

**RUSSIA ON THE DANUBE: IMPERIAL EXPANSION AND
POLITICAL REFORM IN MOLDAVIA AND WALLACHIA, 1812-1834**

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Abstract

This study examines the policy of the Russian Empire in Moldavia and Wallachia in the early 19th century at the moment of their transformation from medieval principalities into a modern Romanian nation-state. Originally, parts of the Danubian frontier zone defined by the Ottoman conquest, the Romanian principalities at the beginning of modern period became the object of policies of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Russian Empire, concerned with political stability and seeking to establish control over the cross-border movement of population, diseases and ideas. Frequently influenced by the agendas of various local elites, who sought to use imperial expansion for self-promotion, Russian authorities eventually embraced the course of reform of Moldavian and Wallachian institutions as a means of acquiring hegemony and solving the perennial problem of permeability of imperial frontiers. At the same time, the policies of Russian administration in the principalities in 1828-1834 were conditioned by contemporary institutional development of the Russian Empire, which reflected changing role of the nobility in the course of imitation of the institutions and practices of the Central European well-ordered police state. Outlining the prerogatives of the princely authorities and the boyar assemblies, regulating the relationships between landlords and peasants, consolidating public service, administration and general police, the Organic Statutes of Moldavia and Wallachia produced in an uneasy collaboration between Russian authorities and Romanian boyars, contributed to progressing distancing of Romanian principalities from the Ottoman Empire. Serving the instruments of Russian imperial expansion, the institutions and practices of well-ordered police state introduced by the Organic Statutes, at the same time, can be viewed as the realization of the 18th territorial state centralization and therefore represent an important stage of early political modernization of Moldavia and Wallachia.

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Introduction

Since the middle of the 18th through the middle of the 19th century Russian Empire expanded to the South-West putting an end to the Ottoman control of the North Pontic steppe and destroying the Khanate of Crimea. In the early decades of the 19th century Russian borders reached the Danube and encompassed the territory between the Dniester and the Pruth rivers that used to be a part of a vassal Ottoman principality of Moldavia, whereby a significant number of ethnic Romanians became subjects of the tsar. This period witnessed five Russian-Ottoman wars and six Russian occupations that produced important transformations in cultural and political life of Moldavia and Wallachia culminating with the adoption of the Organic Statutes for Moldavia and Wallachia of 1831-1832 introduced in the wake of the 1828-1829 Russian-Ottoman war and representing a curious product of collaboration between Russian occupation authorities and the Romanian boyars.

In more than a century of historiographic treatment of the subject, scholars addressed various aspects of the process that led to the adoption of the “first Romanian constitution”. The conflicts between the princely authority and the boyar class around the issues of political power and control over the peasantry coupled with social and ethnic tensions within the boyar class is one of them.¹ Another one refers to the change in the international status of the principalities after the establishment of Russian protection. The establishment of foreign consulates created a new space for maneuver for the local elites, whose flexible political orientations and multiple loyalties were produced by centuries of existence between several contesting centers of power.² Yet another major factor was increasing cultural westernization

¹ I. C. Filitti, *Frământările politice în Principatele Române de la 1821 până la 1828* (București: Cartea Românească, 1932); Alexandru-Florin Platon and Gheorghe Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea. Context european, evoluția socială și politică. Date statistice și observații istorice* (București: Ed. Academiei, 1995).

² Germaine Lebel, *La France et les Principautés Danubiennes: (du XVI^e siècle à la chute de Napoléon I^{er})* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955); H. Heppner, *Austria și Principatele Dunarene (1774-1812): o contribuție la politica Sud-Est Europeană a Habsburgilor* (Cluj-Napoca : Universitatea Clujeană, 1999) ; G. Grosul, *Dunaiskie kniazhestva v politike Rossii, 1774-1806* (Kishinev, Shtiintsa, 1975); Radu R. Florescu, *The*

of the Romanian upper classes (in which periodic Russian occupations played a major part), which increasingly employed the rhetoric of historical tradition, patriotism and enlightened reform of local institutions in realization of their political agenda.³

As to the Organic Statutes that represented the culmination of all these tendencies, in their evaluation Romanian historians have always faced a dilemma. On the one hand, they viewed the Statutes as instruments of Russian imperial expansion and hegemony. From this perspective even the salutary principles of the division of powers introduced by the Statutes were seen as a means to sow discord amidst Romanian elite, a Machiavellian *divide et impera* vested in Montesquieuian political philosophy.⁴ On the other hand, even the harshest critics of Russian policies, like A. D. Xenopol, had to admit that the Organic Statutes “introduced for the first time in Romanian political life the idea of public interest” and ultimately “the idea of state... in its modern form.”⁵ A still more graphic illustration of the Romanian historiographic predicament over the Organic Statutes is the question whether this product of cooperation between Romanian boyars and Russian occupation authorities was “a Romanian work, in its essence” or, conversely, a “despotic, aristocratic, authoritarian, anti-liberal and completely Russian work.”⁶ In order to solve this dilemma, some Romanian historians tried to dissociate the institution from the expansionist and despotic empire that produced it, by conceding personal enlightenment to the head of Russian administration Pavel Kiselev and, at

Struggle against Russia in the Romanian Principalities. A Problem in Anglo-Turkish Diplomacy, 1821-1854. (Iași: The Center for Romanian Studies, The Foundation for Romanian Culture and Studies, 1997).

³ Pompiliu Eliade, *Influenta franceza asupra spiritului public în România*, trans. From the French by Aurelia Dumitrascu (București: Humanitas, 2000); Neagu Djuvara, *Între Orient și Occident. Țările române la începutul epocii moderne* (București, Humanitas, 1995); Vlad Georgescu, *Political Ideas and Enlightenment in the Romanian Principalities, 1750-1830* (Boulder, Colo.: Eastern European Quarterly, 1971).

⁴ Tudor Drăganu, *Începuturile și dezvoltarea regimului parlamentar în România până la 1916* (Cluj: Dacia, 1991), 55.

⁵ A. D. Xenopol, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiană*, vol. 9 (București: Cartea Românească, 1928), 100.

⁶ See, respectively, Gheorghe Platon, *Moldova și începuturile revoluției din 1848* (Chisinau: Universitas, 1993), 65, and Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă*, vol. 1. *Domniile pământene și ocupația rusească* (București: Albatros, 1996), 230.

the same time, treating him as rare exception in the generally oppressive system of Russian dominance.⁷

One of the reasons for the perpetuation of this love-and-hate relationship of the Romanian historians towards the Organic Statutes is the unreflective use of the notions “progressive” and “reactionary” betraying an understanding of modernization as a unidirectional development of traditional society towards a modern liberal democracy, which could occur only through a national liberation movement and a unification of all Romanians into unitary state. Obviously, from the point of view of Western constitutional tradition the Organic Statutes appear to be “a most baffling, incongruous and paradoxical institution, defying a rigorous analysis.”⁸ However, it must be remembered that in the first half of the 19th century the eventual victory of liberal ideals was anything, but obvious and in many ways the old regime persisted on the European continent until the First World War.⁹ Another fundamental fault of this approach is the tendency to present the Russian Empire as an unchangeable “oriental despotism,” whose rulers cared only about territorial expansion and the control of the Black Sea straights. As this study will demonstrate, Russian Empire was a complex polity, whose foreign policy and internal administration in the early 19th century were undergoing significant changes. This, in turn made the eventual outcome of Russia’s involvement into political reforms in Moldavia and Wallachia open-ended.

Both misconceptions ultimately have to do with the idea of Europe as a historical and cultural entity, which is defined through its current political form (liberal democracy) in opposition to several constitutive “others”, the “oriental despotism” of the Russian tsars being one of them. Ignored in this approach is the actual richness of European historical experience, which does not correlate with the present day political realities. Thus, Central and Eastern

⁷ Characteristically, Romanian historian Radu F. Florescu called Kiselev “the only Russian whose departure was sincerely regretted by all categories of population.” Radu R. Florescu, *Essays in Romanian History* (Iași-Oxford-Portland, 1999), 207.

⁸ Florescu, *The Struggle against Russia in Romanian principalities*, 159.

European enlightened absolutisms that defined the political context, in which the Organic Statutes were elaborated, were as much a European political and cultural phenomenon as the famous slogans of the French revolution that provided the reference point for Madzinian “young Europe” in the 19th century.¹⁰ In a more fundamental sense, recent re-conceptualization of the political history revealed the inadequacy of traditional understanding of political modernization, upon which Romanian historiographic treatment of the Organic Statutes is based. Following this historiographic tendency, political modernity is understood here not in terms of its epiphenomena such as a liberal constitution or universal voting rights, but first of all as a radical expansion of the scope of government, that characterized the emergence of the centralized territorial monarchies in early modern Europe.¹¹ Reflecting the general European development, the goal of political reforms undertaken in Moldavia and Wallachia in the 18th – early 19th centuries was a more intensive control over both territory and population by means of a more elaborate and efficient administrative system enabling the rulers to mobilize greater resources for the purposes of war. Representing a realization of the agenda of the early modern state-making in Moldavia and Wallachia, the Organic Statutes were produced in the period, when the process of political modernization in Western Europe already entered a principally new phase, characterized by progressive political enfranchisement of the larger masses of population. Different regimes of historicity of the Western Europe and the Eastern parts of the continent might explain why the Organic Statutes were received with mixed fillings by contemporaries, but hardly justify the perpetuation of anachronistic judgments in later-day historiography.

⁹ Mayer, Arno J. *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

¹⁰ For a well-argued rehabilitation of the Enlightened Absolutism from liberal criticism see Charles Ingrao, The Problem of “Enlightened Absolutism” and the German States,” *The Journal of Modern History* 58, (1986), Supplement: Politics and Society in the Holy Roman Empire, 1500-1806, 161-180.

¹¹ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*. Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of the European Nation State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Idem, *Coercion, Capital and European States* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

If a misconceived notion of political modernization was one of the reasons for the historiographic predicament over the Organic Statutes, a highly partial attitude towards empires in general and Russian Empire in particular was another. Throughout the early modern period Moldavia and Wallachia represented borderland territories located between several empires and this exerted a major influence of their development. However, this influence could not receive a just evaluation until the empires were viewed through the spectacles of late 19th century liberals or radicals, who treated them unequivocally as brakes on any political development. Finding their ways in national and social ideologies of the time, early 20th century critiques of imperialism contributed to perception of empires in general and Russian Empire in particular as “prisons of peoples,” which are in the process of irreversible decline and disintegration. The collapse of most continental empires during and after the WWI reinforced this perception, which became entrenched in both Soviet and national historiographies. The émigré historians of the “captive nations” combined scholarly study of national histories with ideological fervor of 19th century national leaders. The division of labor, which existed in Soviet historiography, likewise prevented a positive study of imperial problematic. Making all necessary ideological reservations, historians of Moscow and Leningrad inherited the approach of Russian pre-revolutionary historians writing about history of Russia as the history of nation-state making in the process. The historians of the former Soviet republics monopolized local problematic paying lip tribute to the myth of “progressive role of unification of their territories with Great Russian people.” The collapse of the Soviet Union paralleled by “national revival” in former soviet republics likewise proved to be an inhibiting factor for the development of studies of empire in the post-Soviet space.¹² Hardly making any theoretical contributions, the national historiographies often reproduced the worn-out clichés of the early 20th century.

¹² Mark von Hagen, “Empires, Borderland, and Diasporas: Eurasia as Anti-Paradigm for the Post-Soviet Era,” *American Historical Review* 109, no. 2 (2004): 445-468.

However, political developments in the post Soviet realm in the past fifteen years also added to the skepticism about the nation-state paradigm in politics and historiography, a skepticism which had a longer history in Western intellectual milieu. Political analysts talking about transcendence of the nation-states on both local and global levels are paralleled by scholars who speak about the crisis of the nation-state paradigm in historiography.¹³ A growing number of studies addressing specifically “imperial” dimension of Russian history became a compensation for a relative neglect of this problematique in the past.¹⁴ Among other things, recent studies of empires reflect an interest in alternative political forms that have long been suppressed by progressivist ideology national self-determination. Even the collapse of the Soviet Union, provoking an avalanche of studies of nationalism and nation-building, stimulated interest in empires insofar as the latter provided a political and institutional setting for most national movements. As a result, a number of historians made significant contribution to the understanding of interaction between empires and nationalisms revealing factors that were previously unknown.¹⁵ Our understanding of the historical development of Moldavia and Wallachia can likewise profit from these new histories of empire produced in the last decade and a half.

Continental Empires and Frontier Zones

The history of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe in the early modern and modern period offers reasons for studying empires as a political form *sui generis*. Evolving

¹³ Mathew Horseman and Andrew Marshall, *After the Nation-State. Citizens, Tribalism and the New World Disorder* (London: HarperCollins, 1994); Alfred J. Rieber, “Sravniavaia kontinental’nyie imperii,” in A. I. Miller, (ed.) *Rossiskaia imperia v sravnitel’noi perspective* (Moscow: Novoie Izdatel’stvo, 2004), 31.

¹⁴ Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: a Multiethnic History* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education, 2001); Dominic Lieven, *Empire. The Russian Empire and its Rivals* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001); A. I. Miller (ed.) *Rossiskaia imperia v sravnitel’noi perspective* (Moscow: Novoie Izdatel’stvo, 2004); V. I. Kabytov, Paul Werth, A. I. Miller (eds.) *Rossiskaia imperia v zapadnoi istoriografii* (Moscow: Novoie izdatel’stvo, 2004); Alexei Miller, Alfred J. Rieber (eds.) *Imperial Rule* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia. Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914* (DeKalb: University of Illinois Press, 1996); A. I. Miller, *Ukrainskii vopros v politike vlastei i v russkom obshchestvennom mnenii* (St. Petersburg. Aletea, 2000); Witold Rodkiewicz, *Russian Nationality Policy in the Western Provinces of the Empire (1863-1905)* (Lublin: Scientific Society of Lublin, 1998).

from medieval polities, between the early 14th and the mid 16th century, the Russian (Romanov), the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires represented large, socially and culturally heterogeneous entities, uniting with the help of imperial officialdom and an original political mythology, a multitude of particularistic religious and social communities under control of a single dynasty. Effectively controlling the center, East and South East of the European continent in the 18th and most of the 19th centuries, the three continental empires represented a political form combining both traditional and modern features. The former include rule by monarchs with claims to traditional sacred legitimacy and lack of political enfranchisement of the large masses of population. The latter comprise a high degree of centralization, bureaucratic administration and “a relatively intensive political struggle” caused by the attempts of the rulers and ruling elites to mobilize available resources.¹⁶ The land-based continuous character of imperial possessions, their restricted access to sea and/or limited role of maritime commerce in their economies allow classifying the Ottoman, the Habsburg Monarchy and Russia as continental empires in contrast to maritime colonial powers such as Spain, Portugal, Great Britain or France.

The necessity to legitimize the rule over religiously and culturally diverse population explains a syncretic character of imperial ideology. Although the Ottomans, the Habsburgs and the Romanovs presented themselves as the champions of Sunni Islam, Catholicism and Orthodoxy respectively, these religious banners covered a plurality of legitimization scenarios. Thus, the Habsburgs combined the title of the Holy Roman Emperors with crowns of St Stephen and St Wentslaw and a multitude of minor titles, whereas the Ottomans posited themselves as the heirs to the Seljuk sultanate, Arab caliphate, and Byzantine imperial

¹⁶ S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (London: Macmillan, 1963), 4. Although neither Russia nor the Ottoman Empire ever developed a Weberian bureaucracy, there was an unmistakable tendency towards centralization, systematization and uniformization of the imperial administration. See Walter McKenzie Pintner and Don Karl Rowney (eds.) *Russian Officialdom : the Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth century* (London ; Chapel Hill: Macmillan: University of North Carolina Press, 1993) and Richard S. Wortman, *The Development of A Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: Chicago

tradition.¹⁷ For their part, the later Rurikids and Romanovs claimed the inheritance of Rome and Byzantium, Kievan Rus' and the Golden Horde.¹⁸ Finally, besides their major traditions of legitimacy there was a multitude of particular local themes reflected in the Habsburg or Romanov's imperial titles. The plurality of legitimization themes allowed securing the maximal number of loyalties by establishing direct contact between the elites of the given territory and the emperor. Polyphonic character of imperial ideology and the possibility of direct political dialogue between the emperors and a particular group of their subjects opened before the imperial rulers an extraordinary space for maneuver and was one of the most important factors explaining longevity of empires.

The ability of imperial dynasties to control vast territorial expanses with relatively primitive communication technologies can be explained by elaboration of various mechanisms of indirect rule. The latter is the reverse side of one of the most important characteristics of empire defined by one author as an "effective control whether formal or informal, of a subordinated society by an imperial society."¹⁹ Even in those cases when the establishment of imperial rule was paralleled by extermination of a peripheral elite (as in the case of Ottoman conquest of the Balkans in the mid 15th century, the Habsburg consolidation of Bohemia after 1618 or Moscow's conquest of Novgorod in 1470), the imperial rulers faced the necessity to delegate authority.²⁰ This seriously limited the capacities of continental

University Press, 1976) for the discussion of Russian case. For the same theme in the Ottoman Empire see Carter V. Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom. A Social History* (Ann-Arbor: UNM Books on Demand, 1994).

¹⁷ R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1550-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

¹⁸ Andreas, Kappeler, "Formirovanie Rossiskoi imperii v XV – nachale XVIII veka: Nasledstvo Vizantii Rusi i Ordy," in A. I. Miller (ed.) *Rossiskaia Imperia v sravnitel'noi perspektive* (Moscow: Novoie Izdatel'stvo, 2004), 94-116. Complex character of Russian imperial legitimacy is also addressed in Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power. Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy* Vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)

¹⁹ Michael Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 30.

²⁰ See Valerie Kivelson, *Autocracy in the Provinces : the Muscovite Gentry and Political Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Stanford, Cal. : Stanford University Press, 1996) arguing for a greater local autonomy of the Russian nobility than is usually assumed. The relationships between the Habsburgs and the indigenous elites are addressed in Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy*. For the Ottoman case see Selcuk Aksin Somel, "Osmanskaia Imperia: mestnye elity i mekhanizmy ikh integratsii, 169-1914," in A. I. Miller (ed.) *Rossiskaia imperia v sravnitel'noi perspektive* (Moscow: Novoie Izdatel'stvo, 2004), 177-204 as well as Karen Barkey,

empires to effectively exploit the resources of a territory. Securing basic political loyalty of pre-existing or newly created local elites, the imperial rulers, at the same time, depended on their formal or informal consensus and support in the matters of taxation and war.²¹ Thus, the available “free-floating resources” became the objects of competition and/or negotiation between the elites of the outlining territories and imperial center. With their limited capacities for “intensive” exploitation of resources of the controlled territories, imperial rulers found further conquest to be an important device for mobilization of the imperial and local elites, which can be offered as the most general explanation for the tendency of continental empires towards expansion.

Imperial expansion was the process connecting two basic *topoi* of imperial space – imperial centers or core areas and imperial peripheries or frontier zones.²² According to one definition, “core areas” emerge where political opportunities, economic incentives, population pressures, clashing cultural and religious claims” create “enough internal energy support the formation of a distinct political system and give it an aggressive ideology” “embodying simplistic and fundamentalist attitudes.”²³ In case of the three empires considered here the core areas were the Habsburg Austrian *Erblande*, Anatolia and the “inner gubernias” for the Habsburgs, the Ottomans and the Romanovs respectively. Here the control of the dynasties was the most obvious and these provinces served as power bases, from which

Bandits and Bureaucrats. The Ottoman Route to State Centralization (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1997).

²¹ A comparative perspective on the process of consolidation of control over East European nobilities by imperial centers see Orest Subtelny, *Domination of Eastern Europe: Native Nobilities and Foreign Absolutism, 1500-1715* (Gloucester, UK : Sutton Publishing, 1986). For the process of their integration into imperial elites see Ivo Banac (ed.), *The Nobility in Russia and Eastern Europe* (New Haven : Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1983).

