

Language Variation in Moldavian Charters of the 14th–15th Centuries: Phonetic Level

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1. Introduction

Variation as a philosophical category expressing the variability and dynamics of social life in its material and cultural spheres is reflected in the field of linguistics. The nomenclature *variant, invariant, variation, variability, variance*, the etymology of which is associated with the Latin lexemes *vario* „diversify, change”, *varius* „diverse, versatile”, are interdisciplinary terms that usually characterize the structure and functioning of objects. They were firmly captured in linguistic studies, having become the basic terms of the theory of language variation¹.

Such aspects of the phenomenon of language variation as extralingual and intralingual causes of language parallelism, types of language variants (for example, by language levels, functional styles, territorial features, socio-cultural spheres, etc.), the formation of an empirical and methodological base for the scientific study of variable language units, the specifics of language variation in diachronic and synchronic aspects, the consequences of the phenomenon of language variation in the evolution of a particular language system, etc., require the attention of linguists today.

2. Literature review

In the context of these issues of language changeability, the works of Romanian and Moldavian linguists are of considerable interest. In particular, the phenomenon of variation of the Romanian language on the territory of the Republic of Moldova was studied by Liliana Botnari in her thesis paper *The theory of variability and its applicability to the Romanian language of the Republic of Moldova* (2020). Thanks to the application of a multiconceptual approach to the analysis of language varieties, their functioning in Romanian charters and the Soviet print press in Bessarabia in 1946–1992, the scientist classified the types of language varieties, revealed the mechanisms of development of variation in the Romanian

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¹ Scientific studies dedicated to the issue of language variants: Milroy 1992; Ammon 1995; Gadet 2003; Bartmiński, Szadura 2003, and others.

language in diachrony and synchrony. As a result of the study, Liliana Botnari came to the conclusion that variation processes activity in the Romanian language in its varieties occurred due to extralingual, geographical, sociocultural, ideological, political, stylistic and other factors.

The provisions, important from the point of view of language variation concept, were developed in the scientific works of other linguists: Eugen Coseriu studied the problems of language changeability in synchrony and diachrony (1997), Florin-Teodor Olariu characterized the dialect variation in the Romanian language caused by dialect influences and sociolinguistic factors (2017), Ariadna Stefanescu analyzed the variation and standardization of the Romanian language in Bessarabia (2016).

Interesting observations of the phenomenon of language variation were made by Polish researcher Marek Ruszkowski (2014: 53–62). The scientist considers those language elements that differ in form, but perform the same or similar function, variable, and also suggests dividing them according to the following criteria: language standardization, language levels, the universality of use, frequency of use, chronological criterion, geographical criterion, range of occurrence, stylistic criterion (2014: 54–59). In general, the classification proposed by the researcher will help to solve the problems of language parallelism.

Russian linguist V.M. Solntsev studied the sources and types of variation, identified and analyzed variant-invariant relations in the Paradigm system, came to the conclusion that variation is one of the internal factors of language development and changeability, the effect of which is associated with other internal and external factors of language development and which is implemented by continuous creation, selection, functioning of various variants, that is, in the process of variation (1984: 31–42). K.S. Gorbachevitch also joined in solving the problems of language variation. He characterized language variants in relation to their intra-system and diachronic relations, analyzed accentological, phonemic, morphological variants of the word, paid special attention to the normative and stylistic aspects of the use of variable language elements (2009). In his conclusions, the linguist noted that the study of variants competition is a necessary component in establishing the main trends in the development of the literary language and in creating a dynamic theory of norm.

Ukrainian linguists raised the issue of variation in the context of dialectologic, sociolinguistic, historical and linguistic and other scientific studies².

The purpose of our work is to study the phonetic variation in the Cyrillic documents of the Principality of Moldavia of the period of the 14th–15th centuries, to find out the causes of graphic and phonetic variants occurrence, to establish spelling trends and oral influences in the written and literary language of that time.

The tasks of our study include analysis of language variation in the diachronic aspect, including the relationship between different ethnic groups, cultures, States, etc. Throughout the history of development, language as an open heterogeneous system synthesized variable units at all structural levels, created at different times, specific and borrowed, and also combined elements of a particular local dialect. The

² In the second half of the 20th – beginning of the 21st century, such studies became particularly active in Ukraine, here are some works: Hrytsenko 1990; Matviias 1998; Tsaralunga 2017; Yunosova 2003.

absence of primers, grammars, and dictionaries that would standardize language norms during a certain period led to an imbalance of spelling and grammatical systems, and the disordered sound and grammatical structure were reflected in variable units at different stages of language development. In the manuscripts, this phenomenon is clearly represented in the texts of business writing, namely, in the documents of the Principality of Moldavia of the period of the 14th–15th centuries, where, among the texts in Latin, Moldavian, Polish and other languages, a considerable part consists of Cyrillic charters (contractual, jury, merciful charters, grants, bills of sale, exchange, confirmation, statutory charters, etc.) issued by voivodes, the rulers of the state.

The value of these official and business written manuscripts lies not only in the possibility of a detailed study of the history of the region, the state structure, socio-economic, diplomatic and legal relations on their basis, but also in the richness of evidential material necessary for studying the written and literary language, the speech of representatives of the ethnic groups of that time. Therefore, the scientific study of the texts of Moldavian charters was started by Yuriy Venelin (1840), Omelian Kaluzhniatskyi (1878), Aleksandr Yatsimirskij (1906), Ioan Bogdan (1908, 1913a, 1913b), and others.

