region and he mentions the metropolitan seats of Alania, Zichia or Abasgia, where “Sebastopol was an archiepiscopal diocese of Constantinople, as Georgios of

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<sup>23</sup> I. Zonaras, in *Byzantinae Historiae Scriptores*, vol. X, Venetiis, 1729, p. 79, says that the Emperor Justinian Rhinotmetos sent a mission to the Alans concerning the fight against the Abasgoi. This mission was led by a sword-bearer called Leon.

<sup>24</sup> FHDR, vol. IV, București, 1982, p. 191.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 191. The synod of 1317–1318.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 195. The synodal tome of 1374.

<sup>27</sup> J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae Episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, Paris, 1981, p. 127. During the reign of Patriarch Nicholas III, the ecclesiastical seats of Sougdaia and Phoulon were joined, and so were the seats of Alania and Soteriopolis.

Cypros said.” Without underlining the beginnings of Christianity in the region, Dositheos mentions the Alans and the Zichoi, who converted to Islam, under the influence of the Tatars. Dositheos employs in relation to them the word “mixoturkoi,” which designated a population with a mixed way of life<sup>28</sup> and not a mixture between different Turkish medieval nations.

Dositheos also mentions the writings of Procopius about the ancient pagan faith of the Abasgoi, who venerated the wood. The Byzantine emperor Justinian managed to Christianize them, sent over priests and had a church erected in their territory.

At the end of the first description of the Caucasus area in the medieval times, Dositheos presents the political and diplomatic relations between the Byzantine emperors and the Abhazoi rulers, who were given by the Byzantines the honorary title of “curopalates.” The Byzantine emperors who used this title for the Abasgoi leaders, from the Bagratid family, included Constantine Porphyrogenetos, Michael, Theodora and Romanos Argyros. For all these aspects, Dositheos mentions the chronicle written by Kedrenos<sup>29</sup>, who presents these relations in detail.

As one may see, the first part of the description was achieved only with the help of historical sources, most of them of Byzantine origin. Dositheos intended to present the early history of the populations from the Caucasus area. But, at the end of the description, Dositheos gives an interesting piece of information, based on his own experience. He mentions some documents dating back to the Comnenos emperors times, which had been kept in a monastery from Mingrelia. He also used some official documents, issued by the Byzantine emperors, called chrysobulls. For example, he mentions the act emitted by Alexios Megas Comnenos in 1364 for the Sumela Monastery, which was very beautiful illustrated.

Concerning the modalities of quoting the historical or ecclesiastical sources, Dositheos applied two methods: either he only mentions the name of the author (“as Kedrenos said,” or “as Zonaras said”), or he quotes both the name of the author and of his book (“as Procopius said in his fourth book”). This was the way of quoting also used by Procopius, who mentioned “Herodotos of Halicarnassos.”

In the eighteenth century, Chrysanthos Notaras, who published the book of Dositheos, wrote in his turn a very interesting geographical work<sup>30</sup>, in which he mentions in the same manner the sources he consulted, and among other authors we can find Plinius, Strabon and Herodotos.

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<sup>28</sup> The Byzantine sources, such as M. Attaliates (eleventh century), Anna Comnena (thirteenth century) and I. Katrares (fourteenth century) speak about the “mixobarbaroi.” FHDR, vol. III, pp. 73, 115, 519.

<sup>29</sup> *Byzantinae Historiae Scriptores*, vols. VII–VIII, Venetiis, 1729, p. 602. Also see Constantin Porfirogenetul, *Carte de învățătură ...*, pp. 64-74.

<sup>30</sup> Chrysanthos Notaras, *Eisagoge eis ta geographika kai sphairika*, Paris, 1716, p. 147.

D. Cantemir used to quote the text he read in the same way, by naming only the author. He said about the Prut river that it was named formerly Gerasus by Ptolemaeus, and Porota by Ammianus Marcellinus, and Pyretus by the ancient Greeks.<sup>31</sup> Occasionally, Cantemir makes a more vague reference to the sources<sup>32</sup>, or gives the author of a text, without mentioning the book.<sup>33</sup> For the period he lived in Russia, Cantemir could only quote the Turkish or Persian texts from memory, being unable to find those books there.<sup>34</sup>

The two authors, D. Cantemir and Dositheos, preferred to use the sources which were contemporary<sup>35</sup> with the events they were describing and this shows a preoccupation for the accuracy of information and also a selection of the sources employed.

Dositheos visited many times the Romanian Principalities, for relatively long periods, and thus he was able to read many historical sources at the Wallachian Court. Constantin Brâncoveanu, the Wallachian Prince, had an impressive library containing a lot of valuable manuscripts and many printed books as well.

M. Caratașu, C. Dima-Drăgan and M. Ruffini<sup>36</sup> studied these aspects regarding the Wallachian library in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and they emphasized the richness and value of their manuscripts and books. Among them, there were works of literature, history, theology, mathematics, law, medicine, geography, and many books were printed in Paris, Venice, Amsterdam, Cologne, Rome, while others were printed in Poland or Constantinople.<sup>37</sup> These books were written in Greek, Latin, Italian, Arabic or Georgian.