²² Building upon the terminology offered by John LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917: the Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), this study operates with the terms of imperial center and frontier zones. Imperial elites, which are the bearers of imperial ideologies, should therefore be distinguished from peripheral elites, which do not have specific imperial ambitions. The term “borderland” is used here to denote parts of the frontier zones formally annexed by empire, which retain their unassimilated particularistic and in some cases, contested character. The elites of the borderland territories are referred to as “local” or “regional elites” to indicate that they are still not fully incorporated into imperial elite, and, at the same time, distinguish them from “peripheral elites”, which are located beyond formal imperial borders.

the rulers drew the resources necessary for the expansion and control of other territories. At the same time, the resources of the core areas alone were manifestly insufficient for the maintenance of empires without support coming from elsewhere. Therefore, core areas were constantly trying to incorporate and control frontier zones that lacked “sturdy political organization, social discipline, ideological conformity and fiscal resources to become core areas,”²⁴ but were much more heterogeneous regions defined by religious and ethnic diversity and multiple and shifting loyalties.

Competition with other imperial centers over frontier zones leading to imperial expansion and the necessity to control parts of the already incorporated frontier is one of the most important characteristics of continental empires alongside with polyphonic ideology and delegated authority. The nature of the frontier zones, which frequently conditioned the security of imperial possessions on further expansion, deserves a special consideration. Studies of frontiers of continental empires characterize them, among other things, as “meeting grounds of settles, nomadic and semi-nomadic populations and of mixed ethno-linguistic and religious groups.” This results in “frequent cross border interactions” including trade, movement of population and ideas as well as wars. Above all, cultural, social and political heterogeneity explains “ambiguous loyalties on the part of the peoples of the frontier zones towards their sovereign overlords combined with strong cultural and often political ties to their religious or ethno-linguistic counterparts across the boundary line.”²⁵ A deeper probing into the nature of the frontier zone reveals its triple aspect as a *space* “encompassing the contested lands between the rival empires,” a *process* consisting of the “movement of people through colonization, resettlement and deportation,” and a *symbol* representing “sites

²³ John LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World*, 3-4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵ Alfred J. Rieber, “Sravnivaia kontinental’nyie imperii,” in A. I. Miller (ed.) *Rossiskaia imperia v sravnitel’noi perspektive* (Moscow: Novoe Izdatel’stvo, 2004), 55-56.

of religious and ideological mission, cradles of heroic myths” and, ultimately, “the dividing line between civilization and barbarism.”²⁶

From the perspective of history of continental empires, the great steppe stretching from the middle Danube and the Balkan mountains in Europe to the highlands of Manchuria in the Far East represent an enormous Eurasian frontier zone that for more than a millennium provided a stage for the conflict between settled and (semi)-nomadic population. In the course of the early modern period, the continental empires (Ottoman, Habsburg, Russian, Iranian and Chinese) constituting political organizations of the sedentary societies eventually established control over the Eurasian frontier zone, subjugated the nomad polities and engaged each other in a never ending contest for territory. This study will concentrate on the westernmost part of Eurasian frontier area, the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone that in the early modern period constituted a space of imperial expansion and contest for the Ottoman, the Habsburg and the Russian Empires. Representing at first a political manifestation of the ecological struggle of the agriculturalists and the nomads, in which the latter gradually gave ground to the former, their imperial rivalry later acquired a momentum of its own accumulating into a lasting legacy of religious, ethnic and political conflict in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe.

Defined by general characteristics outlined above, frontier zone always remained a supremely heterogeneous space that was in the constant process of transformation. A closer look on the map would reveal that some parts of the frontier were characterized by permanent and conflict, while the history of others represent an alteration of the periods of relative peace and periods of intensified tension. For most of the early modern period, the principal and permanent axes of conflict in this part of the pan-Eurasian frontier were the so-called *Triplex Confinium* and the Pontic steppe, which represented two “complex frontier zones” defined by

²⁶ Alfred J. Rieber, “Complex Ecology of Eurasian Frontiers,” in A. I. Miller, Alfred J. Rieber (eds.) *Imperial Rule*, 178.

military conflict of three imperial rivals, taking place in the conditions of an endemic warfare, trading and raiding, large scale population movements (through colonization, migration or deportation) that constituted “imagined or real threats to the stability and security of imperial order.”²⁷

Triplex Confinium emerged in the extreme West of the Eurasian frontier zone along the Adriatic coast, the Dinaric Alps and the right tributaries of the Danube as the point of contact and conflict of the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy and Venice.²⁸ The halt of the Ottoman onslaught in the early 16th century by the joint efforts of the Habsburgs and Venice contributed to the configuration of the frontier that persisted for centuries. Lacking permanent field armies the Habsburgs created the institution of “military frontier” employing the Uskoks of Seni, the herders-warriors in order to confront the Ottomans by giving them the lands along the frontier, recognizing their religious freedom and exempting them from taxation.²⁹ On their part, the Ottomans temporarily attracted the Orthodox Vlachs to serve in the same capacity on their side of the frontier, but failing in the longer run to prevent the Vlachs’ cession to the Habsburgs and Venice. Far from performing the border guard service in conventional sense, the Uskok and the Vlach population of peasant and herder-warriors routinely engaged in trading, smuggling and raiding, constituted the main means, by which the three powers conducted never ending small border-wars. From the point of view of the continental empires as the political organizations of sedentary societies, the employment of the Uskoks and the Vlachs was a means of self-protection by turning the destructive energies of the semi-nomads towards the destruction of their imperial rival(s).

²⁷ Rieber, “Complex Ecology of Eurasian Frontiers,” 179.

²⁸ Drago Rokсандić, “Triplex Confinium. International Research Project: Objectives, Approaches and Methods” in Drago Rokсандić (ed.) *Microhistory of the Triplex Confinium* (Budapest: Institute on South-Eastern Europe, 1998), 7-27.

²⁹ Wendy Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj. Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth Century Adriatic* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992).

An essentially similar, but territorially much more amorphous complex frontier zone emerged in the course of the late 15th and 16th centuries in the Pontic Steppe limited by the Danubian estuary and the Dniester in the West and the Don River in the East.³⁰ Here the 14th and 15th century advance of Lithuania against the Golden Horde was halted after the conquest of the Crimea by the Tatars and the acceptance of the Ottoman suzerainty by their Khans, the Girais, leading to the establishment of mutually advantageous strategic alliance that lasted for three centuries. Once again the continental empire of the Ottomans not only neutralized the destructive energies of the nomads, but also turned them against its imperial rivals, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russia, that represented political organizations of the sedentary peoples living to the north and north-west of the Eurasian steppe. The routine raids of the Crimeans Tatars deep into Russian and Polish interiors for food, raw material and slaves arrested the earlier expansion of the line of agricultural settlement and contributed perpetuation of the “wild field” condition of Pontic steppe existing since the days of the Kievan Rus’. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy sought to protect themselves by employing other nomads (like the Kalmyks, whom Russian rulers used against the Crimean Tatars since their appearance on the lower Volga in the first half of the 17th century) or reverting to the services of the Ukrainian and the Don Cossacks.³¹ The latter were semi-nomadic frontier peoples, emerging in the 16th century in the northern and north-eastern reaches of the Pontic Steppe and representing the descendants of the runaway peasants escaping from enserfment, which took place in Russia and Poland-Lithuania in the same period. However, as both Russian and Polish rulers were to discover in the course of the 17th

³⁰ Rieber, “Complex Ecology of Eurasian Frontiers,” 189.

³¹ Michael Khodarkovsky, *Where the Two Worlds Met. Russian Empire and the Kalmyk Nomads, 1600-1771* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). On the emergence of Ukrainian Cossacks see Linda Gordon, *Cossack Rebellions: Social Turmoil in the Sixteenth-Century Ukraine* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1983).

century, the Cossacks represented a highly unruly and explosive elements, which frequently turned against their employers placing themselves at the head of great peasant rebellions.³²

In comparison with complex frontier zones, the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia located between Triplex Confinium in the West and the Pontic Steppe in the East, were relatively more pacified territories in the early modern period with largely peasant populations, local nobilities and a more or less consolidated princely authorities. Nevertheless, their development in the late medieval and early modern period also betrays some of the fundamental characteristics of the frontier zone. For one thing, the late emergence of medieval principalities in the mid 14th century reveals the influence of the factor of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples that for a long time prevented the definitive settlement of sedentary population to the south and east of the Carpathians. Throughout the late medieval and early modern periods Moldavia and Wallachia continued to provide meeting grounds of settled and semi-nomadic population. Periodic Tatar and Ottoman raids accompanied by the mounting landlord and state taxation, frequently made the peasants flight *en masse* to the woods and mountains and explain why Moldavian and Wallachian peasant in the early modern period preferred cattle-breeding to land cultivation and generally remained far more mobile than its Western and Central European counterparts. Retaining Orthodox faith and internal autonomy throughout the period of the Ottoman dominance, the principalities, at the same time, experienced an influx of Greeks, Albanians, Serbs, Bulgarians and other Balkan peoples, which became heavily concentrated in commerce and the military. Finally, Moldavian and Wallachian elites not only included a growing number of foreign elements, but also maintained contacts with Poland, the Habsburg Monarchy and, ultimately, Russia. Developing multiple and constantly shifting loyalties in the course of

³² After all the four greatest uprisings in Russian history (Bolotnikov's, Razin's, Bulavin's and Pugachev's) started borderland events in which Cossacks provided the crucial military leadership even if they later developed into a general onslaught of the "have-nots" against the 'haves'. Paul Avreh, *Russian Rebels, 1600-1800* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), 5-6, as well as Gordon, *Cossack Rebellions*.

centuries of surviving in a contested frontier zone, the Moldavian and Wallachian boyars were in a way well-prepared for geopolitical transformations generated by the struggle of continental empires.

At the same time, due to a more definitive sedentarization of Moldavian and Wallachian peasantry than was the case of the Uskoks or the Cossacks, as well as continuous existence of landed aristocracy and uninterrupted endemic tradition of princely authority, the principalities were consolidated political units, that managed to retain their original religion, political autonomy as well as ethno-linguistic distinctiveness. In other words, if the Uskok, the Vlachs and the Cossacks made part of the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone as *frontier peoples*, of which only the last developed a proto-state organization that did not survive the 18th century (the Ukrainian Hetmanate), Moldavia and Wallachia made part of the frontier zone as autonomous *frontier polities* ever since the middle of the 14th century and remained such until their transformation into Romanian nation-state. In their case, the conflicts, characterizing the history of the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone, were to a greater extent political clashes of state organizations and to a lesser extent ecological grass-route struggle of different religiously, ethnically and socially diverse populations. Their relative political autonomy and distinctiveness in the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone is testified by greater social differentiation in comparison with the Ukrainian Hetmanate, let along the Uskoks and the Vlach communities. This social differentiation generated peculiar internal conflicts between the peasantry, the aristocracy and the princely authority, which were not unlike the conflicts taking place between the same social elements in the imperial core areas. In the 18th-early 19th century these tensions and conflicts informed the agenda of political reform in Moldavia and Wallachia, in which all the three continental empires became implicated at some point, while their intensification in the early 19th century for a short period of time turned the principalities into the most turbulent part of the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone. In

the remaining part of the introduction I will sketch the main turning points of the development of Moldavia and Wallachia in a contested frontier zone, outline the emergence of the agenda of political reform of the principalities in the 18th century, demonstrate how the involvement of the Habsburg and the Russian Empire into local political reform contributed to the gradual transformation of the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone as well as isolate the basic aspects of this process.

Moldavia and Wallachia as Parts of the Danubian-Pontic Frontier Zone

Emerging at the margins of the Pontic and Danubian steppe after the weakening of the Golden Horde and Polish-Hungarian advance in the middle of the 14th century, the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia throughout their history represented a contested space characterized by conflicting political and cultural influences of several imperial centers.³³ Lacking an imperial ideology and exposed to contrasting cultural influences, the elites of Moldavia and Wallachia were increasingly heterogeneous groups, characterized by multiple and shifting political loyalties and ambiguous civilizational orientations. By the time of intensification of the contacts with the West in the 18th century, centuries of frontier experience accumulated in local social structure, institutions and political culture that profoundly affected the result of the attempts of Moldavian and Wallachian princes to imitate European models.

The consolidation of the power of the first hospodars took place under the influence of Byzantine model of *autocrator* without the latter's imperial pretensions. A number of highest state offices such as *logothete*, *vestiar*, *spathar*, *comis* as well as relationship between state and church hierarchies likewise bore the imprint of the declining Byzantine Empire. In order to consolidate their power, the hospodars also used Byzantine legal tradition against local custom, which resulted in partial reception of Byzantine law. However, fragmentary

³³ Șerban Papacostea, "Relațiile internaționale în răsăritul și sud-estul Europei în secolul XIV-XV," in idem, *Geneza statului românesc în Evul Mediu* (București: Corint, 1999), 254-277.

Byzantine influences were limited to the political apex of a still largely undifferentiated society and coexisted with such indigenous egalitarian institutions as General Assembly of the Land or Peasant Great Army.³⁴ The persistence of these archaic institutions can be explained by the fact that consolidation of political power in the hands of the hospodars predated the establishment of the definitive social control of the boyar class over the peasantry. In comparison with their counterparts south of the Danube, the Romanian peasants retained substantial part of their personal and communal liberties and this proved to be a very important source of hospodars' power during the first century and a half of Moldavian and Wallachia's existence. The social position of the peasantry was crucial for the ability of the hospodars to survive the Ottoman onslaught of the 15th century and ultimately retain political autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.

Unlike the Slavic lands south of the Danube, where the Ottoman conquest uprooted indigenous nobility and state structures, Moldavia and Wallachia retained autonomy in internal affairs and became the vassals of the Ottomans obliged to pay yearly tribute (*harac*) and provide military support for the Sultan in the course of his campaigns. Although with time the Ottomans tightened their control over Moldavia and Wallachia depriving them of effective military force, independent diplomacy and establishing a commercial monopoly, the principalities retained their institutional peculiarity and remained Orthodox countries, where the settlement of Muslims was theoretically prohibited. Within Islamic legal tradition their status was regulated by the notion of '*ahd*' or "agreement" signifying an intermediary position between the "House of Islam" (*dâr al-Islâm*) and "House of War" (*dâr al-Harb*). However, their status remained ambiguous in view of heterogeneity of Islamic law and the tendency of the Ottomans to view the '*ahd*' agreements with non-Muslim territories as temporary, preceding the ultimate victory of Islam. Whereas the hospodars preferred viewing their

³⁴ Valentin Georgescu, *Bizanțul și instituțiile românești până la mijlocul secolului al – XVIII-lea* (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1980), 45-83.

agreements with the Ottomans in contractual terms of Roman-Byzantine or European feudal law presupposing durability and mutual obligations, the Ottomans treated them as temporary privileges granted by the Muslim rulers to non-Muslims that had to be renewed with each change of either of the parties.³⁵ The conflict of interpretations rooted in different legal traditions reflected the balance of powers. With the beginning of the Ottoman decline in the late 16th century and temporary increase of the Habsburg and Polish influence, the transformation of Moldavia and Wallachia into *pashalyks* not only became problematic, but also economically irrational. After the threat of the Habsburg or Polish conquest subsided, indigenous institutions appeared to be more dependable in the task of satisfying the increasing demands of the Sultans for revenue than corrupt Ottoman administrators.³⁶

The annexation of the fortresses on the left bank of the Danube and the creation of the *reaya* districts around them was an important factor of the Ottoman control over the Moldavia and Wallachia. The term *reaya* designated the Christian population of the principalities that was exempted from the jurisdiction of the hospodars and turned into the tributaries of the Ottoman *pashas* commanding the border fortresses in order to provide supply for the garrisoned troops. The first *reaya* was created as early as 1417 after the Wallachian hospodar Mircea the Old ceded the fortress Turnu to the Ottomans. In the course of the 15th century they annexed the fortresses Giurgiu, Braila, Kilia and Akkerman together with substantial portions of Wallachian and Moldavian territories along the Danube and in the Dniester. In the early 18th century, as means of consolidating control over Moldavia, the Ottomans created two additional *reayas* along the Dniester (Bender and Khotin). It is important to understand that no formal boundaries ever separated the *reaya* districts and the territory of the principalities. The Ottoman *pashas* commanding the fortresses frequently

³⁵ Of the four main schools of Islamic law the Hanefi School adopted by the Ottomans operated only with the notions *dâr al-Islâm* and *dâr al-Harb* and did not recognize any intermediate status. Mihai Maxim, *Țările Române și Înalta Poartă* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993), 200-202.

³⁶ Ibid., 131-132.

ignored the formal jurisdictions and intruded well into Wallachian and Moldavian territory in order to supply their troops. The threat of their raids contributed to depopulation of the southern regions of the principalities and was one of the factors preventing complete sedentarization of the Romanian peasantry.

The same was true of frequent raids of the Crimean Tatars into the principalities, whom the Ottomans used in order to enforce loyalty or punish a rebellious prince. In the early 18th century, the Budzhak steppe located in the southern part of the territory between the Pruth and the Dniester became the abode of the Nogai vassals of the Crimean Khans, one of whom (Krym-Girai) established his summer residence at Kaushani, located to the South of Chisinau. Through periodic visits of the Tatars and continued presence of the Nogays, the principalities throughout the early modern period continued to provide the meeting ground of settled and nomadic population that has been defined as one of the important characteristics of the frontier zones. The presence of the nomads influenced the pattern of settlement of the Moldavian and Wallachian peasantry. Villages were usually located away from major routes, where they could easily fall prey to the Ottoman or the Tatar raids, and the peasants were constantly ready to take their movable possessions and fly to the woods or the mountains, which they did frequently enough. The mobility of the local peasantry made one author add them to the list of the “local nomads” alongside the Gypsies and the *haiducs*.³⁷

Together with their political incorporation into the Ottoman Empire in the 15th – first half of the 16th century, Moldavia and Wallachia were drawn into the regional division of labor, which seriously transformed their social landscape and was a factor of major importance for the subsequent relationship between the hospodars, the boyars and the peasantry. Constantinople economy traditionally was based on two staples: the grain supplies and the slaves. In order to secure the permanent supply of the capital with grain and cattle,

³⁷ Francois Ruegg, *La est, nimic nou...* (Timisoara: Eurostampa, 2002), 61-62.

the Ottomans were interested in the overland export from the principalities, which would compliment the overseas supplies from Egypt vulnerable to the naval attacks. Until the end of the 15th century large amounts of grain were imported from the southern regions of Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth through the Dnieper. Later, the alliance with the Crimean Khans made the sultans authorize their inroads into the southern regions of Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy disruptive as they were to the grain trade, but compensating the Constantinople economy with lavish supplies of its second staple: the slaves. As a result, in the course of the 16th century much of the Pontic steppe rim was turned into the wild field creating the precondition the formation of the Cossack polities, while the main current of the Polish grain export was turned to the north along Vistula.³⁸ As vassals of the Empire, Moldavia and Wallachia now replaced Poland-Lithuania in the supply of grain and cattle to Constantinople. Their trade monopoly in the principalities allowed the Ottomans obtaining required quantities of food at fixed prices below the market level.³⁹ At the same time, frequently devastated by wars and vulnerable to the intimidation raids of the Crimean Tatars and Ottoman troops,⁴⁰ the principalities remained incompletely sedentary agriculturalist societies, in which cattle-breeding was as important as the cultivation of land.

The establishment of the Ottoman dominance sapped the power of the hospodars and contributed to the strengthening of the boyar class. The weakening of the princely authority allowed the boyars to undertake an onslaught on the peasantry increasing taxes and seigniorial dues. The decline of the egalitarian institutions of Great Army and Assembly of the Land as well as a gradual exhaustion of the princely land fund, contributed to the strengthening of the boyar class and monopolization of the bulk of the land by the noble and ecclesiastical landowners. As long as the levels of the Ottoman commercial exploitation of

³⁸ William McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier, 1500-1800*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

³⁹ Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774-1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 12.

the principalities allowed that, the boyar class became increasingly “market-oriented” producing on their estates things consumed by the Ottoman capital. The costs of this economic cooperation with the Ottomans were shouldered by the peasants, who found themselves progressively enserfed. The boyar dominance in the countryside was paralleled their economic and social hegemony in the cities.⁴¹

The economic and social ascendancy of the boyars was paralleled by the growth of their political influence, which allows calling the political system of the principalities a boyar oligarchy.⁴² This is especially true of the 17th century, when several great families (The Movilas, the Striocis, or the Ureches) monopolized the important offices of the government as well as elections of the hospodars imposing on them some conditions government similar to Polish *pacta conventa*.⁴³ At the same time, however important were the social and economic positions of the boyars, they never managed to institutionalize their power in some sort of representative institutions. The estate unity of the boyars was compromised by the rivalry of the boyar factions and penetration of numerous foreign (mainly Greek) elements in the nobility of the principalities.⁴⁴ Absence of the primogeniture, low land productivity and frequent redistribution of land prevented the formation of the noble opposition to the authoritarian inclinations of the princes on the territorially entrenched basis and made the control of the people ultimately more important than the control of the land.⁴⁵ The same factors explain the Romanian nobility’s lack of economic self-sufficiency, which ultimately made it dependent on the public offices. As the result, Moldavian and Wallachian boyars represented a variation of domesticated aristocracy organized in clans and patronage

⁴⁰ Long after the establishment of the Ottoman dominance, the Ottoman used these raids systematically as a means of “intimidation.” *Istoria României*, vol. 3. (Bucuresti: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Romine, 1964), 28.