The vocabulary, phonetics, and grammar of Moldavian charters were studied in depth by both Romanian scientists – Alexandru Rosetti (1932), Damian Bogdan (1946), Petre Panaitescu (1958), Elena Lintsa (1972), Slavic researchers – Volodymyr Yaroshenko (1931), Ivan Ohienko (1936), Samuil Bernstein (1948), Mykola Antoshyn (1961), Lukiia Humetska (1971), Stepan Perepelytsia (1998, 2010), Bohdana Tymochko (Tymochko 2013), Sergej Suliak (2016), and others.

More than three thousand handwritten charters from the time of the Principality of Moldavia have been preserved to date; their photocopies were published, and the texts were partially metagraphed in publications of different countries – Romania, Russia, Ukraine, etc.³

3. Grounding the research

In Cyrillic charters, the Principality of Moldavia is represented by cities and towns that were the economic, political, and cultural centers of the medieval state. In particular, the phenomenon of phonetic parallelism can be traced in handwritten texts from such settlements as: Iasi, Khotyn, Neamt, Putna, Roman, Suceava, Vaslui, etc.⁴

Thanks to the frontal analysis of the texts of Moldavian charters, a large number of language fluctuations in the field of phonetics, both in the system of vocalism and in the field of consonantism, certain phonetic changes and spelling trends reflected in sound combinations were detected.

³ To denote the names of collections of Moldavian charters, in which phonetic variation was revealed, the following abbreviations are used: DRH, Gr, SM, UG.

⁴ When certifying the material in examples of word forms selected from the charters, the year, when the document was written, and the place of its creation is indicated; an alphabetic acronym or other abbreviation is used to indicate the name of the source, and numbers after the comma indicate the volume number if any, and the page number.

Vowel phonemes variation

Reflexes of the old *ě are implemented in different continuants. First of all, old written language traditions are found in word forms in which *ě > ѣ: бѣлиць 1408 Suceava (in Romanian – *Suceava*), UG, 70; оу Бѣломъ Городѣ 1408 Suceava, UG, 70; на вѣкы 1465 Suceava, DRH, A II, 185; вѣрному 1408 Suceava, UG, 72; вѣчныа 1471 Suceava, UG, 119; гнѣв 1470 Dolny Torg (in Romanian – *Târgul de Jos*, now a Romanian city *Roman*), SM, I, 245; дѣдичь 1393 Suceava, Gr, 120; дѣломъ 1446 Suceava, UG, 99; лѣсъ 1446 Suceava, UG, 100; лѣтомъ 1395 Suceava, Gr, 127; мѣсто 1439 Vaslui (in Romanian – *Vaslui*), DRH, A I, 281; мѣс(а)ца⁵ 1392 Roman, DRH, A I, 3; насѣкы 1497 Iasi (in Romanian – *Iași*), DRH, A III, 367; роздѣлиту 1393 Suceava, Gr, 120; свѣдомо 1388 Suceava, Gr, 81; смѣли 1456 Neamt (now a Romanian city – *Piatra Neamț*), UG, 105; са не оумѣшаю(м) 1448 Bukovina, UG, 101; хотѣль 1408 Suceava, UG, 72; ѣну 1408 Suceava, UG, 72, etc.

The consequences of the second South Slavic influence can be traced in the confusion of ѣа: варному 1463 Suceava, UG, 118; вачныа 1465 Suceava, DRH, A II, 185; даль 1446 Suceava, UG, 99; оу лас(ъ) 1483 Suceava, DRH, A II, 385; ла(м) 1422 Neamt, UG, 76; могли оасати 1457 Suceava, SM, II, 94; привасити 1446 Suceava, UG, 100 and the like. According to V. Yaroshenko, in Moldavian charters, а is used instead of ѣ due to the influence of the middle Bulgarian graphics: изъ вака, всами, прад etc., as it was the intensive cultural and religious relations between Bukovyna and the Southern Slavs, Bulgarians, in particular, that led to the brisk export from Bulgaria to Moldova of church books written in the middle Bulgarian spelling; therefore, the Bulgarian element greatly influenced Bukovynians according to the researcher (1931: 15–16).

The studied charters very often reflect the phonetic features of the Ukrainian dialect – the reflexivity of *ě > i, which developed primarily in the south-western Ukrainian dialects, in particular in the Bukovynian and Galician dialects⁶: билиць 1460 Suceava, UG, 111; оу Било(м) Городѣ 1460 Suceava, UG, 111; изъ вика 1464 Suceava, DRH, A II, 179; вирнимы 1458 Bakiv (in Romanian – *Vasău*), DRH, A II, 97, вичного 1464 Vaslui, DRH, A II, 173, 179; гнивь 1435 Suceava, SM, I, 245; дида 1466 Suceava, DRH, A II, 196; дил 1432 Suceava, UG, 89; его дитемъ 1393 Suceava, Gr, 120; у ли(с) 1488 Suceava, UG, 125; мисто 1440 Suceava, DRH, A I, 288; мисаца 1393 Suceava, DRH, A I, 6; где осиль Тома 1445 Suceava, SM, II, 94; насикѣ 1497 Iasi, DRH, A III, 367; привисили 1408 Suceava, DRH, A I, 33; розделяючися 1393 Suceava, Gr, 120; свидчили 1464 Vaslui, DRH, A II, 172-173; смил(л) 1460 Suceava, UG, 111; не смѣеть умшиати 1456 Neamt, UG, 105; хотили 1455 Iasi, DRH, A II, 63; цинѣ 1453 Suceava, DRH, A II, 52, and many others. According to the observations of Witold Kuraszkiewicz, the Polish language historian, “[...] in Bukovyna, the process of monophthongization of sonant *je* into *i*

⁵ Here and further in the examples, the superscript letters or letter combinations in words are written in parentheses.