The library of the Hurez Monastery had almost all the volumes of the Byzantine writers, published in Paris in the seventeenth century, during the reign of King Louis XIV. Thus, Dositheos may have read in Wallachia the books of Procopius, printed in Paris between 1661–1663, or of Menander Protector. He could also have read juridical literature, such as the novel issued by Justinian, where he could find information about Lazica.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>31</sup> D. Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, București, 1973, p. 65.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>33</sup> Idem, *Divanul*, București, 1974, p. 231. Cantemir speaks of Dosoftei, Metropolitan of Moldavia, but does not mention his work *Viața și petrecerea sfinților*.

<sup>34</sup> D. Cantemir, *Sistemul sau întocmirea religiei muhammedane*, București, 1987, pp. 168, 366. The author notes that he was unable to find these books in the National Library of Russia, although the library was richly endowed.

<sup>35</sup> Idem, *Descrierea Moldovei*, p. 270. He mentions that he preferred the contemporary sources to other types of historical sources.

<sup>36</sup> M. Ruffini, *Biblioteca stolnicului Constantin Cantacuzino*, București, 1973, p. 67.

<sup>37</sup> C. Dima-Drăgan, *Biblioteca stolnicului Constantin Cantacuzino*, in "Studii și cercetări de documente și bibliologie," 2, 1964, pp. 193-205. C. Cantacuzino returned to Wallachia in 1669 after a journey to Constantinople, Venice, and Padua, and he brought with him many books from Italy.

<sup>38</sup> Novel no. 28, prefatio *Corpus Juris Civilis*, vol. III, ed. by R. Schoell, G. Kroll, Berlin, 1904, p. 212, *apud* D. Obolensky, *op. cit.*, p. 46.



The patriarch Macarios of Antiochia (1647–1672) and also D. Cantemir gave some interesting information about the Caucasus area at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. Macarios crossed the region on his way back to Georgia, after a visit in Russia, where he participated in a synod and D. Cantemir arrived in the Caucasus in 1722, because he accompanied Peter the Great in his military campaign against Persia.

Macarios wrote some notes about the Georgians, and the text was preserved in an Arabic manuscript in the Vatican Library. The author wrote about the Christianization of the Georgians and also about their special devotion to St. George.<sup>39</sup> The devoutness to St. George is also mentioned by other sources and it can be explained by the Christianization of the region by St. Nina, a close relative of St. George.<sup>40</sup>

D. Cantemir performed some research on the spot, and wrote some notes about the Caucasian wall and about the geography of the region. The Russian interest for the Caucasian territory was evident from the sixteenth century<sup>41</sup> and later, Peter the Great sent many missions to research the area.

The notes about the Caucasus were sent by Antioch and Cantemir, the sons of Dimitrie Cantemir, to the German professor Bayer, who published an article in which he mentioned the explorer activity of D. Cantemir.<sup>42</sup> G. Vâlsan remarked a map of the Caucasian wall, near Derbent town, drawn by Cantemir, and also a sketch of the mountains, where the author noted the limits of the snow.<sup>43</sup>

There were two geographical works, very different in style, about the Caucasus area, written by Chrysanthos Notaras and Meletios, the Metropolitan Bishop of Athens. Meletios was Cantemir's professor and wrote in Greek a geographical book, printed in Venice in 1726. He describes some countries in Europe, Asia and America, and he also gives information about the Romanian territory. He describes Albania, the eastern region of Georgia, situated at half distance between Iveria and the Caspian Sea, and he also mentions some rivers, mountains and towns from Colchis.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> "De conversione Georgianorum ad fidem christianam et quomodo sub obedientia patriarchae Antiocheni primum fuerint [...] Georgianos habere magnam fidem in S. Georgium martyrem," in the Arabic manuscript no. 689 from the Vatican Library, *apud* V. Grumel, *Macarie, patriarche grec d'Antioche*, in "Echos d'Orient," 149, 1928, p. 71.

<sup>40</sup> *Patericul Georgian*, Galați, 2004, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> W. E. Allen, *Russian Embassies to the Georgian Kings (1589–1605)*, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1972; E. Lozovan, *D. Cantemir et l'expansion russe en Caucase (1722–1724)*, in "Revue des Etudes Roumaines," XIII–XIV, 1974, p. 92.

<sup>42</sup> Bayer, *De muro Caucasco (1726)*, *apud* P.P. Panaitescu, *Le prince D. Cantemir et le mouvement intellectuel russe sous Pierre le Grand*, in "Revue des Etudes Slaves," VI, 1926, pp. 245–262.

<sup>43</sup> G. Vâlsan, *D. Cantemir ca geograf*, in "Revista Științifică," XII, 1925, 1, pp. 13–16.

<sup>44</sup> Meletios, *Geographia palaiā kai nea*, Venetia, 1807, p. 308. In Chapter 23 he describes Colchis, Iveria and Albania.

The geographical work of Chrysanthos Notaras presents some elements of astronomy and climate and contains drawings of the planets and zodiac.<sup>45</sup> He also mentions the rivers of Colchis or the Caspian Sea, but the geographical elements are not very detailed, because the author emphasizes mainly the astronomical problems.

In conclusion, at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were many geographical works which presented the Caucasus area. The work of Dositheos contains a lot of geographical elements, but also mentions important historical and religious events. Dositheos employs historical and ecclesiastical sources, describes contemporary facts – such as his own expedition in the area, in the company of Paisios, the Patriarch of Jerusalem at that time, and the journey of Paisios in Mingrelia – and gives information about the Church dedicated to St. George.

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<sup>45</sup> Chrysanthos Notaras, *op. cit.*