⁴¹ Peter Sugar, *South Eastern Europe under the Ottoman Rule 1354-1804* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977), 127.

⁴² Hitchins, *The Romanians*, 19.

⁴³ Peter Sugar, *South Eastern Europe under the Ottoman Rule*, 126.

⁴⁴ *Istoria României*, vol 3, 201.

networks vying for prince's favor and sometimes effectively controlling him, but never managing to establish an aristocratic republic in the manner of Polish Commonwealth.

Incomplete political consolidation of the boyar estate was compensated by the hospodars' increasing dependence upon the good will of the Ottomans. The latter controlled the election/appointment of the hospodars since 1462 in Wallachia and 1538 in Moldova and with time, their interference into the election of the prince tended to be more frequent and arbitrary. In the conditions of the general weakening of their power in the late 17th century, the Ottomans replaced the hospodars with increasing frequency as a way of keeping the principalities loyal and cashing a greater revenue. Already in the first half of the 16th century, large sums were submitted to the Ottoman authorities by the candidates for the hospodar office. In the 17th century the average term of hospodar service was four and a half years for Wallachia and two and a half years for Moldova.⁴⁶ The prolonged reigns of Matei Basarab in Wallachia (1632-1654) and Vasilie Lupu in Moldova (1634-1653), who took advantage of the severe crisis of the Ottoman Empire, were exceptional. The Ottomans encouraged the boyar opposition to the princes and factional struggle. With their dominance in the region seriously challenged by Christian powers in the end of the 17th century, the Sultans grew increasingly mistrustful of the autochthonous hospodars and sought to replace them by the foreigners of Greek or Albanian extraction. This process culminated in the early 18th century with the establishment of the so-called Phanariote regime.⁴⁷ Delivering a decisive blow to the

⁴⁵ Neagu Djuvara, "Le Grands Bojars ont-ils constitue dans les principautes roumaines une veritable oligarchie institutionele et hereditaire?" in *Sudost Forschungen*, XLXVI, (1987) : 1-56.

⁴⁶ Hitchins, *The Romanians*, 11.

⁴⁷ The term Phanariote derives from Phanar a quarter around Constantinople patriarchy occupied by Greek merchants. The first important Phanariote figure was Alexander Mavrocordat, who was a client of the famous Kuprulu family and rose to the positions of importance in the Ottoman hierarchy eventually becoming the High Dragoman of the Porte and the main Ottoman representative at the peace negotiations at Karlowitz in 1699. Alexander Mavrocordat seized the opportunity after the defection of Dmitrii Cantemir to the Russians in 1711 and decapitation of Constantine Brancovianu to get the Moldavian and Wallachian thrones for his son Nicolae in 1716 which initiated the period of the Phanariote rule. It is important however, not to consider Phanariotes as identical with Greeks. For over a century after the establishment of the Phanariote monopoly over the hospodar offices, two out of the three families sharing that monopoly were either of local Romanian origin (Racovitsas) or of the Albanian extraction (the Ghicas) who has long settled in the Principalities and assimilated in the local noble class. Vlad Georgescu in *The Romanians*, 73-74, points out that the real criterion for the classifying this

last vestiges of the hospodars' independence, the establishment of Phanariote regime also seriously compromised the position of the boyar oligarchy. Descending upon Moldavia and Wallachia every three years, numerous clients and relatives of each new Phanariote prince at least partially ousted the autochthonous elements from administrative positions and mercilessly plundered local population, which accounted for the unpopularity of Phanariote regime among later day Romanian historians.⁴⁸

The Politics of Reform in the 18th Century Moldavia and Wallachia

Although Phanariote regime was undoubtedly oppressive towards Romanian boyars and the peasantry, it ushered a number of important transformations in the political system of the principalities. The most remarkable of the Phanariote princes sought to redress taxation, rationalize administration and judicial system, while their encroachment on the privileges of the autochthonous boyars had the semblance of centralization policies pursued by contemporary absolutist monarchs of Europe. At the same time, they were not independent rulers and unlike most European monarchs did not pursue a militarization program that in the evaluation of some scholars was crucial to the emergence of centralized territorial state.⁴⁹ Instead, their reform agenda in the principalities emerged in response to Habsburg advance of the late 17th-early 18th century, which culminated in Austrian annexation of Oltenia, a Western part of Wallachia in 1718. Even more important than the loss of territory was the

or that prince as a Phanariote was his sharing of the basic values of the cosmopolitan Phanariote culture rather than ethnic origin. The term "phanariote" becomes increasingly associated with "Greeks" only after 1774 when the scene is dominated by other families (The Ypsilantis, the Sutsos, the Carageas, the Callimachis) while the old Phanariote families (the Ghicas, the Racovitsas') become "de-phanariotized" and join the ranks of the boyar opposition.

⁴⁸ The 19th century critical evaluations by Mihai Kogalniceanu *L'Istoire de la Dacie, des Valaques Transdanubiennes et de la Valachie* (Berlin : Librairie B. Behr, 1854), 372, and A. D. Xenopol, *Epoca Epoca Fanariotilor pâna la 1812* (Iasi: Editura Librăriei scoalelor Fratii Saraga, 1896) were countered in the 20th century by N. Iorga, "Le Despotisme eclaire dans les pays roumains au XVIIIeme siecle," *Bulletin of the International Committee of Historical Sciences*, 1 (1937), and F. Constantiniu and S. Papacostea, "Les reformes des premiers princes phanariotes en Moldavie et en Valachie: Essai d'interpretation," *Balkan Studies* 13 (1972); For the bibliographic surveys of the question see S. Lemny, "La Critique du regime phanariote: Cliches mentaux et perspectives historiographiques." In A. Zub (ed.) *Culture and Society*. (Iasi: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1985), 17-30 and C. Papacostea-Danielopolu, "Etat actuel des recherches sur l'epoque phanariote", *Revue des Etudes sud-est europeens* 24, no. 3 (1986) : 227-43.

⁴⁹ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1992* (Cambridge : Blackwell, 1992).

loss of population that fled south of the Danube or to Transylvania from chaos produced by frequent wars, Ottoman and Tatar raids and growing exploitation.⁵⁰ Finally, Phanariote rulers obtained a monopoly on the thrones of the two principalities on condition of securing a loyal supply of increased tribute in conditions of general military decline of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans wanted Phanariotes to preserve and augment the resources of the two provinces rather than turn them into strong centralized states. The dependency upon the Ottomans imposed serious limitation on their ability and/or desire to create such states. Nevertheless, in conditions of frequent war between the Ottomans, the Habsburgs and the Romanovs, the reform agenda of Phanariote rulers bore certain influence of Central European models brought by Austrian and Russian occupation authorities.

A brief Austrian occupation of Western Wallachia (Oltenia) in 1718-1739 provided the first instance of application of these models on Romanian soil. Unlike Transylvania that passed under the Habsburg sovereignty under the treaty of Karlowitz of 1699 and preserved its historical constitution, Oltenia was directly subordinated to the central government in Vienna represented by the Supreme Director residing in Sibiu (Transylvania). The latter supervised the functioning of administrative and judicial bodies and appointed local officials. The reorganization of finances that was at the top of the agenda of Austrian authorities took as the principle the correspondence between wealth and the amount of taxes paid. In order to stop the flight of the peasantry, the government performed the first census of the population on the Romanian territories seeking to eliminate uneven distribution of taxes and impose uniform obligations upon peasants. The Austrian administration, for the first time in the Romanian history, fixed the tax quotas at the level of individual households. As a result, the state managed to claim a greater share of revenue than was expropriated by the boyars. Naturally, both boyars and peasantry resisted the policies of the Austrian authorities

⁵⁰ G. Iscru, "Fuga țăranilor - forma principală de luptă împotriva exploatarea în veacul al XVIII-lea în Țara Românească," *Studii: Revistă de Istorie*, 18, no. 1 (1965): 125-147, 128.

frustrating for a number of years their attempt to obtain adequate census data. The government scored a relative victory over the boyar opposition only after several rounds of reform of administrative and judicial apparatus. Official correspondence was transferred to Latin in order to be closely monitored by Vienna, while Germans increasingly replaced locals not only in provincial government, but also at the district level. Division of functions, fixed salaries for the higher officials, prohibition to conduct administrative business in private houses and increasing reglamentation of office work contributed to the redefinition of the nature of the public office. Coupled with curtailment of the boyars' jurisdiction and diminution of the number of the privileged categories, these measures signified "the transfer of power from the domain of social privilege into that of central authority."⁵¹

Although all these impressive results were lost after the Ottomans re-conquered Oltenia in 1739, they informed the policies of the most remarkable Phanariote hospodar Constantine Mavrocordat, who ruled for a number of times in both Moldavia and Wallachia between 1730 and 1769. In order to stop the flight of the peasantry that acquired threatening proportions in the wake of 1736-1739 Russian-Austrian-Ottoman war, and pay the increased tribute to the Porte, Mavrocordat redressed the taxation system and the courts of law as well as tried to reform the civil service. The number of taxes was greatly reduced, their amount was fixed and their collection regularized through the introduction of taxation records. Village as a basic taxation unit was replaced by smaller units like *ludori* (*cisla* in Moldavia) including a number of peasant families. Mavrocordat vigorously fought tax evasions by registering all the tax-payers and establishing the number of peasants exempted from state taxation in favor of the landlords (*scutelnici*).⁵² In order to secure the implementation of these measures Mavrocordat created the institute of *ispravniks* (2 in each district) combining judicial administrative and fiscal prerogatives. For the first time officials received fixed

⁵¹ Șerban Papacostea, *Oltenia sub stăpânirea austriacă (1718-1739)* (București: Editura Academiei R. S. R., 1971), 31.

salaries, which sought to replace practice of *havaeturi*, whereby officials pocketed a portion of taxes that they collected from the population in place of a salary.⁵³ However, although these measures were given European publicity through the publication in *Mercure de France*,⁵⁴ they did not last long and *havaeturi* were soon reintroduced in addition to salaries.

While the late 16th and 17th century in the principalities was the period of consolidation of serfdom, seigniorial control over the serfs remained limited. There remained a significant number of free landless peasants, who occupied the lands of the boyars and the monasteries on the basis of private agreements. Taking advantage of chaos created by frequent wars, the serfs often fled from their original masters to the domains of other seigneurs and settled there on the basis of free contract. At some point it became impossible for the state to secure the return of the fugitives without seriously compromising tax collection. As a result a significant number of former serfs with cognizance and support of the state administration changed their status to that of free peasants on a “free” contract still before the formal abolition of serfdom. At the same time, the obligations of “free” landless peasants tended to grow with time adding certain number of *corvee* (labor) days to initial *dime* (desiatina). This tended to eliminate the differences between free landless peasants and the serfs and facilitated the eventual abolition of serfdom.⁵⁵ Characteristically, before abolishing personal serfdom, Mavrocordat raised the amount of *corvee* obligations of “free” landless peasants and fixed them at 12 days a year. By the decrees of August 5, 1746 in Wallachia and April 6, 1749 in Moldova the peasants were declared personally free from the landlords and henceforth their relationships were to be regulated on the basis of individual

⁵² Istoria Romănilor, vol. 4 (București: 2002), 504.

⁵³ F. Constantiniu and S. Papacostea, “Les reformes des premiers princes phanariotes en Moldavie et en Valachie: Essai d’interprétation,” *Balkan Studies* 13 (1972) : 111.

⁵⁴ Mavrocordato published his reform legislation of the 1740-1741 in the *Mecure de France* for 1741 under the title of “Constitution.” Georgescu, *The Romanians*, 93.

⁵⁵ V. Mîhorea, *Maitres et paysans dans les Principautés romaines au XVIIIe siècle*. (Bucuresti: Editura Academiei R. S. R., 1971), 257.

contracts.⁵⁶ These measures meant an implicit recognition of the failure to enforce serfdom legislation, reflected on-going homogenization of the Romanian peasantry and further contributed to this process.⁵⁷

The first continued Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1769-1774, like the Austrian occupation of Oltenia in 1718-1739 played certain role in the reform agenda of the Phanariote rulers. Picking up the idea articulated in some of the memoirs and petitions addressed by Romanian boyars to Catherine the Great in 1769, Russian Commander-in Chief P. A. Rumiantsev pursued the principle of division of administrative and judicial functions, by creating a special Judicial Divan within the existing one in 1771. Reproducing earlier prescriptions of Constantine Mavrokordat, regular working hours were introduced while the decisions of the Divans and the opinions of the Divan members were to be communicated in writing. Two years later Catherine's "Nakaz" was translated into Romanian informing some of the decisions taken by Judicial Divan.⁵⁸ The reforms were continued by the Wallachian hospodar Alexander Ypsilanti, who was appointed immediately after the conclusion of the Kuchuk-Kainarji peace treaty with Russian support. In the first years of his reign the hospodar undertook a reform of the judiciary and, in order to facilitate the dispensation of justice, created alongside the Judicial Divan, four departments serving courts of the first instance. In line with the 18th century practice of collegial government, the departments were collegial judicial bodies dealing with specific kinds of cases (civil, criminal, petty crimes etc.) Paralleled with some specification of the judicial prerogatives of district authorities, the

⁵⁶ In return for personal freedom, the former serfs (*rumani* in Wallachia and *vecini* in Moldova) lost any title to their lands and had to labor for the landlord for certain number of days. Despite the fact that Moldavian Hospodar Georgie Ghica fixed the amount of work to be performed in one labor day, in practice the amount of work could not be performed in one day. Initially the Moldavian peasant had to work 18 days to perform his duties. By 1777 the actual number of corvee days reached 27-28. In the 1818 the number of the official labor days was doubled for Wallachia reaching 24. Andrei Otetea, *Tudor Vladimirescu, si revolutia din anul 1821*. (Bucuresti: Editura Stiintifica, 1971), 44-46.

⁵⁷ However, the problem of depopulation persisted because of the flight to the neighboring territories especially during the Russian-Ottoman wars of the late 18th century. S. Columbeanu, *Grandes Exploitations domaniales en Valachie au XVIIIe siecle* (Bucharest, 1974), 38-47.

reform contributed to better definition of the duties and responsibilities of the officials and reglamentation of office work.⁵⁹

At the same time, contemporary Austrian and Russian institutions and practices were not the main sources of inspiration for the Phanariote princes. Their influence was limited to formal parameters of administrative, judicial, fiscal, or social transformations introduced by the Phanariotes. The actual substance of their legislation was to a greater extent defined by reception of Byzantine law. Thus, Alexander Ypsilanti's urban legislation containing the embryos of medical police, fire protection, regulation of private construction activities, control over the prices on foodstuffs and as well as general order and safety contained direct borrowings from Byzantine sources.⁶⁰ Byzantine law rather than contemporary German or Austrian statutes provided Phanariote hospodars with a more available weapon in their struggle with the unwritten custom that the oppositional boyars frequently used in defense of their social privileges. However, although the Byzantine law performed in Romanian principalities essentially the same role as Roman law in consolidation of the European absolutist monarchies, the character its reception was markedly different. Hardly replacing local custom altogether, it was used alongside it, frequently performing didactic or ethic rather than normative function. Even when incorporated in the legal codes produced by individual hospodars, the Byzantine formulas did not become legal norms in the contemporary sense of the term, since such codes did not have compelling force for subsequent rulers.

The reforms of the Phanariote princes and first of all the liberation of peasants from formal personal dependence on the landlords affected the existing balance of social power in the principalities. It weakened the boyar class deprived and them of the economic self-

⁵⁸ Valentin Al. Georgescu, Petre Strihan, *Judecata domneasca în Țara Românească și Moldova, 1611-1831. Part I. Vol II (1740-1831)* (București Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1981), 191-192.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 79-80.

sufficiency and made them even more dependent on the prince's favors.⁶¹ While originally the boyar title was conditioned on the possession of land, Constantine Mavrocordat made it dependent on the confirmation by hospodar's *caftan*, which usually, but not always, was accompanied by tenure of an office. The conferring of the nobility to the hospodar relatives or clients, paralleled by the loss of the boyar rank by some of the old boyars was bound to produce bitter conflicts between the old families and the newcomers or between autochthonous boyars and the Greeks of the hospodar's entourage.⁶² In an attempt to reverse the results of Phanariote policies, the boyars employed the language of defense of the ancient rights and privileges of the country against the encroachments of the foreign princes.⁶³ Thus, in 1769 they addressed Russian authorities with a request to replace the office of the hospodar by an aristocratic council including twelve most prominent boyars of the country. During Russian-Ottoman peace negotiations three years later they attempted to break the Phanariote monopoly and secure the appointment of an autochthonous hospodar.⁶⁴ The increase of the seigniorial dues at the expense of state taxes was another important item on the agenda of the boyars, which they later tried to realize in their relationship with great powers. Characteristic in this respect was the memoir addressed by the Wallachian Divan to Austrian commander Prince Coburg-Gotha during the war of 1787-1791, in which the boyars advocated the restoration of serfdom.⁶⁵

Although the boyars failed to achieve their goals, the success of the Phanariote Princes in the pursuit of political centralization was also limited. In comparison with the

⁶⁰ Valentin Al. Georgescu and Emanoilă Popescu, "Introduction," to Idem, (eds.) *Legislația urbană a Țării Românești, 1765-1782* (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1975), 17, 27-33.

⁶¹ Valentin Georgescu, Petre Strihan, *Judecata domnească în Țara Românească și Moldova*, 18.

⁶² D. Berindei and I. Gavrilita, "Mutatii in sinul clasei dominante din Tara Romanesca in perioada de destrimare a orinduirii feudale," *Revista de istorie*, 34/11 (1981), 2029-46.

⁶³ For the boyar oppositional ideology see Vlad Georgescu, "The Romanian Boyars in the Eighteenth Century: Their Political Ideology," *East European Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (1973): 31-40 and Idem, *Political Ideas and Enlightenment in the Romanian Principalities, 1750-1830* (Boulder, Colo.: Eastern European Quarterly, 1971).

⁶⁴ *Istoria României*, Vol. VI, 517-518.

⁶⁵ Valentin Al. Georgescu, Emanoilă Popescu, "Introduction" to Idem, *Legislația Agrară a Țării Românești (1775-1782)* (București: Editura Academiei Române, 1970), 9.

Austrian administration of Oltenia, even the most determined Phanariote rulers lacked bureaucratic personnel that could secure the implementation of the adopted measures. Although Phanariote princes articulated the idea of appointment to the office in accordance with personal merit and competence,⁶⁶ they failed to create a new cameralist bureaucracy or transform the nobility into a new service class as it was done by 18th Central and Eastern European absolutist rulers. In the absence of proto-bureaucracy associated with state interest, they inevitably had to rely on boyars, whose social privileges their policies sought to curtail.⁶⁷ As a result, the concessions, which the latter were temporarily forced to make, turned out to be reversible, leaving the possibility for a seigniorial reaction in future. Severely limited in their actions by short tenure of office and the necessity to meet their obligations before the Ottomans and their own clients, the Phanariotes did not manage to transform the boyar class in any fundamental way. Despite significant presence of the Greeks, the autochthonous boyars were more likely to occupy the major offices throughout the 18th century.⁶⁸ While the noble status nominally became the function of state service, in practice the two never became identical.⁶⁹ As a result, the Phanariotes did not manage to place the power of public officials above the social privileges of the boyars and thereby score a decisive victory over the boyar opposition. Their policies of state centralization took place in a legitimization vacuum, were perceived a foreign oppression of the native custom and were never fully “naturalized” in the principalities. Lacking self-sufficiency of independent rulers, they failed to create a new political culture of service to the state as the embodiment of general well-being, the formation of which accompanied the centralizing policies of other European rulers.