⁶ Change of *ě > i in the Bukovynian dialects of the second half of the 20th century is depicted on the dialect maps, see *Atlas ukraïnskoi movy*, Vol. 2, maps no 9, 10, 13.

completed at the end of the 14th–15th centuries, as evidenced by frequent *u* instead of *ѣ* in the Moldavian charters” (1934: 65).

Continuation of **e* and **a* 'a belongs to variation phonetic processes, the consequences of which have acquired the following graphic expression in Moldavian charters: *А* – *ѡ/ѡ* (*a*) – *е/е*: *кнѡгинина* – *кнегининѣ* 1428 Suceava, DRH, A I, 103, 112; *предѡдатом(ѣ)* – *дѡдетомѣ* 1479 Suceava, DRH, A II, 328; *оучѡстїе* 1411 Suceava, UG, 75 – *учестїе* 1440 Torhovyshe (in Romanian – *Târgoviște*), UG, 137; *на чѡдо(х)* 1488 Suceava, UG, 126 – *на чѡдо(х)* 1440 Torhovyshe, UG, 137, etc. As we can see, the medieval manuscripts partly reflect the traditional writing of that time, when the transition of **e* > *a* > *ä* > *a* was expressed in the letters *А* and *ѡ/ѡ*. As for the consequent confusion of letters *ѡ* (*А*) – *е/е*, it should be assumed that they reflect the phenomenon characteristic of Naddnistrianska Ukraine dialects, which is now being implemented as a transition of 'a into 'e⁷. In this context, the conclusion of M. Antoshyn is reasonable: “it is impossible not to see a reflection of Bukovyna and Pokuttia reflexes in the replacement of *А* with a letter *e*” (1961: 24).

Sometimes, graphemes *ѡ* (*А*) – *ѣ* are used to denote vowel continuants **e* and **a*, in particular, in the unaccented position: *дѡсѡтину* 1456 Neamt, UG, 105 – *дѡсѣтину* 1458 Dolny Torg, UG, 109; *кнѡгини* 1438 Suceava, UG, 92 – *кнѣгиню* 1474 Vaslui, UG, 122; *сѡ* покусить 1422 Neamt, UG, 76 – *сѣ* покусить 1443 Suceava, UG, 96; *торговѡлами* 1408 Suceava, UG, 70 – *трѣговѣлами* 1456 Suceava, UG, 104, and others; stressed: *брѡтѡю* 1408 Suceava, UG, 72 – *брѣтѣю* 1411 Suceava, UG, 75; *заплати(т) завѡзку* 1423 Suceava, UG, 79 – *заплати(т) завѣзск(у)* 1474 Vaslui, UG, 123; *ѡ(т) Монастырѣ* – *наше(т) монастирѡ* 1463 Suceava, UG, 117; *мунѡаньскѡи* 1408 Suceava, UG, 72 – *моунѣаньскѡи* 1460 Suceava, UG, 113; *працѡурѡ(м)* 1422 Bukovina, UG, 77 – *працоурѣ(м)* 1432 Suceava, UG, 89; *оузѡти* 1448 Bukovina, UG, 101 – *оузѣти* 1460 Suceava, UG, 113; *ѡгнѡчїихѣ* 1408 Suceava, UG, 70 – *ѡгнѣчїи* 1460 Suceava, UG, 111, and many others. V. Yaroshenko considers cases of confusion of *е*, *ѣ* and *А*, *ѡ* in the language of Moldavian charters of the 14th–15th centuries as a result of the effect of the middle Bulgarian graphics, and convincingly proves that these are clear signs of South Slavic influence.

The Chancellors of the Moldavian hosts richly decorated their charters with the peculiarities of Bulgarian spelling, both unwittingly, taking one or another feature of the middle Bulgarian graphics from church books, and deliberately, trying to demonstrate their erudition and book culture (Yaroshenko 1931: 15).

The signs of reverse confusion of the letters *ѣ* – *ѡ* (*А*) should be explained by the middle Bulgarian influence: *имѡнуѡма* 1443 Suceava, UG, 97 – *имѣнуѡма* 1429 Suceava, UG, 83; *сирѡ(т)скоѡ* – *Сере(т)скѡи* 1408 Suceava, UG, 71–72.

Therefore, due to the “fluctuation” of continuants **e* and **a*, a triple variation of graphemes *ѡ* (*А*) – *ѣ* – *ѣ* in one word is observed: *проклѡ(т)* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74 – *проклѣ(т)* 1440 Torhovyshe, UG, 137 – *проклѣтъ* 1488

⁷ See *Atlas ukraïnskoi movy*, m. no 41, 43, 46, 47.

Suceava, UG, 126; *тезати – тѣзали* 1474 Vaslui, UG, 122-123 – *тагальса* 1423 Suceava, UG, 79.

