



## THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF THE KANTEMIR FAMILY IN RUSSIA

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**Annotation:** The article is dedicated to the history of three generations of the Kantemir family, who played an important role in the political, scientific and literary spheres. The founder of the dynasty, Constantin Cantemir, came from the eastern aristocracy and was proud of his origins. He took the throne of the ruler of Moldavia, laying the foundations of dynastic influence. His son, Dimitri Kantemir, received an outstanding education in Istanbul, where he distinguished himself as a scholar and writer. He became the first orientalist of the Russian Empire, created the Turkish anthem, and made a significant contribution to the development of history, geography, and music. A representative of the third generation, Antioch Kantemir, became famous as one of the founders of Russian satire. During the reign of Anna Ioannovna, he held the post of a government official, combining diplomatic activity with literary work, which made his name iconic for Russian culture.

**Keywords:** military campaigns, Turkish sultan, ruler, guest, talent, musical works, Persian campaign, Arabic script, printing house, historical science, dissemination of science, satire, lyrical songs.

Constantin Cantemir, the grandfather of Antioch Dmitrievich Cantemir, spent most of his life in military campaigns. According to his own words, he was a descendant of the famous Khan Timur. For seventeen years, he served in the Polish army as a mercenary, rising to the rank of captain. After retiring, he returned to Moldova, where he married Anna Bantysh, becoming related to influential Moldavian families, including the hospodars of Eustratiy. Dabiju and Georgiy Duku.

By this time, Konstantin had already entered the Turkish army. He was famous for his heroic nature and physical strength. During the Khatyn standoff, he managed to rescue the wives of Sultan Mehmed IV, who was almost captured by Polish troops. This episode became a turning point in the fate of the experienced warrior: in 1685, 73-year-old Konstantin was appointed ruler of Moldavia by the Turkish Sultan. By that time, he already had two sons.



Turkey found it increasingly difficult to hold on to its European possessions, which were claimed by Russia, Austria, and Poland. Constantine secretly negotiated with Christian rulers. Although he himself had not received a systematic education, he valued knowledge and made sure that his sons were educated. They received an excellent home education: foreign tutors taught them Greek, Latin, Old Church Slavonic, and the basics of philosophy.

When the Turkish sultan demanded that one of his sons be sent to Istanbul as a guest, Konstantin immediately sent the youngest, Dmitry. In the capital of the Ottoman Empire, the talented boy entered the Academy of the Orthodox Patriarchate at the Patriarchal Compound in Phanar. There he studied Arabic, Turkish and Persian, Ottoman culture, music, literature and religion.

The naturally talented young man was close to the Sultan's court and was often present at meetings with European diplomats, thanks to which he was able to establish personal contacts with some of them.

When Dmitry was 20 years old, his father died. However, due to numerous intrigues and fears for the life of Dmitry, who had returned to Iasi, the capital of Moldova, the sultan again recalled him to Istanbul, where the young heir continued his studies. Later, when his older brother Antioch Cantemir was appointed governor of Moldova, Dmitry represented his interests at the court of the Ottoman sultan. In addition to diplomatic missions, he participated in military campaigns, studied military engineering, strengthening strategically important positions, and wrote philosophical and historical treatises. The most famous of them was "Divan, or the Dispute of the Sage with the World."

However, Dimitri Kantemir gained the greatest fame in Turkey thanks to his musical talent. He was fond of collecting Turkish folklore and even developed a unique system of recording folk melodies using his own symbols. Along with this, he composed musical works that were very popular among the Turkish population. In addition, Dimitri was known as an unrivaled improviser on the tamboura - a musical instrument common in Central Asia and the Caucasus - and was invariably present at the feasts of the sultan and high officials .

Kantemir is also considered the first musician to introduce a musical notation system in Turkey that lasted until the end of the 18th century. His method was based on the Arabic alphabet and included 33 signs. In his book, *The History of the Formation and Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, he wrote: "I taught music to some extent, mainly theoretical, and a newly chosen method that allows for the recording of songs and dainas. These are discoveries previously unknown to the Turks." In total, he composed more than 30 Turkish musical works, including the "March of Bayazet," which was performed for a long time as the national anthem of Turkey.

In 1710, Sultan Ahmed III appointed Dimitrie Cantemir as the ruler of Moldavia. Grand Vizier Bastaji Mehmet Pasha and the Crimean Khan Devlet Giray



II, who supported this decision, considered him a loyal ally of Turkey. However, they did not know that, while still in Istanbul, Dmitry was conducting secret negotiations with the Russian envoy of Peter I, Pyotr Tolstoy.

For Cantemir, the main factor was the support of the Christian clergy and the Moldavian people, who saw the Muslims as their oppressors. Having assessed the situation, he entered into negotiations with the Russian tsar through his acquaintance from Istanbul, the Greek Georgiy Polikala, the personal physician of Peter Tolstoy. Soon the parties reached an agreement, and a treaty was signed in Lutsk: Moldavia came under the protection of the Russian tsar, preserving national traditions and partial sovereignty. The Cantemirs became hereditary rulers, the country was freed from tribute, and after the war with Turkey, its original lands were to be returned to it.

When Peter I's troops approached Iasi, Prince Dmitry announced to the boyars, the army and the people that he was breaking off relations with the Ottoman Empire and going over to Russia's side. He published manifestos in which he listed the disasters that Moldova had suffered from the Turkish invasion and called: "All people of our country, take up arms and come to the rescue!"