⁶⁶ Vlad Georgescu, *Ideile politice si iluminismul*, 120.

⁶⁷ Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Boiarimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea. Context European, evoluție socială și politică*. (București: Editura Academiei Române, 1995), 74-75.

⁶⁸ Gheorghe Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea*, 66.

⁶⁹ Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians*, trans. from the Romanian by Alexandra Bley-Vorman (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1984), 84.

Historical development of Moldavia and Wallachia by the late 18th century had generated a number of tensions, two of which are important in the context of present study. First, was the political conflict between the hospodars and the boyar opposition, which was aggravated by the failure of the former to dominate the latter in the manner of the 18th century absolutist monarchies. However, the hospodars' policies of promotion to boyar ranks and their desire to make the boyar title dependent upon the public office contributed to the tensions within the boyar class between social parvenus and ancient boyar families. The conflict between them was further aggravated by the tensions between foreign and autochthonous elements. The position of Moldavia and Wallachia within the Ottoman Empire tended to perpetuate both conflicts. Using the Phanariotes as means to secure the loyalty of the principalities and extract greater revenue in the condition of weakening of their power, the Ottomans at the same time kept their tenure short, which never allowed the hospodars to eliminate the boyar opposition altogether. At the same time, the location of Moldavia and Wallachia in the Danubian frontier zone contested by several imperial centers allowed the conflicting sides appeal to the neighboring empires in an attempt to secure the implementation of their political goals. A great power, which aspired to establish an effective political dominance in the principalities would have to offer satisfactory solutions for all conflicting parties within the local elite in order to prevent other great powers from capitalizing on their discontent.

Political Reform in Moldavia and Wallachia and the Transformation of the Danubian-Pontic Frontier Zone

The above discussion demonstrates that in important respects the social and political development of Moldavia and Wallachia was influenced by their geographical position in the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone. Changes in the balance of power between the Ottomans, Habsburgs, Poland-Lithuania and later Russia affected internal politics of principalities. At

the same time, this correlation was never simple and sometimes one and the same external factor could cause opposite tendencies in internal development, just as similar internal political phenomena could be produced by quite different developments in the relationships between great powers. Thus, the Ottoman advance since the middle of the 15th century first contributed to consolidation of the princely power in Moldavia and Wallachia, but later became a factor strengthening the boyar oligarchy. On the other hand, the Ottoman retreat under the Habsburg pressure in the late 17th – early 18th centuries brought about a relative strengthening of princely authority (the establishment of the Phanariote regime) at the expense of the boyar oligarchy that reigned supreme in the 17th century. At the same time, a more secure control over the principalities achieved in the first half of the 18th century did not mean political or cultural assimilation of the principalities into the Ottoman Empire. Conversely, the reforms undertaken by Phanariote hospodars further accentuated social, political and cultural peculiarity of Moldavia and Wallachia among the Ottoman possessions and in fact started the process that led to progressive distancing of Moldavia and Wallachia from the rest of the empire.

The latter tendency reflected the general evolution of the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone in the 18th – early 19th centuries. This evolution constitutes an important chapter in the history of frontiers, which itself represents one of the basic aspects of human history. If Roman antiquity offered the early example of frontiers as zones behind the lines of fortification, which “appeared when larger and more complicated states were created and found themselves to be in contact with populations that refused the order, peace and material and moral civilization, which the larger states stood for,” in medieval and early modern period frontiers denoted a military front line of an army and later, more figuratively, a front line of a territorial monarchy, evolving into modern “the projection on the ground of the

external outlines of a nation fully conscious of itself.”⁷⁰ While this might be too linear and simplistic understanding of what in reality was a much more complex trajectory,⁷¹ the evolution of frontiers in Europe was definitively related to the emergence of the territorial state and state sovereignty.⁷² However, the development from a zone that marked the limit of civilized society, through the line of military advance of a territorial monarchy, to a demarcation line between two homogenous popular sovereignties constituted only one of the possible trajectories in the evolution of frontiers characteristic of Western Europe. In other regions, such as South-Eastern Europe, late 19th – early 20th century attempts to reproduce the end result of Western European evolution of frontiers had dire consequences, because the earlier stages of this evolution were fundamentally different. Here the starting point was Islamic frontier as the essentially temporary division of the world into the “abode of peace” and “abode of war” with an irreducible intermediate zone dominated by semi-nomadic holy warriors (Gazi) and their Christian counterparts (the Uskoks, the Vlachs and the Cossacks).⁷³ In the course of two centuries following beginning of the Ottoman retreat and the advance of the Habsburg Monarchy and later Russian Empire, the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone evolved from the Islamic type of frontier into an early modern variation of ancient Roman “frontier of civilization” as the fortified line with the zone of agriculturist colonization behind it that the two Christian powers put up against the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples that previously facilitated the Ottoman expansion.

⁷⁰ Lucien Febvre, “Frontiere: the Word and the Concept.” In Peter Burke (ed.) *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of [Lucien] Febvre*, trans. K. Folca (London, 1973), 211-212.

⁷¹ See the criticism of the linear concept of evolution of frontiers into boundaries in Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries. The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 4-5, pointing out that linear boundary is in fact an ancient notion, while the zonal character of the frontier persists after the formal demarcation.

⁷² Febvre, “Frontiere”, 213. On the gradual formation of territorial boundary in the process of transition from jurisdictional sovereignty towards territorial sovereignty see Sahlins, *Boundaries*, 28, 61- 102.

⁷³ This discussion is based on the typology of frontier offered by Alfred J. Rieber in his “Frontiers in History,” in Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Bates (eds), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 9 (New York: Elsevier Science, 2001), 5812-5818.

Indeed, if in the 15th the 16th and even the 17th century the alliances with the nomadic and semi-nomadic frontier peoples and the character of the frontier warfare generally favored the relative Ottoman supremacy, later changes in the ecology of the frontier worked to their disadvantage. The establishment of the relative superiority of the European powers over the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the 18th century started a long term process, whereby the Islamic type of frontier in South-Eastern Europe with its division into *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* gradually gave way to the frontiers of agriculturist settlement maintained by the Habsburgs and the Russians and finally to an imitation of the European system of state frontiers. The peculiarity of this process consisted in the fact that the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans was not simply reversed through a formal Habsburg or Russian *reconquista*. Instead, it proceeded through the formation of new smaller polities to the south of the Habsburg and Russian borders remaining for a time under the Ottoman suzerainty, but becoming more and more independent under Habsburg or Russian protection. The new polities became increasingly integrated into European system of state borders that the Ottomans were eventually forced to respect. Beginning with the peace of Karlowitz that for the first time induced the Ottomans to accept the notions of European international relations and culminating with the Peace of Paris of 1856 that formally included the Ottoman Empire into the European “concert”, this process of transformation of the Islamic frontier into frontier of colonization and ultimately into a system of fixed state boundaries had important symbolic and institutional aspects.

The former had to do with changes in the perception of the Ottoman Empire and the territories that it controlled in Europe. Originally, the Ottoman Empire was viewed in purely religious terms as a threat to Christendom and providing the Habsburg emperors with important resource of legitimacy in the form of their “Eastern mission”. With the beginning of visible decline of the Ottomans at the end of the 17th century paralleled by the dawn of the

age of enlightenment in Europe, this perception shed its religious overtones and became increasingly secularized. The Ottoman Empire remained the main “Other” of Europe, but the ascribed difference referred not so much to religion as to political institutions, public mores or culture. The realm of the Sultans associated with political instability, despotism, luxury and sensuality became the most concrete illustration of an “Oriental” society that in all important respects constituted the logical opposite of the enlightened, industrious and prospering Europe. In other words, the Ottoman Empire became the principle *topos* of the symbolic geography implied by intellectual phenomenon of “orientalism” defined by Edward Said as a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over Orient.”⁷⁴ Building upon Michel Foucault’s notion of “discourse” and Antonio Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony, Said defines “orientalism” as a “structure of cultural domination” meaning not only a totality of the ideas about Europe’s superiority to the East, but the unchallenged hegemony of these very ideas producing “positional superiority” of a Westerner in all possible relationships with the “Orient.”⁷⁵

The switch from religious to secularized terms also occurred in the perception of the Christian peoples under the Ottoman rule. If earlier they were viewed primarily as the Greek Orthodox with all the feelings that this religious denomination was capable of producing in a Catholic or Protestant hearts, with time they became treated in terms of their position on the scale of enlightenment, in which the Oriental despotism of the sultans and the civilized countries of Europe constituted the logical opposites.⁷⁶ The problematique of symbolic geographies implied in Said’s book, was creatively approached by Larry Wolff and Maria Todorova, who studied Western European perceptions of Eastern Europe and the Balkans respectively, demonstrating the importance of “semi-orientalizing” discourses alongside

⁷⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁶ On the transformation of the image of the “Turk” as the “Other” of Europe see Iver Neuman, *Ispol’zovanie “Drugogo”* (Moscow: Novoie izdatel’stvo, 2004), 72-98.

classical “orientalism” in the formation of the European identity.⁷⁷ Cast against the fundamental oppositions of “European-ness,” and “non-European-ness,” barbarity and civilization, stressing ambiguity and “in-betweenness”, the representations of Eastern Europe and the Balkans treated these territories as regions of Europe’s potential extension and the space of its natural “civilizing mission.” In the context of the present study, the works by Said, Wolff and Todorova allow understanding how, with the emergence of orientalizing and semi-orientalizing discourses, the old religious frontier between the Islamic empire of the Sultans and the Christian realms became a frontier between “barbarity” and “civilization”, while the old Habsburg “Eastern mission” consisting in the protection of the Christendom turned into mission to civilize the lands that had the misfortune of falling under an unenlightened yoke.

The Austrian 18th and early 19th century accounts of Hungary, Transylvania, Banat, Moldavia and Wallachia persistently refer to these territories as barely populated and largely uncultivated lands, with semi-savage peoples speaking a bewildering variety of incomprehensible tongues and entertaining a host of superstitions instead of religion.⁷⁸ The deplorable state of these territories was seen as the outcome of the Ottoman rule, but also increasingly as the result of the barbarity and laziness characterizing local population. The semi-orientalizing character of these accounts pointed out by Wolff and Todorova had to do not so much with the fact that these lands represented a mixture of barbarity and enlightenment as with their geographical position between the civilized European countries and the classical Orient, i. e. the Asiatic part of the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the Orient, which represented the symbolic opposite of the West and thereby acquired a high, if negative, ontological status, the lands of the Danubian frontier zone in a sense lacked independent

⁷⁷ Larry Wolff, *The Invention of Eastern Europe: the Map of Civilization on the Mind of Enlightenment* (Stanford.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 517-518, 539. Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁷⁸ Francois Ruegg, *La est, nimic nou....* (Timisoara: Eurostampa, 2002).

subjectivity in the symbolic geography of the 18th century Enlightenment, suspended as they were in between the two opposites. Some barbarous indigenes notwithstanding, these territories were persistently portrayed as “empty” and therefore inviting conquest and colonization. As the space of civilizing mission par excellence these territories were even more suitable for the realization of the “enlightenment project” than the countries where it originated.

The perception of Danubian and Pontic regions as lands where civilization represented by the European powers undertook to combat with barbarity seen as the pernicious legacy of the Ottoman rule was equally characteristic of Russian public discourse. Actually, it was a Russian author, Anatolii Demidov, whose book titled “A Voyage to Southern Russia and Crimea through Hungary, Wallachia and Moldavia undertaken in 1837” demonstrates that “Danubian-Pontic frontier zone” is not only a conceptual tool elaborated to serve the purpose of present study, but had important precedents in the way contemporaries perceived this region and the transformations, which it was undergoing. Speaking of “irresistible desire to study the countries that had remained uncultivated for so long, but recently have been conquered and civilized (obrazovannykh) with all the diligence, which they merit,” Demidov referred specifically to Southern Russia and Crimea. Nevertheless, both the title and the content of the book testified that the author placed Hungary, Moldavia and Wallachia in the same category as the two Russian provinces. The symbolic geography underling Demidov’s work referred to the Danubian and Pontic steppe as parts of the same space, whose past was defined by nomadic devastations and the Ottoman dominance, but whose present and future were conditioned by the benevolent action of European powers such as Austria and Russia. Finally, Demidov’s representation of the countries that he visited provides a good illustration of fundamental ambiguity of the region’s mental mapping that was characteristic of semi-orientalizing discourses of Eastern Europe and Balkanism.

Characteristically, the author took interest in seeing them precisely at the moment, “when there is still a possibility to capture the last traces of this effacing historical way of life and at the same time understand the way, in which this barbarity turned into civilization and how a hope for the future developed out of this terrible past.”⁷⁹

If symbolic conquest in the name of civilization and enlightenment provided one of the aspects of the transformation of the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone, the institutional transformations, placing the advancing imperial powers in greater control of the territory and its natural and human resources, were the other. As the result of these transformations the original ecology of the frontier dominated by semi-nomadic peoples was overtaken by an altogether different landscape of relatively dense agriculturist settlement achieved through colonization and increasingly elaborate local administration. The latter took place in the zone immediately behind the frontier line, which increasingly resembled modern state boundaries. The peculiarity of this process consisted in the attempt of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Russian Empire to construct the “frontier of civilization,” of which Roman Empire offered the early prototype, by means of policies that characterized the emergence of territorial monarchies in early modern Europe. This circumstance relates the transformation of the Pontic and the Danubian frontier zone in the 18th – early 19th century to the early stages of modern state building in Western and Central Europe.

Originating in Western and Central Europe in the 16th and the 17th centuries, the process of political modernization started with the expansion of the traditional scope of authority “from the passive duty of preserving justice to the active task of fostering the productive energies of society and providing the appropriate institutional framework for it.”⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Anatolii Demidov, *Puteshestvie v Iuzhnuuu Rossiiu i Krym cherez Vengriiu, Valakhiuu i Moldaviuu sovershennoie v 1837 godu* (Moscow: tip Alexandra Semena, 1853), Preface.

⁸⁰ Mark Raeff, “The Well-Ordered Police State and the Development of Modernity in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Europe: An Attempt at a Comparative Approach,” in *American Historical Review* 80, no. 5 (1975): 1226. Alternatively, early political modernity can be characterized by a transition from the essentially juridical power as the right take life or let live towards a power that exerted “a positive influence on life that

On the practical level, the transformation of the nature of government was reflected in an increasingly meticulous regulation of all aspects of life and activities of the subjects of a territorial ruler by means of police ordinances (called *Landes und Polizeiordnungen* in German speaking areas of Central Europe), embracing such diverse areas of human life as personal behavior, public order, fire-protection, sanitation, taxation, charity, husbandry or house building. Placed in the care of an increasingly professionalized body of public officials representing the public interest, all these diverse activities composed the domain of police (*Polizei*),⁸¹ which provided the essence of the new type of government called well-ordered police state (*Polizeistaat*).⁸² By the early 18th century on the basis of these institutions and practices there emerged a new political science of cameralism combining the discourse of the common good with objective of maximization of the taxable wealth and resource mobilization.⁸³ Constituting the intellectual horizon of the new state bureaucracies cameralism contributed to the redefinition of the scope and character of government, the redistribution of coercive functions and the correlation between public and private spheres. Reflecting the emergence of the new concept of territorial sovereignty, whereby monarchical authority elevated itself above the whole range of medieval political forms, well-ordered police state and cameralism as its theoretical manifestation were also characterized by increased concern with formal territorial demarcation. The border-lines separating one sovereign territorial state from another became more precise and simplified through the

endeavored to administer, optimize and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations.” Michel Foucault, “Right of Death and Power over Life,” in Paul Rabinow (ed.) *Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 259.

⁸¹ Reinhold August Dorwart, *Prussian Welfare State before 1740* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1971), 14-15. The word *Polizei* originates from the French word *polir* (“to establish good order”)

⁸² There is a disagreement about the correct translation of this term into English. While Raeff and the majority of scholars use the term “well-ordered police state,” other scholars, like Dorwart, *Prussian Welfare State*, 3 indicate the failure of the literal translation as “police state” to account for the important function of public welfare, performed by the government, and insists on translating it as “welfare state.”

⁸³ Albion W. Small, *The Cameralists* (New York, 1967); Keith Tribe, “Cameralism and the Science of Government,” in *Journal of Modern History* 56, No. 22 (1984): 263-284; Mack Walker, “Rights and Functions: The Social Categories of Eighteenth Century German Jurists and Cameralists,” in *The Journal of Modern History* 50, No. 2, (1978): 234-251.

elimination of various medieval “enclaves” and “exclaves.” The emergent state borders became factor of increasing importance in the everyday life of the subjects by virtue of border patrols, signs, sentry boxes, customs houses, sanitary cordons and passport check points.⁸⁴

Pursuing the ideal of well-ordered police state in their internal policies the Habsburg emperors of the second half of the 17th and 18th century and Russian rulers after Peter the Great applied the same principles to the policies in the frontier zone.⁸⁵ Once again the Austrians pioneered and the Russians followed. The conclusion of the Karlowitz peace treaty in 1699 was accompanied by the first formal border demarcation. If earlier, the institution of the “Military border” sought to mobilize the local warrior-peasants and herders against semi-nomadic elements on the other side of the border and match the Ottomans in continuous border-war, after the Karlowitz peace the Habsburg authorities attempted, and to some degrees managed, to pacify the frontier areas altogether. The retreat of the Ottomans meant not only loss of the territory, but also transformation of the ecology of the frontier that for centuries advantaged the Ottoman supremacy. In a century following the conclusion of the treaty the territories in the area of the *Triplex Confinium* were mapped and border signs, control points, sentry boxes, customs buildings and sanitary cordons started to transform the physical aspect of the frontier. The purpose of all these installations was to fight the epidemics that frequently ravaged the Ottoman realms and penetrated into the Habsburg lands, as well as to place the local and central authorities in better control of the circulation of

⁸⁴ Lucien Febvre, “Frontiere: the Word and the Concept,” 212-213.

⁸⁵ On the well-ordered police state model in reforms of Peter the Great see Syromiatnikov, “*Reguliarnoie*” *politseiskoie gosudarstvo Petra Velikogo* (Moscow – Lenigrad: Izdatel’stvo AN SSSR, 1943); E. V. Anisimov, *The Reforms of Peter the Great: Progress through Coercion in Russia*, translated with an introduction by John T. Alexander (Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, 1993), 217-243, and Mark Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 181-218.

people and goods. Merchants were required to produce special certificates issued by the military commander became necessary in order to cross the border.⁸⁶

An important aspect of this transformation was a change in the approach of central authorities towards the institution of the military border itself. While *Militargraenze* expanded into the newly conquered territories such as Banat (in 1704) and later Transylvania reaching the border with Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, post-Karlowitz period also witnessed the centralization of military border administration, which was transferred from Gratz to Vienna, as well as repeated attempts to turn the peasant warriors into soldiers, without lifting their fiscal obligations. However, the objective proved to be unrealistic. The efforts of the Austrian authorities to militarize the *Graenzer* units by imposing uniforms and army discipline on them were bitterly resisted by the peasant warriors and ultimately had to be abandoned.⁸⁷ The attempt of the Joseph II to reorganize the *Graenzer* into cantons and improve both their military and economic capacities were also largely likewise unsuccessful, while in Transylvania, where there had never existed a strict demarcation line between the peasant warriors and the rest of the peasantry, the reorganization efforts even led to a bloody peasant rebellion of Horia in 1784.