Reflexes of *o and *e in newly closed syllables appear in variable forms. It is worth noting the old spelling of graphemes *o* and *e* in place of etymological vowels, as well as numerous examples of transition of **o* > *y* and **e* > *ю*, regardless of the stress: *болше* 1411 Suceava, UG, 75 – *бу(л)ше* 1488 Suceava, UG, 126; *бро(д)* 1423 – *броу(д)* 1437 Bukovina, SM, I, 124; *будь съ коимь* 1440 Torhovyshche, UG, 136 – *бу(д)куему* 1463 Suceava, UG, 118; *колко* слухали 1462 Suceava, DRH, A II, 150 – *кільки* прислухают(ь) 1452 Vaslui, DRH, A II, 19; *пановъ* 1447 Suceava, DRH, A I, 387 – *панѡв(ь)* 1468 Suceava, DRH, A II, 221; *попоу(д) лѣсѡ(м)* 1490 Suceava, UG, 131, *поуд(ь)* печати 1454 Neamt, DRH, A II, 61 – *под печати* 1456 (?) Bukovina, UG, 107; *потверждаюмъ* 1439 Vaslui, DRH, A I, 275 – *потерьждаемъ* 1459 Suceava, DRH, A II, 118; *тютци* 1462 Bakiv, DRH, A II, 147, *тютка* его 1480 Suceava, DRH, A II, 343; *юи* самой 1462 Bakiv, DRH, A II, 147 – *еи* да *вчинать* – 1470 Suceava, DRH, A II, 245, etc. Obviously, it reflects the interaction of traditional spelling and oral speech, as the centers of changes of *o* > *y* and *e* > *ю* are clearly traced today in the south-western Ukrainian dialects⁸. Thus, studying the language of Moldavian charters of the 14th–15th centuries, L. Humetska qualifies a change in the former quality of *o*, *e* in a new closed syllable as a result of an increase in their longitude (*булшеи, кролювъ*) as an expressive Ukrainian language feature (1971: 33).

The phenomenon of “ikavism”, that is, the transition of elongated etymological vowels **o* and **e* into *i(u)* in newly closed syllables *o*, *e*, is represented by single examples: *оу че(м)* 1448 Bukovina, UG, 101 – *у чи(м)* 1456 Neamt, UG, 105, the charters also evidence the functioning of the so-called “*новуі уат*”: *роубѣжіе – роубежіе* 1446 Suceava, UG, 99-100; *камень – камѣню* 1470 Suceava, DRH, A II, 436.

Labialization of vowel e, both etymological and secondary, with *ь*, in the position after sibilants before a hard consonant, regardless of stress, in *o* caused the following parallel spellings: *до Брашова* 1408 Suceava, UG, 71 – *до Брашева* 1460 Suceava, UG, 112; *бчел(ь)* 1453 Suceava, DRH, A II, 38 – *бчо(л)* 1458 Dolny Torg, UG, 109; *вышелъ* 1392 Suceava, Gr, 109 – *пришоль* 1403 Suceava, DRH, A I, 26; *женѣ* 1393 Suceava, Gr, 120 – *жоны* 1462 Bakiv, DRH, A II, 147; *нашемоу – нашому* 1403 Suceava, DRH, A I, 26; *повише* где били грекове 1462 Suceava, SM, II, 160 – *повышо* потоку(м) долоу 1448 Suceava, SM, II, 160; *абы поше(л)* 1456 (?) Bukovina, UG, 106 – *аби пошо(л)* 1474 Vaslui, UG, 122; *с(вѣ)топочившому* 1435 Suceava, DRH, A I, 193 – *с(вѣ)топочившему* 1436 Suceava, DRH, A I, 224; *Чорного* 1432 Suceava, UG, 89 – *Черного* 1407 Suceava, DRH, A I, 30; *четыре* 1436 Suceava, DRH, A I, 211 – *четыры* 1408 Suceava, UG, 72, etc. The phenomenon of change of *e* > *o* in Moldavian charters caused a significant variation of spellings, so the labialization of the vowel occurred inconsistently, and later developed into a typical feature of the modern Ukrainian language.

⁸ See *ibidem*, m. no 51–53.

Examples of the **initial transition of *je* into *o*** are evidenced in the following variants: *Еленоу* – *Олены* 1466 Suceava, DRH, A II, 192, 196; *едно* 1422 Neamt, UG, 76 – *адноу* 1443 Neamt, DRH, A I, 315; *по едино(м)* 1429 Suceava, UG, 85 – *одному* 1407 Suceava, DRH, A I, 30; *озеро* 1429 Neamt, UG, 82 – *езеро* 1429 Suceava, UG, 85; *езера* 1454 Suceava, DRH, A II, 59 – *озера* 1472 Suceava, UG, 121, etc. The distribution process began with the loss of prosthetic *j*, and the sound *e* gradually labialized and turned into a non-anterior vowel of mid tongue elevation *o*. Writing of a grapheme *ε* (*e*) at the beginning of the word is the result of the spread of the Church Slavonic written language tradition, but the use of *o* at the beginning of words is a common feature of proto-Ukrainian, proto-Belarusian and proto-Russian dialects (Shevelov 2002: 215, 221), widespread in East Slavic literary languages to this day.

