

AT THE END OF EMPIRE: IMPERIAL GOVERNANCE, INTER-IMPERIAL RIVALRY  
AND “AUTONOMY” IN WALLACHIA AND MOLDAVIA (1780s-1850s)

BY

STEFANIA COSTACHE

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Maria Todorova, Chair and Director of Research  
Professor Keith Hitchins  
Associate Professor John Randolph  
Associate Professor Christine Philliou, Columbia University

## **Abstract**

This dissertation recreates the biography of several power holders in Wallachia and Moldavia to explore how local, imperial and inter-imperial politics interacted on this Ottoman borderland between the 1780s and 1850s and promoted European imperialist aims in the Ottoman Empire. For this purpose, it provides an analysis of Ottoman rule on a borderland inhabited by a Christian population and located near two Christian empires, the Habsburg and the Russian, the latter of which pursued an active expansionist policy against the Ottoman Empire. It also explores the interplay between the politics of local power holders who aimed to enhance their position and the forms of political intervention that the competing European empires deployed to exert control over the Ottoman Empire in contraction. It suggests that the major turning point in the history of Ottoman imperial rule over this borderland occurred after the European powers devised formal agreements in the 1830s to formally create the notions of European protection of the Ottoman Empire, of restricted Ottoman rule in the Christian Balkan dominions and of local “autonomous” governments, which accommodated the elites on site.

The study is divided in four chapters that retrace the interaction of local and imperial interests on the borderland during the Russian-Habsburg-Ottoman wars of 1787-1791/1792, the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), and the Russian-Ottoman war of 1828-1829. These chapters reveal the transformation of forms of European expansion against the Ottoman Empire, as tested on the Danube borderlands: from territorial annexation to diplomatic influence, imperial condominium and the creation of a body of international law pertaining to the Ottoman Empire. The analysis of the trade with land estates across the Ottoman-Habsburg-Russian borders between the 1780s and the 1810s, displays the complications that characterized territorial annexation as a form of European expansion against the Ottoman Empire. In this respect, the

local power holders' private businesses with land estates challenged the authority of the three empires on the borderland, prompting the imperial central administrations to acknowledge such businesses in order to substantiate their own territorial claims. A study of the information networks that the local power holders operated between the Ottoman, Russian and Habsburg Empires during a period of crisis for the Ottoman Empire, from the Napoleonic Wars until the Greek revolts, reveals how diplomacy on the borderland became an important instrument to promote and oppose European expansionism at the Porte. It also reveals how local elites used their role in the Ottoman diplomacy to survive the political changes that the Greek revolts triggered at Constantinople. The analysis of the local power holders' involvement in the Russian-sponsored administration of the borderland between 1829 and 1840 explores how European powers competing for control over an Ottoman Empire in turmoil began to promote formal agreements to legitimize their authority in imperial affairs, restrict Ottoman power and co-opt local leaders. The examination of successive European formal definitions of Ottoman, local and international control in Wallachia and Moldavia and of changing local political agendas (1830s-1850s) explores the continuities between competing European imperial projects in the Ottoman Empire and the elites' promotion of a unified nation-state on the borderland.

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## Introduction

The village of Samurcășești, also known as Ciorogârla, and its monastery in the immediate vicinity of Bucharest, Romania, are the last visible traces of the powerful family of officials in the Ottoman borderland of Wallachia, the Samurcas. The most prestigious member of the family and the founder of the church was Constantin Samurcas (?-1825),<sup>1</sup> treasurer of Wallachia, representative of the Ottoman Christian *hospodar* appointed by the sultan to rule this province, and a collaborator of Ottoman, Russian and Habsburg officials in the region.

Constantin was not buried near the church that he built. He died an exile in 1825 in the Habsburg city of Brașov, having fled Ottoman retaliation against the imperial Christian elites after the anti-Ottoman Greek revolts and the local uprising in Wallachia in 1821. His nephew and heir was Alexandru (1805-1870), an official who served successively Ottoman and joint Ottoman-Russian administration in Wallachia. Alexandru was the forefather of the most well-known branch of the Samurcas in Romania, the state that succeeded to Wallachia and its neighbor Moldavia. He found his resting place near the church at Samurcășești.

Four hundred kilometers away from Ciorogârla, the imposing city hall of Iassy, which once was the administrative city in Ottoman tributary Moldavia, is one of the few remnants of the power and prestige of the two officials Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu (1746-1836) and his son, Nicolae.<sup>2</sup> From the final years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the 1830s, Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu served as chancellor and treasurer of Moldavia and deployed a constant political campaign to obtain the support of other officials in Moldavia, and Ottoman and Russian approval to become *hospodar*. Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu was acquainted, at least by name, with Constantin

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<sup>1</sup> Damian Stanoiu, *Mănastirea Samurcasesti (Ciorogârla)*, (Bucharest: Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1926)

<sup>2</sup> The ruins of the palace that Iordache built on his main estate at Stâncă Roznovanu are engulfed by the surrounding forest. See Nicolae Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic al localităților și monumentelor medievale din Moldova*, (Bucharest: Biblioteca Monumentelor Istorice din România, 1974)



Samurcas, his counterpart in Wallachia. A younger brother of Samurcas was a respected physician in Iassy and the care giver of Rosetti-Roznovanu's family,<sup>3</sup> while another, the father of Samurcas's heir Alexandru, had served in the Moldavian *hospodar's* retinue. Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu (1794-1858) embraced the ambition of his father, Iordache, to take the rule of the province, but diversified his contacts and methods to attract Habsburg and French support for his project.

The Samurcas and Rosetti-Roznovanus achieved the peak of their political activity between the 1780s and 1856, a time when Ottoman imperial contraction and European imperialism altered permanently the map of the Ottoman Balkan dominions. Russia, which constantly reiterated its privilege to intervene on behalf of the Ottoman Christians, including those of Wallachia and Moldavia,<sup>4</sup> interceded with Ottoman administration in the Balkan borderlands. The Habsburg, British and French Empires repeatedly attempted to check Russian influence over the Ottoman Empire that threatened the Habsburgs' ambitions at preeminence in Europe, the British passageways to colonies in the East and the French colonial ambitions in Egypt. All these instances of European expansion involved alliances and imperial projects in which the Danube borderlands figured prominently. How and why did local, imperial and inter-imperial political dynamics become intertwined on these borderlands and how did the resulting power settlements shape each other in time?

Using the biographies of the Samurcas and Rosetti-Roznovanus, I explore the connections and tensions between local officials who sought to maintain authority in the region, Constantinopolitan officials who endeavored to preserve this province and the Empire's integrity

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<sup>3</sup> Vlad Zirra, "Medici din Moldova veacului trecut: Dimitrie Samurcaș și descendența sa (I)," *Arhiva Genealogică* Ediție Anastatică I-V (1989-1993): 723

<sup>4</sup> Valeriu Veliman, *Relațiile româno-otomane 1711-1821-Documente turcești* (Bucharest: Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului, R.S. România, 1984), 495-498

and European imperial agents trying to control Constantinople and the Straits. My argument is that between the 1780s and 1850s, Wallachia and Moldavia became the setting where local officials and representatives of rival empires tested various imperial projects, creating precedents for irreversible European intervention in the Ottoman Empire. After 1830 the European powers selected some of these precedents to devise a self-referencing body of international law that impinged on Ottoman imperial prerogatives by delineating Ottoman imperial authority and local government and by providing privileges of rule for the local agents and international arbiters. This was a major step for the European powers to restrict Ottoman imperial control through active intervention in the rule of Ottoman communities. When, after the 1850s, the “nation” became the main principle that local elites evoked to legitimize their political actions, the European powers moved to acknowledge the “popular sovereignty” of local governments and to place them under international scrutiny.

Several recent studies in Habsburg and Russian imperial history addressed the involvement of the elites from the Wallachian and Moldavian borderlands in the division of the Habsburg-Russian spheres of influence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the expansion of the Russian empire to the West.<sup>5</sup> I aim to add to these studies by showing that the Danube borderlands and their elites can shed light on the agendas of different empires as well as on the intersections of different imperial projects and ideological movements.<sup>6</sup> The attempts of Constantin and Alexandru Samurcas and of Iordache and Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu to improve their political

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<sup>5</sup> Miroslav Sedivy, “From Hostility to Cooperation? Austria, Russia and the Danubian Principalities, 1829-1840” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 89, no. 4 (2011); Victor Taki, “Russia on the Danube: Imperial Expansion and Political Reform in Moldavia and Wallachia, 1812-1834” (PhD diss., Central European University, 2007)

<sup>6</sup> In this respect, I suggest that local, imperial and inter-politics were the site for the interaction of imperial and conservative interests and liberal and radical political mobilization, which affected simultaneously the evolution of inter-imperial rivalry in the East as well as policies in Western Europe. About the concept of relative synchronicity in Europe, see Maria Todorova, “The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism,” *Slavic Review* 64, no. 1 (2005): 154-155

position in Wallachia and Moldavia are evocative of the inter-imperial transformations between the 1780s and the 1850s. These officials placed themselves, with or without Ottoman approval, in positions that allowed contact with the representatives of the other empires or helped European involvement in the affairs of these Ottoman dominions. However, the Samurcas and the Rosetti-Roznovanus were not indifferent to the imperial projects that they helped implement or to the ideological mobilization throughout Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The fact that they could serve simultaneously different imperial agendas and embrace particular ideologies despite their declared allegiances indicates skillful political calculation as well as continuities between imperial projects and overlaps between such projects and political ideologies, such as liberalism and nationalism, deemed to be at odds with empires.

The analysis of borderland politics in Wallachia and Moldavia will also add to the current historiography about Ottoman borderlands by revealing how these provinces resembled and differed from other such Ottoman regions in the Balkans, especially concerning the relation between local power holders and Constantinople during a period of decentralization. A significant number of analyses approached the Balkan borderlands from the perspective of military history, focusing on how their role of military frontiers with Christian powers shaped inter-confessional and inter-ethnic relations there and the relations between the military outposts and the adjacent areas.<sup>7</sup> Other examinations addressed the politics of these frontiers, paying attention to how Muslim leaders in Christian-inhabited areas challenged the central government

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<sup>7</sup> See the studies of Gabor Agoston, "Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet: Rivers, Forests, Marshes and Forts along the Ottoman-Hapsburg Frontier in Hungary," 57-79; Victor Ostapchuk and Svitlana Bilyayeva, "The Ottoman Northern Black Sea Frontier at Akkerman Fortress: The View from a Historical and Archaeological Project," 137-170; Rossitsa Gradeva, "Between Hinterland and Frontier: Ottoman Vidin, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," 331-351; Ibolya Gerelyes, "'Garrisons and the Local Population in Ottoman Hungary: The Testimony of the Archaeological Finds," 385-401 in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, edited by A.C. S. Peacock, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Gabor Agoston, "Defending and administering the frontier: the case of Ottoman Hungary" in *The Ottoman World* edited by Christine Woodhead (New York: Routledge, 2012)

at a time of imperial decentralization in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and demanded participation in the re-organization of imperial authority.<sup>8</sup> They also alluded to the complex connections between the Christian power holders of Moldavia and Wallachia and the neighboring Muslim commanders and notables.<sup>9</sup> However, despite such indications of contacts between the elites from the two provinces and other Balkan power holders, Ottoman historiography refrains from discussing Wallachia and Moldavia within the frame of the empire. The fact that these borderlands were inhabited by Christian populations and ruled by Christian elites who enjoyed significant land ownership privileges and rule in exchange for the payment of a tribute transformed them into “special cases” that appeared analytically unaccountable in terms relative to Ottoman imperial history.

On the other hand, Wallachia and Moldavia were considered “well-protected domains” of the sultan, participated in the collection of imperial taxes and, through the supply of the fortresses on the Danube, in the Ottoman defense system. Such attributions warrant an analysis of Wallachia and Moldavia that would place them within Ottoman imperial history. Studying the leadership of these borderlands exposes significant connections and tensions with other Ottoman elites in the Balkans and Constantinople, which can be understood in the frame of political factionalization and decentralization of power in the Ottoman Empire. Similarly to other Ottoman provincial elites, the boyars (officials and landowners who participated in the administration) and *hospodars* (rulers) of Wallachia and Moldavia used the devolution of tax-collection to local elites to increase their own wealth and resources of power at the expense of the local population. Also similarly to other power holders in the Balkans, the elites of Wallachia

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<sup>8</sup> Frederick Anscombe “Continuities in Ottoman Centre-Periphery Relations 1787-1915” in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, edited by A.C. S. Peacock, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 235-251

<sup>9</sup> Rossitsa Gradeva, “Osman Pasvantoğlu of Vidin: Between Old and New,” in *The Ottoman Balkans 1750-1830*, edited by Frederick F. Anscombe (Princeton University: Department of Near East Studies, 2006): 115-162

and Moldavia became involved in the political factions that disputed control over the central bureaucracy, the reinvention of imperial polity and the course to take in foreign affairs.

At the same time, the leadership of Wallachia and Moldavia was also particular in terms of its composition and imperial role. Unlike the other power-holders in the Balkans, the elites in these provinces were tightly connected to the Christian elites involved in the Ottoman Constantinopolitan bureaucracy. Even more, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century they became involved in activities that had become crucial to the Porte such as diplomacy and information networks with the neighboring empires. Furthermore, the fact that these elites were Christian caused the suspicion of their Muslim masters and ultimately, their downfall after the Greek revolts in 1821. Finally, the elites of Wallachia and Moldavia were also ethnically and socially heterogeneous. They recurrently used the distinction between “boyars from the land” and “Phanariot boyars” to distinguish between the officials who resided in the provinces and those who arrived from Constantinople, which could further suggest a distinction between the “local” and the “imperial” in their self-identifications and attributions. This dissertation examines how confession, ethnicity, social status and political interest underlay the relations among these Christian power-holders and between them and the imperial central elites to explore how these Christian borderlands participated in two parallel imperial trends: decentralization and the safeguarding of the empire.

I reconstructed the biographies of the Rosetti-Roznovanus and the Samurcas using primarily personal documents such as correspondence, property and business deeds, testaments and petitions. These documents have been preserved in family archives, such as the Rosetti-Roznovanu collections at the Romanian National Archives in Bucharest and in Iassy, and in other collections at the Romanian National Archives and Library of the Academy, Bucharest and

at the Austrian State Archive in Vienna. Thus, I could identify who were the political allies and the enemies of the four individuals, and their connections among Ottoman central and neighboring elites, Russian, Habsburg and other European representatives. Using these individuals' testimonies and recreating their patterns of action, I could explore how they used wealth and political intervention to consolidate their position in relation to other power holders on the borderland and its vicinity, and to attract the attention of various imperial agents. I also used published Ottoman decrees and published and unpublished Habsburg, Russian and French consular reports to evaluate to what extent the Porte and other imperial representatives considered the activities of the officials as acceptable behavior, or as useful to their agendas. Analyzing foreign correspondence, I could reconstruct shifting inter-imperial relations, the ways in which imperial agents interacted with members in the political networks in Wallachia and Moldavia and the impact of international intervention in these provinces after 1829.

### **1. An Ottoman borderland in local and Ottoman historiographies**

Local studies referred to the Samurcas as “Phanariot” boyars and to the Rosetti-Roznovanus as “Phanariot”<sup>10</sup> or “Moldavian” boyars. The alternate use of the labels of “Phanariot” and “Wallachian/Moldavian” boyars is evocative of the complex nature of rule in the province in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as of the diverging historical interpretations about whether Ottoman rule was effective on this borderland.

In 1821, when Tudor Vladimirescu, a low-ranking boyar, took the lead of a local rebellion against the abuses of the elites in Wallachia, he referred to this leadership as the

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<sup>10</sup> Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru Florin Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1995), 68

“boyar-Phanariot kin.”<sup>11</sup> “Phanariot” was a derivative of the word “Phanar” that referred to a neighborhood of Constantinople inhabited by a tightly-knit community of wealthy, well-educated and Hellenized Ottoman Orthodox Christians associated with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, who became influential in Ottoman bureaucracy and diplomacy at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The “Greeks from the Phanar” was a phrase often used in Wallachia and Moldavia in reference to these individuals who arrived in the provinces to take offices. But unlike “Phanariot,” “Wallachian” and “Moldavian” were rarely used for the identification of the elites in the two provinces. Instead, these individuals called themselves and were called by the population and the *hospodar* as “boyars.” To distinguish themselves from the new comers from Constantinople the boyars referred to themselves as being “from the land,” instead of “Wallachian” or “Moldavian.”

The historiography about these borderlands describes the elites as “boyars,” “Phanariot,” “Moldavian” and “Wallachian,” and “from the land,” using these markers to distinguish them from the rest of the inhabitants but also to convey immutable divisions between the “Phanariots” and the “Moldavians/Wallachians.” Thus, the former term denotes passing foreigners, agents of a fleeting and temporary imperial imposition, while the latter two - permanent residents and enduring “local” polities. Several studies in the national historiography of Romania, the modern state on the territory of Wallachia and Moldavia, questioned these distinctions. Andrei Pippidi avoided reifying the categories that described the elites on the borderlands and argued instead that the ascendance of individuals called “Phanariots” was indicative of a new political vision of rule. The Phanariots were members of an ethnically heterogeneous “bureaucracy” that promoted

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<sup>11</sup> Dumitru Bodin, “Tudor Vladimirescu și Constantin Samurcas” in *In amintirea lui Constantin Giurescu la douăzeci și cinci ani de la moartea lui*, edited by Constantin Marinescu, Alexandru Rosetti, Victor Papacostea and Constantin Grecescu, (Bucharest, 1944), 162

“social concord under the patronage of the sultan”<sup>12</sup> and who profited from the position of intermediaries between the Ottoman government and the population in Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>13</sup> This political model prevailed through most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although it co-existed and later combined with a rival model that claimed more power for the elites localized in Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>14</sup> Adopting Pippidi’s understanding of 18<sup>th</sup> century politics on the borderlands, I will refer to the networks of imperial intermediaries as the “Phanariot rules” and to their members, as Phanariot-Wallachian or Phanariot-Moldavian.

The ethnic definitions of the “Phanariots” have been promoted in Romanian historiography of Wallachia and Moldavia to suit a particular version of these provinces’ past: as a single nation, preserving its medieval institutions untainted by “foreign” influences, including the Ottoman rule.<sup>15</sup> Ever since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, local historians proceeded to demonstrate that a medieval Romanian state survived in Wallachia and Moldavia. To do so, they focused in particular on the essential role for the preservation of local “sovereignty” of the “privileges” that elites from these provinces presented to the Russian authorities in 1772 to argue for the restoration of alleged prerogatives usurped by the Porte.<sup>16</sup> At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Romanian historian Constantin Giurescu demonstrated that these “privileges” were in fact

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<sup>12</sup> Also see Florin Constantiniu, “ ‘Sărmanele raiale:’ factorul otoman in geneza politicii de reforma a domnilor fanarioti,” *Caietele Laboratorului de Studii Otomane* 1 (Bucharest: Universitatea București, 1990), 189-199

<sup>13</sup> Andrei Pippidi, “Phanar, Phanariotes, Phanariotisme,” *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 13, no.2 (1975): 237

<sup>14</sup> Andrei Pippidi, “Phanar, Phanariotes, Phanariotisme,” 237-238

<sup>15</sup> Anca Dobre, “Points de vue de l’histoire grecque et roumaine sur la question des Phanariotes,” in *Relations Gréco-Roumaines: Interculturalité et identité nationale*, edited by Paschalis Kitromilides and Anna Tabaki, (Institute for Neohellenic Research, 2004), 192

<sup>16</sup> These apocryphal “privileges” also gained currency among 19<sup>th</sup> century European historians and specialists of international law who tried to document how Ottoman power could have been reconceptualized and limited as “suzerainty.” See Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman law of war and peace: the Ottoman Empire and tribute payers* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2000) 36-38



forgeries.<sup>17</sup> However, the interest in finding documentary evidence of a “privileged status” for Wallachia and Moldavia and continuity of their “institutions” gained impetus when local historians began to study Ottoman history.

These historians detected documents in which the Porte acknowledged at various times from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards that Wallachia and Moldavia were registered separately at the imperial chancery and that their Christian inhabitants could own and bequeath properties.<sup>18</sup> Such charters assigned Ottoman protection to the Christian lands situated between the territories under the rule of Islamic law and those of enemy Christian empires. But even though these historians nuanced the history of Wallachia and Moldavia to reveal the Ottoman legal categories ascribed to them, they also considered that such charters consecrated the two provinces’ “lands and own leadership, the state itself with its administration, laws, army, church, official language.”<sup>19</sup>

A new, revisionist trend in Romanian historiography of Wallachia and Moldavia and in Romanian Ottomanist historiography began to question the assumptions of previous studies. Lucian Boia deconstructed the myths of Romanian history, including the minimization of Ottoman rule, and pointed out that historically, it would be “just as correct, and certainly more realistic, to observe that, beyond the Romanian-Ottoman [...] antagonism, the Romanian lands were integrated for centuries in the Ottoman system.”<sup>20</sup> Silvana Răchieru also criticized the

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<sup>17</sup> Constantin Giurescu, *Capitulațiile Moldovei cu Poarta Otomană* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1908)

<sup>18</sup> Mihai Maxim, “L’autonomie de la Moldovie et de la Valachie dans les actes officiels de la Porte au cours de la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle” in *L’Empire Ottoman au Nord du Danube et l’autonomie des Principautés Roumaines au XVe siècle* (Istanbul: Isis, 1999), 11-40; Ion Matei, “Quelques problèmes concernant le régime de la domination ottomane dans les pays roumains (concernant particulièrement la Valachie),” *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* 10, no. 1 (1972): 73-75

<sup>19</sup> Mihai Maxim, *L’Empire Ottoman au Nord du Danube et l’Autonomie des Principautés Roumaines au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Istanbul: Les Editions Isis, 1999), 15

<sup>20</sup> Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 155

exclusive focus of local historians on reifying Romanian “institutions” and ethnicity and proposed instead the study of ambiguous historical issues, such as the political prominence and role of the “Phanariots.”<sup>21</sup> Viorel Panaite, a Romanian Ottomanist scholar, revised previous interpretations about the juridical status of Wallachia and Moldavia in relation to the Porte. Panaite acknowledged that Wallachia and Moldavia occupied a distinctive position, as tribute paying, buffer protectorates, but he also explained that in these provinces, similarly to other dominions, imperial mandate was exerted in a customary fashion, which allowed continuous reinterpretations of their status by the Porte. In this fashion, Wallachia and Moldavia were included in the broader and heterogeneous imperial system of the *pax ottomanica*.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from Viorel Panaite, who provided specialized analyses for Wallachia and Moldavia within the Ottoman Empire, non-Romanian Ottomanist historians referred to these provinces rather briefly, hinting at their numerous, particularly socio-economic ties, with the Porte. This approach is in part due to the fact that some non-Romanian Ottomanist historians adopted the argument about Wallachian and Moldavian “vassalage” from their Romanian counterparts<sup>23</sup> and only few others emphasized the changing character of Ottoman rule in these provinces.<sup>24</sup> In general surveys of Ottoman socio-economic history, however, Wallachia and Moldavia figure more prominently. While some of the sources are Romanian interpretations, this

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<sup>21</sup> Silvana Răchieru, “Romanian national ‘histories’ after 1990: between description and analysis,” *Romanian Journal of Society and Politics* 3, no. 1, (2003): 249-261

<sup>22</sup> Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman law of war and peace*, 494; Viorel Panaite “Wallachia and Moldavia from the Ottoman Juridical and Political Viewpoint 1774-1829,” in *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760-1850. Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, edited by Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovos, (Rethymno: Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Crete, 2007), 34-37

<sup>23</sup> Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) Vol. 2:451

<sup>24</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire-1700-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 27

section of Ottoman history also uses a great number of Balkan, non-Romanian studies, as well as Ottoman sources about the Ottoman supply and trade on the Danube borderland.<sup>25</sup>

Another line of study in Ottoman history, which dealt with the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, suggested the complex connections with Wallachia and Moldavia. Deena Sadat juxtaposed the elites in Wallachia and Moldavia to the *ayans* in the Balkans to argue that the intensification of trade with neighboring empires in the 19<sup>th</sup> century increased the power of local elites and motivated them to exploit the local labor force.<sup>26</sup> In a similar vein, Virginia Aksan explored the competition for resources, and particularly for land and labor force, between elites in Wallachia and Moldavia and military commanders in the neighboring areas at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup> These studies alluded to the similarities between the ways in which the elites in the provinces and those in the neighboring regions consolidated their power using local resources. They also hinted at the integration of the boyars from Wallachia and Moldavia in the system of Ottoman governance in which their role was, according to Pippidi, to implement a political vision according to which social order and equity were ruled through the sultan's will but local decision-making belonged to them. But how did these Christian elites become involved in power networks with Muslim and non-Muslim elites from various regions or the capital and how did these networks evolve?

As a borderland inhabited by a predominantly Orthodox Christian population, and where bureaucratic elites enjoyed property of most resources, Wallachia and Moldavia were indeed

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<sup>25</sup> Halil Inalcık, Donald Quataert (eds.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 298-303, 364-372

<sup>26</sup> Deena Sadat, "Rumeli Ayanlari: The Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Modern History* 44, no. 3 (1972): 350

<sup>27</sup> Virginia Aksan, "Whose territory and whose peasants? Ottoman boundaries on the Danube in the 1760s" in *The Ottoman Balkans 1750-1830*, edited by Frederick F. Anscombe (Princeton University: Department of Near East Studies, 2006): 61-86

distinctive from other Ottoman dominions in the Balkans and elsewhere where the elites were Muslim, held military power and enjoyed conditional property rights. For most of the period after the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans, the elites of Wallachia and Moldavia competed for the position of ruler (the *hospodar*), for which they needed Ottoman confirmation. This position allowed them and their relatives to monopolize the most rewarding administrative offices (the *boierii*) that carried tax-exemptions and the privilege to farm out sources of public income, or monopolies, such as those on the salt mines, the trade with cattle or wine.

Romanian historians emphasized the Romanian ethnic character of these elites, an assertion that needs careful evaluation. Indeed, these individuals spoke mostly the vernacular, intermarried and regularly referred to each other as being “of the land,” locals. However, they rarely extended the designation of “being from the land” to the other inhabitants of the provinces with whom they shared the language and confession. The boyars also participated in the Hellenized culture common to most Orthodox Christian elites and entertained by the Orthodox Patriarchate in Constantinople,<sup>28</sup> the institution to which the Ottoman sultan acknowledged religious patronage over his Orthodox subjects and certain political influence over this community.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the elites of the borderlands also developed kinship relations with wealthy Orthodox Christian families in Constantinople, which claimed Byzantine heritage,<sup>30</sup> as

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<sup>28</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Bizant după Bizanț* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică Română, 1972)

<sup>29</sup> Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2011), 6

<sup>30</sup> Radu Păun, “Stratégies de famille, stratégies de pouvoir: les Greco-Lévantins en Moldavie au XVIIème siècle” in *Comportements sociaux et stratégies familiales dans les Balkans (XVI-XXs): actes du colloque international 9-10 Juin 2006 New Europe College*, edited by Ionela Băluță, Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, (Bucharest: New Europe College, 2008), 19-20; Nicolae Iorga, *Roumains et Grecs au cours des siècles à l’occasion des mariages princiers* (Bucharest: Cultura neamului românesc, 1921), 27-34

well as with prominent families from neighboring Hungary and Poland.<sup>31</sup> Such newcomers took offices in the provinces, purchased properties or received them as dowries and most of them settled there. This was also the case of the Rosetti-Roznovanus' ancestor, Iordache Rosetti, heir of a layman administrator at the Patriarchate who arrived in Moldavia at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup>

Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Porte did not scrutinize politics in Wallachia and Moldavia closely, although the sultan confirmed the ruler entrusted with the delivery of the tribute and of supplies to the capital and to campaigning armies, when needed. However, at the beginning of the century, the sultan began to appoint the *hospodars* from among the Orthodox Christian elites at Constantinople, rather than confirm boyars who had been elected by their peers to rule the borderlands. The newly-appointed individuals, who had enjoyed before a prominent position due to their wealth and connections at the Patriarchate, climbed the ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy as interpreters and mediators as the Porte began to engage in diplomacy with its European enemies.<sup>33</sup> The change in the manner of appointment of the *hospodars*, which would trigger important changes at the level of the Orthodox elites in Wallachia and Moldavia and at Constantinople, was unprecedented but not surprising within broader transformations in the Ottoman Empire.

The new Phanariot *hospodars* acted as imperial tax-farmers<sup>34</sup> in the context where the Porte implemented an empire-wide system of revenue contracting or tax farming (*malikane*).

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<sup>31</sup> Charles and Barbara Jelavich (eds.), *The Education of a Russian Statesman: The Memoirs of Nicholas Karlovich Giers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 156

<sup>32</sup> See Radu Rosetti, *Familia Rosetti* (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial, 1938)

<sup>33</sup> Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 10-11

<sup>34</sup> Christine Philliou, "Communities on the Verge: Unraveling the Phanariot Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 1 (2009): 157

Through this system, private individuals purchased in advance the privilege to exploit and to administer territories that formally belonged to the sultan,<sup>35</sup> a status that belonged to Wallachia and Moldavia too, as “well-protected domains.” To the Porte, the tax-farming of these borderlands to Orthodox Christian officials from Constantinople entailed a more efficient collection of the tribute and the increase of the sums that these provinces paid to the Porte. Furthermore, some of the local revenues were also directed to the upkeep of Ottoman troops and officials in the provinces and at Constantinople,<sup>36</sup> helping to finance defense on the Danube, and of officials in the imperial government in the capital. The nomination of Constantinopolitan Orthodox bureaucrats as *hospodars* was also compatible with the custom that these lands could only be ruled by Christians and with the pre-existing political and cultural ties between the Christian elites there and those in the capital.

But the auctioning of Wallachia and Moldavia to the Phanariot officials also had particular features that distinguished tax-farming of the borderlands from the farming of revenues in other imperial areas. Thus, the *hospodars* of Wallachia and Moldavia held a title that was formally associated both with leading the administration of a province and with collecting the taxes there, tasks that in other Ottoman areas were supposed to be divided between governors and tax-collectors or tax-farmers.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, these tax-farmers were Christian and deeply involved in the bureaucratic apparatus at Constantinople. Their ascension in the Ottoman

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<sup>35</sup> Ariel Salzmann, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire: Rival Paths to the Modern State* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), 88

<sup>36</sup> Mihai Cantacuzino, *Istoria politică și geografică a Țării Românești*, trans. George Sion (Bucharest: Typographia Nationale a lui Stephan Rassidescu, 1863), 50

<sup>37</sup> Ariel Salzmann, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire*, 164-167

bureaucracy combined with the rule of Christian provinces Wallachia and Moldavia set them apart from other Ottoman elites at Constantinople and in the Empire.

In addition, the Phanariot *hospodars* collaborated with the boyars in Wallachia and Moldavia: they needed the participation of these elites to improve tax-farming and to govern. Connections in Constantinople helped, but the new rulers tried to consolidate their position by offering offices to individuals who enjoyed most power locally and to associates and creditors from Constantinople. Such was also the venue through which Constantin Samurcas, a member in the retinue of Alexandru Ipsilanti took office in Wallachia in 1796. Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Phanariots and the elites on the borderland developed political alliances as well as business ventures and credit relations. The *hospodars* who, like other Ottoman officials in the capital, were liable of having their wealth confiscated if accused of treason, began purchasing land estates on the borderland where the Porte did not encroach on property rights. The elites from Wallachia and Moldavia became acquainted with the members in the Phanariots' retinues and engaged in business transactions with their creditors. Telling of the tight associations between the newly-appointed *hospodars* and their boyars in governing Wallachia and Moldavia is the fact that at Constantinople, when they received various tasks, they were mentioned together, as Christian elites.<sup>38</sup>

But Christian officials from Constantinople and Christian elites in Wallachia and Moldavia also upheld various distinctions between each other. The adhesion to a political party at the Porte or to a particular notable in the neighboring regions was a source of dissension among these elites, leading to long-lasting enmities. Social status was also a source of divisions and hierarchies, as lower rank officials had to obey and buy the protection of their stronger peers.

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<sup>38</sup> Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 19, 28

Finally, “Phanariot boyars” - “boyars from the land” was one of the most currently evoked and most apparent divisions, reinforced by linguistic differences. However, I suggest that this division was circumstantial and that it depended on momentary rivalry for office and position. Intermarriage and the fact that most of the officials on the borderland spoke the vernacular, some of them in addition to Greek, is indicative of the fact that “being from Phanar” could easily segue into “being from the land.”

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these distinctions acquired a more permanent character due to two parallel dynamics. From the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Balkan intellectuals who were trained or acted in the retinues of Phanariot *hospodars* and who adopted the Enlightenment imperative for social progress began to promote divisions between the Balkan Ottoman Christians, based on language and distinctive past, as a first step for local societies to reform.<sup>39</sup> The intellectuals’ distinctions, which resonated with the European Enlightenment appeal to political mobilization and denunciation of monarchical despotism, were aimed at preparing the Ottoman Christian subjects to claim and exert rule against Ottoman autocracy by cooperating across linguistic and ethnic divides. Such opinions were known to Christian elites in Wallachia and Moldavia, including the newly-arrived from Constantinople, but they did not lead to political action.<sup>40</sup> Yet, after 1821 these distinctions were reiterated, and with graver consequences. Successive rebellions in the Greek-speaking Balkan regions, after the failed campaign in Moldavia and Wallachia of a group of Odessa-based anti-Ottoman militants and a peasant revolt in Wallachia, led to a major Ottoman crisis and ultimately to the intervention of

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<sup>39</sup> Paschalis Kitromilides, “‘Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans,” in *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy* (Variorum, 1994), 151-159

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Philpiddis, Neophytos Doukas. See Mihai Țipău, “Ethnic names and national identity in the Greek-Romanian historiography of the Phanariote era” in *Relations Gréco-Roumaines*, 171-177; Neophytos Charilaou, “The critical stance of Neophytos Doukas towards the social structure of the Danubian Principalities,” in *Relations Gréco-Roumaines*, 183-185



the Great Powers. The crisis ended in 1830 with an arrangement whereby the Great Powers acknowledged self-rule in the Greek-speaking regions in turmoil, which reinforced the distinctions in the ranks of the Ottoman Christians and brought the concept of “sovereignty” of Ottoman subjects and the exercise of Ottoman rule to international attention. These transformations spelled the end of the appointment of Constantinopolitan Christians to rule in Wallachia and Moldavia and motivated the elites there to denounce the “Greek” Phanariots as collaborators of the rebels in Greece, an opinion that was also shared by the Porte. However, although the elites on the borderland reiterated old divisions, they were only beginning to reinvent themselves as leaders and members of a local community.

Before this period of major political change, the *hospodars* and the boyars developed complex administrative and political relations with each other, while they were also involved in complex networks with the Ottoman Muslim elites in Constantinople and the neighboring areas. The *hospodars*’ connections with the Muslim elites at the Porte are more apparent: as dragomans and bureaucrats, they worked together with their Muslim colleagues. These networks included, but were not limited to, cooperation within the administrative hierarchies. They involved credit relations, patronage and political support between Muslims and Christians. These connections complicated the confessional hierarchy between representatives of the two *millets* and, as such, they caused suspicion at the Porte.<sup>41</sup> However, the intricate combination of political factionalism and government rendered the concourse of Christian officials indispensable to the Muslim elites in the capital.

One might suspect that once the *hospodars* arrived in Wallachia and Moldavia they were removed from their Ottoman milieu because Muslims were prohibited to inhabit the two

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<sup>41</sup> Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 19

provinces.<sup>42</sup> The regular Ottoman Muslim presence in the borderlands comprised Ottoman troops that guarded the *hospodar* and local order,<sup>43</sup> the *divan efendi* who was a secretary and judge in the council of the ruler and who decided on disputes between Christians and Muslims,<sup>44</sup> Muslim merchants who secured the supply of the capital and fortresses<sup>45</sup> and other passing Ottoman Muslim commanders and officials.<sup>46</sup> The successive imperial orders<sup>47</sup> that forbid Muslim settlement in Moldavia and Wallachia indicate that these agents were present in numbers greater than those suggested in Romanian historiography. Moreover, these individuals did not act separately from the boyars and the *hospodar* but often shared creditors and political interests. Similar relations connected the elites in Wallachia and Moldavia, boyars or *hospodars*, to the *ayans* and military commanders in the neighboring regions such as Vidin, Rusçuk, Ismail, Khotyn, as it will become apparent in the following chapters.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as imperial agents from the peripheries strove to influence politics at Constantinople and the *hospodars* were well-connected with the political parties in the capital, it was not uncommon for *hospodars*, boyars and Ottoman Muslim leaders to strike alliances on account of the faction they supported. These relations did not eliminate violent conflict: boyars

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<sup>42</sup> Marie Mathilde Alexandrescu Dersca, “Despre regimul supușilor otomani în Țara Românească în secolul al XVIII-lea,” *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 14, (1961) : 87-113

<sup>43</sup> Claudiu Neagoe, “Mercenari otomani în oștile Țărilor Române (secolele XVI-XVIII),” *Danubius* 24 (2006): 73-86

<sup>44</sup> Christine Philliou, “Worlds, Old and New: Phanariot Networks and the Remaking of Ottoman Governance in the First Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2007), 68

<sup>45</sup> Marie Mathilde Alexandrescu-Dersca, “Despre regimul supușilor otomani în Țara Românească în veacul al XVIII-lea,” *Studii. Revistă de istorie* 14, no. 1 (1961): 93, 101

<sup>46</sup> Dan Simonescu, “Literatura românească de ceremonial: Conдика lui Gheorgachi” (Bucarest: Fundația regelui Carol I, 1939), 91-95; About the presents and salaries of the Ottoman Muslim military personnel, see Ioan Caproșu, “Sama vistieriei Țării Moldovei din 1777 (I)” *Arhiva Genealogică* 4, 1-2 (1997): 125-158, and “Sama vistieriei Țării Moldovei din 1777 (II)” *Arhiva Genealogică* 5, no. 1-2 (1998): 179-229

<sup>47</sup> Marie Mathilde Alexandrescu-Dersca, “Despre regimul supușilor otomani,” 97-101

vied for the exploitation of the labor force with Muslim merchants who bought estates, Ottoman *ayans* raided the provinces, fortress commanders appropriated lands near their outposts and Muslims and Christians lost their heads depending on which faction was in power at Constantinople. But such conflicts were indicative of the complex interplay of interests between the Muslim and Christian actors on the borderlands and between the borderlands and the center. Samurcas and Rosetti-Roznovanu achieved power by manipulating these networks and the tensions inherent to them.

## **2. Imperial suzerainty, sovereignty and international law**

The history of Wallachia and Moldavia in the 18<sup>th</sup> and particularly 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the international law registered the independence of Wallachia and Moldavia, is to a significant extent the history of concepts of “vassalage,” “autonomy,” “sovereignty” and “suzerainty.” These concepts are central to the argument about the distinctiveness and survival of the “Romanian state” in Wallachia and Moldavia for which national historiography found evidence in the theory of the “local privileges.” Their use since the 19<sup>th</sup> century is indicative of the Romanian historians’ creation of a genealogy for Romanian sovereignty through the identification of stages of self-determination in the imperial past. But it is equally telling of a 19<sup>th</sup> century trend in international law to create concepts that approximated Ottoman rule and which allowed the European powers to define and regulate areas of government that they removed from the prerogatives of the Ottoman rule.<sup>48</sup> “Vassalage,” local “independent government,” “Ottoman sovereignty” or “suzerainty” thus became recurrent in the language of 19<sup>th</sup> century European

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<sup>48</sup> About the way in which Britain used international with the Ottoman Empire in the 1830s and 1840s to influence its administration and territoriality and how these treaties served as a template in Britain’s relations with other great Eurasian governments, see Richard Horowitz, “International Law and State Transformation in China, Siam and the Ottoman Empire during the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of World History* 15, no. 4 (2004): 448

diplomats who dealt with Ottoman affairs, and progressively entered the general vocabulary in relation to the Eastern Question.

The European diplomacies' attempts to control the contraction of the Ottoman Empire overlapped, since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the attempts of a number of local intellectuals and officials to invent the Romanian nation. Therefore, the challenge is to distinguish between these two trends, and to historicize the construction of the international concepts of "sovereignty" and "suzerainty" to define, organize and control Ottoman imperial authority. Adhering to the Enlightenment principle that political participation could lead to progress, Balkan intellectuals and elites had proposed since the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century projects for the reorganization of the Ottoman Christians into "republics" that allowed them to exert political voice. However, these projects fell on deaf ears with revolutionary European leaders such as Napoleon,<sup>49</sup> and led to repression against their proponents.<sup>50</sup> The claims to political agency in the Balkans received consideration as forms of government subordinate or alternative to Ottoman rule only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the European powers began to intervene in Ottoman administration through arrangements that became categories of international law.

After the Congress of Vienna (1815), as the Ottoman Empire became unofficially<sup>51</sup> a beneficiary of the European monarchies' commitment to "dynastic legitimacy and state sovereignty within defined borders,"<sup>52</sup> and a fragile balance of power was reached on the

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<sup>49</sup> Emil Vârtosu, *Napoleon Bonaparte și proiectul unei "Republici Aristo-Democratești" în Moldova, la 1802* (Bucharest: 1946), 6-11

<sup>50</sup> See the case of Rhigas Velestinlis, an admirer of revolutionary France and a Balkan radical thinker, who was arrested in 1798 in Vienna by the Austrian authorities and returned to the Ottoman Empire for punishment. Paschalis Kitromilides, *Illuminismul neoele: Ideile politice și sociale* (Bucharest: Omonia, 2005), 262

<sup>51</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London, Melbourne, Toronto: Macmillan, 1966), 47

<sup>52</sup> Eric Weitz, "From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions," *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1314

continent, the European states refrained from direct annexations of Ottoman lands. But these commitments did not prevent the European powers' expansionist agendas and conflicts of interests at Constantinople, in the Balkans or the Mediterranean Basin. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the European powers pursued such projects through agreements in which they formally acknowledged Ottoman authority but interfered in the Ottomans' rule over disobedient subjects in the Balkans. Providing definitions for Ottoman authority as "sovereignty" or "suzerainty," these agreements only approximated Ottoman prerogatives and formalized the principle that Ottoman rule needed international confirmation. They consecrated European arbitrage with respect to the delimitation of Ottoman borders, the division of the obligations between the Porte and its subjects and the provision of the ways in which these subjects could be governed.

In 1827, Britain, France and Russia proposed to the Ottoman Empire to recognize the independence of Greece in exchange for the sultan becoming the ruler of this entity.<sup>53</sup> The Porte did not concede to such a proposal but was finally forced to acknowledge the independence of this territory placed under international protection.<sup>54</sup> After the Russian-Ottoman war of 1829 Russia forced the Porte to agree to the Russian "guarantee" of the prosperity of Wallachia, Moldavia and Serbia. While referring to these provinces as Ottoman "possessions," the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) defined Ottoman control in Wallachia and Moldavia as "suzerainty," and specified the ways in which it could be exerted: through the collection of a tribute and "confirmation" of the administrative reforms that Russia implemented there.<sup>55</sup> After the Crimean War (1853-1856), the European powers acknowledged the territorial integrity of the Ottoman

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<sup>53</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 73-74

<sup>54</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 75

<sup>55</sup> E.S. Creasy, "Appendix A: Treaty of Adrianople," in *History of Ottoman Turks: from the beginning of their empire to the present time. Chiefly founded on Von Hammer*, (London R. Bentley, 1854), 523

Empire, and repeated that the Ottomans were “suzerains” of Wallachia and Moldavia placed under international “protection.”<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, aside from reiterating the sultan’s quality of suzerain, the European powers also assigned local government and self-rule to the communities of Wallachia and Moldavia. “Sovereignty” as dynastic privilege and local “sovereignty” as self-rule could not function simultaneously for long, and the latter prevailed with European recognition in 1878.