Alongside with the emergence of a physical boundary line in place of frontier area, Habsburg authorities sought to transform the regions along the border recently recaptured from the Ottomans. No longer content to oppose the Ottomans by employing semi-nomadic frontier peoples, who were unruly and frequently raided and looted on both sides of the frontier line, the Habsburg rulers set up the goal of systematic colonization of the frontier area attracting here the German population from beyond their borders. If in the late 17th – early 18th century the Habsburgs encouraged the mass migration of the Serbs to the north of the Danube into Voevodina and Banat, later they sought to dilute the Slavic elements along

⁸⁶ Mirela Slukan, *Cartografic Sources for the History of Triplex Confinium* (Zagreb: Hrvatski drzavni arhiv. Zavod za hrvatsku povijest, 1999), 60-62, 80-81.

the frontier with the German colonists, which in the eyes of the 18th century cameralist bureaucrats appeared to be much better colonists. The policies of colonization were accompanied by the efforts to maximize the human and natural resources of the territory and thereby increase the taxable wealth. These included land survey, development of mines and fight with deforestation aiming to protect and maximize the natural resources of a territory; fiscal census of the population, efforts to improve agricultural technology, and traditional protection of the peasantry from landlord overexploitation (*bauernschutz*); as well as fire protection, sanitation and construction policies aimed to improve the physical aspect of the local towns. Reaching their climax in the Josephinian reforms of the 1780s these policies encountered various forms of local resistance. While the peasantry resisted the attempt of the authorities to impose a quasi-military discipline upon them, the Hungarian landed aristocracy militated against centralized colonization as threatening their land monopoly and sought to replace it with private colonization.⁸⁸

Similar policies were pursued by the Russian monarchs of the 18th century, most conspicuously Catherine the Great, whose reign also coincided with the decisive change of the balance of power in the southern steppe. The ability of the empire to sustain a permanent modern army through increased taxation that materialized in the early 18th century meant the end of the millennial supremacy of the nomads. After such an army was created by Peter the Great, the closure of the steppe became a question of time.⁸⁹ Earlier defensive methods of crossing the steppe with the help of defensive lines, deployment of the Cossacks and checking some nomads with the help of others were overtaken by the objective of total control nomadic movements and ultimately a radical transformation of steppe ecology

⁸⁷ Francois Ruegg, *La est, nimic nou*, 86-87.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

⁸⁹ William McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier, 1500-1800*, 130-131.

through colonization.⁹⁰ The annexation of the Khanate of Crimea in 1783 meant a major victory of the empire over the nomads and a turning point in the whole process. A new balance of power in the steppe changed the policy of the government towards the semi-nomadic elements that it earlier used as allies against other nomads. Similarly to the Habsburg attempts to transform the institution of military border, the Russian authorities sought better control of the Cossack formations, or, failing to do that, abolish them altogether. Cossack forces grew increasingly unreliable and came to be viewed as constant sources of social unrest threatening the basic lord and peasant relationships of the imperial core.⁹¹ Pugachev's rebellion targeted government measures abolishing Cossack autonomy, disbanding their formations or bringing them under strict military control. The Zaporozhian *Sich* was eliminated, and Little Russian and New Russian governors-general effected administrative assimilation of the Ukrainian Hetmanate and the Don Host.⁹² Those who refused to comply with the government policies fled to the Ottomans marking the process of recoiling of the semi-nomadic frontier: thus in the wake of the Bulavin rebellion on the Don provoked by centralization policies of Peter the Great a significant number of the Don Cossacks, the so-called *Nekrasovtsy* fled to the lower Danube accepting the suzerainty of the Sultan. After the abolition of the Zaporozhian *Sich* in 1775, part of the Ukrainian Cossacks followed suite, became the Ottoman subjects and formed the Danubian *Sich*. Through the resettlement of the defying *Nekrasovtsy* and *Zaporozhtsy* to the Danube, Moldavia and Wallachia for a number of decades retained the aspect of territories providing the meeting ground for the settled and (semi)nomadic population. The transformation of the ecology of some parts of the Danubian-Pontic Frontier caused by the Austrian and Russian advance thus meant a perpetuation of frontier conditions for other territories.

⁹⁰ Michael Khodorkovskii, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

⁹¹ Paul Avreh, *Russian Rebels, 1600-1800* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), 5-6.

Seen from the point of view of the secular conflict of the nomadic and agriculturalist societies the colonization project of the Northern Black Sea Littoral embarked on by the Russian Empire in the second half of the 18th century was an attempt to bring this struggle to an end by destroying or radically transforming the very basis of the nomadic society. The process began already in the 1750s, when Russian authorities created the New Serbia colony in the Ukraine out of the Austrian Serbs, discontent with the attempts of the Austrian authorities to dilute their dense presence in Voevodina, Banat and southern Hungary by German colonists. The process intensified in the 1760s, with the campaign of the Russian government to attract colonists from all over Europe.⁹³ Temporarily interrupted by 1768-1774 Russian-Ottoman war it resumed in the 1770s – 1790s on an even greater scale. Colonization process entailed massive relocations of the population. The nomads who were unwilling to change their mode of life and engage in agriculture were driven out. Thus, the number of Crimean Tatars, who emigrated to the Ottoman Empire after the conclusion of the Jassy treaty of 1792 reached 100.000-110.000.⁹⁴ Conversely, the prospective agriculturalists and traders were to be moved in. Out of the total number of half a million of new settlers in the Northern Black Sea, Northern Caucuses and Lower Volga steppe in the reign of Catherine the Great, 56% settled in New Russia.⁹⁵ The scarcity of population being the main problem of the new region, the government organized resettlement of state peasants to New Russia.⁹⁶ The shortage of workforce also made the Russian government turn a blind eye on the flight of peasants from central gubernias to the newly annexed territories,⁹⁷ as well as adopt a liberal attitude to the settlements of Jews from the Western regions in New Russia, after the Empire

⁹² Zenon Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s – 1830*. (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1988), 198-201.

⁹³ Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital. The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia, 1762-1804* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁹⁴ Edward Lazzarini, "The Crimea under Russian Rule. 1783 to the Great Reforms," in Michael Rywkin (ed.) *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917* (London and New York: Mancell Publishing House, 1988), 123-141.

⁹⁵ Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on Russian Steppe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 77.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

incorporated large number of Jewish population as the result of the partitions of Poland.⁹⁸ The development of seaports attracted landlords of Podolia, Volynia, Left bank Ukraine, Kursk and Voronezh gubernia and the Don with the possibilities of grain export. The export-oriented economy grew territorially from the immediate littoral zone to embrace regions as far as 600-km from the shore.⁹⁹ The amount of grain export through Southern ports steadily grew reaching the impressive 80% of the total Russian grain export in 1816-1820.¹⁰⁰ As was the case of earlier Habsburg colonization policies in the frontier zone, repopulation of the Pontic steppe produced a hidden tension between the state-sponsored colonization and the expansion of the large land ownership. The distribution of land to the nobility was one of the means to legitimize the war effort spent at conquering New Russia and the Crimea,¹⁰¹ but it proved to be a poor vehicle of colonization since the noble landowners frequently failed to fulfill the obligation of populating these lands.¹⁰² Besides, noble landowners' interest was bound to clash with those of the foreign colonists, whose settlement was sponsored by the government, as soon as the available resources of free land were exhausted.

By establishing a common the border of Moldavia in 1792 and annexing the territory between the Dniester and Pruth rivers in particular its southern part, the Budzhak steppe in 1812, Russian Empire incorporated the whole of the Pontic steppe subjecting it to colonization policies. Neither Russian imperial expansion, nor the transformation of the frontier area stopped with that. In the wake of the 1828-1829 Russian-Ottoman war, Russian occupation authorities in the principalities pursued policies that significantly transformed the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 75-76.

⁹⁸ John Klier, *Russia Gathers Her Jews. The Origin of the Pale of Settlement 1772-1825* (DeKalb, Iff. : Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), 150; Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 118-122.

⁹⁹ A. V. Fadeev, *Rossia i vostochnyi krizis 20-kh godov XIX veka* (Moscow: Academy of Sciences, 1958), 27.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 28.

¹⁰¹ In some gubernias of New Russian the percentage of the land distributed to the landlords was as high as 75.

A. V. Fadeev, *Rossia i vostochnyi krizis*, 18.

¹⁰² Although in 1783 the peasants of the left bank Ukraine were finally bonded to the land and in 1796 their counterparts in New Russia were prohibited to move without permission, the percentage of serfs remained low despite the attempts of some landlords to resettle their serfs from central gubernia on new lands. With the New

character of the principalities as parts of the Danubian frontier zone. However, the autonomous status of Moldavia and Wallachia and the legacy of the reform efforts of the Phanariote hospodars of the 18th century accounted for the difference of these measures from the policies pursued by the Russian Empire in the Pontic region. If the latter were predicated on colonization, the former concentrated on the reform of local administration accompanied by measures pertaining to the domain of general police. The policies of the Austrian authorities in Oltenia discussed above constituted an early anticipation of the measures taken by the Russian occupation authorities a century later on a much larger scale. Together with the earlier efforts of the reform-minded Phanariote hospodars of the 18th century, the reforms undertaken by Russian occupation authorities in the early 19th century had the effect of distancing the principalities from the Ottoman Empire. By virtue of these changes Moldavia and Wallachia gradually ceased to be part of the Ottoman frontier dominated by Danubian *pashas* and the Crimean Khans and got incorporated into a system of European borders with quarantines, customs and passports checkpoints.¹⁰³

Without denying the expansionist tendencies of the empires in general and of the Russian Empire in particular, this study seeks to examine the way in which their struggle over the Danubian frontier zone contributed to the political modernization of the region. It investigates the circumstances, under which the Russian Empire got involved in the political reform in Moldavia and Wallachia, whereby political modernization of the principalities became a corollary of imperial expansion. It argues that Russian occupation authorities in 1828-1834 sought to use the political reforms in Moldavia and Wallachia in order to establish Russia's hegemony in the principalities. New institutions and practices introduced in this period eliminated conditions of continued dependency of the principalities upon the Ottoman

Russia average of 25%, there were much fewer serfs in Taurida (6%) and Stavropol' (2,41%) gubernias. Ibid., 26.

¹⁰³ This discussion is based on the typology of frontier offered by Alfred J. Rieber in his "Frontiers in History," 5812-5818.

Empire and, at the same time, sought to limit the influence of other powers. After several centuries of serving important elements of the Ottoman frontier in Europe, Moldavia and Wallachia were increasingly incorporated into European system of frontiers and ultimately became part of the European state system. In this way traditional imperial struggle for the control over territory contributed to the political modernization of the region, which constitutes perhaps the most lasting legacy of Russia's policy in the principalities in the first half of the 19th century.

Organic Statutes for Moldavia and Wallachia elaborated and adopted during Russian occupation of the principalities in 1828-1834 represented a continuation of earlier Habsburg and Russian policies aimed to transform the character of the Danubian and Pontic frontier to their advantage, and insofar embodied the principles of the 18th century well-ordered police state. The projection of informal influence made possible by the establishment of Russian consulates in Jassy and Bucharest in the wake of Kuchuk-Kainarji peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire was not enough for the Russian government, concerned with the problem of fundamental permeability of the imperial frontiers to the unauthorized movements of population, diseases and ideas.¹⁰⁴ Besides the consolidation of Russia's political influence in the principalities, the Organic Statutes were also a response to the challenges of epidemics, political instability or ideological subversion. Outlining the prerogatives of the princely authorities and the boyar assemblies, regulating the relationships between landlords and peasants, consolidating public service and administration and presupposing a number of general well-fare measures including the establishment of the quarantine along the Danube, the Organic Statutes contributed to political consolidation of the principalities and their distancing from the Ottoman Empire. Serving the instruments of Russian imperial expansion, the institutions and practices of well-ordered police state introduced by the Organic Statute, at

¹⁰⁴ Alfred J. Rieber, "Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: An Interpretive Essay" in Hugh Ragsdale (ed.), *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 315-360, esp. pages 329-334.

the same time, can be viewed as the realization of the 18th century agenda of political reform and therefore represent an important stage of early political modernization of Moldavia and Wallachia.

A correlate of Russian imperial expansion of the late 18th – early 19th century, the transformation of the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone was by no means a linear process. While symbolic conquest of the frontier zone in a way predetermined its institutional transformation along the lines suggested by the 18th century tradition of well-ordered police state, there were a number of variables that intervened in the process and influenced the ultimate shape of Organic Statutes. First, purely local struggles between various factions of the boyar class as well as between boyar opposition and the hospodars over the control of the peasantry and the distribution of political power tended to intensify with time. The conflicting sides resorted to various kinds of political rhetoric in order to solicit support of the “big players” in an international context defined by the confrontation between the political ideas of the French revolution and Central and Eastern European *ancien regimes*. Second, these local conflicts were further complicated by the tensions between autochthonous Romanian boyars increasingly employing the rhetoric of patriotism and national interest and the heterogeneous Greek elites of the Ottoman Empire, who sought to preserve and expand their hegemony in Moldavia and Wallachia attempting to enlist Russian support for the realization of their plans. Finally, the Russian Empire itself was not an unchangeable entity. Its foreign policy and the principles of internal administration were in the process of transformation, which influenced the approach of Russian occupation authorities in 1828-1834 to the issue of local reform.

These factors define the structure of the dissertation. The first chapter represents an attempt to reconstruct Russian imperial discourse based on the analysis of 18th and 19th century Russian descriptive literature on Moldavia and Wallachia. It investigates how perceived differences between two societies were conceptualized by contemporaries in terms

of the opposition between civilization and barbarity eventually crystallizing in the discourse of “civilizing mission” that legitimized Russia’s hegemony in the principalities. The second chapter addresses the tensions between Greek and Romanian elements within the elites of Moldavia and Wallachia against the background of various projects of political enfranchisement of the Christian peoples of the Balkans from the Ottoman tutelage leading to the Haeteria and Tudor Vladimirescu’s rebellions in the principalities in 1821. It also discusses the influence of this tension on the early stages of incorporation of Bessarabia into the Russian Empire revealing the ability of local actors to manipulate the imperial policies and challenge the hierarchy of priorities imposed by the empire. The third chapter examines the process of incorporation of Bessarabia into Russian imperial space. It seeks to relate the administrative “experiment” that took place in Bessarabia in 1818-1828 to the contemporary debate within the imperial elite over the principles of Russia’s internal administration. It demonstrates that Bessarabian “experiment” of 1818-1828 was part of the broader attempt to restore the “empire of the nobility” of Catherine the Great – a peculiar version of well-ordered police state that in the first half of the 19th century was increasingly overtaken by bureaucratic absolutism. Building upon the discussion of transformations in imperial administration, chapter four examines the formation of Russian policy on internal conflicts within the boyar class that were revealed in the wake of Greek rebellion and Tudor Vladimirescu uprising in the principalities in 1821. Employing various rhetorical strategies, the representatives of conflicting boyar groups sought to enlist the support of the Russian Empire in order to redefine the political system of the principalities in accordance with their interests. The history of elaboration of the Organic Statutes for Moldavia and Wallachia demonstrate that Russian authorities found it increasingly difficult to stay above local conflicts. Finally, chapter five elaborates an alternative approach to the Organic Statutes as an instrument whereby Russian authorities sought to change the character of the frontier zone.

Placing the policies of Russian provisional administration in Moldavia and Wallachia in 1828-1834 in the context of evolution of well-ordered police state in Europe and Russia in the early modern period, it examines changing correlation of different dimension of police institutions and practices introduced to consolidate Russia's hegemony.

Chapter I Moldavia and Wallachia in Russian Imperial Discourse

The 18th – early 19th century Russian-Ottoman wars brought about increasingly intensive contacts between Russian and Romanian societies, whose historical experience of the 18th century was otherwise profoundly different. Although Russian rulers posited themselves as protectors of the oppressed orthodox peoples, periodic contacts of the multiethnic Europeanized imperial officers and diplomats with the boyar class that had been under heavy political influence of the Ottomans and cultural influence of the Phanariote Greeks could hardly be accommodated within the mythology of rediscovery of the Orthodox brethren and asked for other frames of reference. “Russian” administrators faced a heavily Hellenized, indigenous political elite as well as a vast mass of the Romanian peasantry. The quotation marks for “Russians” is necessary since even a cursory glance will reveal, Baltic Germans, French émigrés, Corphiote Greeks, Poles and Bulgarians, who, alongside with ethnic Russians, were instrumental in the establishing *la presence russe* in the region. Naturally, a French political émigré or a Baltic German in Russian service would treat the region from the position of Enlightened Europeans rather than under the species of common Orthodoxy. Similarly, for ethnic Russians, the differences resulting from the political and cultural heritage of Peter the Great arguably proved to be more important than shared religion. Such perceptions crystallized in the language of civilizational superiority based on the opposition between westernizing Russia on the one hand and the presumably semi-barbaric and despotic society of Moldavia and Walachia on the other. This semi-orientalizing discourse expressed and, at the same time, misrepresented the actual differences and similarities in historical evolution of the two societies. Having its roots in the symbolic geography of Enlightenment, this discourse was based on a number of assumptions that Russian empire-builders held about themselves and about the people they sought to enlighten

and/or dominate. Insofar as these assumptions provided the most general format for the imperial policy in the early 19th century they merit a closer consideration.

This chapter analyzes travelogues, diaries, memoirs, statistical descriptions and early histories of the Romanian principalities reflecting the experiences of Russian diplomats, military, scholars and private travelers of the first half of the 19th century. “Oriental despotism” and “corruption of morals” provide the most frequent reference terms, whose dominance is sometimes compromised by the discovery of familiar cultural signs rooted in shared Orthodoxy and reminding Russians of the Pre-Petrine Muscovite past. Opposed to the “Asiatic luxury” and “corrupted morals” of the towns in these accounts are the Romantic images of the “wild steppe” and local versions of the “noble savage” theme. Although virtually all of the examined authors assumed civilizational superiority over the locals, their diagnosis of the latters’ incomplete “barbarity” and unaccomplished “enlightenment”, had as its logical conclusion the idea of civilizing mission that suited Russia more than any other European power by virtue of its common religion with the peoples of the region. Through the discourse of Russia’s civilizing mission legitimizing imperial expansion in the Balkans, the representatives of a westernized Eastern European elite effected a symbolic conquest of Moldavia and Wallachia that constituted an important prerequisite for the actual transformation of the frontier zone. As any other variation of the “enlightenment project” Russia’s civilizing mission in Moldavia and Wallachia remained incomplete. Yet, before Russia’s dominance became a thing of the past, it contributed to the representation of the principalities as lands spatially located between the enlightened countries of Europe and the classical Orient that were also suspended in time between a barbarous past and happy future. In fact, the metaphor of a society situated on a frontier of “civilization” persisted as a cliché in the description of Romanian society up until present day.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ See for example Lucian Boia, Romania: *Țara de Frontiera a Europei* (Bucuresti: Humanitas, 2000).

This relates the present chapter to the discussion of the problematique raised by Edward Said, Larry Wolff and Maria Todorova, which took place recently in Russian studies in the by now famous *Kritika* debate on Russian orientalism. In it, Nathaniel Night, Adeeb Khalid and Maria Todorova offered a new variation on the perennial theme of Russia's difference and/or similarity with the West.¹⁰⁶ Whatever the merits and demerits of the opposing arguments, the debate proved to be singularly creative for it pointed to an altogether different direction, in which the discussion of "orientalism(s)" can progress. While Wolff and Todorova developed on Said by analyzing the "semi-orientalistic" discourses that were important in the formation of European identity, Night and Khalid raised the issue of appropriation of an orientalist discourse by a society that itself had been the subject of a semi-orientalistic discourse of Eastern Europe. The interplay of Russian civilizational marginality with its civilizing mission succinctly captured by Dostoyevsky's "In Europe we were Tatars, but in Asia we are Europeans" has found its metatheoretical expression in the contemporary historiographic discourse.

The present chapter builds upon both tendencies. On the one hand, by discussing the ways, in which Western European and Russian authors described the Romanian principalities, it aims at an analysis of a particular case within the general discourse of Balkanism analyzed by Todorova. On the other hand, by concentrating primarily on the Russian authors, it seeks to investigate the adoption of a semi-orientalizing discourse on Romanian principalities by a society that itself was an object of a semi-orientalistic discourse.¹⁰⁷ This process is seen as an attempt of the Russian elites to

¹⁰⁶ *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, No. 4 (2000): 691-727.