The merge of vowels *yi* and *i* is consequently represented in parallel forms in the charter language: *вид ѣшии* 1422 Bukovina, UG, 77 – *вид ѣшиы* 1462 Suceava, UG, 116; *више* – *выше* 1487 Suceava, DRH, A III, 26; *три возы* 1453 Suceava, DRH, A II, 52 – *тогѣ вози* 1454 Suceava, DRH, A II, 59; *врѣховни(х)* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74 – *врѣховны(х)* 1429 Suceava, UG, 85; *выку(п)леніе* – *викупленіе* 1471 Suceava, UG, 119; *готовими* 1460 Suceava, UG, 113 – *готовыими* 1471 Suceava, UG, 119; *съ грѣли* 1429 – *съ грѣлы* 1430 Suceava, UG, 85–86; *за р̄ злати* – *въ златы* 1460 Suceava, UG, 112; *манастирю* 1463 Suceava, UG, 118 – *монастырю* 1429 Neamt, UG, 82; *млины* 1443 Suceava, UG, 95 – *млини* 1488 Suceava, UG, 124; *наших(ъ)* – *нашых(ъ)* 1487 Suceava, DRH, A III, 30; *пасыки*, *пасыки* 1448 Bukovina, UG, 101 – *пасики* 1463 Suceava, UG, 118; *перевози* 1408 Suceava, UG, 72 – *перевозы* 1460 Suceava, UG, 112; *поясы* – *поаси* 1456–1460 Suceava, SM, II, 219; *свини* 1458 Dolny Torg, UG, 109 – *свыни*, *свыны* 1460 Suceava, UG, 112; *свѣтлимъ* 1443 Suceava, UG, 95 – *свѣтлы(м)* 1448 Bukovina, UG, 101; *тысѣчи* – *тисѣчи* 1456 (?) Bukovina, UG, 106–107; *тоти* – *тоты* 1458 Dolny Torg, UG, 109; *оумысломъ* 1429 Suceava, UG, 85 – *умисломъ* 1434 Dorohun (in Romanian – *Dorohoi*), UG, 90; *ѡльшиит(ъ)* – *ѡлишиит(ъ)* 1490 Suceava, DRH, A III, 59–60; *чыстымъ* 1439 – *ч(и)стымъ* 1440 Vaslui, DRH, A I, 275, 298, etc. Converging ^{bi} > *u* is one of the most prominent features of the Ukrainian language. According to the observations of W. Kuraszkiewicz, this phenomenon did not occur simultaneously throughout the territory, in particular, the earliest it took place in Bukovyna, as evidenced by numerous examples from the Moldavian charters (1934: 75). As Yuriy Shevelov concludes, “most likely, a merge of **i* and **y* spread primarily from Bukovyna, Galicia (with the exception of Carpathian dialects) and the south-western part of Volyn” (2002: 483).

Fluctuations of the unstressed *e* and *u*: *пана Бериндѣа* 1432 Suceava, UG, 89 – *пана Берендѣа* 1438 Suceava, UG, 92; *велѣли* 1411 Suceava, UG, 75 – *вилѣли* 1438 Suceava, UG, 93; *вид ѣшии* 1422 Bukovina, UG, 77 – *вид ѣшиє* 1429 Suceava, UG, 83; *занужє* 1427 Suceava, UG, 80 – *занужи* 1456 Neamt, UG, 105; *заплати(в)ши* 1456 Suceava, UG, 104 – *заплати(в)ше* 1488 Suceava, UG, 128; *земли* – *зимли* 1439 Suceava, DRH, A I, 286; *меже ними* – *межи ними* 1479 Suceava, DRH, A II, 323, 331; *поченіе* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74 – *поченши* 1423 Suceava, UG, 79; *Репчичаны* 1446 Suceava, UG, 99 – *ω(т) Рыпчича(н)* 1448

Bukovina, UG, 101; *селище* – *селици* 1479 Suceava, DRH, A II, 322–323; где *сѧ снѧмаю(т)* 1436 Vaslui, SM, II, 364 – *снимали сѧ* єсми 1455 Khotyn (now a Ukrainian city – *Хотин*), SM, II, 364; *оуставиши* – *ѡставше* 1497 Vaslui, DRH, A III, 371, 376; in borrowed words: *илишаре* 1454 Baichany (now a Ukrainian village – *Банчени*), UG, 103 – (*у*)*лишари* 1458 Dolny Torg, UG, 109; *летоурѣя* – *литоурѣя* 1476 Putna (in Romanian – *Putna*), DRH, A II, 314, 316; *Никита* 1487 Suceava, SM, II, 49 – *Некити* 1497 Vaslui, SM, II, 49, etc. Often such variation spellings are available in one document, which gives grounds to conclude there was a certain dialect articulation norm at that time, which has been preserved to this day in numerous Ukrainian dialects⁹. V. Yaroshenko, describing the phenomenon of approximation of non-accented vowels *u* and *e* in the studies about the language of Moldavian charters of the 14th–15th centuries, also draws parallels with the Bukovina dialects of the early 20th century: *чикай*, *качичка*, *приплевати*, *шенькарки* (1931: 32).

Variation of consonant phonemes

The consonantism of the Cyrillic documents of the Principality of Moldavia of the period of the 14th–15th centuries is replete with variation spellings associated with the phenomena of the consonants hardening.

Language fluctuations caused by the phenomenon of **depalatalization of *p'*** are represented in the following word forms: *Козарєвци* 1431 Suceava, SM, I, 485 – *Козаровци* 1436 Vaslui, SM, I, 485; *домъ Лазоровъ* 1487 Suceava, SM, I, 537 – *брата Лазорева* 1432 Suceava, SM, I, 537; *монастиру* – *монастирю* 1422 Neamt, UG, 76; *монастирю* 1415 Suceava, DRH, A I, 57 – *монастирѡ* 1487 Suceava, DRH, A III, 30; *наши(х) радца* 1434 Dorohun, UG, 90 – *ра(д)ци* ливовскыи 1460 Suceava, UG, 114; *хотара* 1392 Suceava, Gr, 109 – *хотара* 1490 Suceava, DRH, A III, 112; *по хотарю* 1463 Suceava, UG, 117 – *по хотарѡ* 1487 Suceava, DRH, A III, 26, etc. Parallel spellings are mainly associated with the manifestation of sound *p* before vowels *a* and *y*¹⁰.