This evolution appears to confirm the critical approach to international law that argues “sovereignty” and international law has served since the 19<sup>th</sup> century as an instrument of Western expansion. “Sovereignty” became a fixture concept in international legal thought and practice to prevent major conflicts among the European powers on the continent<sup>57</sup> and to further their colonial ambitions in the rest of the world.<sup>58</sup> Antony Anghie claimed that, in its heyday, European colonialism shaped international law and used the concept of “sovereignty” “to create a legal system that could account for relations between the European and non-European worlds in the colonial confrontation.”<sup>59</sup> Colonialism was associated with a particular way of understanding the non-Western world according to which the West, having superior scientific knowledge of society, should oversee the political organization and development of other societies. International law thus became intimately connected to the European colonial powers’

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<sup>56</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 284

<sup>57</sup> It was in this context that scholars of international thought and historians began to project “sovereignty,” “dynastic autonomy,” and even the “territorial state” as legal concepts that had been regulating the relations between “sovereign” entities since the Peace of Westphalia. See Andreas Osiander, “Sovereignty, International Relations and the Westphalian Myth,” *International Organization* 55, no. 2 (2001): 251

<sup>58</sup> Eric D. Weitz, “From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions,” *American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1315

<sup>59</sup> Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3

claim to having a “civilizing mission,” as Matti Koskenniemi pointed out, and a mandate to reform the world based on their “deep insights about society, history, human nature or development laws of an international and institutional modernity.”<sup>60</sup> The moment when the Western powers began to promote the principle that sovereignty lay with communities as a concept of international law was the London Protocol in 1830 that acknowledged “sovereignty” to a group of Ottoman subjects<sup>61</sup> and set up the territorial and political contours of independent Greece.<sup>62</sup> The recognition of the independence of former Ottoman subjects in the Balkans through the Berlin Treaty in 1878 (among which the United Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia), the creation of the African mandates through the General Act in 1885 and the establishment of the Paris system in the aftermath of the First World War sanctioned the active regulation of non-Western polities through international law.<sup>63</sup>

The ranking of polities according to their degree of “civilization” had not always been a major component of international law. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, international relations were guided by a natural law approach<sup>64</sup> that could be extended to entitle non-European entities to the same treatment as the European states.<sup>65</sup> However, between the 1810s and 1840s this pluralist understanding yielded to a conception of “global hierarchy” that became hegemonic in international relations due to a combination of ideological factors and transformations in the field of international relations. Thus, theories of progress became widespread and, in combination

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<sup>60</sup> Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3

<sup>61</sup> Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 110

<sup>62</sup> Eric D. Weitz, “From the Vienna to the Paris System,” 1317

<sup>63</sup> Eric D. Weitz, “From the Vienna to the Paris System,” 1319

<sup>64</sup> Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, 19-20

<sup>65</sup> Duncan Bell, “Empire and International Relations in Victorian Political Thought,” *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 1 (2006): 284; Richard Horowitz, “International Law and State Transformation,” 452

with the universalism residual from the previous natural law approach, created the frame for inventing international hierarchies. The rankings according to the degree of “progress” were reinforced with divisions between the states that adopted liberalism and promoted reforms and those perceived to be incompatible, in their current state, with the European ideas about society and government. These ideological transformations became effective in re-organizing the world as jurisprudence gained a formative role in international relations.<sup>66</sup>

Britain introduced “global hierarchy” in international law during its Eastwards expansion in the 1830s when it used a system of unequal treaties to subordinate the great Eurasian empires, the Ottomans and Qing China. Sending its colonial representatives and international lawyers to the East to press for extraterritorial rights, Britain tried to create effective instruments to control these states. In so doing, it also exposed the Ottoman and Chinese empires to the new type of international law and transformed them into subjects of international regulation.<sup>67</sup> By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, France and Germany also contributed to the development of this model in the understanding of the relations with non-European states.<sup>68</sup> Even more, non-European empires that had been subject to the emerging international law, adopted the concept of “global hierarchies” to subordinate their own rivals.<sup>69</sup>

This polemic approach to the colonial origins of modern international law provides a compelling argument for why “sovereignty” became a constant presence in international

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<sup>66</sup> Duncan Bell, “Empire and International Relations,” 284, 289; About the institutionalization of international law in combination with the promotion of liberal ideas by practitioners of international law in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, 12-18

<sup>67</sup> Richard Horowitz, “International Law and State Transformation,” 451, 454

<sup>68</sup> Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

<sup>69</sup> Richard Horowitz, “International Law and State Transformation,” 455-456



parlance and how it informed state and international policies with respect to religious and ethnic communities. However, this revisionist trend presupposes that communities and the way in which they ruled themselves were the obvious choice for the colonial powers to exert their imperialist ambitions. The recognition by Britain, France and Russia of Greek independence might have been the precedent for a long series of acts through which the powers granted popular sovereignty, but the powers did not adopt this solution immediately after the beginning of the Greek uprisings. Granting “sovereignty” based on popular mobilization could have had a destabilizing effect on their regimes and influence on the continent. Having committed to uphold the dynastic principle at the Congress of Vienna, the European powers were wary of questioning this principle for the Greek rebels in the Ottoman Empire, given that revolts had occurred at the same time in territories much closer or related to their own lands like Italy and Spain.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the Congress had also created a fine balance between the European powers, and these states were wary that outright annexation of Ottoman territories might prompt their rivals to do the same and gain better positions.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, this interpretation also simplifies the complex contexts in which European powers pursued their imperialist tendencies. By focusing exclusively on how a European power’s ambitions in a region informed international law, it obscures the politics that shaped imperial agendas on that particular site. Inter-imperial rivalries, the multiple and changing claims to imperial control, the administration and elites of particular societies had the potential to alter international alliances and provisions. In other words, although the process through which the international law of global hierarchy became hegemonic and irreversible in organizing inter-state relations and regulating local communities’ government, it was not predetermined. An analysis

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<sup>70</sup> Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 606-628

<sup>71</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 58-61

of the imperial and local agendas that combined to shape and implement international instructions can help explain why particular arrangements became precedents for more general regulations or principles of international law. The practices and norms through which the European powers imposed various concepts of “protection,” “guarantee,” “local government” in their relations to non-European communities and with each other can help explain the genealogy of influential concepts in international law, such as “sovereignty,” as well as how and why various international actors acknowledged these genealogies.

Studying politics on the borderlands of Wallachia and Moldavia reveal the complex process that consecrated the division of an empire on the fringes of Europe and of its control over land and people into separate concepts of local “sovereignty” and imperial “suzerainty.” This division recalled European models of medieval vassalage, placing the Ottoman Empire on a subordinate, backward position on the scale to progress. It also paved the way to later European intervention in deciding whether local “sovereignty” should continue to be associated to imperial “suzerainty” or reflect the local claims to political participation based on the principle of the “nation.” Even more, it displays the ways in which different European empires adopted selectively their rivals’ imperial arrangements on the Danube borderland and in the Ottoman Empire to formulate principles of international arbitration in the area. In this regard, politics in Wallachia and Moldavia also reveal the important precedents that Russia and the Habsburg Empire, whose influence on 19<sup>th</sup> century international only begins to be explored, offered to the other European powers in designing a body of law pertaining to the Ottoman Empire and its possessions in the Balkans. These precedents comprised the delimitation of territory, the use of diplomacy to gain sympathizers at Constantinople for various projects concerning Ottoman possessions, the creation and consecration through treaty of imperial condominiums in Ottoman

territories and the claim to control Ottoman strategic positions such as the Danube borderlands or the Straits.

### **3. Organization of the chapters**

This dissertation explores how intra- and inter-imperial politics interacted on a borderland and created different but increasingly related contexts for the display of power: territorial demarcation, diplomacy, government and international law that in the long run linked and shaped local and imperial agendas. In the first chapter, I examine how Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and his peers in Moldavia who were involved in a trade with land estates in the province shaped the delimitation of the Ottoman-Habsburg-Russian borderland at a time of Russian territorial expansion (1780s-1810s). Exploring the appeal of this trade among boyars of all ranks in the province, I explain that it provided individuals with the cash resources and properties necessary to advance in a flexible and venal political system such as that featured the Phanariot *hospodar's* administration of Moldavia. Also, I demonstrate that the ability of the Russian and Habsburg Empires to deal with the rivalries and networks between these elites was crucial to substantiate these empires' claims to their common borderland at the end of an age of sustained territorial expansion.

In the second chapter, I examine the activity as information brokers and mediators that elites in Wallachia, such as Constantin Samurcas, deployed between the Ottoman, Russian and Habsburg Empires from the time of the Napoleonic wars until after the Congress of Vienna (1800s-1820s) to explore two inter-related issues. The first issue is the preservation of power by the elites from Wallachia who acted as mediators for the Ottoman Porte, despite the fact that the Greek revolt fueled suspicion at Constantinople concerning the reliability of the Christian

leadership. The second issue concerns the transformation of diplomacy into one of the main instruments for the Porte to secure the survival of the empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and for the European powers to claim indirect control at Constantinople and dispute each other's influence in Ottoman affairs.

The third chapter surveys the functioning of the Russian-Ottoman condominium in Wallachia and Moldavia as a first arrangement that formalized Russian power over the Ottoman Empire and materialized active Russian intervention in Ottoman rule (1820s-1840s). To explore the creation of a formal imperial condominium, how it functioned with the help of local elites and how other European powers perceived it, I explore successive attempts of Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu to address alternative Russian and European imperial projects on the Danube.

In the final chapter, I reconstruct the career of Alexandru Samurcas in Wallachia from the time when the Ottoman Empire faced its first major territorial loss, Greece, to international arbitration, through the Russian-Ottoman condominium (1830) and until after the European powers took over the protection of the borderland under Ottoman "suzerainty" (1850). Through Samurcas' biography, I examine the way in which the elites of Wallachia survived successive changes of the old hierarchies according to different imperial and ideological principles. I also explain how the regulation of the government of Wallachia and Moldavia provided the ground for European powers to draw on previous Russian restrictions of the Porte's authority, and for the encounter between the European imperial projects and a local movement for "national" unity and self-rule.

## **Chapter 1: Buying and selling land on the Danube: wealth, Phanariot politics and inter-imperial rivalry in Moldavia, 1780s-1810s**

### **Introduction**

Protracted warfare between the Russian and Ottoman Empires between the 1770s and the 1810s, with the occasional involvement of the Habsburg Empire, led to successive revisions of the frontier on the Danube, in the Crimea and the Caucasus. On the Danubian borderland, in Wallachia and Moldavia, warfare stimulated local power holders and imperial agents to engage in a decades-long local trade with land estates across the new inter-imperial delimitations, which required the attention of the authorities from the imperial centers. How did the flourishing trade with land between the 1780s and 1810s influence politics and Ottoman governance on this borderland? How did the local agents' utilization of land for profit shape the delimitation of frontiers on a borderland at the end of a period when territorial annexation in Europe and on its margins had been a constant preoccupation for most European empires?

To study the impact of the land trade on the exercise of political power and the separation of imperial jurisdictions on the borderland, I follow the enterprises for land acquisition between the 1790s and 1812 of the high boyar Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu who enlisted the involvement of other officials in Moldavia, of an Ottoman Christian merchant and of Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian authorities. More specifically, I examine the dealings between 1798 and 1812 of the boyars (local officials) Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu (1764-1836) and Iordache Balș (1742-1812), for the acquisition of lands that the Habsburg Crown had obtained in Moldavia after the Russian-Ottoman war of 1768-1774 and of lands in the vicinity of the fortress Khotyn that Russia took over from the Ottoman Empire in 1812. The transactions were based on business partnership and political alliance and involved Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu (1725-1806), who was Iordache's

father, Panait Cazimir (1759-1826) who also acted on behalf of his brother Petrache,<sup>72</sup> and Teodor Musteață, a Vlach merchant from Ottoman Macedonia, who traded in the Habsburg Empire and who was involved in land subleasing in Moldavia.<sup>73</sup> The transactions are amply documented in the business letters and deeds of the Rosetti-Roznovanus, the Habsburg diplomatic correspondence concerning the management of the estates in Moldavia and the documents about the inheritance of the Balș family.

I adopt an understanding of the borderland as a transitory space underlain by interacting and changing political, demographic, cultural and economic boundaries.<sup>74</sup> While this interpretation admits the existence of ethnic, linguistic and religious divisions among the inhabitants of the borderland, it does not assume that such categories delimited spatial boundaries before the age of ethnic self-determination. Thus, it provides an alternative to the nationalist interpretations of the borderland that obscure the complex transformation of land into territory.<sup>75</sup>

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century local historians in Romania, the successor state to Wallachia and Moldavia, revealed significant differences between these provinces and other dominions under Ottoman authority, which account for the existence of ownership rights and of a late 18<sup>th</sup> century trade with land estates. Thus, they emphasized that the inhabitants of Wallachia and Moldavia could have used and owned lands, prerogatives that did not exist in other Ottoman provinces, and

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<sup>72</sup> ANIC, Inv. 91, Fond Achiziții Noi, Pack CCXLI/no. 8, f. 3 recto

<sup>73</sup> Teodor Bălan, *Refugiații Moldoveni în Bucovina 1821 și 1848*, (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1929), 6, 10

<sup>74</sup> Bradley J. Parker, "Toward an Understanding of Borderland Processes," *American Antiquity* 71, no. 1 (2006): 80-82; Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel, "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands," *Journal of World History* 8, no. 2 (1997): 215

<sup>75</sup> Katherine Pratt Ewing, "Crossing Borders and Transgressing Boundaries: Metaphors for Negotiating Multiple Identities," *Ethos* 26, no. 2 (1998): 262

which resembled ownership rights in the Habsburg and Russian Empires. Indeed, land ownership in Wallachia and Moldavia was possible because the Ottoman government committed to preserve local customs, including those for the use of land, because the two Christian provinces had voluntarily accepted Ottoman rule. Land was used jointly by owners - individuals who could use and sell the land, and renters – individuals who could only use a share of the land and its resources in exchange for various obligations to the owners. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the context of the appointment of the Phanariot rulers, Orthodox Christians from Constantinople too began to purchase land estates in Wallachia and Moldavia. Compared to farming revenues from the sultan's property, owning land in Wallachia and Moldavia offered an advantage: the Porte could have terminated tax-farming contracts upon will, but could not have interfered with landed possessions in Wallachia and Moldavia because custom prevented it.

On the other hand, by overemphasizing local particularity, Romanian historiography represented the borderland of Wallachia and Moldavia between the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires as national Romanian territory. Thus, it isolated the exercise of power in these lands from the broader Ottoman imperial system of the “well-protected domains”<sup>76</sup> and from the inter-imperial dynamics between the Ottoman, Russian and Habsburg Empires that shaped the map of Eastern Europe, Crimea and the Caucasus from the 1770s until after the Napoleonic wars.<sup>77</sup> By examining the ongoing delimitation of territorial jurisdictions that paralleled the delimitations of the authority over subjects in Wallachia and Moldavia, I will show how imperial history can enhance our knowledge about these borderlands and how these regions can reveal the

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<sup>76</sup> Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman law of war and peace: the Ottoman Empire and tribute payers* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2000)

<sup>77</sup> Tolga Esmer reiterates William McNeill's perspective in *Europe's Steppe Frontier 1500-1800* that the Danube marked the borderland between the Ottoman, the Habsburg and the Russian Empires. See Tolga Esmer, “A Culture of Rebellion: Networks of Violence and Competing Discourses of Justice in the Ottoman Empire,” (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2009), 36

evolving relations between the three neighboring empires. Current analyses about the Russian-Ottoman and Habsburg-Russian borderlands provide rich insights about inter-communal relations, religious tensions and competing imperial hierarchies across their confines.<sup>78</sup> Such analyses focus, however, on periods prior to the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. The way in which the inter-imperial Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian confines were re-drawn at the age of the Napoleonic wars that changed the maps of Europe, is less studied.<sup>79</sup> Finally, my study will add to the study of borderlands in general, as it will show that the delimitation of frontiers continued to remain elusive until the first decade of the 1800, despite constant European inter-imperial conflicts that militarized defense lines and borders, and despite continuous diplomatic encounters over territorial delimitation.

The Ottoman Empire's borderland in Wallachia and Moldavia acquired renewed importance as a *confinium* between the Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian Empires after the war of 1768-1774. The Habsburg Empire and Russia acquired sections of Poland and Russia imposed its authority in Crimea, at the expense of the Ottomans, bringing the three empires in close proximity along a frontier from the south of Poland to the Danube. Their close vicinity and successive delimitations of frontiers mixed people of different allegiances and temporarily disconnected claims of jurisdiction over people from those over land. In the aftermath of the war

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<sup>78</sup> Current historiography about the Ottoman-Habsburg-Russian borderlands deals with previous periods. See Virginia Aksan "Whose Territory and Whose Peasants? Ottoman Boundaries on the Danube in the 1760s," in *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830*, edited by Frederick Anscombe (Princeton: Marcus Weiner, 2006), 61-86; Rossitsa Gradeva, "Osman Pazvantoglu of Vidin: between old and new" in *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830*, edited by Frederick Anscombe (Princeton University: Department of Near East Studies, 2006): 115-162; Alfred Rieber, "The Comparative Ecology of Complex Frontiers," in *Imperial Rule*, edited by Alexei Miller and Alfred Rieber (Budapest, New York: Central European Press, 2004), 177-209

<sup>79</sup> Victor Taki's analysis of Russia's sponsorship of political reforms in Wallachia and Moldavia as a component of Russia's expansion on the Danube is unique in this respect. However, Taki's approach of Wallachia and Moldavia follows an understanding of the borderlands that is amenable to nationalizing interpretations. Although he does not cast the two provinces in national terms, he denies the possibility that local elites could have shared imperial ideologies that promoted Ottoman power. See Victor Taki, "Russia on the Danube: Imperial Expansion and Political Reform in Moldavia and Wallachia, 1812-1834" (PhD diss., The Central European University, 2007)



of 1768-1774 Austria annexed the northern districts of the Ottoman-protected Moldavia, also known as Bukovina, a space of intense commercial activity and military manoeuvres. Bukovina was included in the province of Galicia and placed under the administration of the Habsburg authorities in Chernivtsi. Following this territorial acquisition some of the local inhabitants, including officials who held considerable political influence, chose to relocate in the lands under Habsburg authority, whereas others preserved their allegiance to the sultan. The inhabitants who chose Habsburg authority recommended each other as former important officials from Moldavia to accede to positions in the Habsburg government of Bukovina.

The region also comprised several Moldavian monasteries subordinate to the Bishopric of Rădăuți. After the secularization by Joseph II of monastic lands in the empire, in 1783 the monasteries' estates became the property of the Habsburg Crown, in the administration of the provincial authorities of Galicia.<sup>80</sup> But as the estates were located in the neighboring Moldavia, under Ottoman jurisdiction, the Habsburg authorities could not exploit them directly. Instead, they rented them to subcontractors from Moldavia or to Balkan merchants who were Ottoman subjects but who had the approval to trade in non-Ottoman lands. Because of the difficulties encountered in the lands' exploitation, by the 1798 the Habsburg authorities decided to sell these estates. The first offers of purchase were made by individuals who had subleased the lands from the Habsburg Crown.<sup>81</sup>

The estates that the Habsburg Crown held in Moldavia neighbored at the East estates in the exploitation of several Ottoman fortresses that formed a defense line against Russia: Khotyn,

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<sup>80</sup> Elena Moisuc, "Câteva date economice privind moșiile din Moldova ale fondului bisericesc bucovinean," *Revista Arhivelor* 35, no.1 (1973): 3

<sup>81</sup> See Elena Moisuc, "Câteva date economice privind moșiile din Moldova," 5

Bender, Akkerman, Kilia.<sup>82</sup> The peace of 1792 that concluded the war of 1787-1790/1791 between the Russian and Habsburg Empires, and the Ottoman Empire,<sup>83</sup> offered Russia a small portion of steppe in the East of Moldavia and at the north of the Black Sea. This small territorial concession was enlarged during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812 through the Russian annexation of the Ottoman fortresses Khotyn, Bender, Akkerman, Kilia and of their land by virtue of the law of war and of a wide strip of Eastern Moldavia, between the rivers Prut and Dniester, through the peace of 1812. During the war, the Russian troops occupied Wallachia and Moldavia and a mixed Russian-local war administration was created that placed these estates under the management of the local boyars' council. The boyars, several of whom had purchased estates from the Habsburg authorities in 1798, became interested in acquiring the lands that had been used by the population from the Ottoman fortress and, after sub-leasing these estates, bought them from the Russian authorities.<sup>84</sup> The peace of 1812 provided that the inhabitants of the occupied areas could choose their allegiance and relocate under Ottoman or Russian authority accordingly. Like in the Bukovinian case, the relocation of people was followed by continuous transactions with lands that caused this confine to remain relatively flexible for another two decades.

In the first section of this chapter, I will provide a depiction of the land business in Moldavia to introduce Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and the other characters involved in the business, and to discern the connections and tensions between leadership in this region and Ottoman rule. Using the frame of politics on the borderland, I will explain how land ownership, a

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<sup>82</sup> Elena Moisuc, "Câteva date economice privind moșiile din Moldova," 14

<sup>83</sup> Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society 1815-1833* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 21

<sup>84</sup> Alexei Agachi, *Țara Moldovei și Țara Românească sub ocupația militară rusă (1806-1812)* (Iassy: Demiurg, 2008), 88

feature that distinguished Moldavia and Wallachia from other Ottoman lands, became at the end of the 18th century an important resource that fueled political integration and competition in the Ottoman-backed government. In the second section, I will examine the way in which this model of politics was exported in the Habsburg and Russian borderland administration and shaped the division of Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian imperial jurisdictions authority in Bukovina and Bessarabia.

### **1. Land and networks of power on the borderland**

Between the 1790s and 1812, officials from Moldavia entered negotiations and lobbied with Habsburg and Russian authorities and the Ottoman sultan to take over vast properties of disputed ownership on the inter-imperial borderland. The most prominent among these officials were the treasurers Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and Iordache Balș, who were joined by Panait Cazimir, the lower rank official and protégé of Balș. The rulers (*hospodars*) Constantin Ipsilanti and Alexandru Moruzi, Ottoman Christian officials from Constantinople appointed by the sultan to rule in the borderland of Wallachia and Moldavia were also involved in the transfer of properties. Following the story of land appropriation, I will explain what constituted the power of Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and Iordache Balș and why land became such a coveted resource on this borderland at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The “land rush” started in the 1770s, when officials from Moldavia began to petition the Ottoman sultan and the Russian authorities for the cession of properties near the Ottoman fortresses Khotyn, Kilia and Akkerman in Eastern Moldavia asserting that they had belonged to their ancestors. The quest for land properties gained momentum after 1792, when the Habsburg Empire, which had taken over the Northern region of Moldavia, became the owner of estates in Moldavia. Due to the difficulty of profitably managing scattered properties, the Habsburg

authorities first exchanged lands with local officials such as Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu, the father of Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu,<sup>85</sup> then rented and finally sold out the properties to officials from Moldavia in 1798. A partnership was concluded immediately in Moldavia between the treasurer Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, the chancellor Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu, his father, the treasurer Iordache Balș, the lower-rank official Petrache Cazimir, and the merchant Teodor Musteață who acted as intermediary and negotiator with the Habsburg authorities. The newly appointed *hospodar* Constantin Ipsilanti also entered the bid for the purchase of the Habsburg Crown's lands, having the endorsement of the Ottoman *reis efendi* (head of the scribe office and chargé with foreign affairs) Mustafa Reşid Paşa. While his interest in the purchase increased the price of the estates and he temporarily managed to block his competitors, Ipsilanti did not succeed to purchase the lands as he was replaced from office in 1802 by the *hospodar* Alexandru Moruzi.

The acquisition of the lands that the Habsburg Crown held in Moldavia and the lands near the Ottoman fortresses was completed between 1802 and 1812. For one, Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and his associates purchased the Habsburg lands for the staggering sum 331.000 Dutch guilders or 1.226.000 lei.<sup>86</sup> At the same time, the successive Ottoman and Russian control and regulations for the lands near the Ottoman fortresses in Eastern Moldavia led to the transfer of numerous such properties to Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and Iordache Balș and to their associates Panait and Petrache Cazimir. These officials' claims in Eastern Moldavia began to materialize in 1802 when the sultan Selim III, who heeded Habsburg and Russian exhortations, ordered the *hospodar* Alexandru Moruzi to return the properties to their "rightful" owners.

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<sup>85</sup> ANIC, Inv. 91, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCXXXVI/no. 30. The Habsburg authorities were taking over the estates Văscăuți and Zadubnica, while Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu took over Știubeenii, Petricanii, Pustiul, Iubăneștii, Cârsteștii, Măgura in the district of Dorohoi, at the south of the Ottoman fortress of Khotyn.

<sup>86</sup> ANIC, Inv. 91, Achiziții Noi, Pack CLXXXII/no. 8; ANIC, Inv. 91, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCXLI/no. 8

Moruzi began the retrocession on a case-by-case basis, one of the first officials to receive properties being Petrache Cazimir, the brother of Panait Cazimir. When the Russian army occupied Moldavia and Wallachia during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806 and 1812, and captured the fortresses, the Russian commanders allowed the local officials to sublease and finally to take the remaining properties in exchange for the amount of the subleases as a gift. Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, Iordache Balș and several other officials who served in the occupation administration, were among the recipients of these estates.

*Ottoman governance, office and political competition in Moldavia at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century*

Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and his associate Iordache Balș reputed remarkable success in business because they drew on both their authority as officials as well as on the power that their families acquired in Moldavia under the 18<sup>th</sup> century rules of Phanariot *hospodars*, Constantinopolitan Christian officials whom the sultan selected to govern Wallachia and Moldavia. The appointment of the Phanariot *hospodars* continued the custom of Christian ruling in Wallachia and Moldavia and renewed close family and cultural relations between Christian elites there and Christian elites in Constantinople. On the other hand, their appointment also re-aligned local politics to politics in Constantinople as the occupation of office in Moldavia and Wallachia, including that of *hospodar*, translated the political effects of 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman tax-farming.

Tax farming, which flourished as the Ottoman bureaucrats devised new venues to gather resources for the public treasury in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, entailed that private individuals purchased in advance the privilege to exploit the revenues from territories that formally belonged to the

sultan.<sup>87</sup> The auctioning of the rule of the Greek Orthodox provinces Wallachia and Moldavia to individuals from the Phanariot complex followed the logic of tax-farming.<sup>88</sup> The Phanariot *hospodars*, who served as governors and tax collectors, purchased their appointment from the Porte through payments to the high Ottoman officials, payments for the renewal of their appointment and the annual tribute to the Porte. To gather these sums, the *hospodar* Constantin Mavrocordat, during whose rule Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu's grandfather acquired several high offices, merged the treasury of the *hospodar* with provincial treasuries and regularized the sale of offices and public revenues to the boyars.<sup>89</sup> Thanks to this regulation, and as treasury ledgers confirm,<sup>90</sup> the ruler could also direct money from the treasury to his private use, to ingratiating himself "with the high Turks at Constantinople, [...] to the Paşas, [...] to the kadis across the Danube."<sup>91</sup>

The Phanariot *hospodars*' financial devices facilitated the money flow between Constantinople and Wallachia and Moldavia and also connected politics on the borderland and politics in Constantinople. Although nepotism and sale of offices were recurrent in the local administration even before the Phanariot *hospodars*' appointment, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the appointment in boyar offices was known to depend on the aspirant's family, affinity and credit

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<sup>87</sup> Ariel Salzmann, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire: Rival Paths to the Modern State* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), 88

<sup>88</sup> Christine Philliou, "Communities on the Verge: Unraveling the Phanariot Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 1 (2009): 156-157

<sup>89</sup> Mihai Cantacuzino, *Istoria politică și geografică a Țării Românești*, trans. George Sion (Bucharest: Typographia Nationale a lui Stephan Rassidescu, 1863), 50

<sup>90</sup> See Ioan Caproșu, "Sama vistieriei Țării Moldovei din 1777 (I)" *Arhiva Genealogică* 4, 1-2 (1997): 125-158; Ioan Caproșu "Sama vistieriei Țării Moldovei din 1777 (II)," *Arhiva Genealogică* 5, no. 1-2 (1998): 179-229; Ioan Caproșu, "O samă a vistieriei Țării Moldovei din iulie-august 1797," *Hrisovul* 9 (2003): 253-277; DANI, Inv. 749, Colecția Manuscrise, no. 1782, "Sama vistieriei Moldovei sub Scarlat Alexandru Calimah 1804-1814"

<sup>91</sup> Mihai Cantacuzino, *Istoria politică și geografică a Țării Românești*, 50

relations with the *hospodar*, aside from common political agenda.<sup>92</sup> In other words, holding a position as boyar began to refer to one's position in the complex political and economic networks that surrounded the *hospodar* and which connected him to other individuals, Christian and Muslim, in the Empire. On the other hand, as the boyars too could sell subordinate offices to individuals associated to them through family or business, the new political system catalyzed social mobility and involved individuals of various social backgrounds in the political factions around boyars and the *hospodars*, as it was the case with Panait Cazimir, an individual of humble origin who managed to rise in office and to become a partner of Rosetti-Roznovanu and Balș.

The treasurer Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and his father the chancellor Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu, who provided most of the capital and appropriated the most valuable properties, followed these venues to power. Of Constantinopolitan origin, the Rosetti-Roznovanu family began holding office in Moldavia shortly before the ascent to power of the Phanariot *hospodars*, but consolidated their position in the local administration during the rule of Constantin and Ioan Mavrocordat. Through his administrative and fiscal reforms, Mavrocordat assigned to high offices a salary, tax exemptions and the possibility to sell subordinate offices and to purchase public revenues (bee keeping, making of wine, customs, salt mines). These rewards motivated the Rosetti-Roznovanus to foster connections with the *hospodars* and with other officials, and thus helped these boyars develop an impressive fortune.

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu, the new head of the family, held positions of cup-bearer, head judge and chancellor that entitled him to participate in the council of boyars. He married Smaragda Hrisoscoleu, the daughter of a family whose ancestor served as an administrator of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate and whose members

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<sup>92</sup> Mihai Cantacuzino, *Istoria politică și geografică a Țării Românești*, 15-16

became officials in Moldavia during the Phanariot rules.<sup>93</sup> But Nicolae also became involved with a group of other high officials, among whom his friend Iordache Balș, who served in the Russian administration during the occupation of Moldavia between 1768 and 1774.<sup>94</sup> The boyars of Moldavia entreated the Russian court to intervene at the Porte for the end of the Phanariot rules and the restoration of the officials' privilege to elect the *hospodar* from among their ranks. Given the Rosetti-Roznovanu's history of office under former Phanariot *hospodars* and the fact that Iordache Balș too had family relations with the Mavrocordats, I suggest that their opposition to the "Phanariots" was ignited by the particular Phanariot families that rose to power in that period, rather than by the way in which the Phanariot rulers distributed power and rewards.

That the two boyars did not object to politics as conducted by the Phanariot *hospodars* is confirmed by the fact that after the end of the war Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu married his niece to Alexandru Moruzi, the son of the *hospodar* Constantin Moruzi.<sup>95</sup> The political influence that Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu gained in this fashion for his family endured through the rules of the *hospodars* Alexandru Mavrocordat and Alexandru Callimachi and after the Habsburg and Russian occupations. It was renewed during the rule of Alexandru Moruzi, when his son Iordache became the leader of the Rosetti-Roznovanu family and treasurer of Moldavia (1795). Like his father, Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu became a friend and political ally of Iordache Balș, which strengthened their authority in relation to other boyars and even with the *hospodar*. Rosetti-Roznovanu and Balș also extended their political influence by co-opting in their

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<sup>93</sup> Octav-George Lecca, *Familiile boierești române* (Bucharest, 1899), 539

<sup>94</sup> Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Arhiva Românească* (Iassy: Tipograf Adolf Germann, 1860), 152-159

<sup>95</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Amintiri* (Iassy: Viața Românească, 1921), Vol. 1: 25-26



enterprises individuals of lower origin, such as Panait Cazimir and his brother Petrache.<sup>96</sup> Taken since childhood in the household of Balș, where they later exerted administrative tasks, with the help of their protector, the two brothers received offices in the administration and began lending money to other officials.<sup>97</sup> Such credit relations had the potential to become political alliances that connected the borrowers to the Cazimir as creditors and to these lenders' higher associates, the Rosetti-Roznovanus and Balș.

As the boyars rallied to particular *hospodars* who were involved in the political factions disputing power at Constantinople, and who vied for taking the rule of Wallachia and Moldavia, they also began to relate to politics in the imperial capital. But by using the resources awarded by the *hospodars* to develop their own political positions, some of the high boyars also began to nurture their own projects to become *hospodars*, and to court Russian support for the purpose. The good relations that Rosetti-Roznovanu had with Alexandru Moruzi, as well as his growing interest in the rule triggered tensions with the *hospodar* Constantin Ipsilanti, former grand dragoman (interpreter) of the Porte and competitor of Moruzi.<sup>98</sup> The dissension between Rosetti-Roznovanu and Ipsilanti only intensified in 1800, during the sale of the Habsburg Crown's lands in Moldavia, as Ipsilanti almost succeeded to win in the bid for these properties. This rivalry ended only several years later, with Ipsilanti's flight from the Ottoman Empire to Russia after the

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<sup>96</sup> Constantin Sion argues the Cazimir brothers were born in a family of *răzeși*, i.e. free peasants from the district of Suceava, see Constantin Sion, *Arhondologia Moldovei* (Bucharest: Editura Minerva, 1973), 119; This information is offered in a genealogical tree created by P. Verona and G. Bezviconi, ANIC, Inv. 1629, Fond Cazimir/no. 1

<sup>97</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1137, Fond Balș/no. 36; His brother Petrache developed a money lending business too, and offered loans to the princes Scarlat Callimachi (DANI, Sama vistieriei Moldovei sub Scarlat Alexandru Calimah 1804-1814, ff. 34, 99, 110) and Alexandru Moruzi (ANIC, Inv. 2245, Documente Istorice, Pack MCDLXXI/no. 20, f. 159 recto-verso)

<sup>98</sup> Despite their family relations, Constantin Ipsilanti and Alexandru Moruzi were rivals for the appointment to the office of *hospodar* in Wallachia and Moldavia at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They courted international support in their bid, and in doing so, they intervened in Ottoman diplomacy to foster closer relations between the Ottoman Empire and Russia on the one hand and with France, on the other. See Armand Goșu, *The political elite in the Danubian principalities and Russia at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the Moruzi Brothes.* (Istanbul: Isis, 2003)

Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812. Using his political capital and newly built fortune in Moldavia Rosetti-Roznovanu continued even after this moment, to approach the Russian authorities with his plans to become *hospodar*, in the context where the Russian and Ottoman Empire agreed that the appointment of the rulers should be confirmed by both courts.

*Land as political resource for Phanariot-Moldavian power holders*

The pursuit of the land estates of the Habsburg Crown and in Eastern Moldavia lasted for several decades and required significant amounts of money and unending negotiations. That land was valued dearly results from the data about the sums invested in the purchase of the Habsburg Crown's lands, from the loans that buyers made for the purchases and from the detailed accounts of the estates exchanged, bought and sold. Thus, Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and his partners purchased the lands of the Habsburg Crown for an amount almost equal to that of Moldavia's revenues for one year.<sup>99</sup> Constantin Ipsilanti, their business competitor and political opponent, considered paying the arrearages of the sub lessees on the lands in addition to a sum equivalent to that offered by Rosetti-Roznovanu and his partners.<sup>100</sup> In what concerns the lands near the Ottoman fortresses in Eastern Moldavia, Rosetti-Roznovanu, Balș and other officials were willing to offer to the Russian authorities, in sign of "gratitude," the amount of a year's sublease of the lands. Large debts were also contracted for the acquisition of lands. Teodor Musteață, who negotiated the deal with the Habsburg Crown, had to cover from his own purse the price increase caused by the emergence of a new buyer, Constantin Ipsilanti. He contracted loans from Rosetti-Roznovanu and from a brother of Iordache Balș, which he failed to pay, thus losing a land estate

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<sup>99</sup> I compared the price of the real estates with the data for the revenues of the province provided by a treasury ledger for July and August 1798, see Ioan Caproșu, "O samă a vistieriei Țării Moldovei din iulie-august 1797," *Hrisovul* 9 (2003): 254

<sup>100</sup> ANIC, Un-catalogued, Microfilms Austria, Reel 686, c. 41

that he offered as guarantee.<sup>101</sup> But why and how did land gain such value as to elicit the constant interest of many local actors, among whom the *hospodar*?

According to the contracts and evaluation documents about the estates that Rosetti-Roznovanu and his associates appropriated, as well as to a ledger of incomes and expenses of the Rosetti-Roznovanu household, some of the properties were preserved for their families' daily maintenance and expenses, pious donations and to support a lavish lifestyle that involved gifts to friends and subordinates and extravagant parties.<sup>102</sup> Such expenses were common to elites throughout Europe and the Ottoman Empire at the time, and were meant to consolidate power hierarchies, and obligations and relations of reciprocity that bound the individual to the local community.

But many other large properties were allotted for subleases for periods that ranged from one to several years. Thus, the Rosetti Roznovanu's household ledger also indicates that properties such as those purchased from the Habsburgs produced important revenues from the rents paid by tenant peasants but especially from the Armenian and local subcontractors, boyars and merchants.<sup>103</sup> The subleasing of land estates was a practice that gained impetus in Wallachia and Moldavia in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Land subleasing involved a contract between a landlord and a renter through which the renters paid the owners, in advance or in installments, for the use of the land estates, the facilities therein and the labor of the tenants for a pre-

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<sup>101</sup> ANIC, Inv. 91, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCXLI/no. 8; ANIC, Inv. 109, Achiziții Noi, Pack MMCDLVII/no. 7, 13, 14

<sup>102</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLXXXV/no. 1

<sup>103</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLXXXV/no. 1

determinate period of time. The estates' subcontractor could have also built and exploited facilities such as mills or pubs.<sup>104</sup>

The factors that accounted for the success of estates subleasing among owners and sublessees were the Phanariot *hospodars*' fiscal reforms combined with the economic effervescence on the borderland. The reforms of the prince Constantin Mavrocordat were crucial in this respect. In addition to redesigning the management of the public incomes, in 1741 Mavrocordat abolished the landowners' privilege to use the *corvée* work of tenant peasants who had customarily been tax-exempt and made any exemptions dependent on the landowners' appointment in office.<sup>105</sup> The general taxes that were imposed on all the tax-payers of the provinces,<sup>106</sup> such as the poll tax and the tribute, were to be paid together in four yearly installments.<sup>107</sup> Finally, in 1746 Mavrocordat regulated the labor dues of the peasants who were tenants on a landlord's estate and condemned personal serfdom.<sup>108</sup>

These fiscal measures, which regulated the tenants' dues to the treasury (in addition to restricting the number of exempted tenants) and the time they could spend working for the landowner,<sup>109</sup> interfered with the landowners' management of work and production on their estates. Under these circumstances, the land owning boyars found it expedient to subcontract

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<sup>104</sup> Ioana Constantinescu, *Arendășia în agricultura Țării Românești și a Moldovei până la Regulamentul Organic* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1985), 12; Teodora Mititelu, "Arendășia la începutul secolului al XIX-lea pornind de la unele documente din Fondul Frații Nan," *Studia Juvenum – Capitole reprezentative din lucrările de diploma ale absolvenților Facultății de Arhivistică* 2, (2007): 131

<sup>105</sup> I.C. Filitti, "Considerații generale despre vechea organizare fiscală a principatelor române până la Regulamentul Organic," *Analele Economice și Statistice* 18, 1-3 (1935): 179; I.C. Filitti, "Despre reforma fiscală a lui Constantin Vodă Mavrocordat," (Bucharest: Curierul Judiciar, 1928), 17

<sup>106</sup> The officials, clergymen and their tenants were exempted from the taxes.

<sup>107</sup> Florin Constantiniu, "'Sărmanele raiale:' factorul otoman în geneza politicii de reforma a domnilor fanarioți," *Caietele Laboratorului de Studii Otomane* 1 (1990): 191

<sup>108</sup> Florin Constantiniu, "'Sărmanele raiale,'" 192

<sup>109</sup> Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774-1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 78

their estates to other parties. By leasing out their lands in exchange for an upfront payment, they delegated the risks of managing the estate to the sub lessees. In their turn, the subcontractors sought to recover their original investment by building new installations of production on the estate, restraining the privileges and the access to the facilities (mills, grazing lands, forest) of the inhabitants who were by custom entitled to use them, and by extending the term of the lease.<sup>110</sup>

Alongside the boyars, scores of new comers from Constantinople, the imperial provinces and from the neighboring Empires began to be interested in subleasing and even buying estates in Wallachia and Moldavia. Jewish and Armenian money lenders and Muslim<sup>111</sup> and non-Muslim tradesmen such as Teodor Musteață brought their businesses to Wallachia and Moldavia, where they subleased estates. Ottoman Armenian merchants subleased land estates and pastures in Moldavia, Bukovina<sup>112</sup> and Bessarabia,<sup>113</sup> including the estates of Rosetti-Roznovanu,<sup>114</sup> where they bred cattle that they subsequently drove to the markets in Central Europe.<sup>115</sup> The arrangement profited the landowners who received constant revenues from the sub lessees, as well as the local treasury. In consequence, the *hospodars* rewarded the Armenian merchants who

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<sup>110</sup> Ioana Constantinescu, *Arendășia în agricultura Țării Românești și a Moldovei până la Regulamentul Organic* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S. România, 1985), 75, 79, 163-166

<sup>111</sup> Muslims occasionally moved to Wallachia and Moldavia, bypassing the imperial restrictions that prevented any Muslims from settling in the principalities and from doing business there without special authorization. (Virginia Aksan, "Whose Territory and Whose Peasants? Ottoman Boundaries on the Danube in the 1760s," in *The Ottoman Balkans 1750-1830*, edited by Frederick F. Anscombe (Princeton University: Department of Near East Studies, 2006) 63; also Suraya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It*, 93

<sup>112</sup> Patrice Dabrowski, "'Discovering' the Galician Borderlands: the Case of the Eastern Carpathians," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 2 (2005): 384

<sup>113</sup> See later that Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu subleased recently acquired lands to Misir, an Armenian tradesman and to Grigore Pruncu, an Armenian small rank official (ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLXXXV/no. 1)

<sup>114</sup> Gheorghe Bezviconi, *Boierimea Moldovei dintre Prut și Nistru*, Vol. 1: 273

<sup>115</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Probleme controversate în istoriografia română* (Bucharest: Editura Scripta, 2011), 148

enhanced the prosperity of Moldavia with their cattle and horse trade, by offering them exemptions from taxes and customs.<sup>116</sup>

The success of estate subleasing was concurrent with the movement of goods and people on the trans-regional trade routes that featured the borderland between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires<sup>117</sup> and which developed in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the context where the Ottoman Porte offered enticing trading privileges to the subjects of the European empires.<sup>118</sup> The regime of the capitulations allowed neighboring empires to dispatch to the Ottoman lands “missions” to defend their traders’ interests and also to gather intelligence about the local notables, the imperial officials, and about the other empire’s moves. In 1782 the Habsburg Empire was the first to send such missions to Wallachia and Moldavia, through the appointment at Iassy of the “imperial secretary” Stephan Raicevich.<sup>119</sup> As it will be discussed in the following section, Raicevich’s successor became deeply involved in the dealings concerning the purchase by Rosetti-Roznovanu and his partners of the Habsburg Crown’s properties. On the other hand, the capitulations stimulated local markets and commercial routes between various

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<sup>116</sup> Hagop Dj. Siruni, *Armenii în România* (Bucharest: Editura Fundației Culturale Mihail Kogălniceanu, 1940), 42-43. The fact that the princes issued privileges in favor of the Armenian merchants does not preclude the violence committed against these merchants, especially during wartime. In response, the merchants took individual privileges and became suditi, which allowed them to remain in Moldavia, as for example during the Ottoman-Austrian war of 1787-1791 (Nicolae Iorga, *Armenii și românii: O paralelă istorică*, (Bucharest: Librăriile Socec & Comp, 1913), 34

<sup>117</sup> Mark L. Stein, *Frontiers and Ottoman Frontiers*, 22, 24-25

<sup>118</sup> Robert Mantran, “La Transformation du Commerce dans l’Empire Ottoman au XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle” in *L’Empire Ottoman du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle – Administration, économie, société* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), 223; Relli Shechter, “Market Welfare in the Early-Modern Ottoman Economy: A Historiographic Overview with Many Questions,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 48 no. 2 (2005): 272; Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 147; Robert Mantran, “La Transformation du Commerce dans l’Empire Ottoman au XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle,” 228

<sup>119</sup> Veniamin Ciobanu, “Înființarea consulatelor străine” in *Istoria Românilor*, edited by Paul Cernovodeanu and Nicolae Edroiu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002), 6:646

regions, sometimes independently from the agendas of the European representatives in Constantinople.<sup>120</sup>

Moldavia and Wallachia participated in the movement of people and merchandise between the Ottoman Empire and Central Europe, and local products were sold on Ottoman as well as Habsburg and German markets.<sup>121</sup> In contrast, the economic networks between Wallachia and Moldavia and Russia were rather underdeveloped, given that Russia reached these provinces only after the annexation of Crimea at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. When, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russia took an interest in fostering agriculture on its shores at the Black Sea, this region entertained economic relations with the markets in the Mediterranean basin<sup>122</sup> rather than with its most immediate neighbor, Moldavia, which had a similar economic profile.

The Phanariot fiscal reforms and the development of trade networks from the Balkans to Central Europe explain how subleasing came into being and how it thrived on the Moldavian and Wallachian borderlands, but they do not explain why landowners needed the revenues from subleasing. I argue that the interest of the boyars in the sublease revenues is directly related to the Phanariot *hospodars'* tax-farming of Wallachia and Moldavia and the way in which tax-farming shaped access to power in these provinces. Subleasing constantly produced revenues that individuals used to purchase offices, the favor of the rapidly succeeding *hospodar* and the support of other peers. As previously mentioned, one needed to have political, family and credit connections with the *hospodar* or with other Ottoman officials to occupy a position in the power

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<sup>120</sup> Relli Shechter, "Market Welfare in the Early-Modern Ottoman Economy," 272-273; Robert Mantran, "La Transformation du Commerce dans l'Empire Ottoman au XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle," 230

<sup>121</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Probleme controversate în istoriografia română* (Bucharest: Albatros, 1977), 115; Ioana Constantinescu and Constantin Bălan, "Economia agrară" in *Istoria Românilor*, edited by Paul Cernovodeanu and Nicolae Edroiu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002), 6:176; Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774-1866*, 82; Mite Măneanu, *Agricultura și comerțul românesc în secolele XVIII-XIX* (Craiova: Editura MJM, 2009), 20-23

<sup>122</sup> Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question...*, 164

networks in Wallachia and Moldavia, but all such connections were fueled with money and expensive gifts. While treasury ledgers specify the amounts that the *hospodars* spent to repay the cost of their appointment in bribes and gifts “as known expenses to Constantinople,” the expenses for offices were not consistently documented. But judging from the tight competition between officials for better positions and privileges,<sup>123</sup> from the increase in the number of inferior offices at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and from the competition between high officials over the sale of subordinate offices,<sup>124</sup> we can surmise that the boyars allotted significant amounts to buy the *hospodars*’ favor and the cooperation of their peers.

One might argue that high boyars such as Rosetti-Roznovanu and Balș did not need to pay for re-appointment in office because of their already established status. While these officials’ position was acknowledged by every *hospodar*, they still needed to offer the customary monetary gifts to the recently appointed ruler at the time of his arrival in the province to obtain the renewal in office.<sup>125</sup> Even more, they needed significant resources to farm out public taxes and revenues from the *hospodar* who thus received money that he subsequently used for the maintenance of the court, the expenses of the administration and his own debts. The farming out of public revenues and privileges brought to the officials an annual profit. Even more, it allowed them to exert control over the *hospodar*. The treasurer Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu did not make exception as he was purchasing the general tax, the taxes on mines and customs and the tax on

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<sup>123</sup> Mihai Cantacuzino, *Istoria politică și geografică a Țării Românești*, 47

<sup>124</sup> Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru Florin Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1995)

<sup>125</sup> Dionisie Fotino, *Istoria Daciei*, trans. George Sion (Bucharest: Editura Valahia, 2008), 662



wine.<sup>126</sup> In addition to the farm of public revenues, the simple ownership of vast properties over which he had exemptions from the public taxes allowed Rosetti-Roznovanu to control or at least successfully oppose the *hospodar*.