¹⁰⁷ Although 18th writers described Eastern Europe and Russia in particular in "semi-oriental" terms, the region was perceived as an ideal ground for testing the maxims of the dominant political philosophy of enlightened despotism, whose benevolent impact was expected to bridge the gap between the two halves of the continent. The contradictions of enlightened absolutism coupled with the Romantic "discovery" of the medieval history in the 19th century contributed to an important reevaluation to Russia's relationship to Europe, while the despotism of the Russian Tsars was increasingly defined as "oriental" rather than "enlightened." See Martin Malia, *Russia Under the Western Eyes. From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin's Mausoleum* (Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press, 1999), Chapter 2.

discover/construct/appropriate their own “semi-Orient” (e. g. the steppe or the Caucasus) and carve out their own “civilizing mission” essential for asserting Russia’s western identity in an age that increasingly questioned Russia’s “Europeanness.”¹⁰⁸

Moldavia and Wallachia on the Mental Map of Enlightenment

Although the Russian-Ottoman wars of the 18th – early 19th century and periodic occupations offered Russian empire-builders several occasions to involve in the internal affairs of the principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia remained poorly known-lands for the Russian educated public. Characteristic in this respect were the impressions of Alexander I and his suite during their visit to Bessarabia. In spring 1818 Alexander I undertook an inspection trip across the southern provinces of Russian Empire and visited Bessarabia, which was annexed six years before. According to Alexander I’s aide-du-champs A. I. Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, this was “the new region, which belonged to Europe but geographically.” As they crossed the Dniester everything got changed: “land, people and the tongue.” Instead of churches he saw mosques and instead of villages “a number of chaotically placed huts.” “One had only to have a look at the faces and vestments of the people in order to realize that he is in the land, which, although subject to Russia, has nothing in common with her or any other European country.”¹⁰⁹

Thirty years before, the author of an early account of Moldavia and Wallachia, Austrian agent Ignatz S. Raicevich motivated his undertaking by the fact that, despite belonging to Europe geographically, “Moldova and Wallachia... are less known in Europe than America.”¹¹⁰ F. G. Baur - the author of the first Russian cartographic and statistical

¹⁰⁸The theme of adoption of the discourses of cultural dominance by Russian elites is also explored in Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁰⁹ “Iz vospominanii Mikhailovskogo-Danilevskogo. Puteshestvie s imperatorom Alexandrom I po Iuzhnoi Rossii v 1818m godu,” *Russkaia starina* 91, no. 7-9, (1897): 76.

¹¹⁰ Ign. S. Raicevich, *Osservazioni storiche, Naturali e Politiche intorno la Valchia e Moldavia* (Napoli: Presso Gaetano Raimondi, 1788), 4.

survey of Wallachia, albeit with less eloquence, expressed the same idea.¹¹¹ Despite the rather respectable volume of literature written on Bessarabia and the Romanian principalities in Russia in the following six decades,¹¹² the reviewer of the Russian edition of Anatolii Demidov's *Journey to Southern Russia and Crimea through Hungary, Wallachia and Moldavia*, wrote in 1854 that "little is still known about Wallachia and Moldavia." Adopting "peoples without history" rhetoric, the reviewer argued that this obscurity resulted from scarcity of traces left by these countries in the history of Europe: "By Europeans we usually imply the Germans, the French, the Englishmen, the Italians, and the Swedes. Having failed to play an effective part in the history of Europe... the Wallachians and the Moldavians appear foreign to us."¹¹³

According to these authors, the first thing, which prevented calling Moldavia and Wallachia European countries, was the lack of knowledge about them. At the same time, the familiarity and foreignness of a region were not directly dependent on the number of travelogues and statistical surveys written about it. The scarcity of knowledge became a rhetorical figure attached to certain territories as a marker of their marginality in the *oikumena* of civilization. At the same time, lacunae in knowledge entailed the attempts to fill them and thereby make the region an object of scientific conquest. Along with casual travelers committing their impressions of the principalities to paper with varying degrees of

¹¹¹ G. F. Baur, *Zapiski Povestvovatel'nye i zemleopisatel'nye o kniazhestve volosskom* (Spb: Imperatorskaia tipographia, 1791), 1.

¹¹² The annexation of Bessarabia was followed by a number of statistical surveys. See P. Kunitsin, *Kratkoie Statiisticheskoe opisanie Zadnestrovskoi oblasti* (Spb.: Tipografia Glazunova, 1813); P. Svin'in, "Statisticheskoe opisanie Bessarabii," [1815], *Zapiski Odesskogo Obschestva Istorii i Drevnostei*, VI (1867): 175-320; *Statisticheskoe opisanie Bessarabii soostavlennoie v 1826m godu* (Akkerman: Tipografia Akkermanskogo Zemstva, 1899); P. Shabel'skii, "Kratkoie obozrenie Bessarabii i chasti Moldavii priisoedinennykh k Rossiskoi imperii," in *Syn Otechestva* 21, (1815), No. 14:32-41, No. 16:118-126, No. 18:197-212.

¹¹³ *Moskvitianin* 1854, no. 18:33-34. Obviously, by the middle of the 19th century, there was a growing divergence between Western European (esp. French) and Russian authors on the relationship of Moldavia and Walachia towards Europe. The discovery of common Latin origin made French publicists sympathetic to Romanian national movement and set them increasingly at odds with Russia's self-assumed civilizing mission in the region. See Eduard Thouvenel, *La Hongrie et la Valachie, Souvenirs des voyages et Notices historiques* (Paris : Arthur Bertrand, 1840); Felix Colson, *De L'Etat Present et de L'Avenir des Principautes de Moldavie et*

eloquence and publishing them in “thick” journals,¹¹⁴ there appear writers who claimed the expert knowledge of the region and sought to influence the decisions of the policy-makers by means of secret memoirs. The person of Ivan Petrovich Liprandi offers perhaps the most fascinating example of amateur “orientalist”, who at one point in his life tried to make a career out of the principalities playing an important role in Russian imperial expansion and symbolic conquest of the region.¹¹⁵

Although after 1812 Russian border was established along the Pruth, Russians continued to view the Dniester not only as the “real boundary between civilized and semi-savage countries,” but also as a climatic limit, beyond which lay a country, whose nature they found exotic compared with the stern Pontic steppe, let alone the severe climate of the

de Valachie (Paris: A. Pougin, 1839). For French publicists’ attitude towards the Romanian principalities see Nicolae Isar, *Publicisti francezi si cauza romana, 1834-1859* (Bucuresti: Editura Academiei Romane, 1991).

¹¹⁴ Along with the already mentioned Anatolii Demidov’s *Puteshestvie v Iuzhnuu Rossii i Krym cherez Vengrii, Valakhiiu i Moldaviu* (Moscow: Tipografia Alexandra Semena, 1853); D. N. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Puteshestvie v Moldaviu, Valakhiiu i Serbii* (Moscow: Tipografiia Reshetnikova, 1810); A. F. Vel’tman, “Vospominania o Bessarabii,” in *Sovremennik*, no. 3, (1837); A. I. Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, “Puteshestvie s Imperatorom Aleksandrom I po Juzhnoi Rossii v 1818-m godu” in *Russkaia starina* 79, no. 7, (1877) : 69-102; and “Vospominania za 1829 god,” in *Russkaia Starina* 91, no. 7-9, (1897): 182-190; P. V. Zhadovskii, “Moldavia i Valakhii v sovremnnosti,” *Panteon*, No. 1-2, (1856): 32-86; A. Ia. Storozhenko, *Dva mesiatsa v doroge po Moldavii i Valakhii v 1829 godu*. (Moscow : Imperatorskoie obschestvo istorii i drevnostei, 1872).

¹¹⁵ Descending from the family of Pedro di Liprandi, a Spanish nobleman from Naples, Liprandi started his carrier in the Russian army as a dashing young officer during the Finish campaign of 1808-1809 later participating in the 1812 war with Napoleon and the European campaigns of 1813-1814 staying in France with the Russian occupation corps commanded by M. S. Vorontsov until 1818. Returning to Russia he temporarily retired from the army and settled in Bessarabia devoting his time, money and extraordinary linguistic abilities to his lifetime pursuit – the study of the Orient in general and of the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire in particular. The library which he started around 1820, according to his own proud testimony, included all European works on the Ottoman Empire produced after 1800 and already in the 1830s was known to the major scholarly societies of Europe. During his years in Bessarabia he became acquainted with Pushkin, (exiled to Chisinau between 1820 and 1823), closely observed the Greek rebellion in the principalities headed by Alexander Ypsilanti in 1821, as well as Decembrist conspiracy, his connection to it remaining obscure. As time went by, Liprandi became increasingly involved in espionage, the interest for which he developed already during his stay in France in 1815-1818, where Liprandi had the opportunity to familiarize himself with the techniques and methods of the famous Parisian police headed by the notorious cooperative of Foucher, Vidocq. Russian-Ottoman war of 1828-1829, during which he served as an intelligence agent and the commander of auxiliary detachment of pandury, offered a unique context for combining Liprandi’s two lifetime passions – orientalism and espionage. Although a conflict with Russian commander Fieldmarshal I. I. Diebitch at one point greatly imperiled his whole carrier, in the wake of the war Liprandi continued to provide Russian occupation authorities with valuable information on the attitudes of the Romanian elites. Later, getting employed by Russian Ministry of Interior (and performing a key role in the arrest of the Petrashevtsy), Liprandi never abandoned his earlier interest in the region writing and publishing a number historical and statistical surveys. See N. Ia. Eidelman, “Gde i chto Liprandi?” in idem, *Iz potaennoi istorii Rossii 18-go – 19-go vv* (Moscow: Vysshiaia Shkola, 1993).

Central Russian plains.¹¹⁶ The scarcity of the country's cultivation was compensated by the exotic riches of nature: Russian travelers were impressed by Bessarabian meadows with flowers that were not found in Russia as well as the murmur of the millions of insects, which filled the steppe at nights. If the nature of the region was sometimes bright enough to incite the admiration of eyewitnesses, so much easier it could be portrayed as "the promised land" by those who undertook imaginary travels to Danube from Moscow or St Petersburg. Likewise, the necessity to justify five year war efforts spent in order to secure possession of Bessarabia sometimes caused an overestimation of the riches of the land, whereby it was compared to Egypt as the "granary of Constantinople."¹¹⁷ So much precious was the possession of this "golden country,"¹¹⁸ whose "benevolent air, healthy climate, the abundance of the southern fruits, the multitude of springs and waterfalls, the vicinity of the kind and shy Moldavians" were the advantages in comparison with Southern Caucasian provinces, neighboring "hostile and predatory peoples."¹¹⁹ "The aromas of acacias, the singing of the nightingales, huge sturgeons in the rivers and inexhaustible game in the marshes" were enough to make Bessarabia a dreamland for the inhabitants of the snow-clad Moscow or the humid St Petersburg.¹²⁰ Such rhapsodic accounts coexisted with the rumors about the "unbearable heat, the steppes populated by snakes, scorpions and tarantulas, as well as about the plague and eternal fevers" that accompanied the traveler who ventured to see the region out of curiosity or on errand.¹²¹ Both, the exhalation of the riches of these lands and the portrayal of the dangers that they harbored were the two sides of exoticization of the region that made it attractive enough for intrepid travelers.

¹¹⁶ Mikhailovskii-Danivskii, "Vospominania za 1829 god," in *Russkaia Starina*, 182; A. F. Vel'tman, "Vospominania o Bessarabii," in *Sovremennik*, 229.

¹¹⁷ P. Shabel'skii, "Kratkoie obozrenie Bessarabii i chasti Moldavii prisoedinennykh k Rossiiskoi imperii," in *Syn Otechestva*, No. 14, (1815): 35-36.

¹¹⁸ The expression attributed to Alexander I during his visit to Bessarabia in 1818, see A. F. Vel'tman, "Vospominania o Bessarabii," *Sovremennik*, no. 3, (1837): 232.

¹¹⁹ Shabel'skii, "Kratkoie obozrenie Bessarabii," 125-126.

¹²⁰ Vel'tman, "Vospominania o Bessarabii," 246.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

Although Russian writers may have found the nature of Bessarabia and the principalities exotic, they also found it underpopulated and lacking cultivation. Thus, the member of Russian embassy to Constantinople that crossed the principalities in 1793, Pavel Struve reproduced a common place of the 18th enlightenment discourse about Moldavia and Wallachia, when he wrote of colonization and cultivation of land as “the principal source of riches and strength of nations, the most immediate object of attention to other governments,” which were “totally overlooked in a country favored by nature in abundance and fecundity of every kind.” The “insolence” and “stupidity” of local population that accounted for the failure to exploit the natural abundance at the same time had a political cause. Writing about a “profound lethargy, which sinks and brutalizes the nation,” Struve, described it not as a “malady”, but the “consequence of a protracted despotism, which by degrees dries up the sources of life, arrests all the springs of the soul, and at length terminates in a universal and mortal stagnation of the whole body politic.”¹²²

The Phanariote princes of Moldavia and Wallachia were seen as part and parcel of the system of political despotism, being both its agents and victims. Describing their situation Struve noted that the Ottoman government rarely allowed them retain their posts for more than five or six years in a row in order to prevent the prince from forming a strong party in the principality, or out of simple “avarice in view of receiving more frequently the presents and sums which always accompany the ceremony of taking possession of the office.”¹²³ In such a situation “the idea of promoting the happiness of the people, who are subject to him... never yet entered the mind of a hospodar.”¹²⁴ Instead, the hospodars spared no effort in order to compensate the sums that they paid in Constantinople by means of selling offices, creating boyar titles, and simple extortions. Governed by fear, treachery and avarice, the Phanariotes

¹²² [I. Ch. Struve], *Travels in the Crimea. A History of the Embassy from Petersburg to Constantinople in 1793 Including their journey through Kremenschuck, Oczakow, Walachia and Moldavia* (London: G. J. Robinson, 1802), 265-266.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 90.

tested the Enlightenment experience of human psychology. According to A. F. Langeron, a French émigré in Russian service and a participant of the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812, “a European, a person born in a civilized country can conceive of neither the abnegation nor the fear-stricken existence, which is the life of Phanariotes.”¹²⁵ For the exponents of the famous 18th century philosophy of government, the despotism of Phanariotes was thus anything, but enlightened: they rarely had high opinion of either traditional Phanariote education and spoke of the ongoing decay of civilization among them.

The courts of law and nobility – the two most important checks on the monarchical despotism in Montesquieu’s philosophy of government – were found deficient either. Both Russians and Western European observers rarely had high opinion of both, the real independence of the Divan and the local legislative tradition. Only Alexander-Maurice D’Hautrive in his memoir addressed to Moldavian hospodar Alexander Ypsilanti, whom he served as a secretary, tended to idealize local judicial customs and attributed the energy and elocution with which simple Moldavians defended their rights at courts to the “tradition of ancient Roman liberty”, however, surprising it was to find at a distance of “four thousand lieu from Rome and eighteen centuries from Cicero.”¹²⁶ The majority of observers were convinced that, whatever the qualities that modern Moldavians and Wallachians inherited from their Roman ancestors, the spirit of strict legality was not one of them. Thus, Raicevich speaks of the Divan as a mere figurehead, all authority being in the hands of the Prince and his ministers.¹²⁷ According to the already cited Langeron, no member of the Divan paid attention to the written laws and “the quantity and the quality of the presents made to the

¹²⁴ Ibid., 267.

¹²⁵ A. F. Langeron, *Journal des campagnes faites en service de Russie* published in *Hurmuzaki*, Supplement I, Vol. III, 73. Hereafter cited as Langeron, “Journal des campagnes.”

¹²⁶ Alexandre-Maurice D’Hautrive, *Memoire sur l’Etat ancien et actuel de Moldavie presente a S. A. S. le Prince Alexandre Ypsilanti, Hospodar reigning en 1787* (Bucuresti: Institutul de Arte Grafice “Carl Gobl”, 1092), 82.

¹²⁷ See Raicevich, *Osservazioni Storiche*, 151, Wilkinson reports that in case the opinion of the Divan members contradicts the intentions of the prince, the Divan session is prorogued and the Hospodars’ agents proceed to

great treasurer and other members of the Divan defines the course of the lawsuit, which often results in three or even four contradictory sentences passed on the same case.”¹²⁸ Agreed with him was L. S. Baikov (an official at the chancellery of the Senator-president of the divans during Russian occupation in 1808-1812), who found that “both principalities do not have laws other than the self-will of the government and some commandments of Justinian, that are poorly known.” As to the local customs, Baikov argued that they were essentially “the right of the powerful and the one who gives a greater bribe.”¹²⁹

In a series of humorist “Letters from the Main Staff of the Danubian Army,” Russian diplomat Felix Fonton offered a satirical description of Moldavian judicial practices. Lodging at a house of a Moldavian judge, where the court was held, Fonton saw that the latter was trading justice for sheep, calves, packs of oat and other gifts brought by the litigants. Responding to Fonton’s observations, the judge formulated his own judicial philosophy professing honesty and conscientiousness and claiming that he always seeks to find out who is right in accordance with laws. “Then the person who is right has to remunerate me by money or gift depending on the importance of the law-suit, but I do not take anything from the one whom I found wrong.” According to judge’s own evaluation, this order of justice had the advantage of speed and low cost in comparison with a costly operation of British judicial system, provided that the judge was an honest man. Confirming that in comparison with other judicial officials, his judge was indeed the most honest in the principality, Fonton jokingly asked his correspondent to submit such a system of justice to the consideration of Frederick von Savigny.¹³⁰

convince the Divan members to change their attitude, which they usually do since they do not want to try their fortune. See Wilkinson, *Tableau Historique*, 44.

¹²⁸ Langeron, “Journal des Campagnes,” 72.

¹²⁹ Cited in A. A. Nakko, “Ocherk grazhdanskogo ustroistva Bessarabskoi oblasti s 1812-1828 gg.” in *Zapiski Odesskogo Obschestva istorii i drevnostei* 22, (1900): 120.

¹³⁰ Fonton, *Vospominania*, 191-192.

Frequent turns of fortune of the boyars and the ease, with which the social parvenus in the Hospodar's suite acquired boyar rank made some authors doubt the nobility of the Moldavian and Wallachian upper classes.¹³¹ According to I. P. Liprandi, "the influence of the Phanar made the boyars of all classes completely different from the nobility of all other European countries."¹³² Instead of noble hierarchy vice-governor of Bessarabia in the early 1820s F. F. Vigel wrote about a veritable "hierarchy of slaves," whereby the Moldavians were the slaves of the Greeks, who, in their turn, were the slaves of the Turks.¹³³ Confirming Vigel's opinion, A. F. Langeron told his readers of an encounter between a Turkish courier and a Moldavian boyar. In 1808, while waiting for the new horses at the post station Langeron was chatting with a local land captain from the prominent Sturdza family. "The arrival of the Turkish courier had the effect of Meduza's head on my Moldavian. Sturdza stood up, pale and trembling, and rushed for the pipe that the Janissar, replacing Sturdza on the divan, ordered him to bring."¹³⁴ The servility before the superiors was coupled with brute oppression towards subordinates. The already mentioned Felix Fonton was equally offended when Moldavian officials prostrated themselves before him and when they mustered peasants in order to please him. He also found it a "natural consequence of the centuries-long oppression" that local nobility and townsmen became "highhanded and vain" in their relationships with lower classes and "submissive, servile and lowly" before their superiors.¹³⁵

If the Turks made the Romanian boyars servile, the Phanariotes taught them to be treacherous and cunning. Having lost their economical self-sufficiency through the neglect of

¹³¹ Raicevich writes about "the most vile people made noble with a little money" and yesterdays' "grooms becoming boyars." See Raicevich, *Osservazioni Storiche*, 163; Wilkinson asserts that "although the majority of the heads of the families entertain the idea that no other family in Europe can boast of purer blood, only few can trace their origin for more than a century." Wilkinson, *Tableau Historique*, 51.

¹³² Liprandi, *Krakii ocherk etnograficheskogo, politicheskogo, npravstvennogo i voennogo sostoiania khristianskikh oblastei Turtsii. Dunaiskie kniazhestva* (Moscow: Izdanie Imperatorskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei Rossiskikh, 1877), 5, further cited as *Pridunaiskie kinazhestva*.

¹³³ F. F. Vigel his "Zamechania na nyneshnee sostoianie Bessarabii," in idem, *Vospominania*, Part VI, (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografia, 1892), 10.

