

The Molocans from Bessarabia. Origins and Ethnic Composition
(*Abstract*)

Ion GUMENÂI

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The purpose of this study is to approach the issue of appearance on the territory of Basarabia of one of the many religious cults of rationalist trend known as the Molocans' cult. Based on the documentary data collected from the National Archives of Moldavia we notice that the Molocans may be attested on the territory between Nistru and Prut since the middle of the 19th century. The large majority of those are of Slavic origin and they migrate towards this region from the interior provinces of the Russian Empire, mainly from the Moscow region. Their dislocation period may be connected to Napoleon's campaign in Russia.

As we may notice, the religion of the Molocans is not characteristic to Bessarabia and its appearance is due to the annexation of this territory to the Russian Empire, where actually it appeared. The ethnic composition of the Molocans proves that this religious doctrine was not spread among the local population, but only among the newly comers from the interior Russian provinces.