When Rosetti-Roznovanu developed his own plans to become *hospodar* and later, to have Nicolae, his eldest son, appointed *hospodar*, the control over large estates was again an important political weapon. He used the money from their sublease to purchase the favor of Russian supporters, in the context of the increase of Russian influence in the Danubian borderland and over the Ottoman Christians, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, he bequeathed these properties to his sons with the hope that they would help Nicolae impose his political primacy in Moldavia and gain the support of the Russian and approval of the Ottoman authorities.<sup>127</sup>

## **2. Phanariot land acquisitions and the delimitation of the Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian jurisdictions**

As the two stories of land transactions showed, the manipulation of land as a resource to develop political power found a new impetus in the context of the inter-imperial competition on the borderland between 1790 and 1812. This competition made available large properties that the boyars coveted to support financially their designs for power. At the same time, it also brought the networks for power from Moldavia in contact with Habsburg and Russian authorities and exported the manipulation of estates for political purposes in the lands that these empires seized

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<sup>126</sup> See Alexei Agachi, *Țara Moldovei și Țara Românească sub ocupația militară rusă (1806-1812)* 62; Radu Rosetti, *Arhiva Senatorilor de la Chișinău și ocupația rusească de la 1806-1812* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1909), Vol. 3: 2

<sup>127</sup> These estates were Ibănești, Crâstiniești, Știubeeni, Petricani, Balinți, Vorniceni, Pustiul (district of Dorohoi), Pașcani, Conțești (district of Suceava, at the south of Bukovina), Posadnici, Cârpiții, Luceni (in the district of Iassy), see ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLXIV/no. 1, ff.1 verso-2 recto

from the Ottoman Empire. In this section I will examine how political networks and practices for achieving power in Moldavia interfered with the shaping of inter-imperial borders and the exercise of imperial jurisdictions there. I will explore the ways in which tensions between and within empires shaped the delimitation of territory, and the diverse approaches of the three empires to the Danube borderland in the context of the Napoleonic wars. Although the Habsburg and Russian empires occupied positions on the Danubian borderland at the same time, in 1791, and although both had to deal with the local power holders' ambitions, they followed different purposes for the delimitation of the border and obtained different results.

### *The Ottoman-Habsburg borderland in Bukovina*

Ever since the Habsburg authorities took over the lands of the Greek Orthodox monasteries from Bukovina, which amounted to a quarter of the properties held by the Metropolitan See of Moldavia,<sup>128</sup> they encountered serious difficulties in exploiting these properties that were physically located under the authority of another empire. The tensions among the Habsburg authorities and between these authorities and the buyers cannot be separated from broader political processes at work in the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire and the reconsiderations of domestic government, aside from reforms of the military, which the Napoleonic Wars stimulated in these empires and throughout Europe.

Between the 1798, the date of the partnership under study and 1804, the date of the first sale between the Habsburg Crown and the partnership, the way in which the Ottoman Porte dealt with the issue of the delimitation of lands with the Habsburg Empire was significantly shaped by the political conflict that engaged Ottoman elites in Constantinople and the Balkans over the fiscal and military reforms proposed by sultan Selim III and over the choice of an ally in the

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<sup>128</sup> Elena Moisuc, "Câteva date economice privind moșiile din Moldova," 4

context of Napoleon's offensive in Egypt (1798). Compared to the power holders in control of other regions in the Balkans, such as Ali Paşa or Pasvan-oglu, who openly challenged the sultan's sovereignty, the *hospodars* in Wallachia and Moldavia did not defy the sultan's rule on this edge of the Danubian borderland. But relative peace did not signify that the *hospodars* fully agreed with the sultan's reforms. These tax-farming governors and members of their local retinues were involved in the political factions that spread from the capital to the Northern Balkans. During the period, three *hospodars* succeeded on the throne of Moldavia: Alexandru Callimachi (1795-1799), Constantin Ipsilanti (1799-1801) and Alexandru Moruzi (1802-1806). Each of these *hospodars* was connected to Ottoman Muslim officials at the Porte, who disagreed about domestic policies and international alliances, as much as they vied with each other for power.

In 1800, shortly after Constantin Ipsilanti became *hospodar*, Mustafa Reşid Paşa Çelebi who had a long record in financial offices<sup>129</sup> and was a member of the sultan's reformist group, became *reis efendi*, the chief of the scribes who was entrusted with the conduct of foreign affairs. Branded as an opportunist,<sup>130</sup> he immediately took an interest in the land businesses in Moldavia and began assisting Ipsilanti in his bid for the properties with the Habsburg imperial authorities. The replacement of Mustafa Reşid Paşa with Mahmud Raif efendi and soon after, the end of Ipsilanti's rule in Moldavia, removed all competition to Rosetti-Roznovanu and Balş in the business for the Habsburg lands.

On the Habsburg side, due to the severe defeats against Napoleon, by 1800 the central imperial authorities appraised measures to improve the imperial army and the collection and

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<sup>129</sup> Aysel Yıldız, "Vaka-yı Selimiyye or the Selimiyye Incident: A Study of the May 1807 Rebellion," (PhD Diss., Sabanci University, 2008), 853

<sup>130</sup> According to Anatolii Miller, after the violent deposition of Selim III and the elimination of his administrators by the rival faction, Mustafa Reşid Paşa managed to preserve his life and status, Anatolii Miller, *Mustapha Pacha Bairaktar*, (Bucharest: Association Internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Europeen, 1975), 142

redistribution of taxes. It was in this context that Archduke Charles, the emperor's brother, reviewed the revenues obtained from Bukovina and Moldavia and noted that the taxes could have increased tenfold through agricultural cultivation and animal husbandry on the monastic lands.<sup>131</sup> Compared to the estimates made in Vienna, the profits registered by the authorities of Galicia were low.<sup>132</sup> The Habsburg central authorities thus planned to cut off the sublease contracts on account of their unprofitability.<sup>133</sup> Even more, as the Habsburg diplomatic representative in Iassy and the ambassador Hebert Rathkeal in Constantinople were authorized to deal with economic matters that concerned both empires, they began negotiating a new contract with Ipsilanti and Mustafa Reşid Paşa for Ipsilanti's purchase of the lands in Moldavia. The fact that both the governor of Galicia and the Habsburg diplomatic representatives had prerogatives to deal with the land estates in Moldavia brought these Habsburg agents into a conflict for authority. It also catalyzed the competition, on the Ottoman side, between potential buyers such as Musteaţă's partners on the one hand, and the *hospodar* and his ally, the *reis efendi*, on the other.

Musteaţă began the negotiations in 1798 by addressing himself to Jan Gaisruck, the governor of Galicia, where he travelled often with business, but not to the Habsburg representative in Moldavia. Thus, when in 1800 the Habsburg central authorities re-evaluated the properties and their representatives began discussions with Ipsilanti and the *reis efendi*, Musteaţă's deal was in danger of being canceled. The correspondence of Baron Rathkeal with his informants and with Ipsilanti and Çelebi Mustafa Efendi shows that the Ottoman authorities

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<sup>131</sup> Karl A. Roider, "The Habsburg Foreign Ministry and Political Reform, 1801-1805," *Central European History* 22, no. 2 (1989): 172

<sup>132</sup> Elena Moisuc, "Câteva date economice privind moşiile din Moldova..."

<sup>133</sup> Elena Moisuc, "Câteva date economice privind moşiile din Moldova..." 2-3

suspected Musteață of being a pawn of the local boyars<sup>134</sup> and that they demanded to the Habsburg authorities to cancel the former contract with Musteață. These suspicions were justified to a large extent. Although the merchant was not a mere instrument and had his own interests in carrying the deal, the Rosetti-Roznovanus and Balș were definitely a driving force in the business, as they provided a large share of the capital requested for the purchase.

While they challenged the legitimacy of the Galician authorities' arrangement with Musteață, the Habsburg diplomats were conscious that this agreement could not have been easily overturned and that selling the lands to Ipsilanti could not have changed the core of the problem: the sale would have still signified that the Habsburg Empire ceded territory to Ottoman subjects, and thus, to the Ottoman Empire. Under such unfavorable circumstances, they decided to profit from the competition between the buyers to obtain a higher price for the lands. In their turn, the Galician authorities rejected the option of a contract with the party supported by the Habsburg diplomats and the Ottoman *reis efendi*. The reason, disclosed in a letter to a Habsburg diplomat in Constantinople, was that if the rather small sale price of the transaction with Musteață was made public, the usurpations of the properties' margins by their neighbors would have also become known. The fear of future trials for the delimitation of the estates or for damages to the owners could have compromised the overall sale of the estates.<sup>135</sup>

The officials at the Porte and Ipsilanti became aware of the frictions between the Baron Herbert Rathkeal and the governor of Galicia and that the ambassador was more inclined to favor the *hospodar*'s bid. They decided to continue lobbying with him and negotiate a new price for the estates, even if higher than that offered by Musteață. The ambassador and the *reis efendi* reached a verbal understanding through which the *reis efendi* accepted to pay the price requested

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<sup>134</sup> ANIC, Un-catalogued, Microfilms Austria, Reel 686, c. 265

<sup>135</sup> ANIC, Un-catalogued, Microfilms Austria, Reel 685, c. 17

and, in addition, the arrears of the sub lessees who had rented the lands.<sup>136</sup> Rathkeal preferred a verbal agreement to a written one for fear that once Çelebi Mustafa efendi saw the contract, he would have paid the price but delayed as much as possible to pay the arrears.

The delegate of the Galician governor, the counselor d'Oesner, denied to the ambassador any authority to act on such an issue.<sup>137</sup> Instead, d'Oesner proposed to Ipsilanti a deal through which the *hospodar* had to pay for the price of the sale and the arrears of the sub lessees, to make a first installment worth of ten percent of the value and to pay the entire price within six weeks from the signature of the contract. If these conditions were not respected, Ipsilanti would have lost the first installment.<sup>138</sup> Ipsilanti attempted to negotiate these unacceptable terms but d'Oesner responded that the *hospodar* could have bought the lands at the original price if he convinced Musteață to repay for the fiscal concessions that he received from the first sale contract with the Habsburg court.<sup>139</sup> In the meantime, Rosetti-Roznovanu and Balș hurried to lend money to Musteață to cover for his arrearages as a sub-lessee and to avoid giving the Habsburg authorities the pretext to cancel their agreement.

The Habsburg diplomats were furious at the local authorities' readiness to act in favor of Musteață. They accused the governorship of Galicia, during and after the office of Gaisnik, of letting themselves to be misguided by low-rank employees who had originated in Moldavia and who lacked any knowledge of the treaties between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. While the diplomats did not mention the name of Ianake Zotta, former inhabitant of Moldavia who entered the ranks of the Habsburg administration of Bukovina and who was a friend of

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<sup>136</sup> ANIC, Un-catalogued, Microfilms Austria, Reel 685, c. 65

<sup>137</sup> ANIC, Un-catalogued, Microfilms Austria, Reel 686, c. 40

<sup>138</sup> ANIC, Un-catalogued, Microfilms Austria, Reel 686, c. 41

<sup>139</sup> ANIC, Un-catalogued, Microfilms Austria, Reel 117, c. 41-43

Musteață,<sup>140</sup> they suspected that employees issued from the ranks of the *reaya* had helped the merchant to obtain the deal. They also accused Musteață of having circumvented the regular channels for conducting business in Moldavia, i.e. with the *hospodar*'s approval. To avoid the possibility that Musteață might obtain the properties, the diplomats further recommended that the lands should be sold to the *hospodar* under the terms for land sales of the Habsburg-Ottoman Treaty of Şiştov or pending compromise.<sup>141</sup>

As Ipsilanti was recalled from his office in Moldavia to Constantinople in 1801, because of his political maneuvers in support of Russia, the sale was finally made to Musteață. The Ottomans immediately acknowledged the transaction. In 1804 the sultan Selim III approved Musteață' purchase of the estates in Moldavia on account of the fact that he was a member of the *reaya*, i.e. an Ottoman subject, and on condition that the merchant could re-sell the estates only pending imperial approval and exchange them only for estates located outside the province.<sup>142</sup> Alexandru Moruzi who was the new *hospodar* of Moldavia and, as such, the sultan's delegate in the country, acknowledged the purchase of Musteață, Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and of their other partners by having their ownership rights registered at the chancellery in 1805.<sup>143</sup> Teodor Musteață did not keep for long his lands in Moldavia but sold them out<sup>144</sup> and invested the profit in buying a domain at Sadagura, near Chernivtsi in Bukovina. He settled in

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<sup>140</sup> This was the case of Ienache Zotta, an individual of humble origins who rose to become tax-collector in the Habsburg administration. See ANIC, Inv. 117, Achiziții Noi Pack MMDCXXIV/ no. 33; ANIC, Inv. 117, Achiziții Noi, Pack MMDCXXXII/no.11; ANIC, Inv.118, Achiziții Noi, Pack MMDCXLVII/no. 2

<sup>141</sup> ANIC, Un-catalogued, Microfilms Austria, Reel 686, cc. 227-229

<sup>142</sup> Mihail Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor turcești* (Bucharest: Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului, 1960), Vol. 2: 415

<sup>143</sup> ANIC, Inv. 91, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCXXXVI/no. 31

<sup>144</sup> ANIC, Inv. 117, Achiziții Noi, Pack MMDCXXVII/no. 8

the Habsburg province and, due to his newly acquired quality of estate owner and to his relations with the local authorities, by 1825 he was ennobled as “baron.”<sup>145</sup>

The negotiations for the properties of the Habsburg Crown in Moldavia reveal that the delimitation of territory between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires in Bukovina ultimately evolved around the use of land as a political resource for imperial and local agents. As shown in the previous section, land was an asset for gaining power in Moldavia. But the involvement in the sale of the Galician authorities, which assimilated numerous former Ottoman subjects, and the rise of Musteață in the ranks of the nobility, thanks to his newly acquired properties, shows that land was also a resource for Habsburg provincial leadership on the borderland. In this context, land acquisition and subleasing opened Habsburg administration in Bukovina to political connections that continued the networks in Moldavia, funded with money from subleasing.

In what concerns the delimitation of effective imperial jurisdictions, it was profoundly influenced by the way in which the Ottoman and Habsburg empires could muster the authority conflicts within their hierarchies. The strict hierarchy of jurisdictions in the Habsburg government could not prevent authority conflicts within its ranks, as the constant involvement of the Habsburg diplomats, representatives of the Crown, in the affairs of the gubernatorial authorities makes clear. Even when it became clear that the land buyers speculated the tensions between the Habsburg authorities to obtain the deal on their terms, the diplomats and the government of Bukovina did not cooperate but remained divided over their jurisdictional prerogatives. Even more, such conflicts impaired the imperial authorities’ ability to deal with the networks of interest that had extended from Moldavia, through the recruitment of former Ottoman subjects, in the administration of Galicia.

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<sup>145</sup> Teodor Bălan, *Refugiații români în Bucovina 1821 și 1848* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1929), 8



At the other end of the deal, the Ottoman hierarchies in Constantinople and in Moldavia were divided along political rather than jurisdictional lines. While the Ottoman imperial rule was rife with conflicts, which by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century increasingly concerned the control of the center over the periphery,<sup>146</sup> the changing political networks that rallied individuals from the borderlands and from the center did not impede the Ottoman government from claiming formal control in its realm. Thanks to this flexibility, the Ottoman sultan managed to turn the drawing of the borderland between Moldavia and Bukovina to the Empire's advantage, given that the lands involved in the transaction were lands that the Ottomans had previously lost through a treaty. Regardless of the fact that the party endorsed by the *reis efendi* lost the opportunity of buying the lands, this was not a loss to the Ottoman government. Customarily, the Ottoman sultan in Constantinople allowed private ownership in the province, and therefore the identity of the properties' owners did not matter as much as the fact that they were under his authority. Although the *hospodar* Ipsilanti lost his bid against Musteață, the buyers of the lands in Moldavia were still officials approved by the Porte, and Musteață – an Ottoman subject. While the interest of Mustafa Reşid Paşa, the *reis efendi* who had served in financial offices, might suggest the central authorities strove to tighten the control in Moldavia by having the *hospodar* purchase the lands, I suggest that on this matter Mustafa Reşid Paşa acted more from personal interest rather than in response to imperial directives. Even if Ipsilanti managed to purchase the lands, his purchase would not have entailed an increase of the taxes collected for the imperial treasury. But it would have definitely indebted him to Mustafa Reşid Paşa who could expect political support or material reward for his intercession.

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<sup>146</sup> Rossitsa Gradeva, "Osman Pazvantoglu of Vidin: between old and new" in *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830*, edited by Frederick Anscombe (Princeton University: Department of Near East Studies, 2006): 115-162; Ali Yaycıoğlu, "The Provincial Challenge: Regionalism, Crisis, and Integration in the Late Ottoman Empire (1792-1812)," (PhD Diss., Harvard University, 2008)

In what concerns the buyers' relation with the Ottoman and Habsburg governments, it appears that it was a matter of circumstance. The members of the partnership, as well as Ipsilanti, were officials under Ottoman authority. However, in conducting the negotiations, they did not act on imperial mandate but in pursuit of punctual interests that had repercussions on the exercise of Ottoman control in the Moldavian borderland, especially in the context of the coming war with the Russian Empire.

*The Ottoman-Russian borderland on the Prut river*

During the last three decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian Empire obtained from the Ottoman Empire lands in the Caucasus, Crimea and at the mouth of the river Danube, in the South East of Moldavia. In addition, the Russian tsars also began acting as protectors of the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. The immediate consequence of these territorial and political gains was that Russia could interfere in the Ottomans' rule on the borderland in Wallachia and Moldavia and in the effective functioning of their defense line through the fortresses on the Danube and Eastern Moldavia. They also paved the way to Russia's occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1806-1812, as the Russian court aimed to launch a major attack on Constantinople and subsequently divide spheres of influence in Europe with Napoleon.

The Russian court used this privileged position to support the requests that Orthodox Christian boyars and *hospodars* from Moldavia made for the land estates near the Ottoman fortresses after Russia's capture of the Ottoman fortress Ochakov and of the Crimean Khanate had left such properties vacant from their inhabitants. The situation of the estates near the Ottoman fortresses also attracted the attention of the Habsburg Empire that became the ruler of

claimants to such properties after the 1787-1790/1791 anti-Ottoman war.<sup>147</sup> Thus, the Habsburg and Russian authorities soon joined the local claimants in requesting the Ottoman Empire to solve the problem “equitably.”<sup>148</sup>

Selim III adopted a conciliating approach. In 1802, he issued a *hatt-ı şerif* ordering the *hospodars* of Moldavia and Wallachia to return the lands appropriated by the population of the Ottoman fortresses to their “rightful owners.” Other orders requested the inhabitants of the fortresses to refrain from intruding on the lands of the subjects from Moldavia and specified that these subjects could receive the lands they claimed only after providing evidence that the properties had been taken from them unjustly.<sup>149</sup> Alexandru Moruzi, who ruled Moldavia at that time, decided on a case-by-case basis that the boyars could levy taxes from estates inhabited and used by the population of the fortresses. One of the individuals who obtained such a privilege was Petrache Cazimir, the brother of Panait Cazimir and the protégé of Iordache Balș.<sup>150</sup> The injunctions of the Habsburg and Russian Empires and the Ottoman sultan’s orders in this regard gave hope to the boyars and *hospodars* from Moldavia that the Porte would take note of their

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<sup>147</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1467, Fond Siruni, f. 25

<sup>148</sup> Alexei Agachi, *Țara Moldovei și Țara Românească...*, 84-86

<sup>149</sup> Mustafa A. Mehmet, *Documente turcești privind istoria României* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1986), Vol 3, doc. 4 “The Firman of Sultan Selim III to the prince of Wallachia, Mihail Suțu through which he is ordered to survey the application of the conditions from the Firmans of the previous Sultans regarding the status of the principalities,” page 9; doc. 12 “The Firman of Sultan Selim III, following the peace with Russia, renews the old privileges of Moldavia, adding new clauses. The Firman is addressed to the prince Alexander Moruzi,” pp. 29-30; doc. 109, “Hatt-ı şerif through which Sultan Selim III renewed old privileges of Wallachia, adding new ones at the behest of Russia’s ambassador V.S. Tomara,” 175. The fact that these commandments were made repeatedly suggests that the possession of the “usurped” lands had never been solved until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>150</sup> See the chart that Alexander Moruzi offered to Petrache Cazimir concerning the collection of taxes from the estate Gotesti, in the proximity of the lands of Kilia and Akkerman (ANIC, Inv. 2245, Documente istorice, Pack MCDLXXI/no.20, f. 159 recto-verso)

requests. They began to devise business projects, to count the estates in their testaments and to include them in deals among relatives.<sup>151</sup>

The claimants immediately began compiling files with dowries, testaments and genealogies to show that their ancestors held possessions in the region. Among them were the members of the Rosetti-Roznovanu family who decided that Iordache, their most prominent relative, should claim the properties while the others renounced their shares in exchange for compensation.<sup>152</sup> The situation demanded immediate action since some of the claimants had already begun to take over the margins of the coveted estates.<sup>153</sup>

As the petitioners from Moldavia and the Habsburg Crown were preparing for the concession of the estates that they claimed near Khotyn, Kilia and in the district of Tomarova, the Porte soon shattered their expectations, and began to restrict the requests of the inhabitants and of the Habsburg and Russian authorities. In 1805 the Porte gained momentarily the upper hand in the dealings with the Russian Empire through the conclusion of a new defense treaty meant to rally the two states against the offensive of Napoleon. Due to misunderstandings on the Russian side, the Ottoman officials managed to obtain an agreement from Russia, without relenting to its most important requests: the stationing of tsarist troops in Wallachia and Moldavia and the fortresses on the Ionian Sea.<sup>154</sup> With Russia having acknowledged the Porte's terms with regard to their common defense, the Ottoman government afforded to reaffirm its authority on the Danube and to reconsider the pleas for the lands around its fortresses.

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<sup>151</sup> ANIC, Inv. 718, Documente moldovenești, Pack XVIII/no. 8

<sup>152</sup> ANIC, Inv. 91, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCIX/no. 7

<sup>153</sup> T.G. Bulat, "Diviziunea proprietății rurale în ținutul Hotinului după desființarea raialei," *Arhivele Basarabiei* 2, no. 4 (1930): 382-383

<sup>154</sup> Armand Goșu, *La troisième coalition antinapoléonienne et la Sublime Porte* (Istanbul: Les Editions Isis, 2003), 12-14

Thus, when the imperial authorities in Constantinople agreed to return the properties that had been usurped by the inhabitants of the fortresses, they also emphasized that these properties only covered a small surface,<sup>155</sup> in any event smaller than what the boyars and the Habsburg subjects requested. The demands for the large properties were groundless because the ancestors of the claimants had willingly sold their estates to the sultan when the Ottoman Empire took over Moldavia centuries before, as proven by the documents preserved at the Porte. After this transfer of property, the sultan and the Ottoman officials used the estates to sponsor the pious foundations of mosques in Constantinople. The Porte also bluntly rejected the requests the Habsburg Empire on account that in case monasteries from Bukovina still held properties near the fortresses and these lands had been trespassed, the Ottoman Empire had no obligation to intervene because the monasteries were not under its authority anymore.<sup>156</sup>

The Porte's attempt at reinforcing its authority with respect to the delimitation of private properties near its fortresses was short-lived. Partly due to the Porte's attempts at re-establishing its good relations with France, partly because the Porte did not agree to Russia's insistence to gain access through the Straits for its military vessels, in 1806 the Russian troops occupied Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>157</sup> The end of the French-Ottoman alliance led to the dismissal of Alexandru Moruzi, the *hospodar* of Moldavia, and of Constantin Ipsilanti who had begun his rule in Wallachia in 1802 and who, due to his open support to Russia, fled to the Ukraine under

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<sup>155</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1467, Fond Siruni, f. 25

<sup>156</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1467, Fond Siruni, f. 25

<sup>157</sup> Veniamin Ciobanu, "Principatele și problema orientală" in *Istoria românilor*, edited by Paul Cernovodeanu and Nicolae Edroiu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002), Vol. 6: 626

Russian authority.<sup>158</sup> The new war with the Ottoman Empire lasted six years, during which conflict and diplomacy on the Danube responded to the changes in Russia's international politics: from hostility to France and uneasy alliance with the Ottomans to alliance with France for the division of Europe and of the Ottoman Empire, and finally to peace with the Ottoman Empire and open war with France.

As Russia occupied Wallachia and Moldavia in 1806 and created a mixed administration of Russian military and civilian authorities and boyars, the transfer of the properties near the fortresses to the claimants in Moldavia, but not to the Habsburg Crown, seemed feasible again. Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and Iordache Balș, who preserved their old titles of treasurer and chancellor in the new administration, had all reasons to hope that their claims for lands near the Ottoman fortresses would be heeded. The Russian military commanders asserted that the Ottoman fortresses Khotyn, Kilia, and Akkerman and their assets belonged to Russia by virtue of conquest. Accordingly, in 1807 they placed the management of these assets under the supervision of the boyars' council approved by the Russian war authorities, and were included in the fiscal and administrative system of Moldavia.<sup>159</sup> With Russian approval, the council proceeded to rent out the lands near the fortresses, in exchange for deposits to the treasury, to its members Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and Iordache Balș, among others. Shortly after, in 1808, the Russian administration of Moldavia and the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs agreed that the lands near the fortresses had to be transferred to their owners and requested the creation of a

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<sup>158</sup> Constantin Ipsilanti compromised his position at the Porte entirely on account of his support of Russia and was forced to flee the Empire. Losing favor with the Russian military authorities too, he did not receive the leadership of either of Moldavia and Wallachia and took a minor office in the Ukraine.

<sup>159</sup> Alexei Agachi, *Țara Moldovei și Țara Românească sub ocupația militară rusă (1806-1812)*, 87-88

committee of local boyars to verify the evidence of those individuals who demanded restitutions.<sup>160</sup>

Within a year, the committee awarded large properties near Khotyn to boyars such as the Rosetti-Roznovanu<sup>161</sup> and Balș<sup>162</sup> and their ownership was registered by the local council.<sup>163</sup> The committee also afforded some land estates to Panait Cazimir, as one whose ancestors had owned property near the fortresses.”<sup>164</sup> Once the boyars received the properties, they offered the money they used to pay as a rent in 1807 and 1808 to the Russian authorities, instead of the local treasury, as a sign of gratitude.<sup>165</sup> Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and Iordache Balș soon proceeded to dress lists with the new properties, the number of their inhabitants, the grazing surface, the presence of mills or other installations, and to select, like in the case of the properties purchased from the Habsburg Crown, the estates most suitable for subleasing.<sup>166</sup> They speculated that in case Moldavia passed permanently under Russian authority, land properties and the money they produced would have still been necessary to substantiate political power within the Russian

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<sup>160</sup> Alexei Agachi, *Țara Moldovei și Țara Românească ...*, 91

<sup>161</sup> Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu received the estates Cutărel, Molodova, Hrimancăuți, Lomaciniță (Loslacinița), Hliniște (Hlinasae), Rotunda, Cosăuții (which was not registered in the treasury ledgers), Vacinti, Bricenei, Țicoteni, Edinița. See T.G. Bulat, „Teritoriile raelor Hotinului si Brăilei redade stăpânitorilor români, în 1808,” *Arhivele Basarabiei* 4, no.4 (1932): 259

<sup>162</sup> Iordache and his brothers claimed and received Burlanești (Bărlănești), Bărnov (with Cărcuți), Vorcovițe, Blișcinăuți, Balașănești, Vasăliuțai, Cerdica, Șărăuți, Barleștăni (not registered in the treasury ledgers), Rușinel, Vascăuți, Culucienii (not registered in the treasury ledgers), Lopatinți (not registered in the treasury ledgers), Nădăbăuțai. See ANIC, Inv.91, Achiziții Noi, Pack CLXXXV/no. 5, f.1 recto-f.3 verso; T.G. Bulat, „Teritoriile raelor Hotinului si Brăilei,” 259

<sup>163</sup> ANIC, Inv. 91, Achiziții Noi, Pack CXC VII/no.3; Pack CLXXXV/no. 5

<sup>164</sup> The estates that Cazimir took over were Tărășăuței, Palade and Larga. See T.G. Bulat, „Teritoriile raelor Hotinului si Brăilei,” 259, 263

<sup>165</sup> Alexei Agachi, *Țara Moldovei și Țara Românească*, 92

<sup>166</sup> I found the remnant of such a list among the documents in the Rosetti-Roznovanu family fund. ANIC, Inv. 126, Achiziții Noi, Pack MMDCCCXIII/no. 75

system of imperial rule. The Habsburg Crown, as another claimant to properties near the Ottoman fortresses, did not receive any of the estates it claimed as having belonged to monasteries from Bukovina. The vacant estates left in Eastern Moldavia after the boyars took their share were awarded to high-ranking members of the Russian military and the administration.<sup>167</sup>

The Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia lasted until the conclusion of the peace with the Ottoman Empire in 1812. Thanks to superior logistic resources but also to the political turmoil in the Ottoman Empire, the Russian commanders reputed numerous victories and planned to advance further south in the Balkans, but Napoleon's intention to invade Russia hindered their plans and paved the way to the conclusion of peace with the Ottoman Empire. Aware that the Russian Empire was constrained to conclude peace in order to regroup its troops against Napoleon, the Ottoman diplomats strove to obtain the complete withdrawal of Russia from the sultan's Balkan possessions. This aim was partially fulfilled: Russia relented control over most of Moldavia and Wallachia, but due to the investments in the war could not return the entire occupied territory. Thus, it preserved the Eastern stripe of Moldavia, across the river Prut, which offered the Russian Empire exit at the mouths of the Danube, and which included some of the properties involved in the business transaction with the Habsburg Crown and the lands near the Ottoman fortresses. The peace also stipulated that inhabitants in the ceded territory had to choose their allegiance and relocate accordingly. These regulations obscure, however, the permeability of the border they had just drawn, and which becomes apparent if we consider the movement of people between Ottoman and Russian authority, the creation of a nobility in

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<sup>167</sup> The Russian government placed the lands nearby the regions near Tighina, Chilia, Cetatea Alba and Bugeac under the leadership of general-major Ilie Catargi (see Alexei Agachi, *Țara Moldovei și Țara Românească*, 87). Catargi bought through proxies some of these lands and sold them again to the former Ottoman dragoman, currently Russian state counsellor Manuk Bey (see ANIC, Inv. 1467, Fond Siruni, 55-56)



Bessarabia based on credentials offered by the local council in Moldavia under Ottoman authority, and the continuation of the exploitation of estates in Bessarabia by owners from Moldavia. The way in which the Russian and Ottoman governments and the local boyars dealt with this flexible border in the following two decades underlay the effective delimitation of Russian and Ottoman power on this borderland.

Trading Ottoman for Russian allegiance was problematic, since the boyars could not have been certain that they would have obtained political positions comparable, or better, than those they held in Moldavia. But Russia soon provided regulations for Bessarabia that enticed lower rank boyars in Moldavia, aside from several representatives of the main power holders, to choose Russian allegiance. For the next decade, the inhabitants of Bessarabia were allowed to preserve their local customs and regulations and were exempt from paying the poll-tax and military service.<sup>168</sup> In addition, the civil governor of the province chose the members of the administration from the ranks of the boyars who received appointments based on their status in Moldavia, as confirmed by their peers.<sup>169</sup> These regulations allowed individuals who had had a lower rank to hope that they could improve their position with the recommendations of their acquaintances in Moldavia or Bessarabia.

Panait Cazimir, the partner of Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and Iordache Balș in the business with the Habsburg Crown, who also held estates in Bessarabia, was one of the officials who relocated under Russian authority. According to documents from 1809, Cazimir served in Moldavia as *căminar* (boyar who collected the taxes on wine and tobacco and who was not a member of the boyars' council) and *serdar* (boyar in charge of the post). But when he relocated

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<sup>168</sup> Iulian Frunțașu, *O istorie etnopolitică a Basarabiei 1812-2002* (Chișinău: Cartier, 2002), 42; Charles King, *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia and the Politics of Culture* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2000), 21

<sup>169</sup> Gheorghe Bezviconi, *Boierimea Moldovei*, Vol. 1: 12-13

in Bessarabia in 1814, he received from the boyars' council of Moldavia, which included his former partner Rosetti-Roznovanu, the documentation that Cazimir had served as *spătar* (sword-bearer), a higher rank noble. This certificate, together with evidence of land ownership in Bessarabia, helped him acquire a noble title from the Russian authorities.

The treasurer Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu chose to remain in Moldavia where he continued to enjoy a prestigious position even after the end of the Russian occupation. Despite the regulations for the relocation of the inhabitants who chose Ottoman or Russian allegiance, Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu continued to draw on his administrative and political position both in the Ottoman rule in Moldavia and in relation to the Russian Empire for two more decades. Even more, although he remained in Moldavia, he did not lose ownership over his estates across the river Prut in Bessarabia until at least 1821,<sup>170</sup> and preserved connections with acquaintances of his, such as Panait Cazimir, who took office there. Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and his son Nicolae later used these relations and their properties as political assets to ingratiate themselves to the Russian imperial authorities. Iordache Balș too preserved his properties in Bessarabia. During the short period between the acquisition of the land estates in Bessarabia with the help of the Russian occupation and his death in 1812, he bestowed these properties to his son Ioan<sup>171</sup> who subsequently relocated under Russian authority and became a chamberlain at the imperial court.<sup>172</sup>

While Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu preserved his properties in Bessarabia and continuous relations with the Russian authorities there, he did not neglect to declare his dedicated service to

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<sup>170</sup> The fact that he continued to hold properties in Bessarabia by 1821 appears in a letter from the Russian authorities of Bessarabia that seized his estates until he would have paid a fine for the mismanagement of the supplies for the Russian troops, see DANI, Inv. 1126, Colecția Documente, Pack 546/no. 16

<sup>171</sup> "Testamentul lui Constantin Balș mare logofăt," *Uricariul* 11 (1889): 325-326

<sup>172</sup> Octav Lecca, *Familiile boierești române*, (Bucharest: Libra, 2000): 38

the welfare of Moldavia, which was his responsibility as a local boyar. In 1812, together with other boyars among whom the brothers of the late Iordache Balș, Rosetti-Roznovanu signed a letter to Scarlat Callimachi, the new *hospodar* appointed by the Porte, in which they complained against the great loss that the cession of Bessarabia meant for Moldavia. Allegedly, the province lost a significant number of its taxpayers and revenues that sponsored the local salaries and payments to Constantinople, the tenants on the boyars' estates who worked for them, and the richest areas that produced the grains and cattle for the consumption of the imperial capital and for the trade with Austria. To compensate for the major loss of Bessarabia, the officials suggested to the *hospodar* that the Porte should attach to Moldavia those Wallachian districts that were located on the confine between the two provinces.<sup>173</sup>

The letter was obviously meant to show that the boyars continued to be loyal to the Ottoman Empire and preoccupied with the welfare of the province's inhabitants, and to correct the impression that they had been supporters of the Russian occupation. But it also shows that the boyars did not protest the cession of Bessarabia to Russia. Despite counting the losses that the cession had caused to Moldavia, the boyars did not ask for a revision of the treaty that in fact helped them to keep connection with Russia and to enjoy their customary privileges granted by the regime in Moldavia. Instead, they proposed a new alternative, which could have potentially brought them new estates - the annexation of districts from Wallachia to Moldavia.

The Ottoman Porte obtained rather unexpectedly positive results from the peace of 1812, as Russia officially evacuated Moldavia and Wallachia. The fact that boyars in Moldavia preserved political relations with their peers who had relocated in Bessarabia and ownership of estates in this region could have been used to preserve Ottoman influence in this region. On the

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<sup>173</sup>„Anaforaua Obșteștii Adunări către Domnul Moldovei Scarlat Alexandru Calimah pentru înstăpânirea Basarabiei, 1812, oct. 2,” *Uricariul* 4 (1857): 345-3

other hand, the Ottomans lost the fortresses and their adjacent lands in the East of Moldavia, which were strategic gains too important for the Russian Empire to abandon willingly. The Porte also lost the lands of pious foundations and the taxes that were levied from the properties in Eastern Moldavia.

After 1812 the Porte could not apply the tactic used in relation to the Habsburg Empire in 1798 and claim jurisdiction over properties in Bessarabia on account of the fact that their owners were from Moldavia. The Russian authorities were more flexible in attracting and maintaining the cooperation of boyars in Moldavia and their peers in Bessarabia than the Habsburg Crown had been in Bukovina. While both empires integrated former Ottoman subjects in their administrations, the Russian Empire allowed for a period of accommodation between local administration and elites and its imperial structures. In contrast with the rigid and contradictory approach of the Habsburg authorities to the question of the Crown's lands in Moldavia, the Russian authorities accepted the complex overlap of jurisdictions in Bessarabia and did not break immediately the connections between the lands and people in this region and those in Moldavia under Ottoman authority. This attitude attracted the allegiance of the officials in Bessarabia and the sympathy of boyars from Moldavia, such as Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, without exposing imperial structures to the local political maneuvers. In other words, the flexibility of the borderland in Bessarabia favored the Russian and not the Ottoman Empire.

During the next three decades, as Russia became actively involved in Ottoman provincial government in Wallachia and Moldavia and in the context of a political conservative climate at St. Petersburg, Russia's imperial program in Bessarabia became more restrictive. In 1828 the governor issued a regulation through which he dismantled local self-rule and assumed the civil

and military administration of Bessarabia.<sup>174</sup> Russian intransigence in interfering with local affairs in Bessarabia and with Ottoman provincial affairs led to a decline of the support that Russia enjoyed in Moldavia, and to the rallying of the local officials around the Ottoman rule.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I analyzed the trade with land estates that flourished in the Ottoman borderland of Moldavia during a period of prolonged warfare between the Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian empires (1790s-1810s) and its implications for the local and imperial agendas. I explained why despite treaty delimitations, the demarcation of imperial jurisdictions over people and territory spanned over decades and led to results that could have differed from the formal agreements. By reconstructing the biography of the official Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, alongside with discussing the broad trends in Ottoman imperial rule, I suggested that he and his peers began purchasing and subleasing properties on a large scale to obtain monetary revenues necessary to gain official appointments and political preeminence in a venal system of rule. The use of land as a source of money for power attracted the attention of officials of various ranks in Moldavia and of officials from Constantinople.

These political networks, fueled by money, and the way in which they used land underlay Ottoman jurisdiction on the borderland in Wallachia and Moldavia and complicated the demarcation of Ottoman-Habsburg and Ottoman-Russian authorities after the territorial concessions after the Ottoman-Habsburg/Russian wars of 1787-1791 and 1806-1812. While the members of the officialdom in Moldavia agreed to renounce to Ottoman for Habsburg and Russian allegiance, they did not automatically renounce to their political connections and the interests in properties that they shared with their peers in Moldavia. Instead, they interfered in

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<sup>174</sup> Iulian Frunțașu, *O istorie etnopolitică a Basarabiei 1812-2002*, 43

the exercise of the new imperial authorities over the new lands by means of property rights, and by acting as lower rank Habsburg and Russian administrators while keeping relations with the officials in Ottoman Moldavia. These individuals' ambiguous allegiance faced the Habsburg and Russian authorities with a problem: how to bring people and land together and how to extend effective imperial power over the people. Rigid Habsburg hierarchies were not capable to deal with this complex political environment and finally relented land to Ottoman subjects and thus, territory to the Ottoman Empire. Adopting a flexible attitude towards the local power networks, and drawing on its influence in affairs concerning Ottoman Christian subjects, the Russian Empire was better equipped to bring the lands and people it acquired from the Ottoman Empire under its effective authority.

## **Chapter 2: Trading news on the borderland: information networks in Wallachia, inter-imperial diplomacy and the negotiation of Ottoman affairs, 1800s-1820s**

### **Introduction**

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Napoleonic Wars reshaped the map of Europe and its Eastern confines. In contrast, the Ottoman-Russian-Habsburg borderland remained relatively stable despite inter-imperial warfare and the disruptive effect of the social and ethnic uprisings in the area during the 1820s. What made this stability possible? How and why did the local leadership under Ottoman control remain in power although the Ottoman and Russian Empires became unsatisfied with their administrative service in the context of new conflicts on this borderland?

I suggest that during the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the borderlands Wallachia and Moldavia became a nodal point in the diplomatic and information networks that the Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian Empires established in the context of their rivalry and of the emerging concert of European powers. For almost two decades, between 1813 and 1828, the diplomatic networks facilitated an Ottoman-Habsburg alliance that helped the Porte resist Russian expansionist tendencies. The boyars and the *hospodars* of the borderland became important links in these networks, as information traders, and thanks to this role they preserved their authority as officials on Ottoman mandate.

The exploits of Constantin Samurcas (?-1825) who held high offices in Wallachia, but whose father had arrived from Constantinople, reveal the workings of information networks on the Danube until after 1821. To a large extent, Constantin Samurcas is a typical figure of politics on the borderland in Wallachia. He rose to rank and power in the service of a *hospodar*

appointed from Constantinople, the *dragoman* Alexandru Ipsilanti,<sup>175</sup> and he developed his own influence through political networks and the marriage to the daughter of local officials, a woman who also happened to have been the widow of another official with ties to Constantinople and Wallachia.<sup>176</sup> But Samurcas was also a particular character. He managed to preserve a prominent position during the Russian occupation of the province (1806-1812), successive changes of *hospodars* between 1796 and 1821 and through the uprisings of 1821. Once he fled Wallachia in 1822 and he began to openly identify himself as a Greek, he succeeded to become a correspondent in the service of the Austrian chancellor Metternich who was a defender of the Ottoman Empire against Russia and a critic of the Greek uprisings.

The boyars became deeply involved in borderland diplomacy in the context of constant warfare and negotiations between the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires and of the development of the Ottoman diplomatic corps by the sultan Selim III. This sultan acknowledged the principle of reciprocity in the relations with the European powers and created permanent diplomatic representations in London, Vienna, Berlin and Paris.<sup>177</sup> He assigned the contact with foreign representatives to the *reis efendi*, an office occupied by a Muslim bureaucrat, and to the imperial *dragomans* and *hospodars* of Wallachia and Moldavia, offices monopolized by Constantinopolitan Christians who had been actively involved in informing the Porte and

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<sup>175</sup> Anca Podgoreanu and Geta Costache (eds.), *Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcas: biobibliografie* (Bucharest: Biblioteca Centrală Universitară, 2004), XXII

<sup>176</sup> Zoe Samurcas was the descendant of a family of *boieri* in Little Wallachia, the Brânceanu, which had connections among the Phanariots. Zoe's first late husband was the cup bearer and treasurer Constantin Gianoglu, the son of a "local" woman and a new-comer from Constantinople (ANIC, Inv. 2584, Documente istorice, Pack MDL/no. 50). Her cousin was Constantin Varlaam, former treasurer during the Russian occupation of 1806-1812, who subsequently fled to Russia (ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXVI/no. 2, no. 11)

<sup>177</sup> J.C. Hurrewitz, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the European State System," *Middle East Journal* 15, no. 2 (1961): 145



negotiating on its behalf since the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>178</sup> As rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia, the *dragomans* and *hospodars* co-opted the officials from these principalities in the imperial power factions (Chapter 1), as well as in the transmission of information and negotiations. The fact that the boyars, serving as informants and correspondents, were known to furnish information to rival parties only helped them to enhance their political position on the borderland. The empires interacting on the borderland expected the informants to change sides provided they were well rewarded. Thus, although the officials in Wallachia and Moldavia acted in the broader Ottoman framework and could have been punished for insubordination or treason, none of the empires imposed effective control on the information networks and on the informants. In their turn, the officials who traded information could demand protection from the representatives of these empires.

On the other hand, although the boyars and the *hospodar* in Wallachia and Moldavia used information brokerage as a new instrument to obtain greater authority and money awards, their success as informants depended, essentially, on their ability to remain in offices. As divisions along social, linguistic and geographical lines resurfaced between the officials in the context of political and social turmoil in the Balkans, the group began losing its flexibility and many of its members – the grip they had on offices. In consequence, during the Russian occupation of 1806-1812 and especially after the Greek revolts of 1821 that brought up divisions along social, linguistic and hierarchical lines, members of the officialdom in Wallachia and Moldavia began to regroup and to invent new arguments for their legitimacy as boyars.

I aim to explain how Christian leaders on the Ottoman borderland, and especially those who were Hellenized, tried to reconcile their sense of geographical, linguistic and ethnic

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<sup>178</sup> Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire - Governing Ottomans in an Age of revolution* (London, England: University of California Press, 2011), 10-11

distinction with appointment in the service of the Ottoman Empire and conservative imperial politics, at a time when such distinctions compromised political careers. By focusing on the continuation of the information trade through the Russian occupation of 1806-1812 and the Greek revolts, I will also explore the continuities and changes of Ottoman control in Wallachia and Moldavia between 1800 and the 1820s. Finally, I will examine the continuities between imperial rule, imperial expansionism and inter-imperial politics on the Danube borderland during and after the Napoleonic Wars.

Samurcas' mostly successful attempts at gaining recognition from different empires suggest that he had a good knowledge of how contending empires regarded each other and of how they conceived of their servants and subjects. This knowledge was shared by other political agents in a contact zone such as Wallachia, a social space where individuals and empires engaged in relations of power, reproducing and shaping the context for future encounters.<sup>179</sup> At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachia and Moldavia became a borderland where the *hospodars*' activity as Ottoman diplomatic mediators received renewed importance, the European empires began dispatching diplomatic missions, and the officials became familiar with the priorities of these empires and the models of service they requested. Thanks to this knowledge, the *hospodars* and the boyars could trade news, rumors and directives and portray themselves as suitable to the momentary projects of each empire, receiving in exchange money and political support.