¹³⁴ Langeron, "Journal des campagnes," 73.

¹³⁵ Fonton, *Vospominania*, 188.

their lands, the boyars devoted all their faculties to obtaining a lucrative office.¹³⁶ If the Hospodar title became the desired goal of young Phanariotes, the positions of the heads of district administration constituted the object of the boyar sons' efforts.¹³⁷ According to Liprandi, the intrigues employed to obtain and preserve these offices made the boyars "alien to all the reasonable maxims of the enlightened reason, all the constant rules of pure morality. Virtue, conscience, shame and good reputation carry no meaning for them. Only physical fear can reign in their passions. In a word, they are used to the spirit of Ottoman government, they like it and are worthy of it."¹³⁸ Vigel made the same point even more eloquently. According to him, a boyar, who "never entered in litigations, never obtained tax farms, paid all his family debts and did not make new once, never humiliated himself before anyone, never intrigued against anyone and always had quite European lifestyle and thoughts" appeared so rare an exception from the general rule that he could "hardly be considered a Moldovan."¹³⁹ Sometimes the images of the boyars' treachery and villainess acquired truly demonic proportions. As Liprandi warned his readers, Europeans dealing with the boyars should take great care not to fall prey to their intrigues because for "a minister with a respectable patriarchal countenance... all the means are right, even those that involve his wife, daughter, sister or anyone. Conscience, virtue, self-denial, chastity, good reputation, according to him, are like vestments that serve to hide human intentions and connings."¹⁴⁰

Frequently basing themselves on the accounts of Western European authors, Russian observers, demonstrated a remarkable unanimity in their diagnosis of the state of public mores and enlightenment of the upper classes of Moldavia and Wallachia. Nevertheless, not all of them attributed local misfortunes to external factors, such as the Ottoman despotism or

¹³⁶ Raicevich, *Osservazioni Storiche*, 152.

¹³⁷ Wilkinson, *Tableau Historique*, 53.

¹³⁸ Liprandi, "Zapiska o sostoianii umov v Moldavii adresovannaia P. D. Kiselevu," 1828, RGIA, fond 673, no. 231, F. 3.

¹³⁹ Vigel, "Zamechania," 8.

¹⁴⁰ Liprandi, *Pridunaiskie kniazhestva*, 5.

the hegemony of the phanariotes. Sometimes, the Moldavians and Wallachians themselves were put to blame for the pitiful state of the principalities. Characteristic in this respect was the polemics on the state of Wallachia between Wallachian émigrés in Russia Constantine Cantacuzene and Alexander Negri published by Russian magazine “Messenger of Europe.” During the Russian–Ottoman war of 1806-1812, son of the leader of the Wallachian boyars during Russian-Ottoman war of 1768-1774, Matei Cantacuzene, Constantine Contacuzene contributed a short essay called “The picture of Wallachia.” One of the best provinces of Europe according to its geographic position and the quality of land, Wallachia in the appreciation of the author, was “a country dominated by barbarians, a country of the oppressed humanity,” whereby even the beauties of nature such as the majestic flow of the Danube lost their attractiveness.¹⁴¹ The author attributed the misfortunes of the land to the Phanariote Greeks: “These malicious abettors of the Turkish crimes in one hundred years reduced Wallachia to the most pitiful state, devastated it and even changed the mores of its inhabitants. The oppressed people lost all energy and became hesitant and lazy.” For its part, the nobility ceased to care about the common good, which was no longer in its power, and joined the Phanariotes.¹⁴²

Despite their Greek origin, the Cantacuzenes had long resided in the principalities, and got so much assimilated as to become leaders of the autochthonous boyar opposition to the Phanariotes, which explains the harsh evaluations of Constantine Cantacuzene’s article. By contrast, Alexander Negri must have had a closer relation to Phanariotes and therefore defended them. According to him, whatever enlightenment there was in Wallachia it was due to the Greeks and not the autochthonous hospodars, who ruled before the beginning of the 18th century. In the absence of local laws, whose codification was prevented by the lack of the developed Romanian language, the Phanariote hospodars introduced the Byzantine codes

¹⁴¹ Constantine Cantacuzene, “Kartina Valakhii” in *Vestnik Evropy* 49-54, no. 14, (1810): 147-148.

¹⁴² Ibid., 150.

(*Bazilikoi*) and contributed to the development of crafts and printing.¹⁴³ As to the change of mores of local population, “it was proved at many times under different circumstances, that Wallachians have neither patriotic zeal nor compassion for their compatriots.” The interim boyar governments that took power after the destitution of one hospodar and the appointment of another “did not loose the opportunity to plunder the unfortunate motherland” and gladly enriched themselves at public expense. Located much closer to Russian borders than the Serbs, let alone the Greeks, the Wallachians did not try “to rebel against the oppressors of their freedom and common foes of the Christendom,” because “private benefit reigns their spirit and does not allow them to unite in a good faith (*blagomyslie*). They do not care for the ruin of their motherland as long as their private designs are successful and if they can live gaily and luxuriously in huge mansions, dress in sumptuous apparels, take pride of their beautiful tableware, enjoy precious meals, whereas their simple wretched compatriot is oppressed, and dies from hunger.”¹⁴⁴

Moral corruption of the upper classes, whatever its real cause, was contrasted to the qualities of the simple people, whom foreign observers treated with a mixture of sympathy and compassion. Thus, Alexandre d’Hauterive was particularly sympathetic towards the Moldavian peasants. Although victims of a boyar complot, which deprived them of the possession of their land, the Moldavian peasants, according to d’Hauterive, retained personal liberty and due to that “concerned the moral qualities that one would not be able to find with the neighboring people.”¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Ignatii Iakovenko, an official at the Russian Consulate-General in Bucharest, viewed the morals of the simple Wallachians and Moldavians as “containing nothing reproachable compared to other primitive people, who usually follow the guidance of simple natural emotions. Overall, they are virtuous rather than evil, obedient

¹⁴³ Alexander Negri, “Pis’mo k izdateliu Vestnika Evropy,” *Vestnik Evropy* 61-66, No. 5, (1812) : 55.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 56-58.

¹⁴⁵ D’Hauterive, *Memoire sur L’Etat ancien et actuel de Moldavie*, 80.

rather than obstinate and ready to help a foreigner.”¹⁴⁶ Mentioning the laziness of local peasantry Russian authors at the same time praised them for docility, patience and general indisposition for crime. According to Liprandi, “[In Bessarabia] there are so few crimes committed by the simple Moldavians that their number is hardly higher than the number of crimes committed by Moldavian-Bessarabian nobles.”¹⁴⁷

Such favorable comparison of the Moldavia and Wallachian peasants to the boyars went along with references to their most abject misery and barbarity. In 1829, immediately after crossing the Dniester, Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, found “half-naked people with beastly faces, who were idling around” and speaking the language, which was foreign to his ears. Passing across the Wallachian plain, French ambassador to Constantinople Eduard Thouvenel writes about a number of the dug-outs populated by creatures “so degraded by misery that they seem not to belong to the humanity,” while Fonton calls Moldavian peasants “still almost complete troglodytes.”¹⁴⁸ If these authors only observed the deplorable state of local peasantry, a more experienced and courageous traveler like William MacMichael on his way from Jassy to Bucharest dared to spend a night at a hut of Wallachian peasant, which looked like a “cavern of a Troglodyte” and appeared to be worse than the huts of Nubia and Egypt.¹⁴⁹ Finally, all these authors could sign under passage belonging to William Wilkinson, a British representative of the British Levant Company, who noted that “there does not perhaps exist a people laboring under a greater degree of oppression from the effect of despotic power, and more heavily burdened with impositions and taxes than the peasantry of Wallachia and Moldavia.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Ignatii Iakovenko, *Nyneshnee sostoianie turetskikh kniazhestv Moldavii i Valakhii i rossiskoi Bessarabskoi oblasti* (Moscow: Tipografia Smirdina, 1828), 94-95.

¹⁴⁷ Liprandi, “O Sostoianii umov v Moldavii,” (A memoir addressed to P. D. Kiselev), RGIA, F. 673, op. 1, no. 231, F. 3rev.

¹⁴⁸ Eduard Thouvenel, *La Hongrie et la Valachie*, 171-172 ; Felix Fonton, *Vospominania*, Vol. II Leipzig, 1862, 187.

¹⁴⁹ MacMichael, *Journey from Moscow to Constantinople*, 105-106.

¹⁵⁰ Wilkinson, *Tableau Historique*, 140.

The descriptions of the Romanian peasantry reproduced the polemics between Cantacuzene and Negri about the general cause of misery of the principalities. Alongside the accounts attributing the misery of the Romanian peasantry to the Ottoman rule, there were writers who emphasized the local conditions and ultimately blamed the moral constitution of the population. According to Helmut von Moltke, who visited Wallachia in 1835 on his way to the Ottoman Empire, “the yoke of the Turks has long destroyed the energy of this people” and deprived them of the desire to produce beyond their very basic needs. “Used to content himself with little, the Wallachian does not know thousand demands of other nations; he fears less privation less than work, misery and barbarity less than the embarrassment of civilization.”¹⁵¹ Moltke’s impression was confirmed by Russian traveler Anatolii Demidov, who at his first encounter with Romanian peasants remarked that “the appearance of these solemn and motionless people with somber faces... produces the impression that Turkey is not far away.”¹⁵² Foreign observers agreed that prolonged Ottoman domination produced its effects on the psychology of the people. According to the already cited Liprandi, being neighbors of the Turks, the simple people have lost their erstwhile warlike character and acquired a basic trait of all Orientals – mistrustfulness and suspiciousness.¹⁵³

Alternatively, the cause of immobility of local population could be attributed to local conditions. Thus, the author of a well-known history of Moldavia and Wallachia, J. L. Carra found local air lacking “elastic resiliency” of the Western climates and speaks in this connection about the “usual dullness and melancholy” of the peoples populating the region. In line with the 18th century precepts on the influence of climate upon mores, long winters, abruptly starting summers, changeable weather and a lot of humidity were identified as the causes making Moldavians and Wallachians “heavy and lethargic,” lacking violent passions

¹⁵¹ *Lettres du Marechal de Moltke sur L'Orient*, traduit par Alfred Marchand (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1877), 6.

¹⁵² Demidov, *Puteshestvie v Iuzhnuu Rossiiu*, 97.

and strong character and above all lazy.¹⁵⁴ The laziness and ignorance of the population produced by such climate further aggravated its effects: the vast areas of uncultivated land always covered by the rotting foliage, together with the unhealthy marshes were seen as “reasons of the vice, which reigns in the atmosphere of these climates.”¹⁵⁵ The authors of a mid-19th century military-statistical survey continued this line of argument and attributed sickly appearance of Moldavian peasants, attributing it to the influence of “bad air, unhealthy food, carelessness, laziness, ignorance and moral debauchery.”¹⁵⁶ In other words, they emphasized the local conditions that made Romanian peasant a less than perfect embodiment of the “noble savage” model represented by the freedom-loving inhabitants of the mountainous regions of the principalities, such as Oltenia. A healthier climate of the mountains not only brought about a healthier appearance, but also resulted in a “remarkable simplicity of mores, familial virtues, chastity, temperance, cleanliness, sincerity and hospitality.”¹⁵⁷

Russia’s “Civilizing Mission”

As the above discussion demonstrates, Western European and Russian observers revealed a remarkable similarity in their accounts of Moldavia and Wallachia and, the last passage notwithstanding, largely attributed the misfortunes of these countries to the Ottoman dominance. The latter idea was grounded in the assumption that the Ottomans were essentially hostile to enlightenment and civilization, which itself was rooted in the long tradition of representing the “Turk” as the “Other” of Europe. After the Ottoman conquest of

¹⁵³ Liprandi, *Kratkoie obozrenie kniazhestv Moldavii i Valakhii v politicheskome otnoshenii* (Moscow: Izdanie universitetskoi tipografii, 1861), 151.

¹⁵⁴ William Wilkinson, *Tableaux Historique, Geographique et Politique de la Moldavie et de la Valachie* (Paris: Boucher, 1821), 116.

¹⁵⁵ J. L. Carra, *Istoriia Moldavii i Valakhii s rassuzhdeniem o nastoiashchem sostoianii obeikh kniazhestv*. (Spb: Imperatorskaia Tipographia, 1791), 141-142. The original edition J. L. Carra, *Histoire de la Moldavie et la Valachie avec une dissertation sur l’etat present de ces provinces* (Neuchatel : De l’Imprimerie de la Societe Typographique, 1781)

¹⁵⁶ *Voienno-statisticheskoe obozrenie gosudarstv i zemeel’ k Rossiskoi imperii prilozhaschikh. Kniazhestvo Moldavia* (SPb.: Tipographia General’nogo Shtaba, 1855), 5.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

Constantinople the “otherness” of the “Turk” was asserted mainly in religious terms. Relunched by the Pope Pius II in the mid 15th century, the theme of the crusades was later transformed into the discourse of the “Eastern mission” of the Habsburg emperors consisting in saving Christendom from Islamic conquest. In the meantime, and especially after the reduction of the Ottoman threat after the defeat of their army at Vienna in 1683, predominantly religious connotations of the Ottoman “otherness” gave way to political and cultural ones. The Ottoman Empire was not part of the European state system, which emerged after the peace of Westphalia of 1648, while the government of the Sultan provided a ready example of despotism, which in the age of enlightenment constituted the antithesis of the civilized and rational government.¹⁵⁸ The Ottomans’ stubborn support of their traditional institutions, during the long period of the imperial decline only confirmed the impression of cultural “foreignness” of the power, which for centuries controlled a substantial part of European territory and was an important factor of the European “balance of power.”

Conversely, Russian monarchs of the 18th century spared no effort in order to become part of the European states system and get recognition as enlightened rulers, pursuing an ambitious program of cultural and political westernization of their empire. A series of wars with the Sultans undertaken by Russian rulers constituted an important aspect of Russia’s own cultural westernization. Thus, Voltaire enthusiastically supported Catherine the Great in her first war with the Ottoman Empire, which he viewed as the very opposite of the notion of enlightened government. Russian writers of the early 19th century developed this theme asserting that the despotic Ottoman government had no moral right to rule over the Christian provinces. Thus, Russian periodical *The Telegraph* provided a justification for the war that Russia conducted against the Ottoman Empire in 1828-1829 arguing that “the enlightenment, which sheds it benevolent rays onto the better part of Europe, is in stark contrast with the

¹⁵⁸ Iver Neuman, *Ispol’zovanie “Drugogo”*, 72-98.

barbarian spirit of the Ottoman government.”¹⁵⁹ Sometimes the Ottoman Empire was likened to a “malevolent abscess on the body of Europe,” while the Turks were claimed to be foreigners in Europe, who like a terrible meteor embraced the best and the most civilized part of the world and in the course of several centuries... reduced to a desert the once flourishing provinces.¹⁶⁰ The regrettable impact of the Ottoman conquest concerned first of all Greece, as the “cradle of European enlightenment.” However, as the above discussion demonstrated, Western writers condemned the outcomes of the Ottoman rule in Moldavia and Wallachia and some of them, e. g. Carra and Wilkinson suggested taking the principalities from the hands of their enemies (i. e. the Ottomans) and placing them under the protection of a Christian power as a means to facilitate the progress of enlightenment in this part of the world.¹⁶¹ Russian authors picked up this argument and developed it into a claim for an exclusive civilizing mission in the region.

Similarly to Crimea and New Russia several decades earlier, Bessarabia was symbolically appropriated in Russian imperial discourse through references to classical antiquity that Russia.¹⁶² Taking for the model Napoleon’s famous address to his soldiers before the battler of the Pyramids, Pavel Svin’in in his “Recollections of the Bessarabian Steppe” reproduced the address of P. A. Rumiantsev to his soldiers on the eve of Kagul battle of 1770 that contained references to the “numerous victories of ancient Romans over their enemies on these fields” as well as the encouragement “to follow the steps of Trajan”.¹⁶³ The theme of Bessarabia as the place of Ovidius’s exile became famous through Pushkin’s ironic self-comparison to the ancient poet, while Svin’in, on the basis of testimony that Ovidius learned the language of the ancient Getic tribes and composed poems in their language,

¹⁵⁹ “Vzgliad na sostoianie Turetskogo gosudarstva,” *Telegraf*, no. 17, (1829): 87.

¹⁶⁰ Constantine Bazili, *Ocherki Konstantinopolia*, 149.

¹⁶¹ Wilkinson, *Tableau historique*, 170. Carra, *Istoriia Moldavii i Valakhii*, 180.

¹⁶² A. L. Zorin, *Kormia dvukh glavogo orla: literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologia v Rossii v poslednei treti XVIII – pervoi treti XIX v.* (Moscow: Novoie literaturnoe obozrenie, 2000), 100.

conjectured that the Roman poet also might have learned Slavic from the Sarmathian tribes.¹⁶⁴ Even without such extravagancies, the conquest of a territory containing the reminiscences of classical age not only served to portray Russia as an heir of Greek-Roman antiquity like any other European nation, but also gave it the credit of liberating the sites of Europe's cultural homeland.

As soon as the 1774 Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji fixed the right of the Russian Empire to intervene on behalf of the Christian subjects of the Sultan, Russian diplomats sought to monopolize this civilizing mission in the region, and plant in the principalities "the first seeds of Enlightenment."¹⁶⁵ Civilizing mission claimed by Russia in respect of the Romanian principalities and the struggle with the Ottoman Empire, which it presupposed, were essential for asserting the European identity of the imperial elite. Moldavia and Wallachia were often portrayed as the battlefield, on which Russia, representing enlightenment, engaged barbarity associated with the Ottomans and Tatars. In the meantime, Wallachia, Moldavia and Bessarabia became "the cradle of all famous Russian commanders." In the words of Svin'in, Bessarabia was the place where "Rumiantsev, Suvorov and Kutuzov developed their faculties and became immortal," and where Potemkin "first revealed his talents and perished forever."¹⁶⁶ These sites of Russian military glory were all the more precious to Russian authors since, along with "throwing the barbarity beyond the Danube," they witnessed Russia's own progress along the path of enlightenment. Even the defeat of Peter the Great at *Riabaia Mogila* during the Pruth campaign of 1711 was turned into a moral victory over his enemy Charles XII, in pursuit of whom Russian troops found themselves encircled by the overwhelming Ottoman and Tatar army. Telling the story of Peter's *ukaz* to the Senate, in which he prohibited to take into consideration his pleas in case he is captured by the

¹⁶³ Pavel Svin'in, "Iz vospominanii v stepiakh bessarabskikh," in *Otechestvennyie zapiski* 11, no. 27, (1822): 18-19.

¹⁶⁴ Svin'in, "Iz vospominanii v stepiakh bessarabskikh," in *Otechestvennyie zapiski* 5, no. 9 (1821): 9-10.

¹⁶⁵ Demidov, *Puteshestvie*, 125.

Ottomans, Svin'in opposed it to the extravagancy of Karl XII, who after the Poltava defeat became de-facto Ottoman prisoner in Bender fortress and sent his boot to rule Sweden. Contrasting the behavior of Peter the Great and Charles XII, Svin'in portrayed Bessarabia as the site of the monarchical virtue of self-abnegation demonstrated by the enlightened founder of the Russian Empire.¹⁶⁷

And yet despite the attempts to present the disastrous Pruth campaign in a positive light, it continued to evoke bitter memories as a lost opportunity to give Russian history a completely different direction. Enormous cost of the victory in the Northern war and the foundation of the new capital on the banks of the Neva always confounded the imagination of the most patriotic Russians and constituted one of the tensions of the Petrine myth.¹⁶⁸ In an attempt to explain Peter's failure on the Pruth, it was all too easy to put the blame on the Moldavians and Wallachians, who offered him a lukewarm reception. Musing over possible alternative of Russian history, Felix Fonton came to the conclusion that "had Peter the Great encountered here sturdy and honest Bulgarians and valiant Serbs instead of the traitor Brancovano (Wallachian hospodar at the time of the Pruth campaign - V. T.) and a people used to humiliation, the outcome would have been different." In a moment of geopolitical and historical daydreaming, Fonton imagined the transfer to the South of the "point of gravity of Russian policy": "In that case, perhaps, not the eccentric, cold, and granite St Petersburg, but the splendid Kiev would have become the second capital city of our state."¹⁶⁹

Reflecting on a geographical location of the Romanians between Eastern and Southern Slavs, Russian diplomat could not conceal his regret "that these eight million people foreign to the Slavs had settled here on the beautiful slopes of the Carpathians drawing a wedge between the Slavic tribes and preventing their unification. If instead of these

¹⁶⁶ Svin'in, "Iz vospominanii v stepiakh bessarabskikh," 4.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 11-23.