The phenomenon of hardening of sibilants and *ц*, that etymologically were soft in any position caused a considerable number of language variants. Therefore, the reflection of hard *ж*, *ч*, *ш* typical of the modern Ukrainian phonetic system, alternates with the traditional spellings of that time: *Бырличѧ* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74 – *Бырлича* 1438 Suceava, UG, 92; *възъпишиѧ* 1411 Suceava, UG, 75 – *възъпишиа* 1443 Suceava, UG, 96; *держати* 1393 Suceava, Gr, 120 – *держати* 1408 Suceava, UG, 72; *жюпана* 1392 Suceava, Gr, 109 – *жупана* 1392 Roman, DRH, A I, 3; *Жюржъ* 1408 Suceava, UG, 72 – *Журжъ* 1454 Baichany, UG, 103; *Жюржѧ* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74 – *Журжа* 1422 Neamt, UG, 76; *Кръничани* 1448 Suceava, SM, I, 519 – *Кръничани* 1476 Iasi, SM, I, 520; *львовчанє* 1408 Suceava, UG, 72 – *ливовчанє* 1460 Suceava, UG, 113; *начални(к)* 1429 Suceava, UG, 85 – *начални(к)* 1430 Suceava, UG, 87; *печяти* 1395 Suceava, Gr, 127 – *печат(ъ)*

⁹ See *ibidem*, m. no 32, 36, 37.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that modern Bukovina dialects of the south-western Ukrainian dialect are characterized by variation in depicting [p] before the equivalent of the old *a, *e, see *ibidem*, m. no 115, 116.

1472 Vaslui, DRH, A II, 277; *праоунучатѡ(м)* 1422 Bukovina, UG, 77 – *праоунучатомъ* 1392 Suceava, Gr, 109; *Ста(н)чю(л)* 1460 – *Ста(н)чоу(л)* 1462 Suceava, UG, 113, 115; *оучастіє* 1411 Suceava, UG, 75 – *оучастіє* 1460 Suceava, UG, 113; *чадъхъ* 1429 Suceava, UG, 85 – *чадъ(х)* 1438 Suceava, UG, 93; *Ѡприша* 1411 – *Ѡприша* 1429 Suceava, UG, 74, 84, etc.

Also, the pronunciation of affricative *ц* is reflected differently in the studied Moldavian charters: *вѣ(ѡ)чица* 1443 Suceava, UG, 95 – *вѣ(ѡ)чца* 1488 Suceava, UG, 124; *ѡ(т)готовца* – *ѡ(т)готовца* 1446 Suceava, UG, 99–100; *дванашица(т)* 1421 Bukovina, SM, I, 287; *Изварецю* – *Изварецю* 1466 Suceava, DRH, A II, 188; *иногѡ соудцю* 1444 Suceava, SM, II, 400 – *иногѡ сѡд(ь)цю* 1458 Dolny Torg, DRH, A II, 101; *радца* 1434 Dorohun, UG, 90 – *ра(д)ца* 1448 Bukovina, UG, 101, *с радцами* 1408 Suceava, UG, 70; *Кръница* 1436 Vaslui, DRH, A I, 218 – *криницы* 1392 Suceava, Gr, 109, and others. To this day, Ukrainian dialect specialists record fluctuations in the pronunciation of a consonant *ц*: variation [ц'] / [ц] is inherent in the dialects of almost the entire southwestern territory, except for the predominance of hard *ц* in Bukovyna, as well as in some territories of Slovakia¹¹.

Interchange of sounds *ѣ* (graphic *ѡ*) – *у* at the beginning of words before the consonant is recorded, which is expressed in charters in letters *ѡ* – *оу/у/ѡ*: *възати* 1443 Suceava, UG, 98 – *оузати* 1448 Bukovina, UG, 101 – *ѡзати* 1454 Suceava, DRH, A II, 59; *умишати* 1456 Neamt, UG, 105 – *сѡ вмѣшати* 1463 Suceava, UG, 118; *внѡкам(ь)* 1470 Suceava, DRH, A II, 438 – *ѡнѡкъ* *своемѡ* 1468 Suceava, DRH, A II, 225 – *оуноучатомъ* 1479 Suceava, DRH, A II, 453; *оусе* 1388 Suceava, Gr, 81 – *все* 1453 Suceava, DRH, A II, 52; *увси(х)* 1454 Baichany, UG, 103 – *оусъхъ* 1408 Suceava, UG, 70; *усимъ* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74 – *увси(м)* 1454 Baichany, UG, 102; *съ воусеми* 1436 Suceava, DRH, A I, 215, etc. According to M. Antoshyn, *у* instead of *ѡ* was used not only by Ukrainians, many of whom lived in Suceava and Bukovyna, but also by Moldavian boyars, logothetes, clerks, grammarians and scribes (1961: 23), which may indicate a certain written language usage of the official business style of that time.

The charters of the Principality of Moldavia depict **sounds [z] and [r]** differently: *Герман(ь)* 1479 Suceava, DRH, A II, 332 – *Хермана* 1468 Suceava, DRH, A II, 225; *Гринка* 1422 Neamt, UG, 76 – *Хринка* 1415 Suceava, DRH, A I, 58; *мохил(ѡ)* – *могилу* 1425 Suceava, DRH, A I, 86; *оулегчили* 1408 Suceava, UG, 70 – *полѡ(х)чили* 1460 Suceava, UG, 111; *хо(л)довати* 1445 Серет, SM, I, 247 – *голдвалисѣ* 1435 Suceava, SM, I, 248; *хроши* 1460 Suceava, UG, 111 – *пол(ъ) гроша* 1453 Suceava, DRH, A II, 52; and: от *Хорѡдка* 1446 Suceava, SM, II, 512; *хорѡдни(к)* 1474 Vaslui, UG, 122; *Хорѡдника* 1444 Suceava, DRH, A I, 352; от *Хорѡдничан* 1495 Suceava, SM, II, 512; *херцегъ* 1440 Torhovyshche, UG, 136; *Хлубокою долину* 1488 Suceava, UG, 125; на *еди(н) хра(ѡ)* 1490 Suceava, UG, 131, etc. It is likely that in spellings with the letter *х* pharyngeal consonant *z* is evidenced, inherent in Bukovyna dialects, which is confirmed by mixing graphemes *z* and *х* (Humetska 1971: 33).