By emphasizing the role of borderland information networks in the Russian-Ottoman and Habsburg-Ottoman diplomatic encounters, I adhere to an interpretation of diplomacy that draws on a recent critical trend in diplomatic studies and historical analyses of power in "contact zones." According to these revisions, "diplomacy" does not refer only to the formal

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<sup>179</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 4

communications between mutually exclusive sovereignties, according to the priorities of centralized institutions. Diplomacy, in fact, encompasses statecraft, foreign policy and international relations. Defining diplomacy as a field of power for state and non-state agents shifts the attention from institutions and formal communication to the practices of diplomacy and the way in which it serves as “contact-zone” between alterities, involving “diversity” and “connectivity,”<sup>180</sup> negotiations and appropriations of languages of power. This analytical frame also emphasizes the understudied role of “diplomacy from below,” i.e. the activity of actors who do not hold formal diplomatic positions or leadership positions, but who can influence inter-state relations.<sup>181</sup>

To survey the creation and functioning of inter-imperial diplomacy on the borderland through the story of Samurcas’ official activity and diplomatic involvements, I divided this chapter into three main sections. In the first section, I use Samurcas’ service in the administration of the former dragoman and *hospodar* Constantin Ipsilanti to explain how the diplomatic reform of Selim III, which assigned an important role to the *reis efendi* and the dragomans eligible to become *hospodars*, facilitated the boyars’ access to information. The fact that European consuls had just received Ottoman permission to act in Bucharest and Iassy where they collected news added value to the boyars’ information trading.

In the second section, I reconstruct Samurcas’ activity during the Russian occupation of Wallachia (1806-1812) to explore the functioning of the information and political networks with the Ottoman authorities at the south of the Danube. While informants such as Samurcas or

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<sup>180</sup> E. Natalie Rothman, “Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 4 (2009): 772; This relational perspective also informs studies about current diplomacy and foreign relations Paul Sharp, “For Diplomacy: Representation and the Study of International Relations,” *International Studies Review* 1, no. 1 (1999): 33-34

<sup>181</sup> Renaud Maurieux, “Diplomacy from Below and Belonging: Fishermen and Cross-Channel Relations in the Eighteenth-century,” *Past and Present*, no. 202 (2009): 86

mediators such as the Armenian creditor Manuk Bey facilitated the Russian-Ottoman negotiations and provided news to the Russian authorities, they also disclosed information about the Russian plans to the Ottoman officials, among whom the *reis efendi* Galib Paşa. Despite suspicions against the service and loyalty of the boyars, the Russian diplomats continued the contact with them even after the peace. Thus, the Russian ambassador at the Porte Gregory Stroganov even their reports about the way in which the *hospodars* appointed by the Porte respected the terms of the peace and about the emerging diplomatic networks between the *hospodars*, their supporters and the Habsburg diplomats.

In the last section, I follow Samurcas' evolution from the time when he was a counselor to the *hospodar* until his exile in Habsburg Transylvania after 1821, where he attempted to obtain the help of the Habsburg diplomatic agents and of the Ottoman vizier Galib Paşa, the former *reis efendi*, to become again an official in Wallachia. Retracing Samurcas' contacts with the Habsburg agent Friedrich von Gentz, I analyze the creation of the Habsburg-Ottoman diplomatic and information networks in 1813 and the overlap of Habsburg and Russian information channels that used the services of boyars from the borderland. In the context of the international crisis provoked by the Greek uprisings in 1821, the Habsburg Empire became a mediator between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, thus allowing boyars with a past of service for rival diplomacies or supporters of Greek independence, such as Samurcas, to hope that they can receive their office and position back.

## **1. Politics and diplomatic networks in Wallachia in 1800**

In 1796, Constantin Samurcas, the son of Giorgos, a fur-merchant and creditor from Constantinople,<sup>182</sup> became a member in the retinue of the former imperial *dragoman* and *hospodar* of Wallachia Alexandru Ipsilanti who gave him the office of second chancellor (*vtori logofăt*).<sup>183</sup> Although his protector was soon replaced and the rule of Wallachia successively passed to several other Phanariot *dragomans*, Samurcas continued his rise in office. A *căminar* of Wallachia during Alexandru Moruzi's rule, he served as *kaymakam*, i.e. administrator and representative of the *hospodar* in Little Wallachia, under Constantin Ipsilanti.

Samurcas began his career in service during a turbulent period. In the last years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the *ayan* and *paşa* of Vidin Pasvan-oglu repeatedly raided Wallachia in a show of power against the *hospodars* and other *ayans* in the region and of contempt against the sultan's authority. The *hospodars* Moruzi and Ipsilanti were powerless against Pasvan-oglu. They lacked the military means to defend the province against the raids and the incursions scattered the population and disrupted the collection of taxes. Samurcas, who was a *kaymakam* of Little Wallachia, the Wallachian region most exposed to the raids, suffered major losses since his revenues depended on the taxes from the region. Faced with such a challenge, Moruzi and his successor Ipsilanti asked for loans from their neighbor, the *ayan* of Rusçuk Tirsinikli Oglu, to bribe Pasvan-oglu and to pay irregular troops against the *paşa*. Tirsinikli Oglu dispatched Manuk Mirzayan, his trusted creditor and associate, to provide his services to Ipsilanti and to make a loan to the treasury of Wallachia.

Even though there is no evidence that Samurcas was personally in contact with Tirsinikli Oglu or Manuk, he must have been aware of these connections. If they wanted to acquire and

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<sup>182</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pachet MDXV/no. 19

<sup>183</sup> Theodora Rădulescu, "Sfatul domnesc și alți mari dregători ai Țării Românești din secolul al XVIII-lea. Liste cronologice și cursus honorum," *Revista Arhivelor* 34, no. 4 (1972): 671

preserve positions in the close retinue of the rulers, the officials of Wallachia had to gain accurate knowledge of the relations between the *hospodars*, the *ayans* and not lastly, the Russian, Habsburg and French representatives in Bucharest. The European consuls were dispatched on the borderland to collect information about the rule of Wallachia and Moldavia and the authority of the rebellious *ayans* and their patrons and associates in Constantinople. By 1806 Samurcas would have been well versed in Wallachian politics, regional dynamics and the information networks between local power holders and the European representatives.

This section provides an insight into the Ottoman-European information networks that developed across the Danube at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Continuous continental warfare between 1792 and 1815 might suggest that European diplomacy had entered a period of crisis.<sup>184</sup> However, war also motivated the European powers to learn about each other's strategies and pursue new alliances through spies and diplomats. Russia's expansion against the Ottoman Empire and the Napoleonic Wars stimulated the European powers to procure intelligence and alliances with the Ottoman elites. In his turn, sultan Selim III paid particular attention to the development of Ottoman diplomacy and of continuous diplomatic relations with Europe. The dilemma among the European powers was how to address the Ottoman elites' shifting political agendas, to obtain their support. In their turn, the Ottoman officials pondered which potential alliances could help the Ottoman Empire resist the expansionist tendencies of a European power or another, and their domestic agendas at a time when the reforms of Selim III fueled political conflict at Constantinople.

It was in this context that the elites from the Balkans acquired an unprecedented role in war and diplomacy. The Balkans gained significant strategic importance for the warring

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<sup>184</sup> J.C. Hurewitz, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the European State System," *Middle East Journal* 15, no. 2 (1961): 147

European powers at the same time that strong local leaders disputed each other's power and the sultan's authority. Ali Paşa of Ioannina, power holder from Western Rumelia who openly challenged the authority of the sultan and contemplated creating his own rule, immediately attracted the attention of the British and French diplomats. Unlike Ali Paşa, the *paşa* of Vidin Pasvan-oglu, who had antagonized the neighboring *ayans* and opposed the sultan, did not consider secession from the Ottoman Empire and the European powers could not rely on his cooperation. But his acolytes' violence against the inhabitants in the region triggered a local Serbian uprising whose leaders Russia immediately approached at the beginning of the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812.<sup>185</sup> The Russian Empire adopted a similar approach with other Ottoman power holders in the region. Having occupied Wallachia and Moldavia in 1806, they acknowledged the power of the boyars who preserved their positions in the war administration. Also, they began discussions with Mustafa Paşa Bairaktar, the successor of the *ayan* Tersiniklioğlu and commander of the Ottoman army at Rusçuk who had become a supporter of the recently deposed sultan Selim III, and with other fortress commanders. These discussions concerned the conclusion of armistices but the Russian commanders also went as far as to propose to the Ottoman commanders the abandoning of the fortress defenses in exchange for honors in the Russian Empire.

However, in the administration and conduct of diplomacy on the Danube, the Russian agents had to deal with political and information networks difficult to control. The boyars of Wallachia and Moldavia had served and continued to have relations with the *hospodars* who also acted as Ottoman diplomats and negotiators. Samurcas, for instance, had been a boyar in the retinue of two *hospodars*, former Ottoman negotiators: Alexandru Moruzi and Constantin

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<sup>185</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 198-199

Ipsilanti. These individuals and other Phanariot officials were involved in the Russian-Ottoman negotiations for the condominium of the Ionian Islands taken from Napoleon in 1800,<sup>186</sup> the negotiation of a new treaty for mutual defense against Napoleon in 1805<sup>187</sup> and even the negotiations during the war of 1806-1812.<sup>188</sup>

In other words, when trying to manipulate the interests of Ottoman local and central elites to achieve their projects in the Balkans, the European representatives found a match in the Ottoman diplomatic establishment and its branch associated with the administration of Wallachia and Moldavia. Ottoman diplomacy had been recently reformed by Selim III and received a certain degree of agency in the conduct of foreign relations under the leadership of the *reis efendi* or *reisül küttab*,<sup>189</sup> the “chief of scribes,” who managed the activities and information involved in diplomatic contacts and representations.<sup>190</sup> While Selim’s fiscal and military reforms were ultimately reversed after his deposition in 1807, the information networks set up during his rule survived. Individuals who oversaw the diplomatic corps under Selim remained at the forefront of turbulent Ottoman politics for the following two decades. This was the case of Galib efendi who served as Ottoman negotiator after the French invasion of Egypt (1798), during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1821 and after 1821, in the context of rising Ottoman-Russian tensions.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Kahraman Şakul, “An Ottoman global movement: War of Second Coalition in the Levant” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2009), 401

<sup>187</sup> Armand Goşu, *La Troisième Coalition Antinapoléonienne et la Sublime Porte* (Istanbul: Isis, 2003), 22-30

<sup>188</sup> Armand Goşu, *The political elite in the Danubian principalities and Russia at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the Moruzi brothers* (Istanbul: Isis, 2003)

<sup>189</sup> Thomas Naff, “Reform and Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the reign of Selim III,” 298

<sup>190</sup> Thomas Naff, “Reform and Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the reign of Selim III,” 298

<sup>191</sup> Aysel Yıldız, “Vaka-yı Selimiyye or the Selimiyye Incident: A Study of the May 1807 Rebellion” (PhD diss., Sabanci University, 2008), 826-827



As the Phanariot dragomans and interpreters became a lynchpin of the Ottoman diplomatic corps, the appointments to Wallachia and Moldavia between the 1790s and 1821 were made almost exclusively from among individuals who had served as dragomans of the fleet and imperial dragomans: the Callimachis, the Suțu, the Ipsilanti, the Moruzis, the Caradjas and the Hangerlis. From their position of *hospodars*, they called on various local officials, in addition to those who customarily managed contacts with foreign representatives (such as the *kapi kehayas*<sup>192</sup> at Constantinople and the *postelnics*<sup>193</sup> in the province), to gather intelligence about the foreign representatives and their relations with neighboring Ottoman power holders and officials. The local boyars, in search of any connections that would have helped them acquire a more influential office, took this opportunity. Like their patrons, they gathered information through contacts with the European consuls in Bucharest and Iassy, the Ottoman power holders in the region, the Russian authorities governing neighboring Bessarabia and with the Russian commanders during the occupation of 1806-1812.

The European powers began establishing consulates in Bucharest and Iassy only in the 1780s, in the context of Russia's imperial expansion against the Ottoman Empire, and of the French and Napoleonic Wars that brought the region to the attention of the Western cabinets. The Russian court evoked the provisions in the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca about the protection of its commercial interests and the protection of the Ottoman Christians to establish a consulate at Bucharest in 1782 and vice-consulates at Iassy, Ismail (1786) and Kilia (1787).<sup>194</sup> The

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<sup>192</sup> Aurel Golimaș, *Despre Capuchehăile Moldovei și Poruncile Porții care Moldova. Până la 1829* (Iassy: Tipografia Ligii Culturale, 1943), 33-34

<sup>193</sup> Ovid Sachelarie and Nicolae Stoicescu, *Instituțiile feudale din Țările Române*, (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S. România, 1988), 372. Also, Charles Pertusier, *La Valachie et la Moldavie, et de l'Influence Politique des Grecs du Fanal* (Paris: A. Egron, 1822), 57

<sup>194</sup> Veniamin Ciobanu, "Înființarea consulatelor străine în Principatele Dunărene" in *Istoria Românilor*, edited by Paul Cernovodeanu and Nicolae Edroiu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedica, 2002), Vol. 6: 644-645

Habsburg Court dispatched its first “secretary” to Bucharest in 1781 and to Iassy in 1782 to protect the merchants who acted under Habsburg protection, but also to gather information similarly to a regular diplomatic representation.<sup>195</sup> Prussia and Republican France dispatched their consuls in 1784 and 1796 respectively.<sup>196</sup> The consuls in Wallachia and Moldavia recruited agents among the Greek Orthodox and Armenian merchants who claimed the protection of the consulate to receive tax exemptions in the Ottoman lands and among boyars and *hospodars* in Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>197</sup>

Gathering information from actors in the Ottoman governance or from other European agents produced valuable intelligence, but its success was unpredictable. As previously mentioned, the European states attempted to manipulate Ottoman officials and power holders but as a result their representatives also became exposed to the political factions at Constantinople. Although these agents sometimes succeeded to impose their agendas with the help of a faction, they were also manipulated by Ottoman officials and power holders who had their own interests. Particularly during the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the Napoleonic Wars rapidly changed alliances and politics at Constantinople was in turmoil over the rule of sultan Selim III, the *hospodars* of Wallachia and Moldavia used their involvement in the Ottoman-European political and diplomatic relations to secure appointment and help their faction prevail at Constantinople.

Constantin Ipsilanti cooperated, sometimes simultaneously, with the French and Russian representatives until he became the exclusive correspondent of Russia during the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>198</sup> In Constantinople, he was associated to both the vizier and to the *reis efendi*

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<sup>195</sup> Veniamin Ciobanu, “Înființarea consulatelor străine,” Vol. 6: 646

<sup>196</sup> Veniamin Ciobanu, “Înființarea consulatelor străine,” Vol. 6: 650-651

<sup>197</sup> Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774-1866* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996), 69-70

<sup>198</sup> Vladimir Mischevca, Periklis Zavistanos, *Principele Constantin Ipsilanti* (Chișinău: Civitas, 1999), 66-69

Mahmud Raif. Ipsilanti's relative and competitor Alexandru Moruzi, together with his brothers Panaiot and Dimitrie who were dragomans at Constantinople, followed a similar tactic. Moruzi informed both the French and Russian representatives, although he tended to support the Russian agendas at Constantinople, hoping that he would preserve his appointment with Russian support.<sup>199</sup> At the Porte, the Moruzi also benefitted from the support and confidence of the *reis efendi*. The double-game and the change of the political faction in the capital ultimately caused his and his brothers' demise. Scarlat Callimachi, who served in the subordination of the following *reis efendi*, Ahmed Vasıf, cooperated with the French diplomats in Constantinople, but he also preserved good relations with the Russian representatives.<sup>200</sup> Ioan Caradja, another dragoman in the first years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who succeeded Ipsilanti at the rule of Wallachia, was a contact of France, similarly to his patron, the Ottoman *reis efendi* Said Halet efendi,<sup>201</sup> but also kept correspondence with the Habsburg agent von Gentz and with the Foreign Minister of Russia Capodistria.<sup>202</sup> Constantin Samurcas was a boyar in the close circle of all these Phanariot diplomats and *hospodars*.

Moreover, even the ranks of the French and Russian diplomacies were divided by personal rivalries and political dissensions. For instance the Fontons, a Levantine family that had served France for generations but which had royalist sympathies, abandoned French service after

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<sup>199</sup> Armand Goşu, *La Troisième Coalition Antinapoléonienne et la Sublime Porte: 1805* (Istanbul: Isis, 2003), 52-59

<sup>200</sup> Armand Goşu, *La Troisième Coalition Antinapoléonienne*, 82; Ioan C. Filitti, *Lettres et Extraits concernant les Relations des Principautés Roumaines avec la France (1728-1810)* (Bucharest: Imprimerie Demetre Ionescu, 1915), 530-532

<sup>201</sup> Halet efendi had served as Ottoman Ambassador in France and supported a pro-French line of action at Constantinople until the French-Russian Treaty of Tilsit. See Anatolii F. Miller, *Mustapha Pacha Bairaktar* (Bucharest: Association Internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Européen, 1975), 199; Aysel Yıldız, "Vaka-yı Selimiyye or the Selimiyye Incident: A Study of the May 1807 Rebellion" (PhD diss., Sabanci University, 2008), 846

<sup>202</sup> I.C. Karadja, "Corespondența lui Capodistria cu Ioan Caragea Vodă," *Revista Istorică* 7, no. 7-9 (1921): 182

the execution of the king and entered Russian service. The Russian consuls in Wallachia and Moldavia did not trust the Fontons' reports suspecting that they had never ceased to serve the French, and their associations with the Phanariot circles.<sup>203</sup> These rivalries were used by the two enemies against each other, as well as by the Ottoman diplomats in Constantinople, Bucharest and Iassy.

The Russian-Ottoman war on the Danube between 1806 and 1812, and the emergence of a temporary Russian-French agreement for the division of Europe and the Ottoman Empire fueled the information networks at Constantinople and in the borderlands. However, the Russian occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia and the political conflict that followed the deposition of Selim III complicated the relations between the information traders in the provinces and the Ottoman diplomats at Constantinople. On the one hand, the political alliances between boyars and the Constantinopolitan factions continued to function despite the Russian occupation and the recall of the *hospodars* from the provinces. On the other hand, although the boyars in the provinces and the Ottoman Muslim and Christian diplomats at Constantinople shared the same preoccupation with securing their positions and keeping contact, they also operated in different circumstances. Between 1806 and 1812 the boyars on the borderland served in the administration set up to supply the Russian troops against the Ottoman Empire.

## **2. Russian-Ottoman information networks during the war, 1806-1812**

### *The boyars in the Russian administration of Wallachia*

The Russian occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia was the first stage of an ampler offensive that the Court in St. Petersburg planned against the Ottoman Empire, after having

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<sup>203</sup> Anatolii F. Miller, *Mustapha Pacha Bairaktar*, (Bucharest: Association Internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Europeen, 1975), 12

reached in 1807 an agreement with Napoleon over the division of lands and spheres of influence in Europe.<sup>204</sup> Under these circumstances, Russian statesmen began considering Wallachia and Moldavia not only as strategic points conquered in the conflict with the Ottomans, but as lands that would ultimately experience the Russian imperial project.<sup>205</sup> At the beginning of their occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia, the Russian commanders found it expedient to preserve the existing political customs and elites. In this fashion they left almost intact the political and administrative establishment in Wallachia, with its venal official appointments and appropriation of public funds.

The Russian authorities replaced the *hospodars* appointed from Constantinople with a Russian senator who was assigned to oversee a boyars' council in charge of collecting the taxes and the supply of the Russian troops. But the change of the *hospodar* with a Russian senator intensified the officials' competition: accusations of corruption and misappropriation of funds, while accurate, were leveled against almost every administrator in the immediate proximity of the Russian authorities.<sup>206</sup> Such accusations were accompanied by claims that certain officials should not hold office on account of the fact that they were "new comers" and "Greeks" or that the council of boyars in Bucharest was not entitled to make appointments in other regions of Wallachia, such as the Western districts.

Similarly to other boyars, Samurcas adapted fast to the occupation to preserve his position at the forefront of Wallachian politics. He formally endorsed Russian administration, estimating, accurately, that he would be preserved in office. To strengthen his local political

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<sup>204</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London, Melbourne, Toronto: Macmillan, 1966), 40-41

<sup>205</sup> Victor Taki, "Russia on the Danube: Imperial Expansion and Political Reform in Moldavia and Wallachia, 1812-1834," (PhD diss., Central European University, 2007), 86, 109

<sup>206</sup> See Radu Rosetti, *Arhiva Senatorilor de la Chişinău şi ocupaţia rusească de la 1806-1812* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1909), Vol. 4: 4-20

connections, in 1807 he married Zinca Brânceanu, the daughter of a local family of officials and the widow of a prominent Wallachian-Phanariot official in Little Wallachia, Constantin Gianoglu. He also received from the council of boyars in Bucharest, with the approval of the Russian authorities, the office of *kaymakam*, i.e. administrator of Little Wallachia. Until the end of the Russian occupation in 1812, he was re-appointed to this office three more times and was also granted, by the Russian authorities, the office of great treasurer of Wallachia.<sup>207</sup> Although these were highly remunerative offices that allowed him to sell subordinate appointments and a share from numerous revenues, Samurcas did not hesitate to appropriate other offices too, to the exasperation of other boyars.

The disgruntled officials submitted complaints to the Russian authorities against Samurcas personally and against the appointment, by the council in Bucharest, of administrators of Little Wallachia. Samurcas had allegedly enlisted a few “rapacious” associates and almost scattered the inhabitants with his numerous taxes, in obvious violation of his responsibility to safeguard the tax-payers and thus, the good functioning of the fiscal system.<sup>208</sup> In support of the claims that Samurcas was unable to work together with the others and to fulfill his obligations, the officials pointed out that the *kaymakam* was a “foreigner,” a “Greek” who had come to Wallachia solely to enrich himself and to “extort” the inhabitants.<sup>209</sup> The designation of “Greek” suggested that the bearer of the name was a Christian individual arrived from Constantinople and who spoke Greek. More importantly, it was used to castigate a new comer who strayed from the

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<sup>207</sup> Dumitru Bodin, "Tudor Vladimirescu și Constantin Samurcas" in *In amintirea lui Constantin Giurescu la douăzeci și cinci ani de la moartea lui*, edited by Constantin Marinescu, Alexandru Rosetti, Victor Papacostea and Constantin Grecescu (Bucharest, 1944), 158

<sup>208</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Arhiva Senatorilor*, 131, 133-136

<sup>209</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Arhiva Senatorilor*, 132

model of behavior expected of him and who was too ambitious and/or did not share his rewards with his peers.

In addition, the officials from Little Wallachia petitioned for their “sovereignty” and the separation of their appointments from the council of boyars of Wallachia, based on alleged historical precedents.<sup>210</sup> While the main target of these projects was again Samurcas who had received his appointment in Little Wallachia from the boyars in Bucharest, his detractors also aimed to take control of their positions and corresponding revenues without having to share them with newcomers or the administration in Bucharest in which some of them had previously served.<sup>211</sup> These officials imagined that by proposing a new venue for tax-collection that the Russian authorities could use, they could detach themselves from the obligations to their peers in the council of Bucharest and share the local revenues only among themselves.

Samurcas and his detractors soon reconciled to welcome the new leader of the Russian army and to commit together to “the preservation of justice and order among the inhabitants.”<sup>212</sup> But such political reconciliations usually lasted only until another boyar gained the favor of the ruler or of the Russian president after 1806, and occupied remunerating positions such as that of treasurer. The Russian authorities, like the *hospodars*, awarded promotions based on bribes, gifts

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<sup>210</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Arhiva Senatorilor*, Vol. 4: 314-315

<sup>211</sup> The most vocal detractors of Samurcas were Cornea Brăiloiu, Stan Jianu and Constantin Haralamb. Brăiloiu had served as clucer and was member in the boyars’ council of Wallachia in 1800 (Theodora Rădulescu, “Sfatul domnesc și alți mari dregători ai Țării Românești din secolul al XVIII-lea (II),” *Revista Arhivelor* 34, no. 2 (1972): 306). Jianu had been a cup bearer and member of the boyars’ council of Wallachia in 1786 (Theodora Rădulescu, “Sfatul domnesc și alți mari dregători ai Țării Românești din secolul al XVIII-lea (II),” *Revista Arhivelor* 34, no. 2 (1972): 314). Haralamb served as cămăraș of the salt mines in 1788 (Theodora Rădulescu, “Sfatul domnesc și alți mari dregători ai Țării Românești din secolul al XVIII-lea (IV),” *Revista Arhivelor* 34, no. 2 (1972): 662) and as great pitar in 1799. (Theodora Rădulescu, “Sfatul domnesc și alți mari dregători ai Țării Românești din secolul al XVIII-lea (II),” *Revista Arhivelor* 34, no. 3 (1972):451 Thanks to these offices, he was member of the boyars’ council.

<sup>212</sup> T.G. Bulat, “Pagini triste din istoria Olteniei,” *Arhivele Basarabiei* 1, no. 3 (1929), 30. In addition, on this occasion Samurcas and his accusers asked the Russian general to place the local council under his direct order, and not under the authority of the council in Bucharest.

and other favors from boyars. For instance, the General Miloradovic, senator of the Russian administration in Wallachia, preserved Constantin Filipescu for a long time on the position of treasurer. Samurcas, in his turn, benefitted from the support of Miloradovic and of the general-major Engelhart. But by participating in the rivalries between the boyars and the appropriation of public funds,<sup>213</sup> the Russian authorities could not secure the proper supply of the troops. In addition, they unknowingly provided information that these officials subsequently traded to their acquaintances in Constantinople and to the other European representatives.

*Information brokers shaping Ottoman-Russian relations during and after the war*

Information trade on the Danube flourished in the context where the Russian offensive against the Ottoman Empire proved more complicated than expected due to the intervention of France in mediating the conflict in 1807<sup>214</sup> and to the difficulties in assailing the Ottoman fortresses on the Danube.<sup>215</sup> On the Ottoman side, Mustafa Bairaktar and the Porte attempted to conclude truces or the peace with the Russian commanders. Manuk Mirzayan, the confident and creditor of Mustafa Bairaktar played a central role in these negotiations. Samurcas, less influential than Manuk, was also deeply involved in the information networks across the Danube.

In 1807, Mustafa Bairaktar assumed the mission to restore sultan Selim III who had been deposed through a Janissary-led rebellion. He delegated his Armenian creditor and confident Manuk Bey to conduct negotiations with the Russian commander Alexander Prozorovsky for an armistice that would have allowed him to drive his troops on Constantinople and restore the sultan. In 1808, Bairaktar deposed the current sultan and because Selim III had been killed

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<sup>213</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1022, Microfilms URSS, reel 3, no. 9, f. 59, ff. 63-64

<sup>214</sup> Veniamin Ciobanu, "Principatele si problema orientală" in *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 6: 701

<sup>215</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1466, Fond Siruni, ff. 23-26



during the ensuing clashes, he placed the rule in the hands of Mahmud II. Being appointed as vizier, Bairaktar asked Manuk to continue submitting peace proposals to the Russian commanders and to promise potential support in the case of a war between Russia and other states, implying France.<sup>216</sup> Bairaktar was killed shortly after and his rivals rose to power again, threatening the lives of the *ayan*'s former associates. Manuk relocated to Wallachia under Russian occupation, where the boyars awarded him land estates and farms of public taxes in return for his previous loans to the treasury,<sup>217</sup> and continued mediating between the Ottoman and Russian camps. It was possibly during his stay in Wallachia that Manuk also became acquainted with Samurcas.

After the death of Bairaktar, the reis efendi Galib efendi, who had risen to prominence in Selim's diplomatic corps,<sup>218</sup> took the lead of the Ottoman-Russian negotiations for peace. Like his predecessor, he used the services of Manuk<sup>219</sup> who was well acquainted with the commanders of the Russian troops, Russian consuls and diplomats: Prozorovsky, the commander of the Russian troops in 1809, the generals Miloradovic and his successor Bagration, Joseph Fonton, the dragoman of the Russian embassy in Constantinople, and the diplomat Karl von Nesselrode (who would become in 1816 Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs).

But aside from Manuk, who circulated information and negotiated between the two camps, Galib also received news from the boyars in Wallachia, among whom Samurcas. The lack of documentary evidence about the information that they disclosed to the Ottoman

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<sup>216</sup> ANIC, Inv. 74, Fond Siruni, "Articole privind Manuc Bey," ff. 1-8

<sup>217</sup> Ștefan Ionescu, *Manuc Bei: zaraf și diplomat la începutul secolului al XIX-lea* (Cluj Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1976), 111

<sup>218</sup> Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Vol. 2: 8

<sup>219</sup> Ștefan Ionescu, *Manuc Bei*, 68, 115; ANIC, Inv. 1468, Fond Siruni, f. 24

authorities is compensated by the boyars' own admissions to having kept contact with Galib paşa, and the Russian authorities' accusations of betrayal. Thus, Constantin Filipescu, the treasurer who had the support of the general Miloradovic was exiled on account of his collaboration with the French and Ottoman agents.<sup>220</sup> Samurcas, in his turn, later acknowledged that Galib paşa defended him against the attempt of the occupation authorities to send him in exile to Russia.<sup>221</sup> Despite the continuous suspicions against him, Samurcas received in 1811 the Russian Order of Saint Anna in second class, at the recommendation of Miloradovici,<sup>222</sup> and continued to act both in the Russian administration and as an Ottoman informant until the end of the war.

In 1812, the count Alexander Langeron, a general who fought in the campaigns in Wallachia, complained that the occupation authorities made a mistake by keeping in office the local boyars, especially the "Greeks" and accepting their venality. These individuals disclosed the secrets of the campaign and the administration to the Ottomans, damaging the Russian position in the war. General Miloradovic had been particularly susceptible to the boyars' machinations and:

placed the administration in the hands of the enemies of Russia and appointed Samurcas as treasurer and as members of the council and officials of Wallachia – Greeks from Phanar whose fathers, brothers, relatives, wealth and hope were at Constantinople. He completely delivered us to the creatures of the Turks and the French.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Arhiva Senatorilor de la Chişinău şi ocupaţia rusească de la 1806-1812* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1909), Vol. 2: 32, 51

<sup>221</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 198 verso

<sup>222</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2617, Documente Istorice, Pack MDXI/no. 43

<sup>223</sup> Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privind istoria României* (Bucharest: Stabilimentul Grafic Socec şi Teclu, 1887-1942), Supl. I, Vol. 3: 320

When accusing the “Phanariots,” Langeron targeted the entire political class of Wallachia that he perceived to be closely related to the interests of the Porte. He condemned Samurcas as much as he did Filipescu and other boyars who manipulated the allegedly well-meaning Russian officers<sup>224</sup> to preserve offices, detour public funds and inform the Ottomans and the French.

But despite Langeron’s negative evaluation, the Russian authorities continued to use the boyars’ information networks after the end of the war and the Treaty of Bucharest (1812), when the rules of Wallachia and Moldavia were returned to dragomans from Phanar. Apparently, although the Russian representatives held suspicions against the *hospodars* and boyars, they still needed their information and could not avoid their diplomatic concourse. In fact, even the Peace Treaty of Bucharest was brokered by the Ottoman dragomans Panaiot and Dumitru Moruzi, the siblings of the former *hospodar* Alexandru Moruzi. As Russia was under the threat of Napoleon’s invasion, the Ottoman representatives pressed for favorable peace terms. Russia accepted to return most of the territories occupied in the Balkans with the exception of Eastern Moldavia, but kept the territories it occupied in the Caucasus. The Porte accredited the local leadership that had taken over the administration in Serbia after the local revolts. The *hospodars* from Phanar were reinstated to rule Wallachia and Moldavia but for seven years mandates, with the approval of Russia. The two provinces were also exempted from imperial taxes for the following four years.

The sultan appointed in 1812 the former dragomans Ioan Caradja and Scarlat Callimachi to rule Wallachia and Moldavia, with the confirmation of Russia. Samurcas and Manuk’s lives took different paths but they continued exchanging information. Samurcas remained in Wallachia where he took office in the administration of Ioan Caradja, as *kaymakam* of Little

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<sup>224</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1022, Microfilms URSS, reel 3, no. 9, f. 59, ff. 63-64

Wallachia between 1813 and 1815,<sup>225</sup> and later as *vornic*. As these offices offered significant financial rewards and the *vornic* was a participant in the ruler's council, we can infer that Samurcas and the *hospodar* had good relations.

Manuk, whose former protector Mustafa Bairaktar had been an enemy of Caradja's patrons, fled Wallachia with the help of the Russian authorities. After a brief stay in the Habsburg Empire,<sup>226</sup> he relocated to Bessarabia where he had purchased land estates around the Ottoman fortresses that the Russian troops occupied at the beginning of the war and subsequently became the property of the tsar (see Chapter 1).<sup>227</sup> In 1816, the Count Gregory Stroganov, who replaced Italinski as the Russian ambassador at the Porte, made a main object of his mandate to oversee the application by the Porte of the peace terms.<sup>228</sup> Motivated by the ambition to receive noble title in the Russian Empire and by his personal enmity with Caradja, Manuk offered his services again, and requested local boyars who kept the records of the treasuries of Wallachia and Moldavia to testify that the *hospodars*, with the Porte's consent, ignored the tax exemptions stipulated in 1812.<sup>229</sup> One of the boyars whom Manuk contacted was Samurcas. Having received high offices from Caradja, Samurcas was not willing to undermine the *hospodar* and therefore sent inaccurate data to Manuk,<sup>230</sup> compromising their cooperation.

### **3. Habsburg – Ottoman diplomatic networks, 1813-1828**

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<sup>225</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Banii și caimacamii Craiovei* (Craiova: Scrisul Românesc, 1924)

<sup>226</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1466, Fond Siruni, f. 144

<sup>227</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1467, Fond Siruni, f. 44.

<sup>228</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 59

<sup>229</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1467, Fond Siruni, ff. 63-67, 92-94

<sup>230</sup> ANIC, Inv. 1467, Fond Siruni, ff. 155-160

*Competing for intelligence on the borderland: the Habsburg information networks*

At the end of 1812, the Habsburg diplomat and knight Friedrich von Gentz wrote to the newly appointed prince of Wallachia, Ioan Caradja, to start again an allegedly customary correspondence between the *hospodars* and the Court in Vienna.<sup>231</sup> Part of a broader reorganization of imperial diplomacy begun during the Napoleonic wars,<sup>232</sup> this initiative gained impetus under the command of Metternich who strove to transform the Habsburg Empire into the arbiter of European affairs and to prevent Russia from weakening Austria's position in the Balkans.<sup>233</sup> It was in this context that Friedrich von Gentz provided Metternich with regular updates and analyses about the European colonies in South America, current events in Europe and particularly about the Ottoman Empire in the context of the Eastern Question.

To procure data about the Ottoman Empire, von Gentz sponsored information networks that connected Vienna and Constantinople, and which functioned through the correspondence with the *hospodars* in Wallachia and Moldavia, the Habsburg secretary there and numerous other boyars and couriers. These networks provided first-hand information about Ottoman politics and diplomatic projects, given that the *hospodars* were active diplomats. As the networks operated with multiple informants, including boyars from Wallachia and Moldavia, who sent informative notes, the data gathered in this fashion was also verifiable. On the other side of these networks, the *hospodars* received the reports of Gentz, mostly about the projects of Russia with respect to

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<sup>231</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 1, Konv. 1, f. 1

<sup>232</sup> Karl A. Roider Jr., "The Habsburg Foreign Ministry and Political Reform, 1801-1805," *Central European History* 22, no. 2 (1989): 169-171

<sup>233</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, "Corespondența domnilor și boierilor români cu Metternich și cu Gentz între anii 1812-1828," *Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, Seria II, 36, no. 28 (1914): 975; according to Albert Sorel, *Un confident du prince de Metternich – Dépêches inédites du chevalier de Gentz aux hospodars de Valachie* (Paris, 1876), Metternich's projects were anticipated by the sultan Mahmud II who delegated Ioan Caradja with creating an information channel with Vienna. Caradja found an intermediary in the person of Hakim Başı Mahsud Efendi, an individual who had studied medicine in Vienna.

the Ottoman Empire, which they subsequently transmitted to Constantinople. Samurcas did not begin to communicate directly with von Gentz until 1822. However, as a boyar and counselor to the *hospodars* Ioan Caradja and Alexandru Suțu, he was familiar with the Viennese correspondence<sup>234</sup> and possibly provided advice in the drafting of the letters to the Habsburg agent.

The rulers and the boyars used the diplomatic channels with Vienna also as their own sources of information, on which they tapped to preserve offices or to establish connections that could help them later on. Some of the boyars also served as informants to Pini, the Russian consul who had succeeded Kiriko as representative in Wallachia,<sup>235</sup> and traded information between both sides. Thus, von Gentz' network of information functioned simultaneously and intersected with the Russian information channel that the consul Pini developed after the Treaty of Bucharest (1812). Pini's collection of information from the boyars was typical activity for an imperial representative in Wallachia and Moldavia but in 1816 it gained new importance as the new Russian minister at the Porte, Count Stroganov, received instructions to make sure that the Porte observed strictly the applications of the Treaty of Bucharest. Although Russia followed the provisions of the Treaty selectively, the Russian authorities insisted that the Porte should respect the tax exemptions offered to Wallachia and Moldavia for four years after the treaty and the self-rule of Serbia and that it should demolish its fortresses on the Danube.<sup>236</sup> Immediately, Manuk bey, who had entered Russian service after relocating to Bessarabia,<sup>237</sup> offered to compile fiscal

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<sup>234</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, "Corespondența domnilor și boierilor români," 975, 988

<sup>235</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor* (Bucharest: 1938), Vol. 8: 230

<sup>236</sup> After the Treaty, Russia evacuated some of the Ottoman territories in the Caucasus but preserved others not mentioned in the agreement. Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 59

<sup>237</sup> Gheorghe Bezviconi, *Boierimea Moldovei dintre Prut și Nistru* (Tritonic, 2004), 13, 43-44, 52

tables from the boyars of Wallachia and Moldavia, which would have shown the violation of the tax-exemptions by the Porte and its *hospodars*. Samurcas provided false information, and Manuk soon brought this deceit to the attention of the Russian authorities.

Even after this incident, Samurcas and other officials continued participating in both Russian and Habsburg networks. When Suțu died suddenly in 1821, Samurcas allegedly misappropriated his letters with Vienna and remitted them to Pini, in revenge for not having been selected as correspondent with the Habsburg agent, without knowing that the *hospodar* in fact kept a second, secret line of correspondence with Gentz.<sup>238</sup> Given that Samurcas had only recently provided incorrect information to the Russian representatives, it is equally possible that he delivered the letters to Pini because he did not know about the existence of the other correspondence or because he planned to misinform the Russian consul.

Soon after Suțu's death in 1821, Wallachia became the stage for two uprisings that caused the destruction of the leading Phanariot families at Constantinople and the flight of officials from Wallachia and Moldavia to neighboring Habsburg and Russian regions (see Chapter 3). This temporary displacement would, in its turn, re-align local politics and provide the boyars with new incentives to offer information to Russian and Habsburg diplomats. Philike Hetaireia was an Odessa-based society for the liberation of Greece and the Balkans from Ottoman rule that launched its campaign in Moldavia, under the command of the Russian officer Alexander Ypsilantis, who was the son of the *hospodar* Constantin Ipsilanti, Samurcas' former protector. Having received meager support from the officials in Moldavia, the rebels crossed into Wallachia. At the same time, a local peasant uprising against the boyars' exploitation began in Little Wallachia under the command of Tudor Vladimirescu, a former protégé of Samurcas. The

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<sup>238</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, "Corespondența domnilor și boierilor români," 973-1025

two movements coalesced briefly until the imminent intervention of the Ottoman military prompted Vladimirescu to declare his loyalty to the Ottomans, leading to his death at the hands of Hetairist supporters. The Ottoman troops from the fortress of Silistre soon entered in Wallachia to extinguish the rebellion.<sup>239</sup>

Samurcas was again caught in the events. He had connections among members of the Philike Hetaireia,<sup>240</sup> which in the pre-1821 circumstances was not an exceptional occurrence.<sup>241</sup> When the Hetaireia deployed its campaign in Wallachia, it comprised individuals of various social and linguistic backgrounds,<sup>242</sup> some of whom were Greek-speaking Orthodox officials, including the dragoman Mihail Suțu, several boyars, Greek merchants from Odessa or former members of the irregular troops that *ayans* and the *hospodar* Constantin Ipsilanti had at the beginning of the century. As an official in Wallachia, and especially as one interested in gathering intelligence, Samurcas also became acquainted with such characters. While Samurcas had contacts with Hetaireia members and with Pini, who had encouraged this campaign,<sup>243</sup> and his peers dubbed him “Greek,” Samurcas was not a revolutionary.

Similarly to the other boyars, he felt the direct threat of the peasant rebellion that targeted the boyars’ mansions and properties, and of the turbulences caused by the Hetaireia. He acted jointly with his peers to end the disorder. Thus, according to his testimony, he allegedly took a

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<sup>239</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 8:272

<sup>240</sup> Dumitru Bodin, "Tudor Vladimirescu și Constantin Samurcas," 160; Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians 1774-1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 144

<sup>241</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian national state 1821-1878* (Cambridge, London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 21

<sup>242</sup> Christine Philliou, “Breaking the *Tetrarchia* and saving the *kaymakam*: to be an ambitious Ottoman Christian in 1821,” in *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans 1750-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, edited by Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovos (Rethymno: University of Crete, Department of History and Archaeology, 2007) 184-185

<sup>243</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 8: 230



contingent of irregulars to quell the tensions in Little Wallachia.<sup>244</sup> More certainly, he followed the proposal of the local council to take a significant sum from the treasury and to attempt to bribe or to have Vladimirescu assassinated.<sup>245</sup> The *vornic* failed in his mission, and Vladimirescu continued the uprising, pledging to take revenge against the boyars. Samurcas and his fellow officials, some of whom had been supporters of the Hetaireia but most of who feared the disturbances, did not wait for the clashes between the two movements' troops and the Ottoman forces, and fled to Braşov, in Transylvania.

The Ottoman troops took charge of Wallachia and Moldavia and the sultan publicly denounced the Phanariots, who shared the same language and confession with the rebels, as traitors. This denunciation led to massive reprisals against the Phanariots and "Greeks" in Constantinople and whoever in Wallachia and Moldavia was suspected of having connections with them.<sup>246</sup> At the same time, the Porte could not afford to eliminate entirely an important portion of their diplomacy, especially in the context of continuous negotiations with Russia over the application of the peace treaty of 1812 and the Ottoman management of the Greek rebellions in the Empire.<sup>247</sup> For a short time the sultan preserved in office Scarlat Callimachi, the former *hospodar* of Moldavia and *dragoman* in the discussions with Russia, whom he appointed to rule Wallachia.<sup>248</sup> Callimachi only had time to create a temporary governorship to prepare his arrival until he was dismissed several months later. His delegates briefly exerted the leadership of

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<sup>244</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, ff. 61 recto-62 verso

<sup>245</sup> Dumitru Bodin, "Tudor Vladimirescu şi Constantin Samurcas," 162-165

<sup>246</sup> Christine Philliou, "Worlds, Old and New: Phanariot Networks and the Remaking of Ottoman Governance in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2004), 118-119, 122-123, 132

<sup>247</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 61

<sup>248</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, f. 16 recto

Wallachia before two of them, including Ioan Samurcas, the brother of Constantin, were executed for treason.<sup>249</sup>

As the Ottoman Empire deployed a violent campaign of repression against the rebellions that started in the Greek lands in the aftermath of the Hetaireia expedition in 1821, the Russian and Habsburg Empires began to assess the potential results of this crisis for the balance of power in Europe and their influence in the Ottoman Empire. The tsar Alexander I, who was committed to the preservation of the equilibrium in Europe, also condemned the Ottoman violence against Orthodox Christian subjects<sup>250</sup> for whom Russia claimed to have intercession rights. Metternich was committed to defending the Porte's authority in domestic matters, but was also concerned about how Russia would respond to the escalating crisis. Under the circumstances, the effects of the Hetaireia on politics in Wallachia and Moldavia and the exile of the boyars in Habsburg and Russian lands were not urgent issues. On the other hand, the representatives of the two empires preserved relations with the boyars who could continue to serve as their informants and potentially uphold the influence of their empires on the borderland.

Some of the boyars of Wallachia who had taken shelter in Transylvania appealed to Russian support and were in contact with the consul Pini.<sup>251</sup> They distanced themselves from the Phanariots who had caused the troubles and asked for the appointment of the *hospodar* from the boyars "from the land,"<sup>252</sup> a principle currently mentioned in the Ottoman-Russian agreements since 1802. The Russian authorities did not heed their petition, given the delicate international situation caused by the Greek revolts, but their wishes were ultimately fulfilled due to the

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<sup>249</sup> Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, 62

<sup>250</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 61-62

<sup>251</sup> A.D. Xenopol, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiană* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească), Vol. 11: 61

<sup>252</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 8:279-280

sultan's own decision of eliminating the major Constantinopolitan Phanariot families and of subsequently appointing boyars to the rule. Despite the Russian authorities' lack of receptiveness, the petitioners continued their correspondence with the Russian authorities after their return to Wallachia, but this time to inform them about the new *hospodar's* "abuses."<sup>253</sup>

Another group of boyars who had fled to Braşov chose to ask the Porte to replace the Phanariots with *hospodars* "from the place." This group of boyars, which returned to Wallachia in 1822, selected two individuals from their ranks to submit their petition to the Porte. Upon receiving the delegation, the sultan appointed Grigore Ghica, one of its members, as *hospodar*.<sup>254</sup> Immediately after his appointment, in 1822, Grigore Ghica became the correspondent of Friedrich von Gentz in Wallachia.<sup>255</sup> Aside from Ghica, other officials who had taken shelter in Braşov created a pro-Habsburg faction<sup>256</sup> and joined the informative circle of von Gentz. Among them were boyars from Little Wallachia and Grigore Filipescu, the son of the old treasurer Constantin Filipescu whom Langeron suspected of informing the Ottomans and the French.