On June 23, 1711, in Iasi, Dimitrie Cantemir swore an oath of allegiance to Russia and joined the Russian army. However, there was no unity in Moldavian society: many boyars refused to support the new ruler, hoping to return the country to Turkish influence. As a result, significantly fewer warriors joined the Russian troops than expected.

Meanwhile, the Turkish army had already approached the borders of Moldova. In the battle, Peter I's troops were defeated, forced to retreat and abandon the conquered territories, including the Sea of Azov.

The angry Sultan demanded that Peter hand over Kantemir. However, the Russian Tsar refused, stating that the ruler Dmitry was allegedly not in his entourage.

Thus, Dmitry Kantemir, together with his large family and thousands of supporters, ended up in Russia. Peter I enrolled his officers in the Russian army, retained their nobility and allocated them lands. Kantemir himself was granted the title of the most serene prince, lands in the Oryol province and Moscow, as well as an annual pension of six thousand rubles. He became the Tsar's adviser on Eastern issues, which was facilitated by his brilliant command of Eastern languages, deep knowledge of the history and culture of Muslim countries.

After proclaiming himself emperor, Peter I conceived the Persian campaign, in which Kantemir accompanied the army. On his initiative, a printing house with Arabic script was organized, where Peter I's appeals to the peoples of the Caucasus and Persia were printed. In his free time, Kantemir was engaged in scientific research: he studied the geography, history and archeology of the regions, collected materials on the location and history of Dagestan, studied and recorded local



folklore.

In Russia, he wrote a number of significant works, including “The History of the Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire,” “The Life of Constantin Cantemir,” “The System or State of the Mohammedan Religion,” “Description of Moldova,” and others. He is considered the founder of Moldavian historical science and the first Russian orientalist to study the Islamic East in detail. Cantemir highly valued the science and art of the East, which is confirmed by his enthusiastic reviews of the great Uzbek scholar Abu Ali ibn Sina, known in Europe as Avicenna, whose works played a key role in the development of medicine.

Another interesting fact: Kantemir wrote down three anecdotes about the meeting of Khoja Nasreddin with Temur, the Uzbek ruler, in Yangishakhir. He could have taken these stories from the works of the 17th-century Turkish historian Evliya Celebi or heard in Istanbul, where he lived for a long time. However, they are fiction, since Temur's campaign in Turkey took place in 1403 - almost 120 years after the death of Khoja Nasreddin.

For his contribution to science, Dimitri Kantemir was elected a member of the Berlin Academy of Sciences.

The traditions of Dimitri Kantemir were continued by his son Antioch Dmitrievich Kantemir, born in Constantinople in 1708. After the family moved to Russia in 1711, he received an excellent education at home and then continued his studies at the Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy. He was fluent in ancient Greek, Latin, Italian and French. In 1723, at the age of fifteen, Antioch accompanied his father on the Persian campaign of the Russian army.

In 1724, he asked the emperor to send him to study in Europe, but was refused. Perhaps the tsar, knowing the story of Dimitri Kantemir, feared a repeat of his fate.

In 1725–1727, Antioch attended lectures on philosophy, history, natural sciences, mathematics, and physics at the Academic University of St. Petersburg. In 1726, he received the rank of officer in the Life Guards.

Kantemir often wondered about the ways of spreading knowledge in Russia and combating ignorance. He came to the conclusion that the most important role in this matter was played by the establishment of schools, and he came up with initiatives for their creation. Being a son of his era – the era of classicism – he placed his hopes on an enlightened monarchy, while he saw resistance to enlightenment in the clergy and nobility. For this reason, in his satires he criticized the “evil-minded nobles” and ignorant representatives of the church.

Kantemir's literary activity began in the 1720s. He wrote love lyrics and translated works by French authors. In 1730, he took part in the events that led to the accession of Anna Ioannovna.

His work reached its greatest peak in 1729–1730. During this period, he created his first three satires and also translated Fontenelle's book *Conversations on*



the Many Worlds into Russian.

From 1732, Kantemir served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During his diplomatic service in London and Paris, he wrote his last four satires. In total, he created 9 satires, as well as lyrical songs praising science. Thanks to his translations, the Russian reader became acquainted with the works of Horace and other Western European authors. In addition, Kantemir enriched the Russian language by introducing such words as substance, deputy, critic, and others.

In conclusion, it can be noted that the Cantemir family had a significant influence on the history of Moldova, Russia and Europe, leaving behind a rich cultural, political and scientific heritage.

Constantin Cantemir, the founder of the dynasty, became famous as a talented military leader whose bravery and loyalty to his people brought him to power in Moldova.

His youngest son, Dimitrie Cantemir, not only surpassed his father as a statesman, but also became an outstanding scholar, writer, orientalist, and composer. He played a key role in the international relations of the Ottoman Empire, Russia, and Europe, and his works on history, philosophy, and geography remain valuable sources of knowledge.

Antioch Kantemir, continuing the family tradition, became famous as one of the first Russian satirists, a diplomat and educator, who made a significant contribution to the development of literature, language and social thought.

Thus, three generations of Kantemirs not only took part in the fateful events of their time, but also laid the foundations of scientific and cultural traditions that influenced subsequent eras.

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