¹¹ See *ibidem*, m. no 74, 98.

Variation of sound combinations

Variation of reflexes of combinations *ър, ъл, ър, ъл* is consistently recorded in Moldavian medieval charters. The spelling of the syllable-building *ръ/рь, ль/лъ* is mixed with manifestations of vocalization of reduced vowels: *врѣби* – на *вербу* 1427 Suceava, UG, 80; *Влъховецъ* 1490 Suceava, SM, I, 182 – *Волховецъ* 1421 Bukovina, SM, I, 193; *влъховецка* 1490 Suceava, SM, I, 182 – *Волховецького* 1403 Suceava, SM, I, 189; *Длъгополѣ* – *Долгополѣ* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74; *дрѣжати* 1429 Suceava, UG, 85 – *держати* 1408 Suceava, UG, 72; *потврѣжденіе* 1411 Suceava, UG, 75 – *потврѣжденіе* 1427 Suceava, UG, 80; *потвердили* 1460 Suceava, UG, 111 – *потврѣдили* 1462 Suceava, UG, 115; *столпѣ* – *стлпѣ* 1446 Suceava, UG, 99-100; *торговлами* 1408 Suceava, UG, 70 – *трѣговлѣми* 1456 Suceava, UG, 104; *торгохъ* 1408 Suceava, UG, 70 – *трѣго(х)* 1460 Suceava, UG, 111; *угорскы(х)* 1456 (?) Bukovina, UG, 106 – *угръскои, въгрѣкы* 1440 Torhovyshe, UG, 136. Manifestations of ultrashort vowels after smooth *р* or *л* obviously indicate a significant influence of the middle Bulgarian graphics and the written language tradition in general.

Moreover, in Moldavian charters, attention is drawn to the variation spelling of toponyms, anthroponyms, job titles: до *Обръшиіе* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74 – на *Обръжіе* 1488 Suceava, UG, 125; *Паркала(б)* 1471 Suceava, UG, 120 – *Прѣкала(б)* 1474 Vaslui, UG, 123; even compared to: пана *Клѣньѡа*, Костѣ *Мъсърѣскул*, на имѣ *Рърѣѡанѣ* 1488 Suceava, UG, 125, 127; Тома *Пѣхърниче(л)* 1490 Suceava, UG, 130; Геѡргіе *Срѣбин(ѣ)* 1454 Suceava, DRH, A II, 59; ни(ж)[ѣ] *Флъфѡе* 1462 Suceava, UG, 115; на имѣ *Хрѣма(н)* 1458 Dolny Torg, UG, 109; па(н) *Чокрѣиіе* 1471 Suceava, UG, 120, and others. Scientists advise looking for ways to find out such inscriptions in the Romanian language.

In the 14th–15th centuries centuries, they sounded the same in Romanian, and on the paper, they were depicted in Slavic letters rather imperfectly: *AndrŃvoř* – *Ондрѡвошѣ*, *prŃcŃlab* “староста” – *прѣкалабѣ*, *PrŃtonoř* – *Прѣтоноши*, *SrŃvescul* – *Срѣбескулѣ*, *HŃrtan* – *Хрѣманѣ* (Yaroshenko 1931: 24).

Therefore, such Romanianisms often appear in the names of positions, in the proper names of persons and geographical objects, the names of which were supposed to accurately reproduce the sound of the word, which is especially important for the official business style, law to this day.

Both, the specifics of another state organism and the language of the people, among which and for which legal documents were drawn up, had to leave their lexical layers in the language of Moldavian charters (Humetska 1971: 33).

Continuation of sound combinations **tort, *tolt, *tert* is represented by numerous language changes. Nonplephonic forms are primarily caused by the second South Slavic influence, which increased in the Moldavian lands in the 14th–15th centuries: *блато* 1429 Suceava, UG, 85; у *блато(х)* 1456 Neamt, UG, 105; на *брѣзѣ* 1422 Neamt, UG, 76; *Бѣлограда* 1471 Suceava, UG, 120; *Владиславу* 1388 Suceava, Gr, 81; *Вра(н)ча(н)* 1471 Suceava, UG, 120; въ *градѣ* 1392 Roman, DRH, A I, 4; *здравіе* 1422 Neamt, UG, 76; *златы(х)* 1471 Suceava, UG, 119;

кралѣ 1468, Suceava, DRH, A II, 221; *острѣзати* 1395 Suceava, SM, II, 99; наших(ѣ) *предков(ѣ)* 1454 Baichany, DRH, A II, 56; *Сланую Кръницу* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74; *ω(т) въсѣ(х) страни* 1422 Neamt, UG, 76, and others.

Obviously, the Ukrainian vernacular practice has led to a significant prevalence of plenophonic forms with *ере, оро, оло*: *Белогоро(д)а* 1460 Suceava, UG, 111; *на березѣ* 1412 Suceava, DRH, A I, 45; *по болѣтах(ѣ)* 1453 Suceava, DRH, A II, 52; *Воронца* 1490 Suceava, UG, 131; *оу городѣ* 1392 Roman, DRH, A I, 3; *здоровье* 1411 Suceava, UG, 74; *золотых(ѣ)* 1453 Suceava, DRH, A II, 45; нашего *королѣ* (!) 1460 Suceava, UG, 113; *оборонити* 1468 Suceava, SM, II, 69; наших(ѣ) *передков(ѣ)* 1454 Cotnari (in Romanian – *Cotnari*), DRH, A II, 57; до *солонейѣ* 1488 Suceava, UG, 125; *стороны* 1460 Suceava, UG, 111, etc. Such sound combinations are still represented today in oral folk speech, in particular, in Pokuttia-Bukovyna dialects of the south-western dialect of the Ukrainian language¹².