Although Gentz and through him, the chancellor Metternich, continued to defend the Ottoman Empire's right to manage its domestic affairs as it saw fit, the Habsburg representatives began to take a more prudent attitude with respect to the Ottomans, von Gentz even advising the *hospodar* to ponder the information he delivered to Constantinople.<sup>257</sup> Accounting for the

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<sup>253</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 8: 309-310; Marcel Suveică, "Starea de spirit a boierilor din Principate în ajunul războiului ruso-turc din 1828-1829. Date din arhivele ruseşti," *Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii Al. I. Cuza din Iaşi, Istorie (Serie Nouă)* 42-43, (1996-1997): 13-19

<sup>254</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 8: 293-294

<sup>255</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 4, Konv. 10, f. 3 recto

<sup>256</sup> Marcel Suveică, "Starea de spirit a boierilor din Principate," 13-19; Nicolae Rasty, for instance, continued to serve as a courier after 1821 OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 1, f. 8

<sup>257</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 1, Konv. 1, ff. 49 recto-49 verso

knight's prudence is the fact that the Ottoman commanders were fast at delivering death punishments to whomever they suspected of treason and Gentz did not want to endanger his connections in Wallachia. In addition, international public opinion and cabinets began to sanction the Ottoman reprisals against the Greek Christian rebels and Metternich, while still pleading the cause of the Ottoman Empire, had as his priority the preservation of stability in Europe.

*The diplomacy of the Greek revolution and the mediation of opposite imperial agendas*

It was in this context that Samurcas first contacted Gentz in 1822, having been introduced by George Sakellario,<sup>258</sup> a Greek Orthodox physician and creditor from the Ottoman Empire, who became a correspondent of the knight and received the title of "baron."<sup>259</sup> Samurcas wanted to occupy a special place in the information network of von Gentz and not be a mere courier or correspondent. Thus, he attempted to introduce himself as a counselor on "Greek" and "Ottoman" issues, and European politics in general. He even requested Gentz to provide him with news from the Ottoman Empire that he could have analyzed.

Samurcas' intervention near Gentz in 1823, two years after his arrival to Transylvania, was partially due to the fact that the Habsburg authorities, keen on preserving good relations with the Ottomans, were preparing to expatriate the boyars who had arrived in 1821.<sup>260</sup> If he succeeded to ingratiate himself to Gentz and become his liaison, he could have averted the danger of being expelled to Wallachia where the rivalries between the boyars in the province and

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<sup>258</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, ff. 48 verso, 57 verso

<sup>259</sup> Pompei Samarian, *Medicina și farmacia în trecutul românesc* (Bucharest: Tipografia Cultura, 1938), Vol. 2: 119

<sup>260</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 4, Konv. 10, f. 61 recto

between them and the *hospodar* could have placed him in mortal danger. Although Samurcas had spent his fortune in exile and was in a pitiable condition, according to Sakellario,<sup>261</sup> he was not prepared to return in such a hostile environment. However, despite his fear of expatriation, Samurcas did not consider settling in Transylvania either. His plan, as it becomes clear in the correspondence with von Gentz until 1824, was to return to Wallachia in safe circumstances, to recover his positions of *vornic* and to reinsert himself in the Habsburg-Ottoman diplomatic networks.

Shortly after first establishing contact with Gentz in 1822, Samurcas sent him an autobiographical account in which he explained the reasons of his flight from Wallachia and his service for Russia and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>262</sup> The *vornic* narrated that he was born in Constantinople but settled in Wallachia where he married one of the prominent ladies of the province, and thus acquired a place among the high “nobles.” Once a member of the leadership in Wallachia, he invested all his efforts in securing the wellbeing of his adoptive country during the invasions of the neighboring rebellious *ayans* and the Russian occupation. With these details, Samurcas strove to convey that although he was a “Greek,” a Greek speaking new comer from Constantinople, he had fulfilled the conditions to be considered a boyar and even a boyar “from the land,” implying that he was different from the new comers who had no ties to the land and who had also caused the turbulences in 1821. Although he had showed himself a zealous servant of the Ottoman Empire, this dedication brought him the hostility of the other boyars<sup>263</sup> and his efforts and loyalty to the Porte were forgotten when the Greek revolt broke out in Morea and the Porte began to see a traitor in any Greek, i.e. the members of the Phanariot complex. The boyars

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<sup>261</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, f. 82 recto

<sup>262</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, ff. 56 recto-62 verso

<sup>263</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, f. 60 verso

of Wallachia whom the Porte selected to take the reins of rule in the province compiled lists of their enemies whom they accused of treachery and of having led the insurrection. Samurcas was included in the list, lost his good standing with the Porte and could not return to Wallachia for fear of execution on imperial order.<sup>264</sup>

Compared to the other boyars who had fled to Braşov and corresponded with von Gentz, Samurcas placed himself in a particular category and admitted that he was Greek. He had multiple reasons to do so. Gentz might have already heard from the other boyars “envious” of his service about his entanglements with the Hetaireia. Recommending himself as “Greek,” and part of a community that after 1821 had been broadcasted as an oppressed nation, he could imply that he had good knowledge of the “Greek affair” that had captured the attention of the European cabinets. In this respect, despite his averred belonging to a rebellious “nation,” he tried to reassure a correspondent averse to revolutionary disorder such as Gentz, that his origin was not a liability and that he provided loyal imperial service in Wallachia. Thus, Samurcas also mentioned that through service and marriage he had entered the ranks of the boyars, an eminently conservative group, and served Ottoman imperial authority.

This was the beginning of the correspondence between Gentz and Samurcas, and it functioned at the same time that Gentz kept contact with Grigore Ghica, the newly appointed *hospodar*. The *vornic* and the knight sent each other interpretations about issues that had the potential to disrupt the balance of power in Europe and the existing monarchical order, such as the revolts in Naples and the conflict between Spain and its rebellious colonies. Predominantly, however, the two correspondents discussed the Ottoman reactions to the uprisings in Greece,

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<sup>264</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, f. 62 verso

how the situation could have evolved under European supervision, and Russia's involvement in the settlement of a crisis with far-reaching implications.

The *vornic* knew that his chances at entering Habsburg-Ottoman networks depended on a climate of relaxation at the Porte, which was in its turn conditioned on whether the Habsburg diplomats could have helped the Ottoman cause in Europe. However, the international situation was such that Metternich could not fully defend the Ottoman interests in Europe or convince the Russian Empire to accept Ottoman displays of power on their common borderland such as, for instance, the stationing of Ottoman troops in Wallachia and Moldavia after 1821. The Greek revolts occurred in tandem with the revolt in Naples and the secession of the Spanish colonies, all crises that had the potential to affect the European stability and monarchical order,<sup>265</sup> and complicated the latent rivalry between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires on one hand, and the Russian Empire on the other. Under these circumstances, Habsburg diplomacy was guided by two, increasingly at odds, principles: the defense of the Ottomans' prerogatives to manage the revolts in their domains, and the preservation of peace between the Russian and Ottoman Empires, which became increasingly interlinked with the solution to the Greek crisis.

Accordingly, Metternich and his diplomats attempted to bring to fruition any opportunity for Russian-Ottoman reconciliation, and to grasp any sign of good-will between the two courts. Alexander I sent such signals in 1823, when he appealed to the help of Habsburg diplomacy to obtain several concessions from the Porte.<sup>266</sup> The Russian authorities requested the withdrawal of the Ottoman troops sent to Wallachia and Moldavia in 1821. They also demanded that the Porte should stop arresting the foodstuff cargoes of Russian ships that crossed the Straits, and which

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<sup>265</sup> Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 629-635

<sup>266</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 130 verso

served the trade of Odessa, the outlet for the grains of the New Russia. While such concessions were reasonable, and the Russian foreign minister Nesselrode and new consul to Wallachia Minciaki were conciliating, the Russian ambassador to Vienna, Dmitry Tatishchev adopted a stern attitude that antagonized the Ottoman diplomats. Even more, the Russian representatives also provoked the Ottomans' indignation by evoking their alleged privilege of protectors of Wallachia and Moldavia to ask for the withdrawal of the Ottoman troops from these provinces.<sup>267</sup> While actively involved in appeasing such disagreements between the Ottoman and Russian representatives, Metternich also began considering the options to prevent Russia from gaining effective influence in the Greek affair, including the secession of Greece from the Ottoman Empire and its transformation into an international condominium.<sup>268</sup>

In a letter from November 1823, Gentz informed Samurcas about these negotiations and about Metternich's assessment that the tensions between the Ottoman and Russian Empires would have soon become complicated by the solution to the problem of the Greek insurgents in the Ottoman Empire. Although the negotiations appeared to proceed rather slowly, both Gentz and Samurcas were optimistic about their result. Samurcas, who was under financial strain at Braşov despite the help of Gentz,<sup>269</sup> hoped that an Ottoman-Russian agreement under Habsburg auspices would have appeased the Porte and allowed him to return to Wallachia. He responded to Gentz with his interpretation of the current situation and with information from an undisclosed source about the climate at the Porte. Samurcas, who had been directly affected by the dispatch of Ottoman troops to Wallachia, observed that their presence could only offend Russia instead of appeasing those very few local officials who vainly hoped for Russian military intervention and

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<sup>267</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, ff. 131 verso-136 recto

<sup>268</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, ff. 137 recto

<sup>269</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 170 recto



deliverance from the Ottomans.<sup>270</sup> He also agreed with Gentz that the Porte was suspicious about the Russian motivations to seek reconciliation<sup>271</sup> and that this attitude might have slowed the negotiations. Finally, he also addressed the belief among the Habsburg diplomats that the situation in Greece would soon require international intervention. Samurcas, who few months before had deplored that “a fatal blindness” captured “confused peoples,”<sup>272</sup> now proposed that the great powers of Europe could shape the Greek revolt in a fashion that would correspond to their “politics.”<sup>273</sup> Although Samurcas did not provide further details, it is clear he suggested that the Habsburg Empire should intervene and prevent that the Greeks’ secession from the Ottoman Empire might serve the exclusive interests of one power, i.e. Russia.

In subsequent letters from 1824, Gentz and Samurcas discussed more at length the “Greek affair.” While Gentz declared outright that he was a supporter of the cause of the Porte, Samurcas built an entire argument favorable to the Greek rebels combining identity politics, for which he provided historical details, with considerations about the impact of the transformations in the Ottoman Empire on the international order, and about how to control the international effects of the revolts.<sup>274</sup> Samurcas’ exposé made Gentz exclaim that they shared completely opposite political views: while Samurcas was a supporter of change and freedom, almost a liberal, the knight defended power and stability.<sup>275</sup> At the same time, Gentz acknowledged that despite this divergence of approach he and Samurcas ultimately followed the same purpose:

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<sup>270</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 152 recto

<sup>271</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 182 recto

<sup>272</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, f. 48 recto

<sup>273</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, 153 verso

<sup>274</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, ff. 201-244 verso

<sup>275</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 250 verso

stability in Europe.<sup>276</sup> Explaining why their correspondence continued despite this obvious disagreement, can help us to understand how Samurcas envisioned assisting Habsburg diplomacy in relation to the Ottoman Empire and in what ways his intention matched Habsburg agenda was in the Near East.

Although Samurcas declared himself to be a member of the “Greek nation” and despite the fact that he found a logic in the Greek uprisings, he was not a revolutionary. In fact, the Greek revolts caused turbulences that dealt a serious blow to Samurcas’ position in the province. In the *vornic*’s opinion, the revolts erupted due to the oppression by agents of the Ottoman government against the Greeks and were a symptom of a greater problem, the breaking of the Ottoman “colossus.”<sup>277</sup> This problem would have obviously had repercussions on the balance of power and order in Europe that the Habsburg diplomats’ planned to maintain.

By recognizing the reasonable nature of the Greek uprisings and the creation of a state entity in Greece, European powers would not have simply heeded to the demands of troublemakers. They would have conserved continental order as an agreement between states to refrain from aggression against each other. A Greek state<sup>278</sup> could have contributed to the international stability, whereas a disintegrating Ottoman Empire, whose lands were object for international competition, was a threat to international equilibrium. Although the European powers could not have determined the fate of the Ottoman Empire, they could have reduced its disruptive potential until the Empire would have disintegrated or reformed by itself. In contrast to the declining Ottoman Empire, the Greeks had shown that they were capable of creating a state. Descendants of the Ancient Greeks, they became merchants and officials who gathered

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<sup>276</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 251 verso

<sup>277</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 153 verso

<sup>278</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 228 recto and verso

wealth and created knowledge in the empire that had subdued them. Later, through the establishment of the Seven Islands Republic,<sup>279</sup> they also became capable of ruling themselves.<sup>280</sup> Briefly, they had the resources and the preparation to be given the chance of creating a state.

Samurcas' analysis was obviously influenced by current discourses, among the self-identified Greeks and their European supporters, about the continuity between the Ancient and modern Greeks. But by referring to the "Greek" merchants and officials in Constantinople and Wallachia and Moldavia as the agents of the Greek renaissance, Samurcas also displayed an understanding of the "Greeks" as the larger Greek-speaking, Greek-Orthodox community in the Empire. This community based on confession and participation in a Hellenized culture recalled the earlier conceptualizations proposed by Rhigas Feraios, a figure of Balkan republicanism who proposed a Balkan uprising against Ottoman despotism. But by praising the significance of the Greek revolt for the Greek communities, he also tacitly endorsed the view of Feraios' successors about a Hellenic anti-Ottoman revolt, exclusive of the non-Greek speaking population in the Balkans.<sup>281</sup>

Notwithstanding these views about the Greek community and the revolts, Samurcas was not a supporter of an independent Greek republic. That Samurcas committed to the legitimist

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<sup>279</sup> The Seven Islands Republic was a short-lived political entity of the Ionian islands, which functioned between 1800 and 1807. The islands, which had been Venetian possessions, were claimed by Napoleon in 1797 through the Treaty of Campo Formio, and adopted the French Constitution of 1795. After the Russian and Ottoman Empires took the island from the French in 1800, they implemented a Constitution through which the islands became the tributaries of the Ottoman Empire. As a significant section of the population was Greek-Orthodox, Russia also claimed intercession on its behalf. Paradoxically, the regime of the Seven Islands that Samurcas extolled as the example of the Greeks' ability to rule themselves, in contrast to the Ottoman Empire's dismantlement, was the result of inter-imperial, including Ottoman, decisions.

<sup>280</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 228 recto

<sup>281</sup> Paschalis Kitromilides, "From Republican Patriotism to National Sentiment: A reading of Hellenic Nomarchy," *European Journal of Political Theory* 5, no. 1 (2006): 50-60

version of European order that Metternich proposed is revealed in his last recommendation about the Greek state: this entity would have been organized as a monarchy under a king from a ruling house of Europe, placed under Ottoman suzerainty and the protection of the European powers.

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Samurcas hoped that his project about the “Greek affair,” which reconciled the uprisings with the preservation of the monarchical order and balance of powers in Europe, could have recommended him as an ingenious consultant whom the conservative Gentz and Metternich might have coopted in their relations with the Ottoman Empire. Gentz, however, seemed rightfully reluctant about the project although he appreciated the exchange of opinions. In the event that any power proposed such a scenario, the others would have suspected that it aimed at gaining control in Greece, as it soon happened with a Russian project. Alexander suggested the creation of autonomous Greek “principalities,” similar to Wallachia and Moldavia but Great Britain was particularly adverse to the project suspecting that it was a device to bring Greece under Russian control.<sup>283</sup>

Overcoming his first reaction to Samurcas’ report, Gentz was impressed with his interlocutor and continued their correspondence. Samurcas began to believe that his plan of becoming a correspondent between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires was feasible. Shortly after his exchange with Gentz, in January 1824 Samurcas received news from Constantinople that Galib Paşa, the Ottoman *reis efendi* with whom he had been in contact during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812, was appointed vizier. Samurcas praised Galib Paşa as being an experienced and reconciling diplomat, who enjoyed public support and could help the Porte

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<sup>282</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 244 verso

<sup>283</sup> Matthew S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 62

overcome the crisis. The appointment of an individual who rose to power during the reforms of Selim III signaled that the Empire could still undergo improvement and avoid the collapse that the Habsburg diplomats feared and Samurcas had speculated about. As Galib Paşa was also an old acquaintance of his, Samurcas indicated that he might become an intermediary between the Habsburg court and the vizier to whom he could send communications from the Habsburg authorities.<sup>284</sup> While Gentz recommended caution until the vizier would have shown his approach to the tensions with the Russian Empire,<sup>285</sup> the Ottoman authorities' alleged willingness to withdraw some of a troops in Wallachia and Moldavia<sup>286</sup> seemed to confirm Samurcas' estimates. All these signals from the Porte and Gentz' reassurances encouraged Samurcas to believe that he would soon return to Wallachia as a *vornic*. But Samurcas' plans never materialized. The vizier soon fell gravely ill and could not fulfill his assignments anymore, which led to his removal from the post in the fall of 1824.<sup>287</sup> In the winter of the same year, Samurcas died in exile at Braşov.<sup>288</sup>

During the following years, the involvement of the European powers in a war against the Porte became unavoidable. The Ottomans' hostile reaction to the French, Russian and British proposal of a solution whereby the Porte acknowledged Greek self-rule in exchange for the recognition of its suzerainty led to the naval battle of Navarino (1827) and the destruction of the Ottoman fleet. The Ottomans' unwillingness to demilitarize the Danubian borderland, according to an agreement with Russia in 1826, led to a new Ottoman-Russian conflict (1828-1829). These

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<sup>284</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 198 verso

<sup>285</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 254 recto

<sup>286</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 265 recto

<sup>287</sup> OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 4, f. 261 recto

<sup>288</sup> BAR, Fond Alexandru Tzigara- Samurcaş, S43/DCXC, f.2. recto

events made it apparent that the management of the Greek revolt and the creation of a Greek government became interlinked with the interests of the great powers, adding a new stake in the international rivalry.

On the Danube borderland, the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) that concluded the Ottoman-Russian war reiterated the terms negotiated before the war, such as the demilitarization of Wallachia and Moldavia, which involved that the Ottoman fortresses on the Danube would pass under the authority of the *hospodars*, and self-government for Serbia. But in addition to these provisions, Russia obtained the Ottomans' approval for the stationing of its own troops in Wallachia and Moldavia until the Porte repaid the war indemnity, and the right to reorganize their administration. The peace confirmed Russia's influence over the Ottoman government and its control of the Straits, which the authorities in Saint Petersburg reinforced in 1833, as they provided troops to the Ottoman Empire against the claims of the rebellious governor of Egypt.<sup>289</sup>

These transformations damaged Metternich's ability to preserve the peace at the expense of Russia and forced him to acknowledge the ascendancy of this power in the Balkans through the Ottoman-Russian Treaty of Adrianople (1829).<sup>290</sup> After this date he became more amenable towards Russia in Wallachia and Moldavia, as he attempted to maintain Austria's commercial privileges on the Danube.<sup>291</sup> By 1830 Metternich was also ready to accept the option of an independent Greek state.<sup>292</sup> The Treaty of Adrianople and the settlement of the Greek crisis

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<sup>289</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 85

<sup>290</sup> Miroslav Sedivy, "The Attitude of Chancellor Metternich towards the Treaty of Adrianople," in *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations*, edited by Ales Skrivan and Arnold Suppan (Prague: Institute of World History, 2008), 115-124

<sup>291</sup> Miroslav Sedivy, "From Hostility to Cooperation? Austria, Russia and the Danubian Principalities 1829-1840," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 89, no. 4 (2011): 644-650

<sup>292</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 74

through the Treaty of London in 1832 under the patronage of Russia, France and Great Britain ended the influence that the Habsburg Empire had exerted on Ottoman affairs since 1813 and the diplomatic channel that functioned ever since between Vienna and Constantinople.

## **Conclusion**

Between 1800 and 1825 the Constantinopolitan newcomer Constantin Samurcas was one of the most important officials of Wallachia and informants between the Ottoman, Russian and Habsburg Empires. It was not a matter of coincidence that he deployed both activities simultaneously. Since the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, holding office on the Danube borderland became dependent on the incumbent's ability to predict how Ottoman politics and European diplomacies influenced each other at Constantinople and in the Balkans. The sultan's reform of the Ottoman diplomatic corps during the Napoleonic Wars, when the Ottoman Empire and its territories gained new strategic importance, complicated the political game in Wallachia and Moldavia. The *hospodars*, who served as diplomatic negotiators while also participating in imperial politics, lobbied for an empire or another to prepare their appointment to the rule on the borderland. The boyars, whose position depended on the selection of a particular *hospodar* began to interfere in inter-imperial politics to predict changes that could have affected their and their *hospodar's* standing. In addition, the able manipulation of information between two or more empires offered the boyars material gains and the occasion to undermine their opponents.

In its turn, Ottoman diplomacy and its extensions on the Danubian borderland became important for the designs of the Russian and Habsburg Empires in the region and in the context of the Napoleonic Wars. Russia had a keen interest in the information available from Wallachia and Moldavia and, aside from the ambassador dispatched to Constantinople, the Russian authorities delegated consuls to collect news from Bucharest and Iassy. The trade of information

between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, which involved many of the high officials in Wallachia and Moldavia, thrived especially during the Russian occupation of 1806-1812 and between 1816 and the Hetairist uprising of 1821. After Russia occupied Wallachia and Moldavia in 1806, the commanders of the Russian troops did not alter the local administration, which allowed local factions to enlist several Russian authorities in their competition and to use information about the Russian and Ottoman movements as currency. Samurcas, who was the incumbent of the high offices of administrator of Little Wallachia and treasurer of Wallachia, came increasingly under suspicion of offering intelligence about the Russian campaign to the Ottoman diplomats with whom he was well acquainted. In 1816, Russia began to supervise the Porte's application of the peace treaty of 1812, by having its representatives at Constantinople collect information about Ottoman infringements of the peace provisions. The Russian representatives at the Porte and in Wallachia also began to inquire about the emerging diplomatic channel between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires. Samurcas, who kept his power after the end of the occupation, was involved in both projects of information collection.

In 1813, as part of Metternich's broader project to prevent Russia from gaining too much influence in the region by exploiting the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, the Baron Friedrich von Gentz initiated correspondence with the *hospodars* of Wallachia and Moldavia that lasted until the Russian occupation of these provinces in 1828. This channel was designed to circulate information between the Court in Vienna and the Porte in addition to gathering unofficial intelligence about the political situation in the Ottoman capital. The informal diplomatic networks through the intermediary of the borderland power holders assumed yet a new task after 1821, in the context of rising tensions between the Ottoman and Russian Empires and of the transformation of the Ottoman management of the Greek uprisings into a matter of international



concern. Metternich attempted to mediate between the two empires but in the context where the Greek crisis endangered the European balance of power, the Austrian chancellor also began to consider scenarios less favorable to the Ottomans, for which he was using the information of Wallachian boyars, among whom Samurcas.

Samurcas' long political career in Wallachia together with his ability to trade information between the Russian and Ottoman diplomacies and his correspondence with Gentz suggest that he was particularly successful in an activity typical for the boyars at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This success is even more remarkable given the fact that Samurcas had only recently arrived from Constantinople and lacked the family history of office and the well-established political networks of his peers. Even more, the label of "Greek," which he received due to his formation in Constantinople, became a liability in the context of the Hetairist uprising in Wallachia and of the Greek revolts that triggered the dismantling of the Phanariot complex and denunciations among boyars. Samurcas attempted to transform this liability into an asset by presenting himself as an expert in "Greek affairs" that the Habsburg Empire could have used in its Near Eastern diplomacy and relations with the Ottoman Empire.

The flexible and rapidly changing networks that traded information in Wallachia and Moldavia between the Ottoman, Russian and Habsburg Empires became obsolete after the Russian-Ottoman war of 1828-1829 and the temporary Russian administration of the two provinces granted through the Treaty of Adrianople (1829). The Russian administration, which implemented a package of regulatory measures, known as the Organic Statutes, redrew and institutionalized the hierarchies of boyars. Moreover, the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) that defined the nature of Ottoman rule in Wallachia and Moldavia as that of "suzerainty" and the activity of local boyars as "independent internal administration" within the borders delimited in

1812 inaugurated a new stage of European diplomacy in the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Adrianople and the Treaty of London of 1832 were agreements through which the European powers defined the prerogatives of power that the Ottoman Empire could exert in its own domains. By interfering in Ottoman rule over its lands and subjects, the European diplomacy also diminished the incentive for boyars to trade information about Ottoman politics and also their role as potential mediators. During the following decades they would appeal to international arbitration to defend their prerogatives in relation to the Ottoman and Russian Empires.

### **Chapter 3: Running an imperial condominium on the borderland: local elites and the implementation of Russian imperial projects in Moldavia, 1820s-1840s**

#### **Introduction**

Between 1829 and 1834, the Ottoman domains Greece and the Danubian provinces were placed under the European powers' protection, which signaled international control in these lands and at Constantinople. Russia participated actively in these arrangements: it was a protector of Greece, together with Britain and France, and the sole guarantor of the prosperity of Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>293</sup> When the troops of the rebellious governor of Egypt Mehmed Ali were about to overtake Constantinople in 1833, Russia intervened to defend the Empire and gained unprecedented control over the Straits and several Ottoman European dominions.<sup>294</sup> The Russian-sponsored administration in Wallachia and Moldavia epitomized the Russian interference in Ottoman affairs and an unprecedented Russian-Ottoman condominium in a territory under formal Ottoman authority. How did this condominium unfold and according to what imperial imperatives? How did local politics shape the Russian and Ottoman imperial projects during their tense co-management of Wallachia and Moldavia? Answering these questions can expose the interplay of various local and imperial motivations that shaped formal European regulation of rule in a territory acknowledged as being Ottoman possession.

My approach to these questions is to examine the attempts at asserting power of the local leaders, Russian administrators and the Porte in Wallachia and Moldavia at a time when the

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<sup>293</sup> Russia became a guarantor of the prosperity of Wallachia and Moldavia through the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) and a protector of Greece through the London Protocol of 1832 (Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 47. It maintained its troops and actively supervised the administration in Wallachia and Moldavia until the Ottoman-Russian Convention of Saint Petersburg (1834) Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l'Occupation Russe (1828-1834)* (Bucharest: L'Indépendance Roumaine, 1904), 232-234

<sup>294</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question* (London, Melbourne, Toronto: Macmillan, 1966), 84-85

Court in Petersburg assessed that it was in Russia's best interest to control the eventual disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>295</sup> The interaction of imperial projects with local politics ultimately influenced the composition of the local leadership by propelling some boyars to the positions of *hospodars* and ending the power of others. It also exposed Russian imperial projects to the intrigues of the boyars who addressed Ottoman officials and European representatives to support their efforts at becoming rulers. Exploring the attempts of Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu (1794-1858), the heir of Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, to gain Russian support and become *hospodar* reveals these dynamics.

From 1821 until the second half of the 1830s, Rosetti-Roznovanu and some of his peers corresponded or were in personal contact with several important Russian authorities. Among these authorities were the baron Grigorii Stroganov, the ambassador of the Russian Empire at the Porte, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Karl Nesselrode, the general Pavel Kiselev who commanded the Russian troops in Wallachia and Moldavia in 1829, and the count Michael Vorontsov, vice-regent and governor of the neighboring Russian provinces Bessarabia and New Russia. In their turn, these individuals showed great interest in the administration of the Danubian provinces and the way in which it could serve Russia's interests regarding the Ottoman Empire.

In the early 1820s, Stroganov and Karl Nesselrode surveyed closely the application of the Ottoman-Russian treaty that had been in effect since 1812 and which concerned, among others, the rule of Wallachia and Moldavia by the Ottoman-appointed *hospodars*.<sup>296</sup> After the war of 1828-1829, as Nesselrode took the lead of Russian diplomacy, he adopted a moderate view with

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<sup>295</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 80

<sup>296</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 59-60

respect to the role of the Russian administration in Wallachia and Moldavia. The military commanders Vorontsov and Kiselev were involved in the conduct of the operations during the Ottoman-Russian war of 1828-1829.<sup>297</sup> In addition, Vorontsov served as governor-general and viceroy of Bessarabia, the district on the Eastern edge of Moldavia that Russia received from the Ottoman Empire in 1812. He was entrusted to extend to this district the territorial administration of the province New Russia,<sup>298</sup> which significantly altered the prerogatives that the local leadership had held since 1812.<sup>299</sup> The General Kiselev, Chief of staff of the Russian Second Army, and one of the main leaders of the offensive against the Ottoman Empire, served beginning in 1829 as president of the administration that Russia implemented in Wallachia and Moldavia during the war.<sup>300</sup> While in office, he proposed the annexation of Wallachia and Moldavia as necessary to Russia's control over the Ottoman Empire, an alternative that did not coincide with the Russian diplomats' projects concerning the Ottomans.

In the first section of this chapter, I will examine how Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu and his father Iordache began a systematic campaign to attract Russian support for their project to obtain the rule of Moldavia. Ever since 1816 Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu provided reports about the rule of *hospodar*, which the Russian diplomats could use to substantiate accusations that the Ottoman Porte breached the Treaty of Bucharest (1812). After the Ottoman intervention against the Hetaireia in 1821 and during the Ottoman-Russian war of 1828-1829, father and son traveled

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<sup>297</sup> Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society 1815-1833* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

<sup>298</sup> Anthony Rhineland, *Prince Michael Vorontsov: Viceroy to the Tsar* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 67

<sup>299</sup> Iulian Frunțașu, *O istorie etnopolitică a Basarabiei 1812-2002* (Chișinău: Cartier, 2002), 42-44

<sup>300</sup> See chapter "The Danubian Principalities: Occupation and Reform, 1828-1834" in Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question*; Ioan C. Filitti, "L'Administration de Kisseleff" in *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 63-82

to Russia, changed their political strategy and began submitting complaints against the Ottoman rule and projects for the organization of Moldavia. However, their prolonged stay in Russia weakened their position in the political circles in Moldavia.

In the second section, I will review the different projects that the Russian authorities envisioned for Moldavia to contextualize the efforts of Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu and to discuss Russian imperial projects concerning the Danubian provinces. Thus, I will juxtapose Rosetti-Roznovanu's project for an enlightened rule of Moldavia under Russian auspices, which he submitted to Count Vorontsov, Kiselev's project to become a governor of Moldavia and the projects that Russia ultimately pursued through the custody that it shared with the Ottoman Empire in Moldavia and Wallachia. Kiselev's plan diverged from the strategy of the Russian diplomacy and ultimately failed, but his re-organization of the local government strengthened the grip on power of several boyars two of which were appointed as *hospodars* in 1834.

In the third section, in which I explore Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu's political strategies after his return to Moldavia, I will analyze to what extent local politics and the appointment of the *hospodars* from among the boyars materialized the newly defined Ottoman "sovereignty" and Russian protectorate in Moldavia. I will also examine how this arrangement exposed Russian authority in Moldavia to local politics and the interference of other European powers that endeavored to check Russian preeminence over the Ottoman Empire.

### **1. Russian imperial projects and local politics in Moldavia during the 1820s**

Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu was the eldest son of Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, treasurer of Moldavia who, since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, had amassed a considerable landed fortune that secured his family a leading political position in the province until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup>

century (Chapter 1). With the help of his father, Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu entered the political and administrative establishment of Moldavia early in his youth. By 1818, when he travelled abroad to France and Germany, Nicolae had already served as *spătar* (sword bearer), and *aga* (chief of police forces).<sup>301</sup> He also married the daughter of the prominent chancellor of Moldavia, Constantin Ghica.<sup>302</sup> Thus, Nicolae used the usual instruments to build a political career in the context of the Phanariot rules: family relations, political connections and the money to facilitate them. In addition, Nicolae also took pride in being a knowledgeable young man, the owner of a library of classics and modern philosophers and economists among which Etienne de Condillac and Jean-Baptiste Say.<sup>303</sup>

The Rosetti-Roznovanus had begun making plans to be appointed as *hospodars* since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1812, the sultan ordered the annihilation of the most prominent Moruzis, a Phanariot family of dragomans and *hospodars* to whom the Rosetti-Roznovanus had been connected through politics and family relations. After this date, the treasurer Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu focused on gaining Russian support to replace the existing *hospodar*, Scarlat Callimachi, as Russia had obtained in 1802 an Ottoman imperial decree according to which the

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<sup>301</sup> See the record about Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, in *Familia Rosetti*, by Radu Rosetti, (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial, 1938), 121, 123

<sup>302</sup> The marriage ended in a divorce in 1816 allegedly due to the age difference between the spouses. The divorce led to a long legal conflict between the former spouses that lasted until 1830 over the possessions that Katherine claimed were due to her and to the maintenance of the couple's daughters. In addition to this conflict, Katherine was also involved in litigation with her father-in-law Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu over several land estates they had exchanged in Moldavia and Wallachia. About the brief marriage and the divorce see DANI, Inv. 1117, Colecția Documente, Pack 143/69, 78, 96, 145, 149, 152. About the land exchange and conflict between Katherine and Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, see DANI, Inv. 1117, Colecția Documente, Pack 143/no. 70 and ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLXII/no. 2

<sup>303</sup> Nicolae Isar, "Condillac și ideologia franceză în preocupările lui Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu," *Revista de filosofie* 19, no. 5 (1972): 671-679; Cornelia Papacostea, "O bibliotecă din Moldova la începutul secolului al XIX-lea: Biblioteca de la Stâncă," *Studii și cercetări de bibliologie* 5, (1963): 215-220; Vlad Georgescu, "Preoccupations culturelles chez Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu 1818-1821," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 8, tom 8, no. 2 (1970): 232-234, 237

Porte and the Russian representatives decided together the change of *hospodars* suspected of wrongdoings.<sup>304</sup>

An opportunity occurred in 1816, when Stroganov, Russian ambassador in Constantinople, began to compile evidence that the Ottomans had broken the Treaty of Bucharest (1812). Among other provisions, the Treaty stipulated fiscal exemptions for Wallachia and Moldavia and restricted the *hospodars* from collecting taxes for several years. Following rumors that the rulers had levied taxes regardless of the treaty, Stroganov enlisted the help of the former Ottoman subject Manuk Mirzayan to collect data about this abuse that the Porte allegedly condoned (Chapter 2). Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, treasurer of Moldavia, submitted estimates that confirmed the Russian suspicions. Rosetti-Roznovanu had collaborated before with the Russian authorities during the Russian occupation of Moldavia (1806-1812), but after 1816 he began to support Russian interests in Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire more consistently, although not exclusively, as he also traded information to the Habsburg authorities.<sup>305</sup> Iordache's ambition was soon stifled. The collection of reports about fiscal abuses in Moldavia did not have an immediate effect and the tensions between the Russian ambassadors and the Porte over the application of the Treaty of Bucharest continued until 1828. Moreover, when the sultan removed Scarlat Callimachi from the office of *hospodar* in 1819, on suspicion that he collaborated too closely with Russia, the office was assigned to another individual from Constantinople, the dragoman Mihail Suțu.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Mustafa A. Mehmet, *Documente turcești privind istoria României* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.Romania, 1986), Vol. 3: 174

<sup>305</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Familia Rosetti*, 93; OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, 88 recto-verso

<sup>306</sup> As previously mentioned, Michael Suțu will become a supporter of the Greek uprising and participate in the Greek government under king Othon (Christine Philliou, "Worlds, Old and New: Phanariot Networks and the



Suțu's appointment in office delayed Iordache's plans, but it also brought Nicolae to the forefront of local administration and politics. Nicolae used the opportunity to demonstrate that he was not a mere follower of his father, but an autonomous political actor. Nicolae expressed a different view of service introducing himself to the Russian and Habsburg representatives not only as a political actor and a treasurer but also as a manager of the province. In the context where liberalization of trade, and particularly of grain trade, had become a political and economic issue throughout Europe,<sup>307</sup> the treasurer Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu endeavored to show to the Habsburg, Russian and Ottoman authorities that he could introduce Moldavia in the trade circuits without disturbing the economic connections with Constantinople. After discussing with Andrei Pisani, the Russian consul in Iassy,<sup>308</sup> in 1820 Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu proposed to Stroganov, the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, to intervene at the Porte for the free exportation of Moldavian corn to Habsburg Transylvania and Bukovina, a measure that would have partially covered for the deficit in the treasury.<sup>309</sup>

The Russian ambassador commanded Rosetti-Roznovanu on this initiative,<sup>310</sup> but for reasons that were political rather than economic. By the 1820s only few high-ranking Russian officials and nobles openly discussed ways in which the reform of the Russian society by the government could strengthen the power of the Empire, as the tsar Alexander I himself had

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Remaking of Ottoman Governance in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2004), 132

<sup>307</sup> Seven Ağır, "From welfare to wealth: Ottoman and Castilian grain trade policies in a time of change" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2009), 175-177; Alexander I. Grab, "The Politics of Subsistence: The Liberalization of Grain Commerce in Austrian Lombardy under Enlightened Despotism," *The Journal of Modern History* 57, no. 2 (1985): 188-189, 192-194, 198

<sup>308</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 211

<sup>309</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLIII/no. 76

<sup>310</sup> DANIC, Inv. 92 Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLIII/no. 77, f.1 recto

become more conservative in his views.<sup>311</sup> Count Michael Vorontsov, the soon-to-be viceroy of Bessarabia and governor of New Russia, who upheld the idea that free trade in the south-east of the empire can help enhance imperial control, was in minority.<sup>312</sup> Vorontsov could openly pursue a reformist agenda<sup>313</sup> in New Russia, because the tsar and the imperial authorities agreed that this province was rich and in need of skillful administration to develop.<sup>314</sup>

But although free trade did not become a priority for domestic government, the Russian authorities used it as a new theme in their interventions on behalf of Wallachia and Moldavia at the Porte. Specifically, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian representatives in the provinces began to accuse the Ottoman “monopoly” of causing the pauperization of these countries, and to extol the advantages of free trade. This discourse did not dwell on the specifics of trade in Wallachia and Moldavia but used “monopoly” to evoke the oppressive nature of the Ottoman rule that Russia, as protector of the Ottoman Orthodox and intercessor on behalf of Wallachia and Moldavia, had the obligation and the right to denounce. In their turn, the high boyars of Wallachia and Moldavia adopted the theme of the “monopoly,” i.e. “Ottoman oppression” in the petitions that they addressed to Russia after 1821,<sup>315</sup> when they fled the province to escape Ottoman reprisals against the supporters of Alexander Ypsilantis’ Hetairist campaign.

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<sup>311</sup> Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552-1917* (Fontana Press, 2010), 141-143

<sup>312</sup> Anthony Rhineland, *Prince Michael Vorontsov*, 60-64

<sup>313</sup> Anthony Rhineland, *Prince Michael Vorontsov*, 111-113

<sup>314</sup> Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2001), 218

<sup>315</sup> Bogdan Murgescu, “Avatarurile unui concept: monopolul comercial otoman asupra Țărilor Române,” *Revista istorică* 1, no. 9-10 (1990): 823-824

Iordache and Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu were some of the most prominent boyars in exile at Kishinev, in Bessarabia, and they promptly incorporated the “Ottoman monopoly” in the petitions entreating Russia to limit the prerogatives of the Porte in Moldavia. Iordache and Nicolae’s petitions about the need to check Ottoman rule in Moldavia were part of a broader lobby campaign with Stroganov and Vorontsov, through which the two boyars hoped to obtain appointment as rulers with Russia’s concurrence, in defiance of the custom nomination of the *hospodars* by the Porte. This lobby campaign entailed receiving the support of other boyars in exile and fostering personal contacts with the Russian authorities to whom Iordache and Nicolae attempted to introduce themselves as the most suited individuals to rule a province that would become Russian or managed by Russia.

The Rosetti-Roznovanus enjoyed impressive political capital among the local<sup>316</sup> and Russian authorities in neighboring Bessarabia. Yet, they were not the only aspirants to the rule of Moldavia or the only ones who hoped to obtain it by alluring to Russian or Ottoman imperial projects. Between 1821 and 1826, the political leadership of Moldavia was split in three groups. High boyars in exile in Bukovina promoted a project through which the province would enter Russian control and its rule would not be assigned to a *hospodar* anymore, but shared by the high boyars. The boyars in Bessarabia followed closely the directives of the Russian representatives for Moldavia with the objective of having the Rosetti-Roznovanus instated as rulers under either Russian or Russian-Ottoman control.<sup>317</sup> Finally, several high boyars worked in the administration under the supervision of Stephanos Vogorides, a Christian official from Constantinople who had

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<sup>316</sup> An official in the administration of this province was Panait Cazimir, former business partner of Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu Gheorghe Bezviconi, *Boierimea Moldovei dintre Prut si Nistru* (Bucharest: Institutul de Istorie Națională București, 1943), Vol. 2: 45-46

<sup>317</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Amintiri* (Iassy: Viața Românească, 1921), Vol.1: 81-82

served before in Moldavia,<sup>318</sup> while the Ottoman troops from the neighboring district of Brăila were stationed in the province.<sup>319</sup> These boyars petitioned the Porte to end the appointments of Constantinopolitan Christians at the rule of Moldavia. The Porte heeded their request and named Ioan Alexandru Sturdza a boyar “from the land,” instead of Bogorides who was a “Phanariot,” to rule Moldavia. Ioan Alexandru Sturdza was a less powerful brother-in-law of Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu. Iordache had never expected that this poorer relative could endanger his plans of becoming *hospodar*.<sup>320</sup>

The appointment of Sturdza by the Porte and the fact that the new *hospodar* had manifested reverence towards Russia introduced a new variable in the power struggle for authority in Moldavia, prompting the boyars in exile to revise their strategies with respect to their rivals and to the Russian and Ottoman authorities. Relying on the fact that he could run the administration with the help of the boyars who had remained in Moldavia, Sturdza soon answered an order from the Porte and requested the exiled *boyars* to return to Moldavia under penalty of expropriation of their estates and loss of their titles. In response, the *boyars* in Bukovina submitted complaints to the Porte, with the Russian authorities’ knowledge, against Sturdza and his supporters, of low and high rank.<sup>321</sup> They claimed that Sturdza profited from their absence to have his supporters agree to oppressive taxation that violated the fiscal regulations by the Porte at the intervention of Russia. The commander of Silistre who received the exiles’ complains as well as favorable reports from boyars in Moldavia about the rule of

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<sup>318</sup> Bogorides arrived to Moldavia and became a boyar in 1812, under the rule of the *hospodar* Scarlat Callimachi. See Christine Philliou, “Worlds, Old and New,” 296

<sup>319</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor* (Bucharest: 1938), Vol. 8: 272

<sup>320</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Amintiri* (Iassy: Viața Românească, 1921), Vol.1: 83

<sup>321</sup> Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* (Bucharest: Socec, 1891), Supl. 1, Vol.4: 22-23

Sturdza, decided to heed the latter. He arrested the discontent boyars and sent them to Moldavia where the *hospodar* punished them with monetary fines and temporary exile on their estates.<sup>322</sup>

The Rosetti-Roznovanus were adamant about receiving Russian support for their projects, especially in the context where the tensions between the Russian and Ottoman Empires escalated over the application of the Treaty of Bucharest (1812), the Ottoman violent repression against the Greek rebels and the Ottoman confiscation of Russian cargoes that passed through the Straits. Therefore, Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu returned to Moldavia from the Russian Empire only in 1826 and Nicolae – in 1834, after having traveled to Saint Petersburg and Odessa.<sup>323</sup> In 1821 they reprised the communication with Stroganov, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, to expose the situation of Moldavia and to renew demands for Russian intercession at the Porte. This communication might have continued after the Rosetti-Roznovanus relocated to Kishinev. I suggest that they also began to develop their relations with the Count Vorontsov who was appointed viceroy of Bessarabia in 1823. The Count was of the opinion that the expansion of the Russian Empire to the West could only gain from allowing local leaders and “aristocrats” preserve their authority and co-opting them in the Russian imperial project.<sup>324</sup> Such an attitude encouraged the Rosetti-Roznovanus to contact the Count and to press their agenda in 1830 when Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu relocated to Odessa, possibly following Vorontsov who had built his residence there.

The Roznovanus’ aim was to demonstrate to the Russian authorities that had their empire taken over Moldavia, it would have been preferable to name a boyar to their rule, instead of a Russian governor, and to prefer Iordache or Nicolae to any other boyar. Their strategy was to

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<sup>322</sup> Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* Supl. 1, Vol.4: 36-37

<sup>323</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Familia Rosetti*, 123

<sup>324</sup> Dominic Lieven, *Empire*, 250

reiterate a decades-old language about the “privileges” of Moldavia, on which Russia could have capitalized against the Porte, and to propose socio-political analyses of the province that recommended them as skillful administrators. Through this discourse, Nicolae and Iordache attempted to appeal to the Russian diplomats’ interest in interfering with the Porte’s affairs and to Vorontsov who was preoccupied with creating a government that produced prosperity.

Between 1823 and the Ottoman-Russian war of 1828-1829, Iordache and Nicolae signed several petitions to unnamed Russian authorities who, I suggest, were Stroganov and Vorontsov, and to the tsar. While father and son acted and possibly wrote their pleas together, Nicolae’s attempts to portray himself as a modern and capable administrator is apparent throughout these writings, even in those signed exclusively by his father. Their petitions followed a three-section structure, the first treating the “situation of the country,” the second – “the position of the inhabitants” and the last – the measures to be taken in Moldavia, with the implicit endorsement of Russia. The analyses of society and politics in Moldavia, combined with references to Russia’s interventions at Constantinople concerning this province and to current changes were meant to demonstrate that Rosetti-Roznovanu had an informed opinion about Russia’s imperial projects and about how the make-up of the province could serve these projects.

Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu began his petitions to the Russian authorities with a review of the province’s “old privileges” and of the Ottoman abuses and “monopoly,” in which he exposed his allegiance to Russia. These “privileges” were fabricated by the boyars during the Russian occupation of 1768-1774. They referred to an alleged medieval covenant between the sultan and the boyars whereby the former offered his protection to the latter in exchange for taxes, and refrained from altering their political control.<sup>325</sup> As Russia increasingly assumed the

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<sup>325</sup> Constantin Giurescu, *Capitulațiile Moldovei cu Poarta Otomană* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1908)

role of defender of the Ottoman Orthodox subjects after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774),<sup>326</sup> the Russian representatives readily adopted the theme of the “privileges” of Wallachia and Moldavia to interfere in Ottoman affairs, and subsequently inserted it in diplomatic documents between the two empires.<sup>327</sup>

Iordache and Nicolae Rosetti Roznovanu argued repeatedly that the Ottomans had encroached on the “privileges” of Wallachia and Moldavia when the sultan appointed Constantinopolitan “Greeks” as *hospodars*. These rulers mismanaged the finances, increasing arbitrarily the amounts of the taxes to satisfy their greed and impaired the boyars’ authority by making appointment to office and tax-exemptions dependent on service to the *hospodar*.<sup>328</sup> In contrast to the abuses of the Porte, Russia intervened through treaties and pressures to curtail the *hospodars’* abuses and to restore the system consecrated by the “privileges.”<sup>329</sup>

By 1826, as Ioan Alexandru Sturdza continued to be the ruler and the Russian Empire criticized the Ottoman administration on the Danube on account of its trade restrictions there, Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu added the theme of the “Ottoman monopoly” to his argument that the Porte breached the “privileges” of Moldavia. As corrective measures, Nicolae recommended not only that Russia, instead of the Ottoman Empire, should appoint the *hospodars*<sup>330</sup> or organize

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<sup>326</sup> Roderic Davison, “‘Russian Skill and Turkish Imbecility:’ The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered,” *Slavic Review* 35, no. 3 (1976): 475-476

<sup>327</sup> See the imperial hattı-şerifs of 1774, 1802, 1806, 1826, the *sened* of 1784, the *firman*s of 1791 and 1792 and the *kannunname* of 1802, Viorel Panaite, “Wallachia and Moldavia from the Ottoman juridical and Political Viewpoint, 1774-1829,” in *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans 1750-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, edited by Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovos (Rethymno: University of Crete, Department of History and Archaeology, 2007), 25

<sup>328</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no. 4, f.1 recto-verso

<sup>329</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no. 4, f. 2 recto

<sup>330</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no. 8, f. 3 verso

elections, but also that Russia should intervene for the liberalization of Moldavian trade.<sup>331</sup> The tsar's stern attitude towards the Ottoman Empire during the Greek crisis encouraged Roznovanu to suggest that Russia's past interventions in favor of Moldavia and Wallachia indicated a clear intention to add these provinces to its empire.<sup>332</sup>

In the second section of the letters, Rosetti-Roznovanu offered an overview of the political and social composition of Moldavia, to indicate the crucial role of the "class" of boyars in the province and the expertise that recommended them to become *hospodars*. Between 1823 and 1826 the assessments in this subdivision changed progressively, suggesting that the Roznovanus altered their attitude vis-à-vis Bogorides and Sturdza's official appointments. These discursive changes did not change significantly the argument that Russia needed to keep the boyars' in charge of managing Moldavia, despite their divergences. In fact, the Roznovanus combined social and political analyses to craft an essentially political argument about the boyars' preeminence in the province.

Iordache and Nicolae explained how the boyars' power was intricately connected with the administration of the province. Thus, a great deal of the boyars' power derived from the role that the *hospodars*, including the Phanariots, assigned to them through offices and collection of revenues. To avoid that such an explanation might depict the boyars as accomplices of the Ottoman-Phanariot rule, the Roznovanus added that only the boyars could have implemented any political project in the province.<sup>333</sup> If we consider this interpretation about the boyars in relation to the references about Russia's preservation of the "old privileges," it becomes apparent the

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<sup>331</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no. 6, f. 3 verso

<sup>332</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI /no. 9, f. 2 verso

<sup>333</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no. 4, f. 2 recto-verso



Roznovanus suggested that the preservation of the boyars' positions was crucial to Russia's control on the Danube.

The Roznovanus proceeded to substantiate the power of the boyars also in relation to the social hierarchies and "classes" in the provinces. Their brief "class" overviews were reminiscent of the social taxonomies in the European economic literature, but they had a political and circumstantial purpose. "Classes," in the vision of Iordache and Nicolae, did not refer to the social groups' relations to resources and labor. Instead, their "class" hierarchy suggested that certain groups were more entitled than others to exert political privileges, a notion that would have seemed familiar to the Russian officials who were accustomed to a system of estates where groups ranked according to their privileges.<sup>334</sup> Thus, although the Roznovanus noted that the Moldavian society was made of boyars, "peasants," "Jewish merchants" and "Gypsy" slaves,<sup>335</sup> they mentioned "classes" mostly in reference to the different ranks that composed the hierarchy of the boyars.

The political dimension of the "class" classification becomes apparent if we consider that after 1822, Bogorides and Sturdza's newly- appointed and lower-rank officials proposed their own projects for the rule of Moldavia,<sup>336</sup> threatening the positions of the old boyars in the province and in relation to Russia. Beginning in 1823, the Roznovanus and Nicolae in particular, addressed this trend by reviewing the "class" hierarchies first to reject and later to accommodate the new changes. In 1823, Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu reconfirmed that the boyars derived their authority from having served as officials and that they were the nexus of the political rule of

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<sup>334</sup> Gregory Freeze, "The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 1 (1986): 16-18

<sup>335</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no. 4, f. 2 verso; ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no. 9, ff. 3 verso - 4 recto

<sup>336</sup> Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, Supl. 1, Vol. 4: 29

Moldavia, but he also emphasized that they were land-owners who had an astute political and social understanding.<sup>337</sup> In this respect, I suggest that even though Rosetti-Roznovanu associated the boyars with the ownership of land, he did not abandon his political understanding of “class” for a more social oriented approach. He evoked land ownership to uphold the authority of the old boyars and to reiterate the hierarchies that organized a complex social body where the owners were capable, due to their long tradition of political leadership, to procure for the well-being of the others.<sup>338</sup> “Class,” therefore, was used as a political category to distinguish the high *boyars* from the newly appointed officials.

Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu began to revise his former opinion about the new boyars by 1826, considering that their rise to power was a political transformation that could have been used to support his projects for the rule of the province. Such a change of attitude was also recommendable given that the Ottoman and Russian empires negotiated the conclusion of a new agreement that would have had direct bearing on the appointment of the *hospodars* in Wallachia and Moldavia. Thus, unlike his father who adamantly opposed the massive boyar appointments of 1822 and the new boyars’ attempts to intervene in the selection of the *hospodar*,<sup>339</sup> Nicolae began to consider ways in which he could obtain local support for his plan to take the rule. Accordingly, he readjusted his discourse about the new boyars in the letters to his Russian interlocutors and began proposing that old and new boyars could participate together in the elective assembly. Such reconsiderations also shaped his definition of the boyars in the frame of the Moldavian society. More specifically, Rosetti-Roznovanu pointed out that the boyars did not

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<sup>337</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no. 6, ff. 1 verso, 3 recto

<sup>338</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no. 6, ff. 3 recto, verso

<sup>339</sup> Victor Taki, “Russia on the Danube: Imperial Expansion and Political Reform in Moldavia and Wallachia, 1812-1834,” (PhD diss., Central European University, 2007), 243

only rule and own land but also engaged in various activities productive of wealth, such as trade.<sup>340</sup> Rosetti-Roznovanu re-conceptualized the category of *boyars* to include the traditional group of politically active officials as well as the entrepreneurs who bought their ranks.

Iordache and Nicolae's calculation that Russia would effectively take control in Moldavia and could impose them at the rule did not materialize in 1826 as the Russian court and the Porte reached an agreement. The Convention of Akkerman settled the Ottoman-Russian frontier in the Caucasus and the borderland on the Danube. The Porte agreed to recall the Ottoman troops from Wallachia and Moldavia, which had been a major point of Ottoman-Russian contention, and to acknowledge the local authority that the Christian power holders who had revolted in Serbia in 1804 received through the Treaty of Bucharest. In Wallachia and Moldavia the appointment of the *hospodar* was deferred to the council of boyars who were assigned to elect the incumbent of the office from among themselves for a term of seven years. The Russian and Ottoman courts would have confirmed the results of the election. This convention's provisions for the election of the *hospodar* encouraged Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and other high boyars to return to the province from their exile in Bessarabia and Bukovina. Among them were the treasurer Alexandru Sturdza, the high chancellors Grigore and Dimitrie Sturdza, the *hatman* Alexandru Ghica, the *vornics* Grigore Ghica and Theodor Balș, the *treasurer* Alexandru Balș and the *hatman* Răducanu Rosetti.<sup>341</sup>

However, Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu did not follow his father and chose to remain in Russia, relocating from Kishinev to Petersburg and subsequently to Odessa in Crimea. In so doing, Nicolae might have assessed that while Iordache could survey and control politics in

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<sup>340</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLVI/no.11, f. 2 verso – 3 recto

<sup>341</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Amintiri*, 83

Moldavia, he would cultivate his relations with the reformist Count Vorontsov. The Count could then have been persuaded to consider the reform of Moldavia, under a skillful ruler such as Nicolae, as useful to his own projects for the economic development of the neighboring Bessarabia and New Russia.

## **2. Politics in Moldavia between local factions and diverging Russian imperial projects (1828-1834)**

The destruction at Navarino, in 1827, of the Ottoman fleet by the European powers, including Russia, led to a new Ottoman-Russian war between 1828 and 1829. This war initiated a decade-long period of Russian ascendancy over the Ottoman Empire whose most constant manifestation was an imperial condominium in Wallachia and Moldavia. Russia's intervention in the administration of Moldavia during the war activated new coalitions between the elites in the province and the Russian authorities and inspired new imperial projects with respect to the Porte. Boyars in Moldavia and Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu in Russia adjusted their strategies to improve their positions or to become *hospodars* according to how they envisioned the Russian and Ottoman projects in the region and to the local changes introduced by the massive appointments in office after 1821. The Russian supervisor of the administration in the principalities, the General Pavel Kiselev became adept of the idea that Russia should annex these borderlands, while the Russian diplomacy and the tsar considered the strategic advantages of offering protection to the Porte in the context of a brooding conflict between the sultan and the governor of Egypt.

In 1828, after the Russian troops that crossed and occupied the province deposed the *hospodars*, the Court in Saint Petersburg placed the administration of Moldavia under the

supervision of Count Pahlen who acted as the president of the boyars' councils in both Wallachia and Moldavia. The former Russian consul in Bucharest, Matvei I. Minciaky, became vice-president of the boyars' council of Moldavia.<sup>342</sup> Pahlen also coopted some of the high boyars, former exiles during the rule of Sturdza, in an executive council under his command. Others, who opposed Russian preeminence in Moldavia, were marginalized.<sup>343</sup>

Pahlen was soon replaced by the General Zheltukhin as president of the councils, a change that affected directly the officials in the occupation administration. The general eliminated the revenues that the boyars usually farmed out and restored taxes that had been out of use since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>344</sup> He also divided the attributions of the boyars' councils by creating "executive" and "judicial" councils for each province. Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu was re-instated in office and included in the executive council of Moldavia. Further, Zheltukhin requested several officials organized in two, Wallachia and Moldavian, commissions to propose measures for an institutional reform of the provinces. These proposals were allegedly only amendments to a project that he had already received from Saint Petersburg.

Pahlen was accused of having treated the local officials in a discretionary manner. However, he allowed them to make provisions such as the election of the *hospodar* by an extraordinary assembly made of boyars, which clearly suited their ambitions. When the commander of the Russian army Pavel Kiselev replaced Zheltukhin as the president of the councils, these provisions had already been submitted to the Russian state council.<sup>345</sup> Although he mistrusted the boyars, Kiselev submitted the officials' subsequent proposals to Saint

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<sup>342</sup> Panaioti Rizos (ed.), *Mémoires du prince Nicolas Soutzo*, (Vienna: Gerold&Co, 1899), 64

<sup>343</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 47-49

<sup>344</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 58

<sup>345</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 71

Petersburg for confirmation. These proposals and others with respect to the functioning of government, taxation and the role of Russia and the Ottoman Empire in Wallachia and Moldavia will be known as the “Organic Statutes” and will be included in the Ottoman-Russian peace Treaty of Adrianople.

Concluded in 1829, as the Russian troops had advanced into the Balkans within a short distance from Constantinople,<sup>346</sup> this treaty provided rather harsh conditions for the Ottoman Empire. The treaty awarded Russia new territories in the Caucasus and at the north of the mouths of the Danube and access for Russian ships through the Straits and on the Danube.<sup>347</sup> It provided the dismantling of the Ottoman fortresses on the northern shore of the Danube to secure the application of the old “privilege” that these lands were restricted to Muslim settlement but acknowledged Wallachia, Moldavia and other Balkan lands as the sultan’s “possession.” The treaty reiterated the self-rule privileges of Serbia and placed Wallachia and Moldavia, referred to as “principalities” under Russian control until the Porte would have paid the war indemnity. The Porte committed to respecting the “old privileges” of Wallachia and Moldavia and their “independent internal administration” in exchange for the collection of the tribute.<sup>348</sup> Lastly, “the Sublime Porte, desirous of securing, by every means, the future prosperity of the two principalities,” committed to reinforcing their “old privileges” and applying the “administrative statutes” that had been compiled “in consequence of the wish expressed by the assemblies of the most influential inhabitants of the country” and which were supposed to be applied in full

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<sup>346</sup> Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question*, 317

<sup>347</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 72-73; E.S. Creasy, “Appendix A: Treaty of Adrianople,” in *History of Ottoman Turks: from the beginning of their empire to the present time. Chiefly founded on Von Hammer*, (London R. Bentley, 1854), 516

<sup>348</sup> E.S. Creasy, “Appendix A: Treaty of Adrianople,” 523-524

obedience of “the rights of sovereignty of the Sublime Porte.”<sup>349</sup> Russia, in its turn, claimed that it was the guarantor of the “principalities” prosperity and that as such, it watched over the application of the “old privileges” and of the Ottoman-Russian treaties that pertained to them.

The Treaty of Adrianople consecrated Russian interference in Ottoman rule in the Balkans. It reconfigured Ottoman territory in Wallachia and Moldavia through the dismantlement of the Ottoman fortresses that had given to these provinces their traditional role of buffer region.<sup>350</sup> It also translated the nature of Ottoman authority there as “sovereignty,” a concept that approximated the power that the Ottoman Porte had enjoyed in Wallachia and Moldavia. Whereas before Wallachia and Moldavia were integrated in the Ottoman rule through leadership, participation in the imperial financial system and as a buffer and defense line on the Danube, in 1829 Ottoman “suzerainty” meant that the two provinces paid tribute, the sultan confirmed the *hospodars* and the statutes materialized the sultan’s commitment to these lands’ prosperity.

But although the treaty requested the Ottoman Porte to dismantle its fortresses on the Danube and prohibit Muslims from entering the “principalities,” it also re-affirmed Ottoman possession over Wallachia and Moldavia. Russia committed to withdrawing its troops from the Ottoman Empire, and to “restoring” the “principalities” and other Balkan territories, to the Ottoman sultan. Thus, the treaty formally limited Ottoman prerogatives to “suzerainty” to collection of tribute and supervision of local politics but at the same time it also acknowledged that this “suzerainty” was effective on the territory of Wallachia and Moldavia. When an

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<sup>349</sup> E.S. Creasy, “Appendix A: Treaty of Adrianople,” 524

<sup>350</sup> About the role of the fortresses on the Danube for the Ottoman defense in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and their relations with the neighboring Wallachia and Moldavia, see Virginia Aksan, “Whose Territory and Whose Peasants? Ottoman Boundaries on the Danube in the 1760s” in *The Ottoman Balkans 1750-1830*, edited by Frederick F. Anscombe (Princeton University: Department of Near East Studies, 2006), 62-64; Virginia Aksan, “Locating the Ottomans among Early Modern Empires,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 3, no. 2 (1999): 123

international concert later replaced Russia as guarantor of the “principalities,” its members adopted the 1829 concept of Ottoman suzerainty within a delimited territory.

By outlining Ottoman prerogatives and stipulating the application of the Russian-sponsored statutes, Adrianople inaugurated a Russian-Ottoman condominium in Wallachia and Moldavia, which reflected the beginning of a period of Russian ascendancy over the Ottoman Empire. But the implementation of this condominium was left to local and imperial actors who pursued different personal and imperial agendas.

Kiselev’s supervision (1829-1834) of the borderland did not end the rivalry between the boyars. Nicolae, still in Odessa, believed that his father, who had returned to Moldavia, could recover the political influence that the family enjoyed before 1821. But during Iordache’s long absence the Sturdzas, Ghicas, Balș and other boyars who had enjoyed high social and political status even before 1821 took over the administrative councils and the commissions for the review of the Organic statutes.<sup>351</sup> These boyars who were also great landowners used the occasion of reforming the taxation system in the province to reduce the amount of the public taxes and to increase the obligations that the tax-payers, in majority peasants and tenants on their lands, owed to the land lords. They also standardized the dues owed by peasants to the landowners and restricted the customary use of land by the peasants. While such provisions also favored the Rosetti-Roznovanus, the Sturdzas and the Ghicas jealously defended the power they had gained as the main participants in the administration set up during the Russian occupation.<sup>352</sup> Their unchecked political ascendance explains why Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu entered the local executive council only after three years from his return to Moldavia. Also, he did not

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<sup>351</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l’Occupation Russe (1828-1834)*, 54, 59

<sup>352</sup> Panaioti Rizos (ed.), *Mémoires du prince Nicolas Soutzo*, 99-100



appear in the general assembly called in 1831 to approve the final form of the statutes.

Notwithstanding these setbacks, Iordache continued to hope that his son would become *hospodar* and helped him finance his long stay in Russia.<sup>353</sup>

Nicolae, in his turn, endeavored to improve his connections with Russian high officials who were influential at Petersburg and especially with count Michael Vorontsov, a high ranking officer and the scion of a prestigious Russian noble family. Vorontsov was committed to developing New Russia, the vast and scarcely populated region neighboring Bessarabia where he became governor in 1828, by abolishing serfdom, settling Ottoman Christians, encouraging agriculture and opening the province to international trade.<sup>354</sup> Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu strove to gain the governor's political support through projects for the economic-political organization of Moldavia that explained how, under a skilled management, this province could have played in Vorontsov's project to develop the south-east of the Russian Empire. It is difficult to ascertain whether Vorontsov could intervene for Rosetti-Roznovanu at the Court or whether he believed that an economic reform of Moldavia could play into his own plans for the development of New Russia and the Empire's south-eastern regions. However, the fact that Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu traveled to Odessa, the city of Vorontsov, and informed the governor about his projects suggests that the treasurer believed so. In other words, Rosetti-Roznovanu attempted to graft his political ambition on what he perceived to be Vorontsov's imperial project.

In 1830, when the boyars in Moldavia used their positions in the Russian-sponsored administration to claim the position of *hospodar*, Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu sent a project to

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<sup>353</sup> DANI, Inv. 1117, Colecția Documente, Pack 143/no. 143

<sup>354</sup> Anthony L. H. Rhineland, *Prince Michael Vorontsov: Viceroy to the Tsar* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 107-118; Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society 1815-1833* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 517

Vorontsov,<sup>355</sup> in which he discussed the general “advantages of industry and trade over agriculture” and the particular ways in which the productive activities of Moldavia could be re-organized to enhance the wealth of the province and its inhabitants.<sup>356</sup> Having noted that industrial activities return greater profit and produce more wealth than agriculture, Nicolae proposed an argument about the profitability of agriculture that combined the Physiocrats’ appreciation of this economic field with the vision of the liberal economist Jean-Baptiste Say about the freedom of trade.<sup>357</sup>

The treasurer began his project with a demonstration about the value of the goods and resources involved in agriculture and of the tight relation that could exist between agriculture and industry. Thus, he observed that land, the main instrument of production in agriculture, was also a repository of value, including for the profits obtained from industry.<sup>358</sup> Further, Rosetti-Roznovanu questioned the idea that industry produces goods more highly valued than agriculture and explained that consumption in communities involved in agriculture could balance the price of agricultural and industrial goods.<sup>359</sup> Based on these observations, he subsequently proposed that political rule should combine agriculture and forms of industry that use agricultural raw materials on the model of the English “industries” and apply a system of taxation that would balance the taxes levied from agriculture and those from industry. What Rosetti-Roznovanu had in mind was a merger of the putting-out system and the economic privileges that were effective

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<sup>355</sup> Olga Constantinescu, "Cu privire la concepția lui Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu asupra industriei," *Revista arhivelor* 6, no.1 (1963): 156-157

<sup>356</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLIII/no. 195

<sup>357</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLIII/no. 195, f. 2 recto

<sup>358</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLIII/no. 195, ff. 1 recto – 1 verso

<sup>359</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLIII/no. 195, ff. 3 verso-4recto

in agriculture in Moldavia. Allegedly, landowners who had the customary right of using various installations for production on their land estates could have rented these installations to industrial enterprises that used agricultural raw materials.<sup>360</sup>

He further added that these mechanisms could produce profit if the freedom of trade was guaranteed. By referring to the freedom of trade as the main condition for a prosperous agriculture Rosetti-Roznovanu obviously tried to show that he was a nobleman and a connoisseur of economic theories, similarly to the reformist Vorotsov. He also implied that he was a follower to Vorontsov's approach to trade in New Russia and that he had welcome Russia's intervention for the end of the "Ottoman monopoly" through the Treaty of Adrianople.

Vorontsov responded with punctual comments on the proposed model but did not offer his political support to the boyar. The governor was not persuaded by Roznovanu's argument about the economic success of associating agriculture with industry and provided counter-examples that questioned the industrial exploitation of agricultural raw materials.<sup>361</sup> Moreover, whether on purpose or misguided that Rosetti-Roznovanu was only interested in a discussion about economics, Vorontsov did not vouch to offer his support for the boyar's political ambitions. Rosetti-Roznovanu soon ended his stay in Russia and returned to Moldavia where he made clear his intention to become *hospodar*. But the years that the treasurer had spent away from the political game in the principality and from the leading offices that would have allowed him to make allies placed him at a disadvantage compared with the other boyars.

Having drafted the Organic Statutes, which provided for the election of the *hospodar* from among the officials, the boyars of Moldavia were preparing to run for office. However, the

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<sup>360</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLIII/no. 195, ff. 3 recto

<sup>361</sup> ANIC, Inv. 92, Achiziții Noi, Pack CCLIII/no. 195, ff. 3 recto

Russian authorities hesitated about organizing the elections before the official ratification of the document by the Ottoman and Russian governments. Kiselev intended to pass the Statutes before the elections, while the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Karl Nesselrode pressed for elections before the approval of the Statutes. This dispute over timing was indicative of a deeper disagreement with respect to the application of Russian authority in Wallachia and Moldavia. General Kiselev lobbied for their annexation to the empire: implementing the Organic Statutes under Russian observation could only help the assimilation in the Russian Empire and control the intrigues of the boyars. Moreover, Kiselev disregarded the elections also because he had begun to consider assuming the rule of Wallachia and Moldavia. Nesselrode and the central imperial authorities, on the other hand, had begun to consider the diplomatic benefits of a more accommodating approach to the Porte and suggested to Kiselev that the organization of elections should have been received priority.

Kiselev chose to first pass the regulations. He oversaw the vote of these provisions, which were later known as the Organic Statutes, by the local boyars' assemblies in 1831 and their submission to Saint Petersburg and Constantinople for review. The General and the Russian army remained in the principalities pending the payment of the war indemnity by the Porte.<sup>362</sup> For the following two years, the boyars waited for the imperial approval of the documents to prepare for elections. Most of the members of the administrative councils, among whom representative of the Sturdza and Balș families were well-versed in local politics and, according to a contemporary, they pursued their own agendas and avoided effective administrative

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<sup>362</sup> Ioan C. Filitt, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l'Occupation Russe (1828-1834)*, 220

responsibilities.<sup>363</sup> In their turn, Kiselev and Nesselrode debated the annexation of the principalities to Russia.

Until 1833, when Russia agreed through the treaty of Hunkar Iskelesi to defend the Ottoman Empire against foreign attack, Kiselev continued to plead for the necessity of annexing Wallachia and Moldavia by appealing to two arguments. First, he emphasized that the boyars were unreliable and that their rule of Wallachia and Moldavia would have undermined, rather than assisted, Russian control. Second, he also claimed that the Ottomans would have deferred indefinitely the application of the treaty provisions unless Russia showed that it was ready to adopt stern measures to have the Porte comply with its obligations.

In 1830, the General complained to Nesselrode that the boyars used the drafting of the administrative regulations to promote their social interests at the expense of the other inhabitants, the peasants. Such a situation could only profit them and not the government of the principalities.<sup>364</sup> When he wrote his report to the Minister, the boyars had already adopted the provisions with respect to the obligations of the peasants to the landowners. Their ability to impose such regulations and the fact that they had influenced the stipulations concerning the election of the *hospodar* made Kiselev understand that their reputable social and political power could not have been easily controlled.

The approval of the Statutes and the fact that the Russian and Ottoman courts had agreed to a reduction of the war indemnity owed by the Porte<sup>365</sup> did not deter Kiselev from continuing to promote Russia's annexation of Wallachia and Moldavia. The General continued to emphasize

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<sup>363</sup> Panaioti Rizos (ed.), *Mémoires du prince Nicolas Soutzo*, 99-100

<sup>364</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l'Occupation Russe (1828-1834)*, 72-73; Theodor Codrescu, *Uricariul* (Iassy: Tipolitografia Buciumului Român, 1886), Vol. 9: 332

<sup>365</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l'Occupation Russe (1828-1834)*, 220

the importance of keeping a Russian administration in the principalities in the eventuality of another anti-Ottoman campaign and to force the Porte to acquit its treaty obligations. According to Kiselev, who had commissioned in 1819 a study of the resources of Wallachia and Moldavia,<sup>366</sup> these provinces could provide the supplies and assist campaigns of the Russian troops camped at Silistre, which had entered under Russian control, against Constantinople.<sup>367</sup> In his opinion, the principalities were the “means to uphold our political influence in the Orient.”<sup>368</sup> Furthermore, Russia should have kept its army in the principalities until the Ottomans effectively paid the war indemnity.<sup>369</sup>

Nesselrode responded by appealing to a realistic assessment of the short and long-term consequences of the principalities’ annexation. Thus, he pointed out that the take-over would have caused general hostility in Europe against Russia. It was also possible that the Porte, whose finances had been depleted by the expenses for the sultan’s reforms and the campaigns against the Greek uprisings, would have relented willingly the control of Wallachia and Moldavia to Russia. But such a concession was not profitable. Most of the principalities’ revenues would have been spent for the upkeep of the imperial administration, and the remaining amounts were too insignificant to warrant the annexation of Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>370</sup> On the other hand, the organization of the principalities according to the Russian directives and under the elected *hospodars* who felt obliged to the Empire offered the most efficient apparatus to supply the

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<sup>366</sup> This study was part of a broader research about how to improve the Russian campaigns against the Ottoman Empire on the Danube. See Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question...*, 145

<sup>367</sup> “Kisselev lui Nesselrod,” *Uricariul* 8 (1886): 391-392

<sup>368</sup> As quoted by A.D. Xenopol, *Histoire des Roumains de la Dacie Trajane* (Paris: Leroux, 1896), Vol. 2: 408

<sup>369</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l’Occupation Russe (1828-1834)*, 221; “Kisselev lui Nesselrod,” *Uricariul* 8 (1886): 387-388

<sup>370</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l’Occupation Russe (1828-1834)*, 222

Russian troops at Silistre and their potential dispatch against Constantinople. In addition to the costs and difficulties of a Russian imperial government in Moldavia and Wallachia, the Russian central authorities were also anxious about the broader consequences of dismantling the Ottoman Empire. If Russia pursued the annexation of Ottoman territories, the other European powers would have also requested compensations that the Russian authorities could not have controlled. Therefore, it was preferable to maintain the Ottoman Empire, as weak as it was but a de facto international actor, and to place it under Russian influence, than to dismantle it and provoke unpredictable European tensions.

A new turn of events in the Near East confirmed Nesselrode's calculation and offered Russia a new occasion to reinforce its influence in the Empire without taking over provinces where it had recognized Ottoman "suzerainty." In 1831 Mehmet Ali, the powerful governor of Ottoman Egypt who had provided troops to the Porte to quell the Greek uprisings, demanded control over Ottoman Syria in reward for his help. When the sultan refused, his son began a campaign through the Ottoman Middle-Eastern dominions and soon drove his troops against Constantinople. As Britain, Russia's rival for influence in Ottoman matters declined to support Mehmet Ali but also failed to provide military assistance to the sultan,<sup>371</sup> Russia offered to send a fleet to the Bosphorus and the troops from the principalities to defend the Ottoman capital.<sup>372</sup> While Russia chose to secure its control over the Ottoman Empire through assistance and diplomacy, the dispatch of the military from Wallachia and Moldavia reinforced Kiselev's conviction that Wallachia and Moldavia were positions that should remain in the possession of Russia.

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<sup>371</sup> In 1831-1832 Britain was involved in the Portuguese civil war and the secession of Belgium from Netherlands, see G. D. Clayton, *Britain and the Eastern Question: Missolonghi to Gallipoli* (London: University of London Press, 1971), 64; Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 79

<sup>372</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 81-84

Nesselrode agreed with Kiselev that the Porte postponed the payment of its debt until the political strife in Wallachia and Moldavia would have allowed the Ottoman officials to argue that the Russian administration had failed and to impose revisions to the statutes. On the other hand, the minister, in full agreement with the recent Russian approach to Ottoman affairs also pointed out that diplomatic and political influence favored more Russia's presence in the region than hostility and annexation. Alexei F. Orlov, Russian ambassador in Constantinople, responded to Kiselev's proposals in a similar fashion.<sup>373</sup>

Nicholas I soon capitalized on the help that he offered to the sultan against Mehmet Ali. In 1833 he proposed a Russian-Ottoman treaty for mutual defense, which was aimed at combating British and French influence at the Porte and at improving Russia's strategic position against them in the Straits. Nesselrode and Orlov succeeded to negotiate the Treaty of Hunkar Iskelessi on favorable terms. The Porte confirmed again the Treaty of Adrianople and the independence under European protection of Greece and agreed to close the Straits to any foreign military ships in case of war. In exchange, although Russia did not commit to guarantee Ottoman territorial integrity, it pledged to offer military support to the sultan. The Treaty confirmed Russia's role of defender of the Ottoman Empire<sup>374</sup> and assured its supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean for the next two decades until miscalculation of its power at Constantinople and the European powers' alliances led to the Crimean War (1853-1856) and to the end of Russian hegemony in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman-Russian agreement of 1833 was soon followed by the two empires' convention in Saint Petersburg (1834) for the ratification of the Organic

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<sup>373</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l'Occupation Russe (1828-1834)*, 231-232

<sup>374</sup> Matthew Rendall, "Restraint or Self-Restraint of Russia: Nicholas I, the Treaty of Unkiar Iskelessi, and the Vienna System, 1832-1841," *The International History Review* 24, no. 1 (2002): 38, 44-45



Statutes and the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the principalities, which marked the effective beginning of the Ottoman-Russian condominium on the Danube.

The Ottoman delegates at Saint Petersburg, among whom the Grand Admiral Ahmed Fevzi Paşa and Nicolae Aristarki, the son of a former Ottoman Phanariot dragoman, did not propose amendments to the Statutes and agreed that these regulations complied with the Porte's authority in the principalities, as stipulated in the Treaty of Adrianople. However, they also requested, as a one-time exception from the Statutes, that the first *hospodars* should be appointed by the Porte and Russia, instead of being elected by the boyar assemblies.<sup>375</sup> Russia was willing to accept this amendment that would have allowed the two courts to control the factions in the principalities during the seven-year mandate of the *hospodars*. On his way back to Constantinople, Fevzi Pasa stopped in Iassy and Bucharest to take the candidatures of local *boyars* and submit them to the Porte. Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu and his father decided that their chances would have increased if only one of them, Nicolae, submitted his candidature.<sup>376</sup> Other high *boyars*, such as Alexandru Ghica and Mihai Sturdza, the son of the high chancellor Grigore Sturdza, also submitted their applications to the Admiral.

Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu's plans were shattered when Mihai Sturdza, a young *boier* whose family had a long history of official appointment just like the Rosetti-Roznovanus, was appointed *hospodar*. The nomination of Sturdza was not an accident: his family enjoyed great authority in the province and was also well connected to the Ottoman and Russian officials. At Constantinople, Sturdza had the backing of his father-in-law, the powerful Stephanos Bogorides, administrator of Moldavia during the Ottoman occupation of 1821-1826, and Ottoman dragoman

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<sup>375</sup> Panaioti Rizos (ed.), *Mémoires du prince Nicolas Soutzo*, 103

<sup>376</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Familia Rosetti* (Bucureşti: Monitorul Oficial, 1938), 123

in the 1830s.<sup>377</sup> Sturdza had also built his prestige with the Russian authorities. Unlike Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu who did not return to Moldavia after 1829 but tried to obtain the backing of a distant although important character as Vorontsov, Sturdza served in the administration that the Russian generals oversaw after the war. Thus, he introduced himself as a competent, knowledgeable and loyal boyar, qualities that recommended him for appointment. His strategy was successful.

### **3. Local power struggles in an uneasy condominium**

The investiture in 1834 of Mihai Sturdza as *hospodar* of Moldavia and of Alexandru Ghica as ruler of Wallachia marked the beginning of the two provinces' "independent internal administration" under Ottoman "sovereignty" and Russian "guarantee." The shared Ottoman-Russian custody of the principalities epitomized Russia's ascendancy over the Ottoman Empire. However, this ascendancy did not remain unchallenged. The conflicts that featured local politics involved the Russian consuls who were in charge of supervising the application of the Organic Statutes. The Porte eagerly exerted its role of instance of appeal for discontent boyars from the principalities and preserved political connections with local actors. The European powers, suspicious that the condominium on the Danube and the Ottoman-Russian treaty of 1833 were a first step in Russia's plan for hegemony at Constantinople, intervened in the principalities' politics to perturb the activity of the Russian consuls and developed their own plans to gain influence in the Ottoman Empire.

The Rosetti-Roznovanus were competing with their peers and the *hospodar*, and tried to place themselves in the European imperial projects with respect to the Ottoman Empire. Iordache

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<sup>377</sup> Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2011), 146

was named chancellor and Nicolae recovered his title as treasurer due to the fact that Mihai Sturdza, involved in a constant conflict with the boyars, could not afford to dismiss such powerful officials without antagonizing them. They received positions in the assembly and Sturdza's executive council,<sup>378</sup> institutions that reprised the administrative attributions of the old boyars' council, in addition to assuming legislative attributions. But in a dynamic political setting such as that of Moldavia in the 1830s, these positions did not automatically entail political cooperation with the ruler. The boyars and the *hospodars*, who disputed each other's power, sent their complaints and asked for support from Constantinople, the Russian consuls and the other European representatives.

By acting as arbiter in the local competition and preserving some of the old political networks between the local elites and the Christian elites in Constantinople, the Porte aimed to use fully its "suzerain" prerogatives. The appointment of the *hospodar* Mihai Sturdza in 1834 revived old political relations. At the symbolic level, the ceremony of investiture of the *hospodars*, while stripped of many of the symbolic gestures that featured the appointment ritual before 1829, reiterated the *hospodars*' role of delegates of the sultan. The selected candidates for the office were called to the imperial palace for a meeting during which the sultan Mahmud II offered them the fez and medals, distinctions that were bestowed to all Ottoman officials in the new administration, and which affirmed the sovereign's authority over the two rulers.

Moreover, although the Greek revolt dealt a heavy blow to the Phanariot networks, some of the old relations between the boyars, the *hospodars* and the Constantinopolitan Christian officials who now acted mostly in the Ottoman diplomacy were still functional. At the formal level, these relations involved the preservation of the office of *kapı kehayâ*, the Christian

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<sup>378</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Familia Rosetti*, 93, 121

representative of the *hospodar* at Constantinople, an individual who resided in the capital, was deeply involved in the Ottoman government and defended the *hospodar*'s interests to the authorities there. The *kapı kehaya* was meant to serve the hospodar but he also enacted the authority that the Porte could legitimately claim as "suzerain" of Moldavia and as an arbiter of the local elites. The sultan and the other Ottoman authorities could immediately use this prerogative, given that the *hospodar* and his opponents began sending denunciations shortly after the nomination of Sturdza.<sup>379</sup>

These formal connections overlapped to a significant extent with old family, patronage and political relations. Thus, Mihai Sturdza's *kapı kehaya* in Constantinople was his father-in-law Stephanos Bogorides. Nicolae Aristarki, the *kapı kehaya* of the *hospodar* of Wallachia, was an old acquaintance of Nicolae Suțu, the son of a former Phanariot *hospodar*, who served as a prominent official in the Moldavian administration after 1830. Suțu, who was a supporter of Russia, did not refuse Ottoman distinctions in 1834<sup>380</sup> or preserved his old connections at Constantinople. Costache Conachi, another high official who participated in the administration set up by Russia during the war married his daughter to the son of Stephanos Bogorides. The fact that Conachi was related to Sturdza's father-in-law did not deter the boyar from submitting complaints against the ruler to the Porte.<sup>381</sup>

The Rosetti-Roznovanus, whose family had gained power and fortune during the Phanariot rules but who had been openly supporting Russian agendas in Moldavia did not tap on

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<sup>379</sup> Panaioti Rizos (ed.), *Mémoires du prince Nicolas Soutzo*, 111

<sup>380</sup> Panaioti Rizos (ed.), *Mémoires du prince Nicolas Soutzo*, 108

<sup>381</sup> Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Gobl, 1913), Vol. 17: 400

their connections with the Christian officials in Constantinople.<sup>382</sup> Disappointed by the previous lack of support from Russia, after 1833 Iordache and Nicolae maintained certain contacts with the Russian consuls,<sup>383</sup> but also began to develop their connections with the French representatives in the province. They were hardly the only ones to do so. The communication between the boyars and the representatives of the European empires, other than Russia, in the province, was indicative of the fact that local politics combined with rival imperial interests to cause problems to Russia in the principalities.

Russia attempted to scrutinize closely the administration under the *hospodar* and especially the rising conflict between the *hospodar* and various boyars who hoped that his deposition and subsequent elections would bring them to power. The Russian consuls accepted denunciations from the boyars but could not always control the outcome of the conflicts, thus becoming involved in local intrigues. The *hospodar* Mihail Sturdza preserved good relations both with the Russian consuls and with the Porte where he sent reports against the boyars whom he accused of causing troubles in the principality because they had not received the position of *hospodar*.<sup>384</sup> But participating in the local power schemes the Russian consuls alienated some old supporters. The boyars did not hesitate to address the consuls of the other European powers, who used the opportunity to vex the Russian consuls in the principalities.<sup>385</sup> In this respect, the French consuls hoped that the *hospodars*, who had been trained in Paris, would be particularly open

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<sup>382</sup> Nicolae's son will marry the granddaughter of Stephanos Bogorides in 1875 (Christine Philliou, *Biography of an empire*, 179) but by that time the Rosetti-Roznovanu position will undergo major changes

<sup>383</sup> In 1841 the new Russian consul in Moldavia Nicjolas Giers was a frequent guest of Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu. See Charles and Barbara Jelavich (eds.), *The Education of a Russian Statesman: The Memoirs of Nicholas Karlovich Giers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 134

<sup>384</sup> Panaioti Rizos (ed.), *Mémoires du prince Nicolas Soutzo*, 111

<sup>385</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 269

towards them, especially after the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the province.<sup>386</sup> The Porte turned the blind eye to the increasing interference of the other European consulates in local affairs. The Ottoman officials could not and in fact were not willing to prevent European opposition to Russia's preeminence in Ottoman affairs: international rivalry could keep Russia's potentially growing ambitions in check.

France and Britain had missed a major occasion to gain effective influence at Constantinople during the Egyptian crisis of 1830 and allowed Russia to repute two major diplomatic successes in 1833. These were the Treaty with the Ottoman Empire at Hunkar Iskelessi and an agreement with the Habsburg Empire whereby the two powers committed to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the power of the sultan,<sup>387</sup> and which consecrated in fact Russia's new hegemonic position in the Near East. In response, Britain strove to improve its diplomatic relations with Constantinople, and to actively intervene for the modernization and strengthening of the empire against any domestic challenges, including the claims of the governor of Egypt.<sup>388</sup> France, on the other hand, had been a supporter of Mehmet Ali, and although it finally joined the European opposition against the Egyptian governor, it preserved its interest in controlling Ottoman territories. In 1833 the French Minister of Foreign Affairs de Rigny dispatched the Baron Charles Bois le Comte on a mission through the Ottoman

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<sup>386</sup> Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Gobl, 1913), Vol. 17: 328

<sup>387</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 86

<sup>388</sup> G. D. Clayton, *Britain and the Eastern Question*, 74-75

lands from the Danube to Egypt and Syria, during which he took notes about local social and political conditions.<sup>389</sup>

When Bois le Comte reached the capital of Moldavia, Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu requested an audience with the French delegate. If Russia had not been willing to support his candidacy to the rule of Moldavia, Nicolae was committed to improve his chances with the support of Russia's rivals. Introducing himself as a French-educated individual, a liberal and an admirer of the values of emancipation and political rights the treasurer soon received le Comte's attention.<sup>390</sup> Nicolae presented an overview of the recent transformations in Moldavia to emphasize the patriotism of local boyars such as himself, and to explain how their enthusiasm for freedom had been manipulated by Russia for its imperial expansion in the Balkans. Russia attracted wide support in the Balkans by calling to confessional solidarity and claiming that its mission was to protect the Orthodox peoples there and to create a new "Roman" empire in which these peoples would enjoy freedom and prosperity. When Rosetti-Roznovanu and other boyars offered their support to Russia, they did so believing that they would have received self-rule for the principality and that Moldavia would not be annexed to the Russian Empire. The boyars soon became aware that the principles they defended, political freedom and patriotism, contradicted the despotism that Russia or the Austrian Empires manifested.<sup>391</sup> Nicolae's assessments echoed le Comte's own opinions. In his reports to de Rigny the French diplomat noted that the Russian-

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<sup>389</sup> Ion Stanciu, "Two Foreign Accounts on the Romanian Modern Identity in Transition: the Assimilation of Western Values by the Middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century," in *Europe viewed from the Margins*, edited by Ion Stanciu, Silviu Miloiu, Iulian Oncescu (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2007), 12

<sup>390</sup> Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* ( Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Gobl, 1913), Vol. 17: 400

<sup>391</sup> Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, Vol. 17: 400-401

sponsored Organic Statutes helped introduce the “progress” in the principalities, but that Russia used them as an instrument for expansion.<sup>392</sup>

Yet, Nicolae did not receive effective political support from Comte. The diplomat had met with other boyars too, and showed great admiration for the *hospodar* Mihai Sturdza who, in his turn, had also claimed that through the Organic Statutes he and the other boyars attempted to implement constitutional liberalism on a borderland between three autocratic powers. Bois le Comte commended Sturdza’s efforts but he did not promise any help to him either. Instead, the delegate explained that France could prevent Russia’s intrusions by bringing the principalities to the attention of the international “public opinion.”

This response was emblematic for the stance of France in this imperial condominium. Its consuls might have vociferously opposed the attempts of Kiselev to annex the principalities<sup>393</sup> and received the boyars’ visits but could not challenge Russian authority in the principalities. Instead, France attempted to capitalize on the cultural influence that it acquired among the boyars thanks to the education they received in Paris and as a moderate monarchy compared to the autocratic allies the Russian and the Habsburg Empires. Moreover, le Comte’s note about the “national spirit”<sup>394</sup> in Wallachia and Moldavia signaled the emergence of another opportunity for French ambitions agendas and local ambitions to meet. Yet these French missions and a new European-Ottoman agreement in 1839 that replaced the Treaty of Hunkar Iskelessi and ended Russia’s hegemony in the Ottoman Empire did not challenge the Russian-Ottoman condominium in the principalities. The concept that France could sponsor the national development of Wallachia and Moldavia gained currency, during the next decades, among local nationalists,

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<sup>392</sup> Ion Stanciu, “Two Foreign Accounts,” 15

<sup>393</sup> Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, Vol. 17: 328

<sup>394</sup> Ion Stanciu, “Two Foreign Accounts,” 17



French liberal intellectuals and the French monarch and fueled the developing anti-Russian opposition there.

As Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu's contacts with the French representatives did not amount to significant political gains, he and his father attempted to manipulate local politics in their favor and to develop collaboration with the *hospodar*. Mihai Sturdza, who used any means to undermine opposition, was wary of the Rosetti-Roznovanus' power. Although he was familiar with these officials' ambition to gain the nomination of *hospodar* for Nicolae, he offered Iordache a position in his close circle as president of the *hospodar's* council. Iordache, in return, made his acceptance dependent on the nomination of his son, Nicolae, as minister of internal affairs, and of protégés of his in the courts of appeal.<sup>395</sup> Iordache's death in 1836 stopped short the discussions between the *hospodar* and the boyar.<sup>396</sup>

The heir of a great fortune, which had been gathered by his father, Nicolae preserved his rank and position at the forefront of politics in Moldavia but did not enter the *hospodar's* entourage. Sturdza, in his turn, maintained himself in power regardless the intrigues of the *boyars* and the accusations of corruption until 1848 when the Porte, but especially the Russian court, fearing that the project of reform endorsed by several boyars would lead to revolutionary unrest, occupied the principalities. Nicolae's political career was not affected by the events of 1848 but the two courts disregarded him again as a candidate to the rule when appointing a replacement for Sturdza in 1849. The Rosetti-Roznovanus' ambition to become rulers of Moldavia ended with Nicolae. Nunuță, his son, continued the family's tradition of service and of tight connections with the Ottoman Orthodox officials at Constantinople and served as a deputy in the parliament of the United Principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia's successor political

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<sup>395</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Familia Rosetti*, 95

<sup>396</sup> Radu Rosetti, *Familia Rosetti*, 94

entity. But Nunuță also yielded the position at the forefront of local politics and followed a career in the bureaucracy and district administration that will be followed by his successors too.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I followed the treasurer Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu's unrelenting efforts to become *hospodar* of Moldavia from 1822 when the Ottoman Empire reasserted its authority in the province, until after Russia's supremacy over the Ottoman Empire materialized in a Russian-sponsored Russian-Ottoman condominium in this province. By examining Rosetti-Roznovanu's strategies to obtain the rule of Moldavia over a span of twenty years, I aimed to reveal how the Russian-Ottoman rivalry transitioned in Russian-Ottoman shared control on the Danube borderland, changing substantially the nature of Ottoman rule there. The definition of the Ottoman authority as "sovereignty" over a stable territory and a population whose prosperity was guaranteed by Russia and the workings of the political and administrative apparatus that had served Ottoman and Russian custody created a precedent for later international interventions. I also aimed to investigate how local politics shaped the application of the imperial condominium and various imperial claims on this borderland.

Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu owed his rise to power to the financial support and to the political relations that his father, the influential boyar Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu, had already developed with Russian representatives and members of the leadership in Moldavia. But as the Russian Empire imposed its authority in former Ottoman lands, Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu became convinced that the most efficient method to become *hospodar* was to present himself as a supporter of Russian expansion and as a reform-minded individual who could contribute to the development of the Russian Empire's southern provinces. In so doing, he neglected the fact that

Russia implemented another imperial project in Moldavia and Wallachia, one which did not aim at territorial annexation but at extending Russian influence over Ottoman affairs in general. Thus, the re-organization of the administration that general Kiselev implemented as a first step towards annexation was subsequently used to reflect Russia's new status of defender of the Ottoman Empire. It also offered to members of the local leadership a new venue to re-assert their political preeminence over the rule in Wallachia and Moldavia.

In this fashion, the new *hospodars* that the Ottoman and Russian Empires selected to rule Wallachia and Moldavia were individuals who, like Rosetti-Roznovanu, had been involved in the rule of the provinces under the Phanariot rules and who had political connections at Constantinople and among the Russian authorities. However, unlike Rosetti-Roznovanu, these individuals did not pursue supposed imperial projects but maintained their active position in the administration and thus showed their credentials to be placed at the head of the "independent internal administration." Even though Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu's miscalculation did not prevent him from claiming an important political and official position in this administration after 1833, it compromised his family's chances at taking the rule of the principality. His son, Nicolae, also downplayed political activity for a steady career in the administration. How elites in the principalities became divided along institutional lines and how this transformation combined with a new stage of inter-imperial rivalry on the Danube will be the object of the next chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Politics at the end of empire: European expansion, “imperial suzerainty” and “national government” on the borderland, 1830s-1850s<sup>397</sup>**

### **Introduction**

The Treaties of London (1827) and of Adrianople (1829) through which the European powers defined Ottoman control in Greece, Serbia, Wallachia and Moldavia as “suzerainty” lay the foundations for an emerging body of international law that placed irreversible restrictions on Ottoman authority in the Balkans. Politics in Wallachia and Moldavia during the following period are emblematic for the way in which Russia and other European powers created the arrangements that restricted Ottoman control over Ottoman lands and Christian subjects and for the way in which local Christian elites that implemented Ottoman rule reacted to this interference. How did local elites and successive international agreements shape each other and imperial “suzerainty” in a region where European powers competed to control the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire?

In this chapter, I aim to reveal the continuities between different forms of European intervention in the Ottoman Empire as they manifested through the design of a local government from former servants of the Ottoman rule on the borderland in Wallachia. I also aim to show the continuities between imperial agendas and international agreements with respect to the Ottoman Empire and an emerging national project endorsed by some members of the local government. Finally, I also aim to retrace the ways in which local leadership changed through the creation of an international-sponsored government and internationally-condoned nation-building process. To analyze these levels of continuity and change between imperial expansion, international arbitrage and local rule and the transformation of flexible borderland elites into “national” politicians, I

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<sup>397</sup> This chapter draws on research sponsored through a New Europe College Fellowship and on information that I have used before, in a different form, in a publication under the auspices of New Europe College.

will reconstruct the career of Alexandru Samurcas (1805-1870), the heir of the prominent official Constantin Samurcas (Chapter 2). Alexandru Samurcas was a boyar in the local administration supervised by the Ottoman military after the uprisings of 1821 and a boyar and prosecutor in the administration set up under the Ottoman-Russian condominium after 1830. Although he eventually withdrew from politics, he prepared his son for a career in the service of the United Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, the political entity that succeeded to the autonomous Wallachia and Moldavia after 1859.

In the first section of this chapter, I will examine the continuities and changes between the elites that exerted local power under the Ottoman-appointed *hospodars* and the leadership that was entrusted during the Russian-Ottoman condominium with governing the population and securing local prosperity. In this respect, I will emphasize that the divisions caused by the Greek revolts and the increase in the number of appointments made by the *hospodar* influenced the composition of the local leadership but did not change factional politics. In the second section, I will explain how the administration established under Russian protection of the “autonomous” Wallachia through the Organic Statutes and incipient ideological mobilization in Wallachia led to the multiplication of political sites and activities. In the third section, I will explore the connections between the Russian protection of Wallachia and Moldavia in the 1830s and collective European guarantee in the 1850s and the mutual influence between the European arrangement for the Ottoman Empire and the local leadership.

## **1. Empires bridging old divisions: the creation of local government under Russian protection and Ottoman suzerainty, 1825 – 1834**

In 1829, Russia imposed on the Ottoman Empire the recognition of Russian protection of Wallachia, Moldavia and Serbia and arrogated the supervision of a local government in the “principalities” Wallachia and Moldavia that would act “independently” on “internal” matters but would not hinder Ottoman “sovereignty.”<sup>398</sup> The Russian-sponsored government became a prize for local factional politics and in the conflict along hierarchical levels between the officials who had served Ottoman rule after the removal in 1821 of the Phanariot *hospodars*. The power conflict shaped the implementation of this government, the way in which Russian “protection” played out locally and the way in which it was perceived by other European powers that endeavored to exert influence in Ottoman affairs. Alexandru Samurcas’ attempts between 1825 and 1834 to gain a rank comparable to that of his ancestors can shed light on the way in which local elites grafted their ways of doing politics on the administration that Russia sponsored to implement its influence over the Porte.

*Old politics and new divisions in Wallachia under Ottoman rule after 1821*

In 1825, the death of the *kaymakam* and *vornic* Constantin Samurcas in Braşov left his nephew Alexandru without material and political backing. Alexandru decided to return to Wallachia and to re-forge his family’s associations to obtain an appointment. The young Samurcas would not have been in such a precarious position had a series of misfortunes and the time’s changes not brought the family on the verge of extinction. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Samurcas, who had recently arrived from Constantinople, enjoyed a prominent and stable position among the first officials of Wallachia. Constantin had risen to high prominence as administration of Little Wallachia and treasurer and through the marriage to a “local” woman,

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<sup>398</sup> E.S. Creasy, “Appendix A: Treaty of Adrianople,” in *History of Ottoman Turks: from the beginning of their empire to the present time. Chiefly founded on Von Hammer* (London R. Bentley, 1854), 524

Zinca Brânceanu (Chapter 2). Another brother, Dimitrie, earned a diploma in medicine but he relocated to Moldavia where he tended, among others, the Rosetti-Roznovanu family.<sup>399</sup> Their youngest sibling, Ioan, took offices of judge and administrator in Wallachia and Little Wallachia<sup>400</sup> where he married Catherine Rallet, the daughter of a prominent official in the administration.<sup>401</sup> By 1821, Ioan also acquired the office of *postelnic*,<sup>402</sup> which was in charge of managing the *hospodars*' correspondence and contacts with foreign representatives. Constantin, who was the most powerful member of the family, did not have children but Ioan and Catherine had three sons, Costake, Dimitrie and Alexandru.<sup>403</sup>

The relative prosperity and stability of the family was shattered in 1821 when the Hetairist campaign and the local uprising by Tudor Vladimirescu, a former protégé of Constantin Samurcas in Wallachia, led to the dispatch of Ottoman troops to quell the turbulences. The subsequent revolts in Greece fueled persecutions against the Phanariots in Constantinople and led to the removal of the Phanariot *hospodars* in Wallachia and Moldavia and to denunciations against some boyars for having supported or corresponded with the Greek rebels. Constantin became fearful of retaliation and fled to Habsburg Transylvania. Ioan decided to remain in Wallachia where, together with two other boyars, he became overseer of the administration under Ottoman military supervision until the newly-appointed *hospodar* Scarlat Callimachi

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<sup>399</sup> Vlad Zirra, "Medici din Moldova veacului trecut: Dimitrie Samurcaș și descendența sa (I)," *Arhiva Genealogică* Ediție Anastatică I-V (1989-1993): 723

<sup>400</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Banii și caimacamii Craiovei*, (Craiova: Scrisul Românesc)

<sup>401</sup> Octav-George Lecca, *Familiiile boierești române* (Bucharest, 1899), 569

<sup>402</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXII/no. 51, f. 1 recto; Christine Philliou, "Worlds, Old and New: Phanariot Networks and the Remaking of Ottoman Governance in the First Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2007), 296

<sup>403</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Arhiva Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Gobl, 1919), 291

would have taken charge.<sup>404</sup> But as the Ottomans continued to indiscriminately punish the Orthodox officials in Constantinople and those who had arrived from the capital to Wallachia, Callimachi's appointment was soon revoked and two of the *kaymakams*, among whom Ioan, were executed.<sup>405</sup> Ioan's eldest son, Dimitrie, took his place in the administration but he soon converted to Islam and relocated to Adrianople to avoid execution on accusations of mismanagement.<sup>406</sup> Alexandru, only a teenager, moved to Braşov where he lived with his uncle Constantin and began law studies.<sup>407</sup>

Left without significant support upon his Constantin's death in 1825, Alexandru returned to Wallachia's Western region, Little Wallachia, where his father and uncle had once been in office. The boyars in the province offered him an honorary title as *clucer*, which placed him at the bottom of the first rank, and exemptions from public taxes for some of the tenants on its lands,<sup>408</sup> as it was customary for all first generation descendants of officials. These privileges, which under ordinary circumstances would have been the first step for a political career, were not of major help to Alexandru Samurcas. Recent changes in the rule of the province of Wallachia made the ascension of Alexandru, who lacked family help or wealth to sponsor his projects, all the more difficult.

As the Greek uprisings triggered violent Ottoman reprisals in Constantinople and the dispatch of the military in Wallachia, in 1822 some of the boyars who took refuge in Braşov

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<sup>404</sup> Christine Philliou, "Worlds, Old and New," 134

<sup>405</sup> Octav-George Lecca, *Familiile boiereşti române*. (Bucharest: Libra, 2000), 654

<sup>406</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Arhiva Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino*, 291; OS, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Sonderbestände, Nachlass Gentz, Karton 7, Konv. 3, f. 57 verso

<sup>407</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Arhiva Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino*, 291

<sup>408</sup> *Analele Parlamentare* 1, (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1831): 164



submitted petitions in which they requested that the sultan should appoint the *hospodars* from among the local officials and not from the ranks of Constantinopolitan Hellenized Orthodox officials.<sup>409</sup> The sultan Mahmud II, who had dismantled the main Constantinopolitan families rotating at the rule of these provinces, accepted the boyars' petition and appointed the former chancellor and representative of Little Wallachia Grigore Ghica as *hospodar*. Ghica was the descendent of a numerous and prestigious family with strong political and blood ties in Wallachia and Moldavia as well as Constantinople.<sup>410</sup> To the Porte, he seemed the right choice to preserve the established imperial rule in Wallachia without the political complications and suspicions that featured the rules of *hospodars* from the Constantinopolitan Phanariot families. But in Wallachia, his appointment fueled conflicts between boyar factions and between boyar ranks.

Divisions between the boyar ranks had existed before the Phanariot rulers and the reformist *hospodar* Constantin Mavrocordato formalized them to re-assert the connection between the officials' authority and that of the *hospodar*. Thus, the boyars were separated between those who served in high administrative positions and those who had less important appointments, and between those who were in service and those who did not occupy any position but whose ancestors had been grand boyars.<sup>411</sup> Depending on whether they were boyars active in the administration or descendants of grand boyars, these individuals received tax exemptions for the tenants on their land estates, privileges and priority in the purchase of tax-farms.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 8: 279-280

<sup>410</sup> Octav-George Lecca, *Familiiile boierești române* (Bucharest, 1899), 240-241

<sup>411</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu and Irina Gavrilă, *Arhondologiile Țării Românești de la 1837* (Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei, Editura Istros, 2002), 3-5

<sup>412</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu, "Mobility and traditionalism: the evolution of the boyar class in the Romanian principalities in the 18th century," *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 24, no. 3 (1986): 250

However, these distinctions did not hinder the mobility from the lower to the higher ranks. As revealed in previous chapters, being a boyar under the Phanariot rules was not an exclusively social or political category but referred to participating in the multi-faceted relations of power that connected individuals to the ruler appointed by the sultan, and which underlay the collection and re-distribution of public resources. Thus, the boyars made a composite group of relatives of the *hospodar*, creditors, landowners and individuals who claimed prestigious ancestry and whose retinues<sup>413</sup> overlapped with the extensive networks of the Phanariot *hospodars* spreading between Constantinople, Bucharest and Iassy.<sup>414</sup> As the *hospodars* were successively changed, the political factions that supported one or another also rotated in power even though some boyars were skillful to remain in power under different *hospodars*.

But the removal of the Phanariot *hospodars* in 1821 and the appointment of the rulers from among the boyars ended the rotation to power of the boyars' cliques and introduced tensions not only between cliques but also between the boyars' ranks. The wealthiest or most influential boyars believed that the moment had come to promote their own ambitions of becoming rulers (Chapter 3). The multiplication of the number of lower rank boyars, promoted by the temporary administrators before the appointment of Ghica, could assist their projects but also caused political problems. For one, the allegiance of lower-ranking boyars could not be controlled: they offered their political support to different aspirants to the office of *hospodar*. Aware of their political clout, the lower-ranking boyars also lobbied for an increase of their

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<sup>413</sup> Mihai Cantacuzino, *Istoria politică și geografică a Țării Românești de la cea mai veche a sa întemeiere până la anul 1774*, trans. George Sion, (Bucharest: Tipografia Națională a lui Stephan Rassidescu, 1863), 15-16; Marc-Philippe Zallony, *Essai sur les Phanariotes* (Marseille: Imprimerie d'Antoine Ricard, 1824), 49-53

<sup>414</sup> Christine Philliou, "Breaking the *Tetrarchia* and saving the *kaymakam*: to be an ambitious Ottoman Christian in 1821," in *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans 1750-1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation*, edited by Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovos, (Rethymno: University of Crete, Department of History and Archaeology, 2007), 189

prerogatives, privileges and political influence, concessions that aroused the opposition of the major boyars.

Ghica's mandate as *hospodar* intensified the traditional factionalism of local politics, as he now faced the competition of the other boyars for the rule.<sup>415</sup> To counter the political opposition of these individuals, each of whom had the means and the ambition to become ruler, Ghica created a retinue that comprised several prominent boyars in the province, among whom the Filipescu, Crețulescu, Băleanu and the Bălăceanu, who had been acquaintances of the old Constantin Samurcas (see Chapter 2), as well as lower rank boyars and individuals. The support of the high boyars to Ghica was short lived and they soon began to scheme the removal of the *hospodar*.<sup>416</sup> To eliminate the possibility that he could rely on the boyars of lower ranks, they also began to denounce the ascent of these individuals to higher positions and their political participation.<sup>417</sup>

Another division between the elites that perspired in 1821 when the boyars petitioned the sultan for a *hospodar* selected from Wallachia was that between the boyars "from the land" and "Greeks." Ever since the 1760s the boyars claimed that the sultan should acknowledge their authority and name "local" *hospodars*. These requests were picked by Russia, which arrogated the position of intercessor for Wallachia and Moldavia, to amend the way in which the Ottomans ruled this borderland and to request that "locals" should have been preferred for office in the provinces to the "Greeks" who should have received appointments depending only on their

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<sup>415</sup> Keith Hitchins, *Românii, 1774-1866* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1996), 195

<sup>416</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor* (Bucharest: 1938), Vol. 8: 307-309

<sup>417</sup> Keith Hitchins, *Românii, 1774-1866*, 287

expertise.<sup>418</sup> The provisions were not applied systematically but offered a potential instrument that Russia could use, depending on its interests, to intervene in the Ottoman rule over Orthodox Christian subjects.<sup>419</sup> In 1821 the boyars of Wallachia repeated the demands for the removal of the “Greeks” from rule. However, by this means, they pursued their own projects at becoming *hospodars* and tried to distance themselves from the Hellenized Christian bureaucrats whom the sultan eliminated from imperial rule as collaborators of the insurgents for Greek emancipation.

The boyars continued to use the division “from the land”-“Greeks” as a political instrument, depending on circumstances. Similarly to the period before 1821, it separated the individuals who had built power and prestige in Wallachia and Moldavia from the new-comers who accompanied the *hospodar* from Constantinople and who yet needed to acquire political credit in the provinces. Language and birth place stressed divisions between those who spoke the vernacular or the vernacular and Greek and those who spoke only Greek, and between those who were born and bred in Wallachia and those who had been educated in the Hellenized culture of the Orthodox Christian circles in Constantinople, tightly associated with the Patriarchate. But language and family connections also allowed the amalgamation between “locals” and “Greeks,” as many of those who were identified in one category or the other spoke each other’s languages and had relatives in both groups. When the difference between boyars from the land and “Greek” boyars were reiterated after 1821, it was intended for less discriminatory effect than before. The tensions between political factions and between ranks were more influential in polarizing politics in Wallachia than the division “Greeks”-“boyars from the land.”

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<sup>418</sup> Mustafa A. Mehmet, *Documente turcești privind istoria României* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.Romania, 1986), Vol. 3: 174

<sup>419</sup> Victor Taki, “Russia on the Danube: Imperial Expansion and Political Reform in Moldavia and Wallachia, 1812-1834” (PhD diss., Central European University, 2007), 112-114

It can be argued that the complaints of the high boyars against the lower ranks might have targeted in fact the “Greeks,” especially those who tried to escape to the province in 1821 and took subordinate offices. But Samurcas’ biography in the 1820s suggests that the “Greek”-“locals” division was not the main source for tensions in the province. When Alexandru Samurcas returned to the province, he was not marginalized on account of the fact that his family arrived from Constantinople to Wallachia two generations before, but was offered the customary awards due to children of boyars. Samurcas encountered major obstacles as a young boyar deprived of wealth and support, whose position at the bottom of the first rank category did not allow a promising career unless he associated to one of the prominent boyars.

It was under such circumstances that Samurcas tightened his relations with the representative of Little Wallachia and chancellor Alexandru Filipescu. This boyar had been an acquaintance of the *vornic* Constantin Samurcas with whom he served as delegate of the boyars to the leader of the peasant rebellion in Wallachia in 1821.<sup>420</sup> Again like Samurcas, Filipescu had been an exile in Transylvania since the time of the rebellion through most of the rule of Ghica, having returned only in 1826.<sup>421</sup> However, unlike Samurcas, Filipescu had preserved his power, especially since his extended family continued to have a grip on high offices. Although Ghica recruited in his retinue not only lower-rank boyars, who owed their office to the *hospodar*, but also high boyars such as the Filipescu and the Bălăceanu, these power holders soon began to openly oppose the ruler.<sup>422</sup> Alexandru Samurcas was not necessarily adverse to Ghica, but the connections with Filipescu placed him in the faction that opposed the *hospodar*. In the long term,

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<sup>420</sup> Dumitru Bodin, “Tudor Vladimirescu și Constantin Samurcas” in *In amintirea lui Constantin Giurescu la douăzeci și cinci ani de la moartea lui*, edited by Constantin Marinescu, Alexandru Rosetti, Victor Papacostea and Constantin Grecescu (Bucharest, 1944), 165; Octav-George Lecca, *Familiile boierești române*, 221

<sup>421</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 8: 307-308

<sup>422</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 8: 310-311

Alexandru's association with Filipescu was a wise decision. Filipescu served as an official in the administration under Russian occupation after 1829 and in all likeness helped Samurcas receive a new appointment.

*Government under Russian "protection" and Ottoman "suzerainty"*

These elites fighting for ranks and for the position of *hospodar* were called in 1829 to implement an unprecedented Ottoman-Russian imperial condominium over an Ottoman borderland. Ever since Russia, at war with the Ottoman Empire, dispatched its troops in Wallachia and Moldavia, the Russian authorities oversaw the drafting by the boyars of a program for the re-organization of the provinces that was subsequently approved in 1829 in the peace Treaty of Adrianople between the two powers. The Porte's agreement to sharing prerogatives of rule with Russia on their borderland in the Balkans marked the beginning of two decades of Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire. It provided that the Porte accepted an institutional reform in Wallachia and Moldavia for their "independent internal administration," designated as "government,"<sup>423</sup> but one which was implemented under the supervision of the Russian authorities present in the provinces after the war. It also stipulated a territorial delimitation for Wallachia and Moldavia, removing the last Ottoman fortresses from the Wallachian shore of the Danube,<sup>424</sup> according to the findings of a mixed Russian-Ottoman commission, but restoring these occupied provinces to the sultan.<sup>425</sup>

By specifying that the Ottoman Porte approved the administrative reform in Wallachia and Moldavia, which Russia implemented as a guarantor of their prosperity, the treaty also

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<sup>423</sup> E.S. Creasy, "Appendix A: Treaty of Adrianople," 517

<sup>424</sup> E.S. Creasy, "Appendix A: Treaty of Adrianople," 522

<sup>425</sup> E.S. Creasy, "Appendix A: Treaty of Adrianople," 516

created the notion that the Ottomans' power in these borderland provinces was translatable as "suzerainty." The Porte was entitled to collect the tribute in the provinces within the territorial delimitation of 1829, a provision that formalized the territoriality of the sultan's "suzerainty." But at the same time, the Treaty of Adrianople inaugurated the concept that the power of the sultan over an imperial territory and subjects was conditional on another empire's approval and that this power was effective within the perimeters defined through an international covenant. After the treaty, the Ottoman Porte could re-assert its power by appointing the first *hospodars* and later sending troops to pacify the provinces, but it could do so with the acknowledgment or at the behest of the Russian authorities.

The government that the Russian authorities in Wallachia and Moldavia set up after instructions from Sankt Petersburg became the field for local power struggle and competing imperial and international claims. This administration reordered the existing local hierarchies, offering new prizes for factions but also the setting for an incipient ideological politics. At the level of inter-imperial relations, the local government materialized Russian control in the Ottoman Empire. Yet, local elites also elicited the attention of Western European powers that endeavored to end Russian hegemony by manipulating the difficulties that local politics were causing to Russian control in the Balkans (see Chapter 3).

After 1830 Alexandru Samurcas made his way in the administration under Russian supervision. Given that this administration was stuffed with the opponents of the *hospodar* Ghica who was deposed at the beginning of the occupation, I suggest that Samurcas owed his position during Russian occupation to Alexandru Filipescu. Ever since 1828, Alexandru Filipescu and other opponents of Ghica took offices in the judicial and administrative councils created by the

Russian authorities.<sup>426</sup> They also served as members in the commissions that drafted the Organic Statutes, the local administrative regulations after Russian guidelines, which were remitted to the Porte and the Russian authorities in 1831.<sup>427</sup> It was during this period that Alexandru Samurcas was assigned to act as interpreter of Greek and French in the consultative commission for the revision of the regulations.<sup>428</sup> He was also included as a secretary in the Commission for the delimitation of the border on the Danube,<sup>429</sup> which was composed of a Russian representative, Raigent, the Ottoman delegate Mehmed Arif Efendi and a local official, Mihai Ghica.<sup>430</sup>

The translation activity that Samurcas deployed for these commissions was in accordance to the office of second *postelnic* (interpreter) that he acquired in the province,<sup>431</sup> and which was a position subordinate to that of *postelnic* held by his father in 1821. Alexandru hoped that under the new regulations and administration, which promoted the idea that service warranted title, his activity and the support of a high rank official would help him achieve higher position in the government and in politics. His expectations soon seemed to materialize: he was called to participate in the assembly that voted for the approval of the revised, Russian-sponsored Organic

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<sup>426</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l'Occupation Russe (1828-1834)* (Bucharest: L'Indépendance Roumaine, 1904), 60, 67

<sup>427</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 76

<sup>428</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXII/no.3

<sup>429</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 68; *Analele Parlamentare* 1: 31

<sup>430</sup> He was the brother of a former prince of Wallachia, Grigore IV Ghika, whom the Ottomans appointed after the dismantlement of the Phanariots, and of a future prince of Wallachia, Alexander II Ghika, Eugène Rizo-Rangabé, *Livre d'or de la noblesse phanariote en Grèce, en Roumanie, en Russie et en Turquie* (Athens: Imprimerie S.C. Vlastos, 1892), 47-48; about the composition of the commission, Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 68

<sup>431</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXII/no. 3; no. 20



Statutes. He was also assigned the second rank of *comis* and a position of prosecutor in the district of Ilfov near Bucharest.<sup>432</sup>

However, Samurcas' plans for advancement were soon stalled. During the first years after the implementation of the Organic Statutes, the management of Wallachia remained in the hands of the most powerful boyars and was a source of sinecures for their protégés. Russia did not plan to alter significantly the political mechanisms in Wallachia, but to manifest the power it had gained over the Ottoman Empire and the fact that whoever was in charge in the province had to gain the support of the Russian representatives (Chapter 3). At the same time, the Statutes reinforced the boyar hierarchies by reprising the divisions between "old" and "new" boyars and between "locals" and "Greeks" and by assigning many of those who had aspired at rising in rank to stable but also static positions in an emerging institutional bureaucracy.

The boyars in power received the title of "nobles" that reinforced their position of leadership in the government and their authority in relation to the *hospodar*, who was selected from their midst, and to the boyars of inferior ranks. As "nobles," they also participated in the assemblies that proposed new laws and regulations to be considered and endorsed by the *hospodar*.<sup>433</sup> The recognition of the quality of "nobles" was dependent on land-ownership<sup>434</sup> but, in the context where title had outlived the quality of being a local "lord" and had become connected to public service,<sup>435</sup> land-ownership was less of a criterion to promote their

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<sup>432</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXII/no. 23; no. 51

<sup>433</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 86, 89-90

<sup>434</sup> Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1995), 100-101

<sup>435</sup> If before the 18<sup>th</sup> century the quality of boyar belonged to landowners, independently of their official position (Constantin Giurescu, *Despre boieri și despre rumâni* (Bucharest: Compania, 2009)), after the appointment of the Phanariot rulers, it became increasingly associated with holding a position in the administration. Romanian historiography argues that this transformation only allowed low-rank individuals to accede to inferior positions, whereas the high boyars, drawing their origins from the medieval military lords, had always derived their power

prominence than a criterion to contest the political voice of the lower-rank boyars. The incumbents of the lower-ranks could obtain titles according to the offices they exerted but, formally, these titles were not hereditary.<sup>436</sup> On the other hand, since they could vote representatives in the legislative assembly and could play a part in the political game of the high nobles, the lower-rank officials could hope to gain the support of a patron and the perpetuation of their privileges. Thus, the new delimitations that reinforced the primacy of the high boyars did not eliminate factional politics. For the next few years, as new provisions regulated the steps of promotion for lower-rank individuals at the *hospodar*'s recommendation and with the high officials' approval, the high boyars, or "nobles" could still help their protégés to advance in the administration. In return, the protégés would vote for their patron in the assemblies for the election of the *hospodar*.

A supplement to the Organic Statutes was approved in 1837 to regulate how functions in the newly created military and the administration corresponded to old boyar titles and to set up a hierarchy that the assembly and the *hospodar* should follow in conferring noble titles. This new regulation organized the elites in three classes and stipulated which old positions corresponded to the newly-created offices in the administration and to noble rank.<sup>437</sup> Many of the positions that used to belong to the top tier of the boyars hierarchy were now assigned to lower classes and ranks. Although nepotism allowed certain boyars to advance in rank and be part of the legislative

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from landownership, the vestige of their military past (Neagu Djuvara, "Les Grand Boiars ont-ils constitué dans les principautés roumaines une véritable oligarchie institutionnelle et héréditaire?" *Südost Forschungen* 46 (1987): 1-56). I suggest that aside from the problematic issue of the continuity medieval lords-modern boyars, this line of inquiry also obscures the extent to which the boyars integrated office-holding in their self-identification and their power and wealth came to depend on it during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>436</sup> Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea*, 102; *Regulamentul Organic* (Bucharest: Eliad, 1832), Chapter VIII, Section 1, art. 350 - art. 351, 187

<sup>437</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu and Irina Gavrilă, *Arhondologiile Țării Românești de la 1837*, 5

assemblies,<sup>438</sup> many of them remained confined to offices in the administration, the reformed judiciary apparatus and the newly created military. Samurcas was one of the individuals who saw their chances at rising to first rank dwindle: having started his official career at the bottom of the first rank, his new positions and the administrative reorganization downgraded him to the third class.

But whereas the Statutes reinforced divisions and hierarchies among the boyars according to social and political status, another provision with respect to the “Greek” and “locals” or “local Rumanians” provided the bases for the elimination of this division that the boyars used to control the rise to power of some of their peers. The new regulations stipulated that the incumbents of offices were to be all “locals” or “local Rumanians” a condition for which the “Greeks” could qualify within seven years after applying for naturalization, if they could certify relations to the “local” families through blood relations, marriage or adoption.<sup>439</sup> A decade after the Hetairist revolt in Wallachia and the removal of the Phanariot *hospodars* from power, this provision seems to have voiced deep and old resentment against the “Greeks.” It also evoked an emerging self-identification of the other boyars as locals but also as “Rumanians.”

However, by distinguishing between “Greeks” and “locals” the statutes did not solidify old divisions but rather paved the way for this distinction to disappear in time. The naturalization as “locals” concerned specifically those who aspired to rank and position and it was a requirement that could have been fulfilled rather easily. It also provided a formal acknowledgment to the connections that continued between boyars in Wallachia and the Greek Orthodox officials who survived in the Ottoman administration at the Porte after the

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<sup>438</sup> The *hospodar* could award promotions in the ranks of the judiciary and the military and the “nobles” selected individuals for promotions in the bureaucracy, both the *hospodar* and the nobles thus being able to buy the loyalty of supporters in the elections.

<sup>439</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 86, 179

dismantlement of the Phanariots. Several such officials had served as boyars in Wallachia and Moldavia and now became representatives of the new *hospodars*, continuing to strike family relations with the “local” boyar families (Chapter 3).

But despite the fact that this provision did not aim to purge the “Greeks” from politics, its conditions combined with the reorganization of the “noble” titles to disadvantage Alexandru Samurcas. Thus, according to the new regulations, Alexandru was considered “Greek” and needed to apply for naturalization, a situation that delayed his plans to accede to higher noble title. Indeed, Samurcas’ family qualified only partially for naturalization. They had been owners of land estates in the provinces, were related to “local” families but had been in office for less than the term of residence and service that the Statutes requested of those who wanted to be considered as “local.” Had his father or uncle been alive and in office, the provision might not have been applied so rigorously, but without consistent support Alexandru had to follow the procedure for naturalization in addition to cultivating his political connections and building his record of service. After 1834 he would take office in the judicial apparatus under the administration of the *hospodar* Alexandru Ghica, brother of the previous ruler Grigore Ghica, whom the Porte and the Russian authorities appointed to rule as a one-time exception from the text of the Organic Statutes.<sup>440</sup>

## **2. The multiplication of political sites and imperial condominium at an age of revolution, 1834-1848**

The application of the Organic Statutes under the auspices of Ottoman-Russian condominium in Wallachia reproduced the old political factionalism in the province. Whereas

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<sup>440</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian national state, 1821-1878* (Cambridge, London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 34

many of the low-rank boyars were assigned to bureaucratic tasks and their access to the institutions of decision-making was regulated, they continued to participate in the factions of the high-boyars who attempted to replace the *hospodar*. But other sites for political action, aside from the competition for rule, took shape during this period, some within the framework of the government set up by the Organic Statutes and in compliance with Russia's imperial mandate and others in manifest opposition to the arrangements that underlay Russian control in Wallachia.

Following Alexandru Samurcas' efforts to promote to high rank and the obstacles that compromised his endeavor, in this section I will reveal how political factionalism co-existed with networks of professional and political support between lower-rank officials that reproduced old relations between the boyars. I will also emphasize that aside from these arenas for political action, and at odds with them and what they represented, took shape a new type of ideological politics, promoted by young nobles who participated in a European-wide movement for political representation and civil liberties.<sup>441</sup> The promoters of liberalism and ideological politics did not eliminate factionalism as political strategy, but denounced the Russian imperial control that supervised the factions in Wallachia and promoted a campaign of international lobby that played

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<sup>441</sup> The boyars in Wallachia and Moldavia had been responsive to the French-inspired European liberal movement since the beginning of the century. The lower rank boyars of Moldavia proposed in 1822 a project of constitution, evoking the projects of the Italian revolutionaries in 1821, for the election of the ruler by an assembly of all the boyars, for the separation of the branches of the administration, equality before the law and freedom of speech (Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 8: 301-302; Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians 1774-1866*). The project, which had the approval of the ruler, did not survive. Later, in the 1830s, the exiles of the Polish anti-Russian revolution, including liberals and conservatives, found refuge in Moldavia (Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation*, 35). However, the constitution of 1822 was limited in its liberal scope, and served circumstantial interests: with the prominent boyars and their associates in exile after 1821, the lower rank boyars hoped they could enhance their prerogatives. Later, the contacts with the Polish refugees fueled the anti-Russian attitude in the principalities, but did not catalyze a local liberal movement. This movement gained impetus when boyars of Wallachia and Moldavia, who had traveled to France for studies, became actively involved in the French radical liberal movement. See Angela Jianu, *A Circle of Friends: Romanian Revolutionaries and Political Exile, 1840-1859* (Leiden: Brill, 2011)

in the plans of the other European powers with respect to Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire.

*Politics, administration, and the manifestations of Russian control in Wallachia*

As the *hospodar* Alexandru Ghica took the rule of Wallachia with Ottoman investiture and Russian agreement in 1834, the prosecutor Alexandru Samurcas was hopeful that he could capitalize on his service during the Russian occupation and on his family's remaining connections. A first step in this endeavor was the naturalization as a "local Rumanian" for which he prepared by marrying Zoe Chegiul Beiazi, a woman of Wallachian-Phanariot origin but who was considered "Rumanian," and whose father, Nicola Chegiul Beiazi, was related to Ioan Ghiulbeiazi, an old acquaintance of Alexandru's uncle.<sup>442</sup> The witness at the wedding was the great boyar Alexandru Filipescu. The Samurcas family soon grew with the birth of two daughters, Elisabeth and Helen and of a son, Ioan.<sup>443</sup>

However, as in 1835 the Wallachian legislative assembly was considering the creation of a Table of the noble titles and ranks that corresponded to classes in the bureaucratic hierarchy,<sup>444</sup> Samurcas was not willing to wait long for his naturalization as "local." Hoping to qualify sooner for a high placement in the bureaucratic hierarchy, Samurcas reconnected with his aunt Zoe Samurcas, who was considered a "Rumanian" woman,<sup>445</sup> helping her to sort out her businesses

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<sup>442</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXV/no. 63

<sup>443</sup> For lack of documentation, I could not date precisely the birth of the three children of Zoe and Alexandru Samurcas. Finding letters that the daughters and son wrote in the 1850s and 1860s (BAR, Fond Alexandru Tzigara Samurcas, S 26, S 27, S 28 (1-4), S 37, S 39 (1-3, 6)/DCXCI) I inferred the approximate years of their birth as the 1830s and 1840s respectively

<sup>444</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu and Irina Gavrilă, *Arhondologiile Țării Românești de la 1837*, 5

<sup>445</sup> Zoe Samurcas was the descendant of a family of boyars in Little Wallachia, the Brânceanu, which had connections among the Phanariots. Zoe's first late husband was the cup bearer and treasurer Constantin Gianoglu, the son of a "local" woman and a new-comer from Constantinople (ANIC, Inv. 2584, Documente istorice, Pack

and debts. Zoe was grateful for her nephew's attention. In 1836, shortly before she passed away, Zoe petitioned the ruler through the Great Chancellery of Justice to adopt her adult nephew. The prince approved the adoption request and confirmed that Alexandru Samurcas, a married adult hired in civil employment, could be considered Zoe's "adopted son."<sup>446</sup> The adoption meant that Samurcas became Zoe's heir and the administrator of her possessions, the several land estates in the proximity of Bucharest, as well as of her debts.<sup>447</sup> The land possessions of Zoe Samurcas were rather small by the time's standards. However, they were an asset that Alexandru could evoke to testify for his family's nobility and to support his own claims to become a hereditary "noble."

In 1837 the legislative assembly passed the supplement to the article "About Ranks" in the Organic Regulations.<sup>448</sup> According to the article, the numerous noble titles whose names duplicated those of the boyar offices during the Phanariot rule, were organized in a hierarchy of nine ranks and three classes. Alexandru, still a prosecutor, was proposed by the prince Alexandru Ghica for a title of *serdar*, which was a title of the eighth rank and third class. Being a landowner and also holding a noble title made Alexandru Samurcas eligible for the district elections in 1841 as a delegate to the Legislative Assembly of Wallachia,<sup>449</sup> but Samurcas' result in the elections remains unknown. Although Samurcas succeeded to enter the hierarchy of ranks, and regardless of his already several-years long service in the administration, the *hospodar* did not offer him

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MDL/no. 50). Her cousin was another new comer from Constantinople Constantin Varlaam, former treasurer during the Russian occupation of 1806-1812, who subsequently fled to Russia (ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXVI/no. 2, no. 11)

<sup>446</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXII/no. 81-82, 90, 94

<sup>447</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice 2270, Pack MDXII/ No. 112, 159, 171

<sup>448</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu and Irina Gavrilă, *Arhondologiile Țării Românești de la 1837*, 5

<sup>449</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXIII/no. 42

any promotion during the following years. I suggest that accounting for this stagnation was Samurcas' affiliation with the detractors of the *hospodar*.

During the late 1830s the *hospodar* and the nobles in the assembly were in constant conflict. The ruler had appointed relatives in his executive council<sup>450</sup> and strove to rally to him those officials who had entered the ranks of the military.<sup>451</sup> Alexandru Ghica tried to consolidate his position also by maintaining good standing at the Porte through his representative there Nicolae Aristarki,<sup>452</sup> the son of one of the Ottoman Christian officials who had survived the dismantlement of the Phanariots. This strategy did not involve the risk of antagonizing Russia. Aristarki was an associate of the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs and other Ottoman officials who favored Russia<sup>453</sup> and who did not dispute the recent arrangements between the two empires.

In their turn, the boyars did not stop submitting complaints to the Russian representatives and to the consuls of the other European powers. Several members of the Băleanu family took over positions in the executive and so did members of the Filipescu family who took charge of the Supreme Court of Justice. Samurcas was a rather minor figure in the power struggle but the *hospodar* was not willing to approve promotions in office or rank to individuals who could have supported his political enemies. However, Samurcas' stagnation in office only lasted until Alexandru Ghica was removed from power in 1842 during a political crisis that was triggered by Russia's attempts to recapture its influence in the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>450</sup> A.D. Xenopol, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiană* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească), Vol. 11: 63

<sup>451</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 269

<sup>452</sup> Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2011), 180

<sup>453</sup> Christine Philliou, "Worlds, Old and New," 318



Despite the fact that Russia continued to enjoy significant control in the Ottoman lands on the Danube, by the late 1830s it had begun to lose its hegemonic position at Constantinople due to a new Ottoman crisis that prompted active European intervention in the Ottoman Muslim lands and paved the way to British influence in the Empire. In 1839 a conflict between the Ottoman sultan and his unruly governor of Egypt led to new international intervention for the defense of the Ottoman Empire. Britain in particular, wary of Russia's ascendance in Ottoman affairs<sup>454</sup> and of the attempts of France to extend its influence in Northern Africa, offered military help and became a lasting ally to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>455</sup> The conflict ended in 1840 after Britain had stopped the advance of the Egyptian troops and the European powers brokered a convention between the sultan and his governor, through which the governor conceded most of the imperial lands he had occupied but was recognized hereditary rule in Egypt. The European powers and the Ottoman Empire signed in 1841 another convention that provided for the closing of the Straits to the warships of any power. This convention superseded the Russian-Ottoman Treaty of mutual defense of 1833 that gave Russia the right to be the unique power allowed to send its warships through the Straits.<sup>456</sup> Although Russia signed the new agreement of 1841, it did so to avert the open conflict with the other European powers and especially with Britain that had gained new influence at Constantinople.

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<sup>454</sup> Britain was suspicious that the Austrian-Russian agreement of 1833, through which the two powers declared their intention to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, was an alliance for the Empire's dismembering. The Treaty of Unkiar Iskelessi could have also favored Russia's ambitions in the Middle East, had the Court in St Petersburg decided to pursue territorial expansion, Matthew Rendall, "Restraint or Self-Restraint of Russia: Nicholas I, the Treaty of Unkiar Iskelessi, and the Vienna System, 1832-1841," *The International History Review* 24, no. 1 (2002): 61-62

<sup>455</sup> G. D. Clayton, *Britain and the Eastern Question: Missolonghi to Gallipoli* (University of London Press, 1971), 80-82

<sup>456</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 106

During these events, Russia sought to assert its authority at the Porte by pressing for a reinforcement of imperial control in Wallachia and Moldavia that were relatively removed from the other powers' involvement. In the new international context, Russia needed a guarantee that the terms of its condominium with the Ottoman Empire remained the same notwithstanding local factionalism and the local nobles' attempts to gain the support of European diplomatic representatives for their schemes. For this purpose, the Russian authorities exerted pressure on the *hospodar* and the Porte to secure the addition to the Organic Statutes of an additional clause according to which no amendments could have been made to the Statutes without the authorization of the two Empires. They also intervened decidedly in local politics and withdrew the support that they had offered to Alexandru Ghica.

The additional clause had been an object of friction in Wallachia since shortly after the approval of the Statutes by the two courts in 1834.<sup>457</sup> As the clause needed to be approved by the local assembly of boyars, in 1838 the Russian consul in Bucharest P. Rückmann asked the *hospodar* Ghica, who tried to maintain his position with Russian help, to force the boyars into obedience. The refusal of the boyars to approve the additional article led to the dismantlement of the existing assembly. The Russian authorities subsequently decided to demand an Ottoman imperial order that imposed the application of the additional article without the approval of the local assembly. They also intervened in the political conflict between the *hospodar* and the boyars that intensified after the dissolution of the assembly.

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<sup>457</sup> Ioan C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines*, 240-241

The new consul Iakov Dashkov withdrew the customary Russian support for the *hospodar* and manifested great deference to the boyars<sup>458</sup> instead. The Russian Court dispatched Major Alexander Duhamel, ambassador in Persia, to collect and investigate the complaints of the officials.<sup>459</sup> The Porte too delegated a commissioner. Although the denunciations were indicative not only of the *hospodar's* shortcoming but also of the factional strife in Wallachia, the two courts decided in 1842 to end the rule of Ghica. Elections were organized according to the provisions of the Organic Statutes. George Bibescu, the son of one of Constantin Samurcas' peers in Little Wallachia<sup>460</sup> and a boyar who had been trained abroad, won the elections.<sup>461</sup> Bibescu, who had benefited from General Kiselev's sympathy during the occupation of 1829-1834 and from Dashkov's support, was also well acquainted with local factionalism and intrigues and had participated in the opposition to Ghica. After taking power, Bibescu tried to consolidate his position through appointments and sinecures in the government but in his turn he became the target of the denunciations and schemes of his former peers. However, unlike Ghica, Bibescu did not wait for his opponents to consolidate their positions with the consuls or in the assembly and soon dissolved the assembly, ruling without check for two years before a new assembly was elected in 1846, consisting mostly of his supporters.<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> According to Nicholas Karlovich Giers, the Russian consul in Iassy, the Filipescus and the Baleanus became Dashkov's dinner guests. See eds. Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Education of a Russian Statesman: The Memoirs of Nicholas Karlovich Giers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962) 155

<sup>459</sup> Charles and Barbara Jelavich (eds.), *The Education of a Russian Statesman*, 192

<sup>460</sup> George Bibescu was the son of Dimitrie Bibescu, chancellor and *vornic* from Little Wallachia, who asked the Russian commanders during the occupation of 1806-1812 to increase their prerogatives at the expense of the boyars from Bucharest. See Radu Rosetti, *Arhiva Senatorilor* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Gobl 1909), Vol. 4: 313-314; Octav-George Lecca, *Familiile boierești române*, 73

<sup>461</sup> Charles and Barbara Jelavich (eds.), *The Education of a Russian Statesman*, 157, 193

<sup>462</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation*, 38

Among the individuals whom Bibescu promoted in office was also Alexandru Samurcas who in 1842 became president of the Commercial Law Court in Craiova, the major city of Little Wallachia, and received the title of *paharnic* (cup bearer).<sup>463</sup> While Samurcas owed his promotion to the change in the first ranks of the political leadership, after 1842 and until 1848 he concentrated on obtaining promotion through service in the judiciary in Little Wallachia. A potential explanation for this change of strategy is the fact that having relocated to Craiova Samurcas was rather detached from the political factionalism in Bucharest. Also, there is no evidence that he continued his relations with the Filipescu or the other prominent families in the assembly. On the other hand, the appointment in Craiova allowed Samurcas to tighten the relations with his colleagues and to connect to local merchants and prominent figures.