In the process of analyzing texts, we also focus on the obvious signs of West Slavic language elements. According to the conclusions of Polish researchers:

Bukovyna, along with other Moldavian lands, has long been under Polish influence through political unions, feudal possessions and family and property unions of the Polish Gentry with Moldavian boyars (Krasowska 2018: 44).

Therefore, the Polish language influence in the language of Moldavian charters is reflected in the following variants: *до брезу* 1393 Suceava, Gr, 120; *бронити* 1395 Suceava, Gr, 127; *Влодиславоу* 1462, Suceava, SM, I, 181; *кролицы* 1393 Suceava, Gr, 120; *крол(ѣ)* 1468 Suceava, DRH, A II, 221; нашего *кролѣ* 1456 Suceava, UG, 104; *обронити* 1439 Birlad (in Romanian – *Bârlad*), SM, II, 70, etc.

Cases of triple variation caused by the interaction of various spelling usages and phonetic systems have been recorded: *пред(ѣ) нас(ѣ)* 1449 Suceava, DRH, A II, 5 – *прад* речених сел – *перед* нами 1487 Suceava, DRH, A III, 26; *попрѣкъ* 1422 Neamt, UG, 76 – *поперекъ* – *попракъ* 1446 Suceava, UG, 99.

The variation units caused by such phonetic phenomena as:

– **assimilation of consonants by place and method of creation:** *ωт(ѣ) пчел(ѣ)* 1458 Dolny Torg, DRH, A II, 101 – *ω(т) пчолы* 1456 Neamt, UG, 105 – *ωт(ѣ) бчол(ѣ)* 1458 Dolny Torg, DRH, A II, 107; *немѣцкаго* 1462 Suceava, UG, 116 – *немѣцкаго* 1427 Suceava, UG, 80; *немѣцкыи* 1474 Vaslui, UG, 123 – *немѣцкыи* 1460 Suceava, UG, 113; *сере(т)скыи* 1408 Suceava, UG, 72 – *серецкаго* 1471 Suceava, UG, 119;

– **simplification in groups of consonants:** *съ мѣстьчаны* 1408 Suceava, SM, I, 630 – *мѣсчаномъ* 1445 Bukovina, SM, I, 630; *польвтора* 1408 Suceava, UG, 71 – *по(л)тора* 1460 Suceava, UG, 113;

– **continuation of sound combinations *dj, *zdj:** *dj > жд:* *непонѣдени* 1488 Suceava, DRH, A III, 34; *потврѣждаемо* 1443 Suceava, UG, 95; *потврѣженіе, оугождѣиши(х)* 1411 Suceava, UG, 75; *dj > ж:* *потверженіе* 1408

¹² See *ibidem*, m. no 72, 73.

Suceava, UG, 72; *прироженя* 1462 Suceava, SM, II, 245; на *рождество* 1439 Suceava, SM, II, 296; *оутверженіа* 1403 Suceava, DRH, A I, 26;

– the **transition** of *mj* > *mn*, inherent in modern south-western Ukrainian dialects are represented less consequently¹³: *тємьянъ* 1408 Suceava, UG, 70 – *тємнлнъ* 1480 Suceava, UG, 111, etc.

The reason for this, as we can see, is the interaction of old and new forms, spelling of that time and vernacular influences that penetrated into numerous Cyrillic texts of business writing of the late Middle Ages (Tsaralunga 2017: 30).

4. Conclusions

The results of the analysis of variation language units in the texts of Moldavian charters allow concluding that church Slavonic phonetic reflexes are the elements of old Cyrillic written language. Moreover, the variation spellings show phonetic signs of Ukrainian dialect speech: prominent features of dialects of Pokuttia-Bukovyna, Podillia, Galicia are partially preserved in the Ukrainian south-western territories to this day. Phonetic and spelling features of the influence of other linguistic systems, primarily the second South Slavic influence, as well as some phonetic features of the Polish and Romanian languages, are detected in parallel forms.

The prospects for further research of language variation are seen in the study of variable language units in written manuscripts from other lands created at different times. The results obtained will be important for solving the problems of standardization of one or the other language system at different stages of functioning, solving issues of ordering its lexical, phonetic, and grammatical structure.

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¹³ See *ibidem*, m. no 76.

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Abstract

The article suggests considering the phenomenon of language variation in the diachronic aspect. The objectives of our work are to study the phonetic variation in the Cyrillic documents of the Principality of Moldavia of the period of the 14th–15th centuries, to find out the causes of graphic and phonetic variants occurrence, to establish spelling trends and oral influences in the written and literary language of that time. The phenomenon of phonetic parallelism can be traced in handwritten texts from such settlements as: Iasi, Khotyn, Neamt, Putna, Roman, Suceava, Vaslui, etc. The analysis of parallel language units in vocalism and consonantism of Moldavian charters has been carried out, and the variation of sound combinations has been characterized.

The results of the study of variation language units in the texts of Moldavian charters allow concluding that church Slavonic phonetic reflexes are the elements of old Cyrillic written language. Moreover, the variation spellings show phonetic signs of Ukrainian dialect speech: prominent features of the Pokuttia-Bukovyna and Podillia dialects are preserved in the Ukrainian south-western territories to this day. Phonetic and spelling features of the influence of other linguistic systems, primarily the second South Slavic influence, as well as some phonetic features of the Polish and Romanian languages, are detected in parallel forms.