During the 1840s, members of the administration set up by the Organic Statutes reactivated the connections that had underlain the old local networks of power and which political factionalism in Bucharest did not monopolize entirely. These connections became the substitute for the relations of collegiality and service that the Russian administration hoped to achieve through the institutionalization during the Organic Statutes. In Little Wallachia, the integration of former political, family and interest relations in the bureaucracy was facilitated by the fact that the old council of boyars of the region had been transformed in 1831 into a superior juridical instance. The divan of Craiova, which had been in charge of the administration in the region, provided after 1831 the instances of appeal for civil and criminal justice and commercial affairs.<sup>464</sup> Its old members became the personnel in the new justice courts.<sup>465</sup> Alexandru

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<sup>463</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXII, no. 162, f. 1 recto

<sup>464</sup> See Ilie I. Vulpe, *Divanul Craiovei*, (Craiova: Scrisul Românesc, 2002); *Regulament Judicătoresc: coprinzător de capul al șaptelea din Regulamentul organic* (Bucharest: Tipografia I. Eliad, 1839), 38-39, 55

<sup>465</sup> Such members were George Coțofeanu and Dimitrie Haralamb, descendants of members of the local council of officials, who, at the beginning of the century, had competed for power in the Western districts with the *kaymakam*

Samurcas was a perfect match for the office: not only had his family been involved in the workings of the Council of Craiova before and had relations with the local boyar families, but he also had law training, which he had acquired during his years in Braşov, to act in an instance.

The appointment to the commercial court in Little Wallachia helped Samurcas revive his family's old connections and gain prestige locally, assets that were of significant help during the coming political crisis, but did not satisfy his ambition at advancing in service rank and gaining higher noble title. In this respect, his assignment to Little Wallachia could have been a professional cul-de-sac and Samurcas renewed his efforts to obtain a promotion from the *hospodar*, most likely with recommendations from his peers in Craiova. In 1845, Bibescu fulfilled his plea partially and offered him a title as *chlucer*, which was a title superior to the one he held previously, but within the same rank. The rise in the noble hierarchy was not accompanied by a promotion in the justice system and relocation to Bucharest, as Samurcas hoped based on his service record and his title. Nevertheless, Samurcas continued to act within the norms of the government ruled by the Organic Statutes.

### *Ideological politics in Wallachia and the Russian-sponsored government*

Only a few years later, in 1848, Wallachia went through a political crisis that endangered the career plans of Samurcas and others like him. This crisis, which was the result of new political dynamics in Wallachia in tune with the ideological trends in Europe, also resonated at the level of the rivalry between the Western European imperial agendas and Russia. Young descendants of boyar families that held an intermediary position in the noble hierarchy and who

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Constantin Samurcas, Alexandru's uncle. See ANIC, Inv. 2617, Documente istorice, Pack MDXI/no. 35; Radu Rosetti, *Arhiva Senatorilor de la Chişinău şi ocupaţia rusească de la 1806-1812* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice "Carol Göbl, 1909), 4: 313-315; Ilie I. Vulpe, *Divanul Craiovei*, (Craiova: Scrisul Românesc, 2002), 250-251

had been educated in France became imbued with the idea of belonging to the European civilization, versus Russia,<sup>466</sup> and brought in local politics an ideology that combined liberalism with romantic nationalism.<sup>467</sup>

In 1848, these boyars began an uprising that led to the creation of a short-lived “revolutionary” government. They expressively denounced the corruption in the administration regulated through the Organic Statutes, but adopted different attitudes towards Russia and the Porte, the imperial powers that supervised these regulations. Whereas the revolutionaries rejected Russian involvement in Wallachia, they did not challenge Ottoman authority. In fact, they hoped to obtain Ottoman approval for their liberal program, which they depicted as corresponding to the broader reforms in the Ottoman Empire and as an efficient instrument for the Porte to counterbalance the influence of Russia.<sup>468</sup> In this respect, they made manifest to the Ottoman authorities in Constantinople that their action did not aim to overturn Ottoman authority but to restore the province’s “old privileges” harmed through the intervention of Russia,<sup>469</sup> the very empire that in fact had validated the fictional “privileges” in the relations between the Porte and Wallachia and Moldavia.

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<sup>466</sup> Angela Jianu, *A Circle of Friends: Romanian Revolutionaries and Political Exile, 1840-1859* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 39

<sup>467</sup> Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774-1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 233; Liberalism enjoyed only a moderate support in Wallachia and Moldavia where, since the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the boyars responded to the Enlightenment’s injunction for change with proposals for administrative reforms. Although the young boyars became receptive to the European liberal program, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they downgraded the liberal agenda for nationalism. See Paschalis Kitromilides, “The Enlightenment East and West: A Comparative Perspective on the Ideological Origins of the Balkan Political Traditions” in *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*, Paschalis Kitromilides (Variorum, 1994), 63, 65

<sup>468</sup> Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians 1774-1866*, 290

<sup>469</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation*, 46

In the spring of 1848 these individuals' action took by surprise the *hospodar* George Bibescu who soon abandoned his office and escaped to Transylvania.<sup>470</sup> Samurcas too fled Wallachia for this Habsburg province. Soon after, despite initial hesitations, the Porte dispatched the military to Wallachia. George Duhamel, whom the tsar Nicholas I appointed to inspect the situation in the principalities and to call for military assistance, if necessary, opted for intervention and the General Alexander Lüders drove the Russian troops to Wallachia.<sup>471</sup>

As Lüders took control of the province and of the administration, Alexandru Samurcas decided to return to the province where he had been removed from office on account of his participation in the revolution. In October 1848 Samurcas asked several of his peers at the Law Court in Craiova and local merchants who had benefitted from his service as president of the Commercial Court to write a recommendation letter in his favor to someone in a decision-making position in the Russian military, possibly the general Lüders. He estimated that a letter depicting him as a loyal servant of the Organic Statutes and thus, of the Russian authority in Wallachia, would eliminate any suspicion of the Russian authorities.

His associates heeded the plea and explained to the Russian authorities that Samurcas never supported the revolution and that the recent events had in fact forced him to take refuge in Habsburg Transylvania at his own expense.<sup>472</sup> The signatories emphasized that the “inhabitants and owners” of Craiova who benefitted from Samurcas’ judicial activity evaluated his service in the most positive terms. Allegedly, Samurcas fulfilled his official duties impeccably and with great attention while also being a pleasant member of the local “society.”<sup>473</sup> By presenting a

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<sup>470</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation*, 43

<sup>471</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation*, 44-47

<sup>472</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXIII/no. 159, f. 1 verso.

<sup>473</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXIII/no. 159

positive evaluation of Samurcas' bureaucratic service jointly with an assessment of his public persona, the signatories strove to show that the president of the Commercial Court corresponded entirely to the model of behavior that the Russian authorities promoted through the Organic Statutes. In addition to manipulating a discourse that would have appealed to the Russian authorities, the letter was also the product of a local network of officials for mutual support that the Organic Statutes had engendered during the last decade. Several signatories were officials from Little Wallachia, whose ancestors had competed and collaborated with Alexandru Samurcas' uncle and father, and colleagues in the judicial courts that the Organic Statutes instituted there.<sup>474</sup> Thus, Alexandru Samurcas and the signatories of the petition were supportive of each other as "nobles" of similar rank as well as servants in the judicial-bureaucratic corps.

Samurcas was reinstated but he also planned to advance in the judicial hierarchy, now that the Russian authorities were in command of the administration and he did not have to predict which political faction was in power. Thus, in winter 1848 the *clucer* Samurcas wrote a letter to the General, in which he summarized his official activity and noble titles to request the nomination as judge in the court of appeal in Bucharest or in the corresponding court in Craiova. Samurcas also hinted that he hoped for a higher title and made several references about the future alliances of his family and land estates, assets that only increased one's prestige as a noble.<sup>475</sup> This biography was meant to reveal Samurcas' complete dedication to the good working of the reforms implemented through the Organic Statutes and to set him apart from the boyars who had openly contested Russian authority as well as from those who plagued the administration with their ineptitude and corruption.

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<sup>474</sup> Descendents of Constantin Samurcas' peers and rivals in Little Wallachia were Dimitrie Haralamb and George Coțofeanu

<sup>475</sup> ANIC, Inv. 2270, Documente istorice, Pack MDXIII/no. 162, ff. 1 recto-2 recto



The direct intervention near a Russian official, the references to family responsibilities together with mentions of his service are evocative of the fact that the discursive tropes promoted by the Russian authorities had been adopted by the participants in the administration and manipulated in the networks that endured from the time of the Phanariots. But while officials extolled Russian intervention in the administration, they preferred to obscure the way in which they used political assets, such as connections, which had been developed before 1830. To show his compliance with the mechanisms that the Organic Regulations introduced to control governmental activities and leadership, Alexandru counted scrupulously his appointments, the years of service in each of them and the individuals, all in positions of leadership, who placed him in office and rank. In addition, he emphasized that he accomplished each of the assignments with diligence and efficiency, conditions that would have warranted a promotion in office.

Emphasizing that he owed his political career exclusively to Russian “protection,” Samurcas went as far as to obscure that his family had served Ottoman rule or that they were new-comers from Constantinople. This might have been the reason why he did not mention his recent naturalization as a “local Rumanian” through adoption and marriage. It is equally possible that Samurcas did not refer to his Constantinopolitan origins because the Statutes’ provisions about naturalization had been successful in bridging the division between the “Greek” boyars and the boyars “from the land.”

Samurcas’ strategy in 1848 suggests that he attempted to re-insert himself in the local administration through what had become a common method to pursue advancement in politics and bureaucracy: by trying to connect with the Russian authorities. In addition, he also appealed to the networks of support that functioned within bureaucratic hierarchies based on old associations between the boyars. These networks survived during the Organic Statutes regime

and offered a setting for political action that complemented factionalism for the title of *hospodar* and the highest noble ranks and positions in the government. But by 1848 a new site for political competition also began to take shape in Wallachia, part of a trend throughout Europe: liberal ideology provided political actors with new principles for political association and incentives to pursue power. A small group, the liberal nobles in Wallachia, promoted a new legitimizing principle for political action, the “nation.” Although the principle lacked conceptual precision, it was nonetheless evoked to contest vehemently Russian imperial control.<sup>476</sup> Despite their commitment to “national freedom,” the relations between the liberals from Wallachia and imperial rule in general, and between them and the other elites of the Organic Statutes were more complex, as the creation of a new government under international supervision soon revealed.

### **3. Imperial suzerainty, international guarantee and “national” politicians: the 1850s**

The elites in charge of Wallachia remained virtually unchallenged during the 1850s, but the politics underwent unprecedented changes due to the way in which new inter-imperial rivalry over the survival of the Ottoman Empire catalyzed ideological mobilization and propelled the “nation” to becoming the main political project in the province. Wallachia became the site for both local “national” politics and collective international regulation of Ottoman authority in the principalities.

In 1849, Alexandru Samurcas was again a magistrate in Wallachia, possibly in one of the instances in Bucharest, as his family’s relocation to the capital seems to indicate.<sup>477</sup> However,

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<sup>476</sup> Angela Jianu, *A Circle of Friends*, 161

<sup>477</sup> Anca Podgoreanu and Geta Costache (eds.), *Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș: biobibliografie* (Bucharest: Biblioteca Centrală Universitară, 2004), XXIV

changing political circumstances determined him to moderate his ambitions at promotion.

Samurcas and other participants in the governmental institutions who had received offices under the Ghicas or who still occupied lower posts began to adjust their political expectations. Thus, by the 1850s or 1860s Samurcas resigned from the justice system to dedicate himself to study.<sup>478</sup>

But while Samurcas and others abandoned the political competition for high offices, these individuals hoped that their stable positions and networks with each other would help their offspring to accede to the first ranks of the nobility and public service. Furthermore, they still held voting privileges, an asset that the liberal and conservative nobles could not ignore as local politics became polarized along the liberal - conservative and unionist - anti-unionist divisions. Thus, notwithstanding his withdrawal from the administration, Samurcas and his family became soon involved in politics that promoted a new principle for action, the “nation.”

This ideological mobilization of local politics in the first decade after the revolt of 1848 was possible due to a new configuration of the rivalry between the European powers who disputed the control over the fragmenting Ottoman Empire. The agendas of the liberals and of the high boyars, who defended their prerogatives against liberal radicalism and who adopted particular stances to the re-assertion of Russian authority in the province, gained relevance among the European courts that competed for influence in the Ottoman Empire. In the 1840s, Britain and Russia were the main contenders for the role of “protectors” of the Ottoman Empire, with Russia slowly losing ground after the Convention of the Straits in 1841. France, which during the Egyptian crisis of 1839 had supported the Egyptian governor against the Porte, did not

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<sup>478</sup> Anca Podgoreanu and Geta Costache (eds.), *Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș*, XXIII

abandon its projects for the Ottoman Middle Eastern dominions but was amenable to cooperate with Britain against Russian expansion in the region.<sup>479</sup>

To reinforce the influence that it preserved at Constantinople as protector of Wallachia and Moldavia, in 1849 Russia pressed for a new convention with the Ottoman Empire that renewed their condominium in these provinces. This Russian-Ottoman agreement suspended the provision in the Organic Statutes that assigned the election of the *hospodars* to the local assembly and stipulated, similarly to the Convention of Akkerman of 1826, that the Porte should select the *hospodars* from among the boyars, for seven-year terms.<sup>480</sup> The ruler appointed to Wallachia was the boyar Barbu Știrbei, a sibling of the former *hospodar* Alexandru Ghica. At the same time, Russia adopted a more permissive attitude towards the local leadership, allowing the return of the liberal boyars from exile and approving the creation of commissions of nobles for the revision and improvement of the Organic Statutes.<sup>481</sup>

During their exile, the liberal and unionist nobles deployed lobby campaigns in France and Britain for the removal of the Russian protectorate and the union of Wallachia and Moldavia under a foreign prince, which overlapped to a certain degree with these powers' geopolitical interests at the expense of Russia. By the 1840s, the British and French governments began to feature themselves as moderate monarchies at home and abroad, especially in opposition to Russia. It was in this context that Russia began to be described in the West not as a conservative power that abhorred the overthrow of legitimate governments through violence, but as a despotic and expansionist state.<sup>482</sup> While the Western powers were not particularly supportive of political

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<sup>479</sup> G.D. Clayton, *Britain and the Eastern Question*, 95

<sup>480</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, 273-274

<sup>481</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation*, 49, 51

<sup>482</sup> G.D. Clayton, *Britain and the Eastern Question*, 94-95

turbulences that could complicate their agendas for the Ottoman Empire,<sup>483</sup> Russia's violent intervention to suppress movements in the lands under its influence and in the Habsburg Empire confirmed the damaging portrait of oppressor of peoples that the Western governments had popularized. In addition, France began to ponder to what extent the union of Wallachia and Moldavia could help promote its own agendas in Europe. The new ruler Napoleon III, who was a supporter of the establishment of Polish and Italian "nations," also endorsed the unionist project for Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>484</sup> Britain approved the anti-Russian agenda of the local liberals but was hesitant about whether their unionist program would help preserve the Ottoman Empire, or whether it would undermine its integrity.<sup>485</sup> Nevertheless, the unionist project for Wallachia and Moldavia and the anti-Russian mobilization of local boyars had become known to the European cabinets and were later considered in calculations about the administration of these provinces.<sup>486</sup>

In 1852, Russia claimed imperatively at the Porte the protection over the Ottoman Orthodox subjects in the context of a jurisdictional crisis with France for the guardianship of the Holy Sites, leading to a Russian-Ottoman war during which Britain and France sided with the Ottoman Empire. Russia lost the war and the influence that it had acquired at the Porte through the provisions of the Treaty of Adrianople in the Ottoman European territories and the condominium in Wallachia and Moldavia. In the Treaty of Paris (1856), the European powers requested open access on the Danube, the elimination of Russian protection over the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire and intervention in Serbia, Wallachia and Moldavia, and re-

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<sup>483</sup> In this respect, in 1849 the British government adopted an ambiguous attitude towards the liberal boyars in exile who tried to obtain British diplomatic support, Angela Jianu, *A Circle of Friends*, 127-128

<sup>484</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation*, 54

<sup>485</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation*, 55

<sup>486</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 150-152; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 9: 270

affirmed Ottoman independence and territorial “integrity.”<sup>487</sup> After the powers evaluated how a potential union of Wallachia and Moldavia could serve their interests, they promoted the principle of collective international protection of these Christian “tributaries.”<sup>488</sup> In addition, they also appealed to the Porte to give guarantees for the good treatment of the Ottoman Christians. Although Britain might have assessed that these provisions could stimulate a new Ottoman reform and thus, the strengthening of the Empire,<sup>489</sup> they also formalized the concept that the European powers could intervene in the relations between the sultan and the imperial Christian subjects.

In consequence, in 1856, the sultan issued an edict that proclaimed religious equality in the Empire, in parallel with the new reforms being implemented in the administration.<sup>490</sup> In Wallachia and Moldavia, the collective of European powers reiterated the Russian-originated and limiting concept of Ottoman “suzerainty,” also providing for the creation of a local army. But unlike Russia , which in 1829 sponsored an imperial-driven program of organization of these provinces under Ottoman “suzerainty,” Britain, France, the Habsburg Empire, Prussia and Sardinia did not specify the terms of their collective protection of Wallachia and Moldavia and of how it would manage local administration. Instead, they assigned the organization of the principalities to local assemblies under the supervision of an international commission.<sup>491</sup> The activity of these assemblies was rife with political conflicts between the liberals who had

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<sup>487</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, 284

<sup>488</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 9: 272-274

<sup>489</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 143

<sup>490</sup> Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Vol. 2:87

<sup>491</sup> Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 143

returned from exile and conservatives,<sup>492</sup> unionists and anti-unionists<sup>493</sup> and aspirants to the position of princes in the context where each power came to adopt a particular stance with respect to the union of the two provinces. Despite these dissensions, the assemblies spelled the abolition of “nobility” by cancelling privileges, regulating taxation, making administrative employment public and by imposing mandatory military service.<sup>494</sup> Such a change did not, however, pave the way to social and political reform: wealth and property continued to be necessary assets for political participation in countries where most of the population was landless.

Moreover, in 1859 the unionists and liberals succeeded to repute majorities for the election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, an officer who had been involved in the events of 1848, as prince of both Wallachia and Moldavia, against the anti-unionists who tried to impose a separate ruler for Moldavia.<sup>495</sup> By the end of 1859, the arrangement proposed by the powers had a paradoxical effect with respect to the Russian and Ottoman authority on the borderland. Russia, a loser in the war but trying to recover its position among the European powers as an ally of France, joined France in approving the union of the two provinces. The Ottoman Empire, a victor in the Crimean War, suffered a more severe loss of authority in Wallachia and Moldavia after the European powers re-affirmed its integrity as a suzerain than after the Russian invention of the concept of Ottoman “suzerainty” applied through the Russian-Ottoman condominium.

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<sup>492</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 9: 256, 259, 262

<sup>493</sup> About the activity of an anti-unionist group in Moldavia before 1856, see Andrei Pippidi, “Invenția Originilor: Patriotism Conservator în Moldova secolului al XIX-lea,” *Analele Universității București, Secția Istorie* 46 (1997): 27-48;

<sup>494</sup> Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru Florin Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea*, 141

<sup>495</sup> About the rivalries for the position of prince and how local elites tried to impose their candidate by bribing the Ottoman authorities or obtaining the support of the European powers, see Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. 9: 286-288

During the following decades, the government of the United and “autonomous” Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, which continued to be divided by political rivalries and factions, subordinated social reforms to a nation-building project that became the source of self-legitimization for most of its members. This project also prompted the local elites, still separated by the status that came with old ranks and wealth, to reinvent themselves. The way in which Alexandru Samurcas and his family rebranded themselves after 1860 is telling in this respect. Samurcas might have withdrawn from the justice system but he was not indifferent to his family’s future. He groomed his son Ioan to follow a career in justice: such a career enjoyed prestige among people who claimed “noble” backgrounds and commoners alike, and Alexandru’s service and connections would have helped him to advance in the administration and politics. Thus, in 1862 he sent Ioan to study law at the Universities of Munich and Vienna.<sup>496</sup> To strengthen his family’s position in the administration, Alexandru soon married one of his daughters, Elena, to Toma Tzigara, an acquaintance of his from the Justice Court of Appeal in Bucharest.<sup>497</sup>

In other words, Samurcas attempted to re-invent his family as servants of the new, unified government but for this purpose he chose to recover the prestige that had featured appointments since before 1821 and titles in public office during the Organic Statutes. The removal of the “noble” titles in 1857 did not entail the democratization of politics: property ownership, which was a significant component of the “nobles” status continued to offer them social and political preeminence over the majority of the population. But in the context where a developing education system and bureaucratization threatened to create potential competitors, the elites of

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<sup>496</sup> See the correspondence between Ioan Samurcas and his parents during his studies abroad, preserved at BAR, S39(1-9)/DCXCI, S40(2)/DCXCI

<sup>497</sup> Anca Podgoreanu and Geta Costache (eds.), *Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș*, XXIII-XXIV



various rank strove to resurrect the prestige that used to accompany noble title. Similarly to 1831 when the boyars attempted to distinguish themselves from their political enemies by pointing out that they had been nobles across several generations, the nobles and ennobled officials deprived of titles in 1857 tried to construct a new past for themselves that set them aside as elites, but which did not remove them from the “nation.”

This process of rebranding was not easy: it involved the re-assessment of a past that had strong imperial connotations and the preservation of those elements that seemed to correspond to the nation-building mission of the new government. The Samurcas chose to do so by reiterating their service in the local administration and by building a prestige of “Greek-Wallachian aristocracy.” Only three decades after Alexandru initiated procedures to be considered “Rumanian,” his wife, Zoe, emphasized to her children who were educated in French and German and who spoke Romanian that they also needed to learn Greek. Zoe did not insist that her offspring should speak Greek in order to relocate to Greece, although Samurcas might have begun to embrace his ethnic affinity with the Greek nation,<sup>498</sup> but to signal the fact that they belonged to a prominent Greek (as “Phanariot” held negative connotations) -Wallachian family of public servants.

This concept of nobility presupposed assertions of past local prominence, activity and social distinction combined with a projection of Greek or Romanian identity. However, it obscured all connection with Ottoman or Russian service, despite the fact that “nobility” had received a definition through the Russian-sponsored and Ottoman-approved Organic Statutes. Such was the case because the political establishment in the United Principalities continued to be suspicious of Russia. In what concerns the service that the boyars in Wallachia or Moldavia had

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<sup>498</sup> In 1843, Alexandru Samurcas published in Athens a Greek grammar, see Anca Podgoreanu and Geta Costache (eds.), *Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcas*, XXIII

carried for the Ottoman Empire, it did not convey significant symbolic capital in the context where Russian protection and European collective guarantee successively diluted Ottoman authority in the principalities and created the notion that the boyars had always enjoyed privileges and autonomy in relation to the Porte.

Alexandru and Zoe were successful at carving out a space for their children in the politics of the United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia and of its successor, the Romanian Kingdom, which took shape in 1878, after the end of Ottoman suzerainty and the European powers' confirmation of local sovereignty. Shortly after Alexandru's death in 1870, the jurist Ioan Samurcas, his son, became a diplomat of the Principalities' representation at Berlin, being considered for a ministry in the local government. A grave illness ended Ioan's career, but shortly before his death he adopted Alexandru, the teenager son of his sister Elena and of Toma Tzigara who had deceased a decade prior.<sup>499</sup>

Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcas did not pursue a career in the Romanian bureaucracy or diplomacy but in the academic world. He became an art historian and a museographer who invested money and effort in creating a museum of ethnographic art that was dedicated to gathering the evidence of a Romanian essence, as preserved in peasant culture, and which contributed to the ongoing project of constructing the Romanian nation. Despite the fact that his interest lay outside of politics, the heir of the Samurcas family married Maria Cantacuzino,<sup>500</sup> the descendent of a family of Moldavian-Phanariot boyars and which at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century figured among the families that enjoyed the prestige of "Romanian" aristocrats and were in the entourage of the Romanian king. The Romanian aristocracy that had taken shape in the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Anca Podgoreanu and Geta Costache (eds.), *Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș*, XXXIV

<sup>500</sup> Anca Podgoreanu and Geta Costache (eds.), *Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș*, XXXV

century to serve in the national government and deploy the nation-building program, and to which Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcas belonged, found its end at the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Conclusion**

The career of Alexandru Samurcas and his successors in the 19<sup>th</sup> century displays the continuity between the boyars of the last Phanariot rules and of the Russian-Ottoman condominium and the elite of the Romanian nation-state. These elites that were actively involved in the creation of the Romanian “nation” and the running of the Romanian state reinvented itself as a “Romanian” aristocracy. But in the process, they obscured the way in which they had preserved authority by serving under imperial mandate on a borderland, an “autonomous” government under international guarantee and finally a nation-state. In this chapter, I explored the ways in which the elites of Wallachia and Moldavia responded to and implemented the successive European arrangements that defined and encroached on Ottoman authority over territory and subjects in the Balkans during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following the biography of Alexandru Samurcas, the descendent of a Phanariot-Wallachian family of officials, I revealed the multiple levels of change that transformed Orthodox Christian elites on a borderland and their authority while reshaping power in this space along concepts of imperial “suzerainty” and “autonomous” local government.

In this fashion, I explained that although the dismantlement of the Orthodox Christian leadership in Constantinople and the Russian-sponsored government shaped these elites’ career options, they reproduced the old mechanisms of acceding of power holders in a borderland province under Ottoman control. But despite the continuity in the composition of the leadership, Russia involved this group in applying an imperial project that permanently altered Ottoman

control on this borderland and created a precedent for future international interventions. After 1848, members of these elites who became adepts of liberal politics challenged Russian influence on this borderland simultaneously with the European empires' attempts at devising forms of international agency that would have allowed them to control the survival of the Ottoman Empire according to their own imperial interests.

By examining these levels of continuity and change, I emphasized that within three decades the elites in Wallachia and Moldavia served three different political projects: first Ottoman control after the destruction of a group that had been entrusted with supervising the application of imperial rule in the province; subsequently, an inter-imperial condominium that served Russia's influence in the Ottoman Empire; finally, a government under international guarantee that upheld national self-rule as a legitimizing principle. While the elites' continuous service might indicate opportunism, it is also reflective of the continuities between imperial rule, local self-rule and European imperialism. European powers on expansion tried to gain influence in the Ottoman European lands by co-opting the actors that had supported Ottoman rule on the borderland, while redefining and restricting the Ottoman rule in the area. In this manner, they reduced the content of Ottoman authority to privileges of "suzerainty" and created the legal fiction that Ottoman authority can manifest itself in Wallachia and Moldavia only indirectly, through an autonomous or internally independent government composed of the old agents of Ottoman rule. When these actors decided to adopt the "nation" as the legitimizing principle of the "autonomous" government, having little international support, they developed on the concepts of local self-rule and restricted imperial control that the powers had promoted in these Ottoman possessions.

## Conclusion

This dissertation reconstructed the lives and political careers of four officials and power holders from the Ottoman tributaries Wallachia and Moldavia between the 1780s and the 1850s to address important issues pertaining to Ottoman history, the history of the Eastern Question and of modern European imperial expansion in the Ottoman Empire. How did local ambitions for power and imperial projects combine to transform the borderland between the Ottoman, Russian and Habsburg Empires into a nodal point for European expansionism in the Ottoman Empire? Through what kind of political arrangements did these dynamics materialize and how did they shape rule on the borderland? I argued that although borderland politics prevented the exclusive materialization of either local, imperial or inter-imperial interests, the body of international law that the European imperialist powers designed to regulate Ottoman rule in the 1830s ultimately facilitated the combination of local and imperialist agendas. Following the activity of Iordache and Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu and of Constantin and Alexandru Samurcas, I identified four contexts for the interaction between local agendas and imperial projects that fostered European expansion in the Ottoman Empire through the Balkans. These were: the establishment of an inter-imperial territorial demarcation on the Ottoman Danubian borderland; the exposure of the Ottoman affairs to international arbitration, which Ottoman diplomatic networks in Wallachia and Moldavia facilitated; the creation of an Ottoman-Russian condominium on the borderland as the first formal European definition of Ottoman rule over land and subjects and of local government; the combination of international law and local politics on the borderland to re-define Ottoman rule as divided in different spheres of action that had their own sources of legitimacy.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the ethnically and socially heterogeneous Orthodox Christian leadership that the Ottoman Porte mandated to rule Wallachia and Moldavia was deeply involved in imperial networks that sprawled across the Balkan provinces and Constantinople. In the context of the Ottoman-Habsburg-Russian wars in 1787-1792 and 1806-1811, these networks in Wallachia and Moldavia became the site for local elites to enhance their position with Ottoman, Habsburg or Russian support, and for the three empires to assert their position on this borderland. The transactions with land estates, which provided the cash for venal politics in Moldavia, reinforced the power of Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and his family in the competition with other officials in the province, such as the ruler delegated from Constantinople. The transactions also served two antagonistic imperial projects: they offered a pretext to higher Ottoman authorities to claim authority in territory lost during the wars, and a possibility for the Russian Empire to effectively coopt local power holders in supporting its expansion against the Porte (Chapter 1).

Wallachia and Moldavia and their elites acquired new regional importance in the context where Ottoman affairs became the site for the competition between European empires during the Napoleonic Wars and for the Habsburg Empire to maintain the continental balance after the establishment of the European concert of powers in 1815. Diplomacy and information networks provided the means through which the Porte strove to attract the support of other empires and for these empires to extend their influence in the Ottoman Empire at each other's expense. The elites in Wallachia and Moldavia, who had been customarily carrying out diplomatic tasks for the Porte, became influential in trading information between the Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian Empires, and particularly in consolidating the Ottoman-Habsburg cooperation. This newly-acquired relevance encouraged local power holders such as Constantin Samurcas to re-claim

authority after the Greek revolts in 1821 had caused purges against the Hellenized Orthodox servants at Constantinople and suspicion against their associates, the elites in Wallachia and Moldavia (Chapter 2).

The major turning point for the leadership in Wallachia and Moldavia and for inter-imperial rivalry on this borderland occurred after the Greek-Ottoman clashes between 1821 and 1827 prompted the European powers to intervene in Ottoman rule and become protectors of independent Greece. Although the powers initially assessed that the revolts endangered the order established in 1815, they subsequently focused on turning the situation to their own advantage. The Russian Empire reputed significant strategic gains: after becoming a formal protector of Greece (1829), it soon pledged military defense to the Ottoman Porte (1831). The manifestation of this protection was joint imperial rule of Wallachia and Moldavia following the principles of “Ottoman suzerainty” and “Russian guarantee” of these provinces. The activity of the local elites, who became the actors in the administration supervised by Russia after 1829, was supposed to materialize these principles at the local level. It was in the context of the new European rivalry for the Ottoman Empire that prominent members of the local leadership, such as Nicolae Rosetti-Roznovanu, attempted to enhance their position by formally aligning themselves to different Russian projects while also entertaining connections with Russia’s rivals (Chapter 3).

The effective application of the Ottoman-Russian condominium on the borderland and its formal terms provided the precedent for the European powers, which had joined the Porte against Russia in the Crimean War, to become “protectors” of Wallachia and Moldavia and to continue restricting Ottoman control as “suzerainty” (1856). The manifestation of European imperialism in the Ottoman Empire by dividing Ottoman rule in separate areas for local autonomous

government and imperial “suzerainty” converged with a transformation at the level of local elites. The multiplication of political sites in the government under Russian supervision and ideological mobilization assigned some elites such as Alexandru Samurcas to an emerging bureaucracy, while bringing to the forefront of local politics a group of less prominent individuals who were supporters of the “national union” of Wallachia and Moldavia. As the European protectors allowed the inhabitants of the borderland to decide on the creation of the new local government, these individuals managed to impose the principle of a unified Wallachian-Moldavian government in charge of constructing the “nation,” and of implementing the new international “protection.” The descendants of the old elites in local politics or bureaucracy became active upholders of the Romanian “nation” and servants of the Romanian nation-state (Chapter 4).

Throughout the dissertation I also explored the connections and divisions between the elites in Wallachia and Moldavia, the Orthodox Christian elites in Constantinople, and the Ottoman Muslim elites in the region and the capital, which are relevant to studying the relations between this borderland and the Ottoman center. Thus, I explained that the elites in these provinces implemented Ottoman rule not only by symbolic mandate, but also because they participated in the imperial redistribution of resources and the political connections that defined the farming out of Wallachia and Moldavia to Constantinopolitan Christians. They also became involved in two activities that were essential to the Porte as the Empire became object to international competition and expansion: associating a particular territory with Ottoman authority and helping the Porte connect with potential allies. At the same time, I emphasized that the way in which the center controlled Wallachia and Moldavia also fueled tensions and contestations. Although the Hellenized Orthodox elites from Constantinople and the Orthodox elites in



Wallachia and Moldavia were related by numerous bonds, the competition for power transformed ancestry, place of birth, rank and social status into assets evoked to dispute the legitimacy of officials delegated from Constantinople and even the way in which the Ottomans ruled the borderland. Such tensions had been reconcilable before through the factional political game that connected the borderland and Constantinople and the increase of the number of appointments. However, the tensions also offered a new pretext to the Russian Court to intervene in Ottoman affairs and, after the Greek revolts, stimulated re-arrangements of the elites in Wallachia and Moldavia under Russian supervision.

This study could be used to pursue other directions of study pertaining to the evolution of international law concerning the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and to the combination of local political projects in the frame of the developing nation-state and new Western imperial agendas in the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire. One of the arguments of this dissertation has been that compared to other Ottoman Christian lands in the Balkans, Wallachia and Moldavia served as laboratories for European imperial projects concerning the Ottoman Empire to be formulated, challenged and implemented. However, for a more comprehensive understanding of how European imperial agendas and international law developed based on these experiments, it could be useful to explore in parallel the international arrangements for Wallachia and Moldavia, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria in the later decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Furthermore, this dissertation, which detected how two generations of elites on the borderland implemented Ottoman imperial authority or European expansion while following their own agendas, ended with the death of the members of the second generation, around the time of the creation of the United Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (1856). Thus, it did not approach several questions that can launch new directions for inquiry in the history of the

Balkans and of the relations between the politics of the Balkan nation-states and international dynamics. For instance, a biography of Christian officials who used to be allies or relatives in Wallachia, Moldavia and Constantinople but who became officials in the service of Greece, the reformed Ottoman Empire or the United Principalities can illuminate the nationalization of a once heterogeneous leadership. An inquiry into the connections between the representatives of the Ottoman Empire, Balkan and Western states who once were Ottoman elites could result in a transnational history about how local state-building, international capitalism and Western imperialism combined and had political repercussions in South-Eastern Europe. The relational approach that I proposed in this study can be adapted to analyses of modern Balkans that overcome the isolation of national histories and the assumption that this region was destined to lag behind Europe.

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## APPENDIX A: Glossary

*Alışveriş* – Term used in Wallachia and Moldavia to refer to trade in general as well as to the transactions and subleases of land estates

*Arxontas* (Gr.) – term used in the Phanariot-Wallachian/Moldavian circles to refer to Greek Orthodox incumbents of office, creditors and power holders in general in Constantinople, Wallachia and Moldavia

*Ayan* – local grandee in the Balkans and the Middle East who enjoyed local social and political prestige, engaged in the extensive purchase of tax-farms and in trade and mediated between local communities and the imperial authorities appointed by the center

*Ban* – official who traditionally ruled over administration and justice in Western Wallachia but who in the 18<sup>th</sup> century became associated with the collection of taxes and acted alongside the *kaymakam*

*Başdefterdar* – Ottoman treasury supervisor before the 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Bey* – title of the leaders who ruled Ottoman administrative units, and which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was also used in reference to the *hospodars* of Wallachia and Moldavia and the Phanariot families

*Boyar (boier/boieri)* – term used in Wallachia and Moldavia to designate individuals who owned land estates and, beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, individuals of different social ranks who held offices in the retinue of the ruler and the administration of the provinces

*Căminar* – official appointed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to collect the tax charged on the sale of wine, brandy and tobacco. He did not participate in the *Divan* and did not receive salary but was entitled to have tax-exempt tenants on his estates and to a share from the taxes he collected.

Honorary title after 1830

*Clucer* – official who participated in the *Divan*, received a salary and was entitled to tax-exempt tenants on his estates. Honorary title after 1830

*Comis* – official who oversaw the *hospodar*'s stables, but who did not participate in the *Divan*. He was entitled to a share from the revenues for the upkeep of the stables and to tax-exempt tenants on his estates

*Divan* – the council of the high *boieri* in Wallachia and Moldavia, called to decide on important administrative issues and to serve as high instance of appeal for litigations

*Domn* - formal titles used in the vernacular Wallachia and Moldavia to refer to the rulers of these provinces

*Dragoman*, *Imperial Dragoman* and *Dragoman of the Fleet* – titles held by Phanariot officials who acted as interpreters and mediators of the imperial council in the encounters with foreign representatives. The Dragoman of the Fleet also exerted administrative tasks in the communities from the islands in the Aegean, Rumelia and Anatolia, which were under the authority of the Ottoman Admiral. Their remuneration was provided, among other sources, from revenues collected in Wallachia and Moldavia

*Hegemonas*, *authontas* – formal titles in Greek used among the Phanariot officials at Constantinople and in Wallachia and Moldavia to refer to the rulers of these provinces

*Hatman* – traditionally, a military official in Moldavia. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Wallachia, an official in charge of implementing the *Divan*'s decisions in civil matters

*Hatt-ı şerif* – imperial decree

*Kadı* – judge of Islamic law and customary law

*Kapı kehaya* – representative of the *hospodar* at the imperial palace, who had ceremonial and effective political duties. Selected from the close entourage of the appointed *hospodar*, the *kapı*

*kehaya* prepared his trip to the province, was part of the procession of appointment and later informed the *hospodar* about the political decisions and changes at Constantinople and entertained with gifts and services the favor of the sultan, the vizier and other officials for the *hospodar*. They also maintained contact with foreign representatives at the Porte

*Kaymakam* – 1. the *hospodar*'s representative in Western Wallachia, in charge of collecting taxes, the application of justice in Western Wallachia and the trade between this region of Wallachia, Habsburg Transylvania and the lands at the south of the Danube. The kaymakam's remuneration consisted of a share from the revenues in cattle trade and from the sale of subordinate offices

2. the delegates that a *hospodar* newly appointed to rule in Wallachia or Moldavia sent to the province to prepare his arrival and take over the accounts of the treasury from the officials of the previous *hospodar*

*Logofăt* – chancellor, prominent official who oversaw the chancellery and its staff, and who participated in the *Divan*. He was entitled to a share from the revenues of the treasury and tax farms and to tax-exempt tenants on his estates

*Malikane* system – the auctioning, by the Ottoman state to entrepreneurs of tax-collection rights over tax-yielding assets for the duration of the entrepreneur's life

*Negoț* – Term used in Wallachia and Moldavia to refer to trade in general but also to transactions and subleases of land estates

*Paharnic* – cup bearer, honorary official who did not participate in the *Divan* but who was entitled to a salary and to tax-exempt tenants on his estates. An honorary title after 1830

*Paşa* – high title of Ottoman military and civil officials

*Phanariots* – term used in Wallachia and Moldavia and by Balkan and Ottoman historians to refer to the ethnically and socially heterogeneous group of Greek-speaking Greek Orthodox officials involved in the affairs of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and active as dragomans at the Porte, *hospodars* and incumbents of administrative offices in these provinces

*Pitar* – official who oversaw the bread supply of the court and the upkeep of the *hospodar's* carts. He did not participate in the *Divan* and did not have a salary. He was entitled to a share from the revenues for the upkeep of the cart and to tax-exempt tenants on his estates. Honorary title after 1830

*Postelnic* – prominent official who oversaw the *hospodars* relations with foreign representatives and his correspondence with Constantinople, and who participated in the *Divan*. He received a salary and gifts from all those appointed in office and was entitled to tax-exempt tenants on his estates. Honorary title after 1830

*Prince (prinț)* – formal title used increasingly frequently in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to designate the rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia

*Reaya* – the group of Muslim and non-Muslim tax-payers in the Ottoman Empire, distinctive from the military. After the 18<sup>th</sup> century it became associated with the non-Muslims in the empire until the distinction reaya-ruling class was abolished in 1839

*Reis efendi (reisül küttab)* – the chief of the scribes to the grand vizier and, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the responsible with foreign affairs.

*Spătar* – sword bearer, prominent official who oversaw the local armed corps in charge of preserving peace, and who participated in the *Divan*. He was entitled to revenues from his subordinates and to tax-exempt tenants on his estates. Honorary title after 1830

*Sudit* – foreign or Ottoman subject involved in trade and/or crafts who, by entering the protection of the European empires' consuls in Bucharest and Iassy, enjoyed low trade tariffs and immunity of person and domicile

*Tax-farming* – a wide-spread practice in the Ottoman lands during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which could refer to the collection by an entrepreneur of the taxes in particular fiscal units, the poll tax paid by non-Muslim communities, trade taxes, for a predetermined period of time or for life

*Vistier* – Treasurer. Prominent official who oversaw the operations and the staff of the treasury. Although he did not receive a salary, he was entitled to a significant share from the revenues collected by the treasury and tax farms and to tax-exempt tenants on his estates

*Vizier* – Ottoman official of the highest rank who participated in the Imperial Council

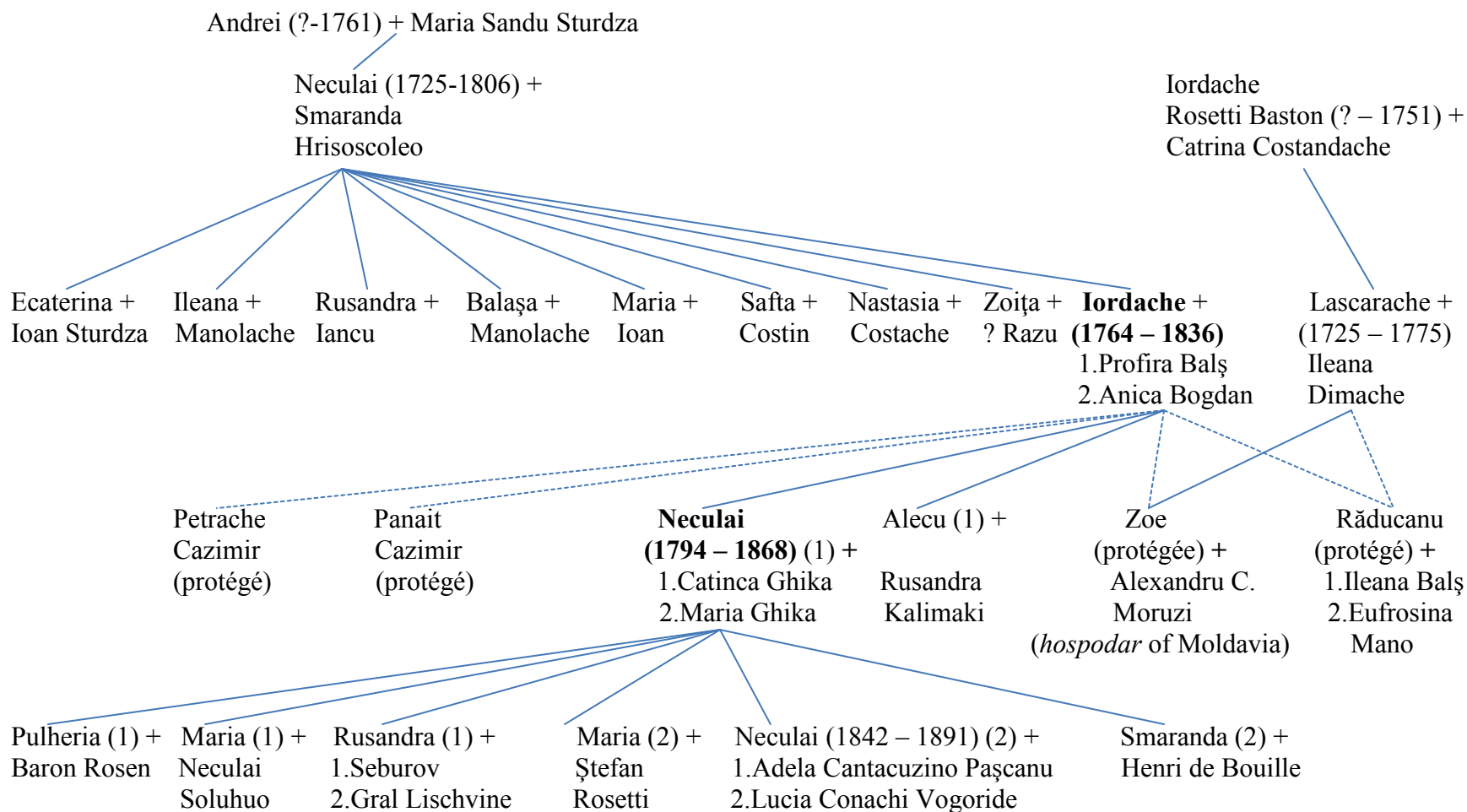
*Vornic* – prominent official who collected the customs fees and participated in the *Divan*. He was entitled to a salary, tax-exempt tenants on his estates and to a share from the revenues he collected

*Voyvoda, hospodar* - formal titles used by the Ottoman sultan and Muslim and Phanariot officials to refer to the rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia that the sultan selected for temporary mandates to administer and tax-farm these two buffer regions. *Voyvoda* was used in other regions of the empire to refer to financial agents.

## APPENDIX B: Family tree of the Rosetti-Roznovanus

Lascar Rosetti + Bella Cantacuzino  
(? 1580-1646)

The ancestor of the family





## APPENDIX C: Family tree Samurcas

Gheorghe Petropol, known as Samurcas,  
fur merchant in Constantinople, 18<sup>th</sup> century