¹⁶⁸ See Nicholas Riazanovskii, *The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

Rumanians there were Serbs or Bulgarians, how easy it would have been to solve the Eastern, or better to say, Slavic question.”¹⁷⁰ Ultimately, Fonton had to admit that his ruminations over the alternative course of Russian history were futile: “There is no use to consider this! The Romanians are here! They cannot be swept off the face of the earth.” He realized that by their geographical position the Romanians lay an insurmountable obstacle to the realization of the geopolitical utopia of Pan-Slavism and sought to find advantages in the existing state of things: “Reaching here the political and strategic limits, which it cannot overcome without exposing itself, Russia nevertheless has an advantageous position for it can vindicate the rights of the people of common faith and origin (*edinovernnye i edinorodnye*) enslaved by the Turks without giving anyone the ground to suspect its intentions.”¹⁷¹

* * *

However, Russia’s “Balkan entanglements” were not limited to diplomatic demarches on behalf of the Christian subjects of the Sultan, the practice of which was established by the treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji of 1774. Russian-Ottoman wars entailed the contacts between Russian armies and local population, which were by no means as peaceful and unproblematic as they appeared in Russia official discourse. Lacking their own bureaucratic cadre, Russian commanders generally relied on the authority of local institutions to legitimize the demands for supply from local population.¹⁷² To this end P. A. Rumiantsev in 1769–1774 and G. A. Potemkin in 1788-1791 left the Divans in power and limited themselves to appointing mid-ranked Russian officers to supervise over their activities. However, this meant that Russian occupation authorities inherited all the shortcomings of the local administration, which were further aggravated by war and usual tensions which occur between the occupying army and

¹⁶⁹ Fonton, *Vospominania*, Vol. 1, 38.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁷² According to Rumiantsev, it order to secure the loyalty of the local population one should not infringe upon its liberties and render justice in accordance with their customs. “*Arkhiv voenno-pokhodnoi kantselarii grafa P. A. Rumiantseva-Zadunaiskogo, 1700-1774 gg.*” In *OIDR*, 1865, vol. 1, otd. 1:243-244.

local population. Besides the necessity to deliver great quantities of food and forage, the inhabitants of Moldavia and Wallachia suffered from unsanctioned requisitions performed by soldiers and officers and the abuses of local *ispravniks*, who would lever illegal taxes and dues motivating them by the necessity to supply the army. While Russian commanders would fight with the former by tightening the army discipline, the eradication of the latter necessitated greater involvement in local administration and possibly a reform of local institutions, for which Russian occupation authorities hardly had the time in conditions of war.

The tensions between Russian army and local population over the question of supplies became particularly acute during Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812. Unlike the two previous wars, this time it took Russian commanders five years to bring their adversary to a definitive defeat and in the meantime, continuous occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia by the Russian armies imposed a heavy burden upon the local resources, aggravated by the corruption in local administration. The necessity to provide for the army stimulated Russian occupation authorities for a deeper involvement into local administration than ever before and for the first time made them consider the reform of local institutions. The graveness of the situation was reflected in the new format of Russian provisional authorities. While earlier, the function of supervision over the Divans was placed with two mid-ranked Russian officers, this time, the supreme civil authority in both principalities was concentrated in the hands of one high-placed Russian official in the rank of Senator, who relied on a sizable chancellery and a number of supervisors in the districts.¹⁷³

In his instructions to the first Senator-President of the Moldavian and Wallachia Divans S. S. Kushnikov, the Commander of Russian army in 1807-1808 Field Marshal A. A. Prozorovskii explained the difficulties of providing the army with food and forage by scarcity

of the country's population, which was frequently forced to fly by an "unjust and, one can even say oppressive government." Reproducing the common place of the moralizing discourse about Moldavia and Wallachia, Prozorovskii pointed out that "the lowly subjection in which the inhabitants of the principalities have always been kept caused them to learn all intrigues and cunning. Avarice is their only goal and personal enrichment is taken for intelligence, honor and virtue. As to the general good, it is completely foreign to them."¹⁷⁴ Prozorovskii admitted that "nothing is more difficult than correcting the mores of the people when corruption, inclination to intrigues and above all avarice have become so deeply rooted." Nevertheless, Kushnikov had to "spare no effort in order to gradually eliminate this evil and change local mores alternating strictness with moderation and using all available means."¹⁷⁵ More specifically, Kushnikov's two major objectives were 1) "eradication of abuses in the government insofar as the form of government permits" and 2) "protecting the oppressed village dwellers." In his activities, Kushnikov had to take into account "the political situation of other powers as well as the customs of the land, and, at the same time, try as far as the situation permits, bring these customs closer to Russian practices and fundamental laws." However, the definitive political settlement of the principalities was to be postponed until "the future of these principalities is decided by a peace treaty."¹⁷⁶

One of Kushnikov's first steps was to establish specific procedures for the keeping of the government accounts. Originally, there was no practice of sorting the cases and organizing systematic archives, and each official used to keep his own private accounts and destroy them as soon as soon as he was out of office. Kushnikov's instructions to the central and district governmental bodies prescribed a uniform manner of the government's financial

¹⁷³ For a discussion of measures taken by Russian occupation authorities see Nakko, "Ocherk Grazhdanskogo Upravleniia v Bessarabii, Moldavii i Valakhii vo vremia russko-turetskoi voyny 1806-1812 goda," in *Zapiski Odesskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei*, vol. XI, (1879): 287.

¹⁷⁴ Instruction to Kushnikov cited in A. O. Egunov, ed., "MATERIALY dlia noveishei istorii Bessarabii," in *Zapiski Bessarabskogo Oblastnogo Statisticheskogo Komiteta*, vol. 3 (Kishinev, 1868), 143.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

accounts and book-keeping as well as the forms of criminal and civil cases in courts.¹⁷⁷ This was coupled with some transformations in the Divan system in order to make it less costly and more efficient. Pressed by the hard financial situation of the principalities on the one hand, and following the instruction of Prozorovskii “to preserve for the time being local laws and customs” on the other, Kushnikov decided to cut redundant offices “as contradicting the local custom” and bring the existing Divan departments to their “original” composition. At the local level Kushnikov sought to curb the arbitrariness of the *ispravniks* by limiting their powers in criminal investigations and introducing the standard formulas, in accordance with which each criminal investigation had to be effected. He also tried to deprive the *ispravniks* of the judicial prerogatives and to limit their role to investigation only. Yet it is impossible to establish whether any of these measures were effected.¹⁷⁸

The practical helplessness of Russian administration soon became especially evident at the level of district administration, where Kushnikov did not have any permanent representatives. Periodic revisions of the district administration, like the one effected by Savitskii in 1808 served more to portray the horrendous picture of abuses, than to correct local wrongs. In his report Savitskii presented Kushnikov with a picture of abuses and profiteering hiding behind the rhetoric of service to the motherland and the common good: “A crocodile, having found its pray, would water it with its tears, before tearing it apart and consuming; similar to such beasts are many individuals here, who, sympathizing with the destiny of the ruined fatherland shed tears and complain and, at the same time, are filling

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 144-145.

¹⁷⁷ The actions of Kushnikov in respect of civil administration were paralleled by similar measures of Metropolitan Gavriil in clerical sphere. He introduced the metric books in the parishes from 1810 and thwarted the abbey's opposition to the introduction of the accounts of the monastery revenues and expenditures – a measure that aimed at a better deployment of monastic resources. Nakko, “Ocherk Grazhdanskogo Upravleniia v Bessarabii, Moldavii i Valakhii,” 293, 304.

¹⁷⁸ I. N. Khalippa (ed.) “Opisanie arkhiva gg. Senatorov, predesedatel'stvovavshikh v Divanakh knazhestv Moldavii i Valakhii s 1808 po 1813-ii god.” In idem (ed.) *Trudy Bessarabskoi Gubernskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii*, vol. 1 (Kishinev, 1907), 505.

their bags with gold and silver, becoming main cause of this ruin.”¹⁷⁹ According to Savitskii, the main cause of the plight of the population was not the army requisitions, but “the Moldavian lords, who oppress their fatherland in the heaviest way.” The most frequent form of abuse was the uncontrolled distribution of exemptions from taxes and duties (*scutelnici*), whereby some of the peasant families paid taxes only to the landlord, while their share of state taxes was placed on others. The members of the Moldavian Divan used their relatives in the district administration in order to exempt their possessions and peasants from the transportation dues required by the army. Another factor accounting for the ruining disproportions in the level of taxation, was the *ispravniks*’ systematic failure to report the true number of the tax paying families to the treasury. According to Savitskii’s estimations, the actual number of the taxable families in Moldova was twice the number reflected in the tax-collecting records.¹⁸⁰

Meanwhile, resistance to these measures steadily grew. Kushnikov’s chancellery was soon flooded by all kinds of litigations, petitions, accusations and vindications of the infringed rights. The members of the Divans were complaining on each other. The *ispravniks* were taking to blame their predecessors.¹⁸¹ Rather than directly obstructed the policies of the provisional administration became overwhelmed by the very revelations of misgovernment they sought to redeem. Ironically, instead of correcting the corrupted morals the actions of the provision administration were multiplying the instances of libel and intrigues.¹⁸² The situation was particularly grave in Wallachia where the corruption developed into an anti-Russian plot headed by the great treasurer (Vel Vestiar) Constantine Fillipescu, who managed to enlist the support of the commander of the Russian corps in Bucharest Miloradovich in order to

¹⁷⁹ “Krokodil, nashedshii zhertvu svoiu, prezhdasterzaniia i pogloschenia, oblivaet ee slezami i v tosamoe vremia, s’edaet onuiu; takovogo roda zivotnym mnogie zdes’ upodobliaiutsia, kotoryie sotradaia uchasti razorenno otechestva, oblivaiutsia slezami, zhaluiutsia, a mezhdum samymi vinovniki razoreniia onago, napolnivshi meshki svoi zlatom i serebrom.” Khalippa, Trudy, I, 340-341.

¹⁸⁰ Savitskii’s report to Kushnikov August, 1808, Jassy. ANRM, Fond, 1, op. 1, d. 590, 3-4.

¹⁸¹ Alexei Nakko, “Ocherk Grazhdanskogo Upravleniia v Bessarabii, Moldavii i Valakhii,” 301.

counteract for the time being the efforts of Kushnikov, who resided in Jassy to investigate the affair. The conspiring boyar was replaced and exiled only after a more energetic P. I. Bagration, succeeding Prozorovskii as the commander of Russian army, ordered investigation, which revealed that Filippesco used his liaison with Miloradovich to provide the Ottomans with the information on the movement of Russian troops.

The appointment of P. I. Bagration the Commander in Chief of Russian army in the principalities promised to change the situation. As soon as he solved the most pressing military problems, Bagration turned to the problems of supplies of the army and thereby got involved in the affairs of administration.¹⁸³ Russian commander was scandalized by the fact that the principalities failed to supply 50 thousand Russian troops although their deliveries to Constantinople before the war were enough to maintain a population of 500 thousand and attributed this fact either to the “ill-will of the people or the vicious administration.”¹⁸⁴ The investigation of the causes proved that “the real cause of misery and desperation of the people are the officials and not the Russian troops.” Bagration found it “most offensive” that these misfortunes were explained to the population by the demands of the Russian army.¹⁸⁵ Since simple replacement of the corrupt officials could not in itself redeem the situation, Russian commander introduced some modification in local institutions.

Setting the guidelines for reform of local administration, Bagration employed the language of the late enlightenment political science pointing out that “every well-meaning and experienced official used in the administration of the country undoubtedly knows that reasonable economy constitutes one of the major factors contributing to the well-being of the

¹⁸² ANRM, Fond 1, op 1, d. 481 “Perepiska s Divanom Moldavskogo kniazhestva o nakazanii lits podaiuschikh Senatoru Kushnikovu klevetnicheskie i melohnye pros’by i zhaloby.”

¹⁸³ Kushnikov still remained in place until March 1810, but the most important decisions and the new energy for transforming the situation came from the commander himself.

¹⁸⁴ “Iz predlozhenia P. I. Bagrationa sosloviiu pervoklasnykh boiarkniazhestva Vakhii po voprosu upravlenia kniazhestvom,” January 24, 1810, in N. V. Berezniakov, V. A. Bogdanova, *Bagration v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh* (Kishinev: Gosizdat MSSR, 1949), 76. All dates are given in accordance with the Julian calendar which was used at the time both in Russia and the Romanian principalities.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 78.

land and revealing a good government.”¹⁸⁶ Referring to the wide-spread practice whereby some individuals bought exemption from taxation, which dwindled the number of taxpayers and caused their ruin by placing on them a greater burden, Bagration ordered the Divan distribute the taxes equally and prohibit the *ispravniks* and their subordinates to re-distribute them. He considered a precise definition of the amount of taxes paid by each taxpayer according to his social status a precondition of “the security of property as the foremost right (after life and honor) of every citizen living under the protection of benevolent government.”¹⁸⁷

According to Bagration, this goal could be achieved only through eradication of the venality of the offices as well as the custom of yearly re-appointment of the officials. Russian commander deemed it insufficient merely to replace the abusive *ispravniks*, but sought to transform the whole institution by appointing the officials on the basis of balloting for an indeterminate period of time.¹⁸⁸ In this way Bagration hoped to eradicate the basic root of all abuses – the venality of offices. In order to secure continuity in local administration and make it more competent, each *ispravnik* was given two deputies from the boyars of the second rank, who were to execute *ispravniks*’ orders all over the district. In that way they would gradually acquire the necessary knowledge of local conditions, which would make them qualify for the position of *ispravniks*.¹⁸⁹ These measures were strengthened by creation of some sort of “procuracy” out of Russian military officers appointed to supervise the activities of the *ispravniks* in each district and report to the President of the Divans or his deputy permanently residing in Bucharest.¹⁹⁰ A special official accompanied by Russian officer was

¹⁸⁶ “Iz predlozhenia P. I. Bagrationa Divanu Valashskogo kniazhestvao podatiakh i povinnostiakh zhitelei,” January 28 1810, in *Bagration v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 84.

¹⁸⁷ Predlozhenie Bagratuiona Divanu, January 28, 1810, ANRM, Fond 1, File 1418, Ff. 23-23rev.

¹⁸⁸ A similar procedure was introduced for the central offices “Iz Predlozhenia P. I. Bagrationa soslovaiu pervoklasnykh boyar kniazhestva Valakhii po voprosu upravlenia kniazhestvom,” January 24, 1810, in *Bagration v Dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 79.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 82.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 83.

appointed to make revisions of the situation in the districts every four months and report abuses to the president of the Divans.¹⁹¹

Along with measures aimed at preventing instances of corruption and abuses in future, Bagration struggled against “the most offensive” representation of the Russian army as the cause of the population’s current misfortunes. To that end he appointed the “Commission for the Investigation of the Abuses of the Wallachian Boyars” headed by two Russian generals and consisting of the two deputies of the newly appointed Divan, two revisors dispatched by Kushnikov and two boyars, with the task of examining the complaints on the instances of extortion by the current or erstwhile officials and define fines and punishments for the culprits.¹⁹² “By giving the due satisfaction” to “the wretched people, who had suffered all possible extortions,”¹⁹³ Bagration sought to restore the good attitude of the local population to the Russian army that had been deteriorating in the previous years. Defining the guidelines for the commission, Bagration insisted that the “revenues of Wallachia are state property (gosudarstvennoie imuschestvo). Therefore, if it is discovered that some money had been embezzled, they should be returned to the treasury.”¹⁹⁴

The attempt of the Russian authorities to redress local administration was paralleled by the general well-fare measures, such establishing public order and hygiene. Thus, in 1808 Kushnikov found the atmosphere of Jassy “odorous to the highest degree” as a result of burials near the churches within the city line. Coupled with the insufficient depth of the graves as well as the custom of exhumation of corpses for the performance of repeated funeral services, this was bound to cause “dangerous contagious diseases.” In order to correct the situation, Kushnikov got in touch with church authorities and suggested creating cemeteries beyond the city lines. Likewise, he prohibited a habit to bury people, who died

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 79-83.

¹⁹² “Pis’mo P. I. Bagrationa general-maioru Bakhmet’evu i general-maioru Nazimovu o poriadke rabot komissii po zloupotrebleniiu valashskikh boiar,” February 12, 1810, in Bagration v *dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 87-89.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 86.

suddenly, on the day of death and prescribed *ispravniks* or other local officials to ascertain cases of sudden death and investigate its causes.¹⁹⁵ The affair hardly moved before Moldavian and Wallachian church was headed by Metropolitan Gavriil in whom Kushnikov found a willing and capable collaborator.¹⁹⁶ Gavriil suggested creating four walled cemeteries near each capital city, assigning each parish to one of them and prohibiting the priests to perform burial services in the cities. However, he soon complained that despite Kushnikov's order to the Divan, the local police (*agia*) preferred to delay this unpopular measure.¹⁹⁷ V. I. Krasno-Miloshevich, who replaced Kushnikov in March 1810, still found Bucharest and Jassy lacking conventional cemeteries. The resistance of local population was so tenacious that Krasno-Miloshevich was forced to address the whole boyar estate with a request to admonish the population.¹⁹⁸ He considered this custom a superstition in anything but name and argued that change in the places of burial "cannot infringe upon the maxims of Christian faith, since both Russians and other enlightened Christian nations have long abandoned the custom of burial in the cities." However, the magnitude of discontent was so great that he postponed the prohibition until spring 1811, by which time a church was to be built at each cemetery for the performance of funeral services.¹⁹⁹ Meanwhile, the police, the Divan and all boyars of the principality were called to persuade the inhabitants about the harmfulness of their custom.

The success of all these measures was extremely limited and most of them were abandoned as soon as Bagration and Kushnikov were replaced on their posts by Kamenskii and V. I. Krasno-Miloshevich, respectively. The new commander of the Russian army and Senator President of the Divans lacked the determination of their predecessors and forewent

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 87.

¹⁹⁵ The representation of Kushnikov to the Moldavian and Wallachian Divans, March, 9, 1809, ANRM, Fond 1, d. 45, Ff. 4-6rev.

¹⁹⁶ Metropolitan Gavriil to Kushnikov, March 7, 1809, Ibid., l.3.

¹⁹⁷ Metropolitan Gavriil to Krasno-Miloshevich, June 13, 1810, Ibid., Ff. 14-14rev.

¹⁹⁸ Representation of Krasno-Miloshevich to the Moldavian Divan, Ibid., Ff. 27-27rev.

the ambition of correcting the vices of local society believing that “an overall eradication of abuses depends upon time and change in the form of government.”²⁰⁰ The general unpopularity of Russian policy, which was resisted by all the classes of the population added to the difficulty of pursuing reform in conditions of war. According to the reports of Russian agent Fonton, “the majority of the boyars wish to return under the Ottoman government, which is unsurprising for they realize the impossibility of self-enrichment through plunder under Russian authority.” As to the simple people, although it had met Russian troops and had wished to remain under Russian administration, the unheard-of oppression that it suffered greatly undermined this attitude. The people not only desired the evacuation of the troops, but also “the return to the ancient order of things, since it had never been burdened so much by taxes in the time of the hospodars.”²⁰¹ Confirming Fonton’s opinion French Consul Ledoux reported to his government that “if the war continues for one more year, it will become completely deprived of resources and ruined and one would have to repopulate the country again as many inhabitants, particularly from the regions close to the Danube already fled south of the river.”²⁰²

* * *

Despite meager results, the first probing of reform of local institutions made by Kushnikov and Bagration in 1808-1810 offers an opportunity to discuss the fundamental assumptions, with which Russian authorities approached the problem of political reform of Moldavia and Wallachia and illustrates the constraints, within which they had to operate. Most importantly, the policies of Russian occupation authorities in Moldavia and Wallachia were informed by two mutually contradictory assumptions that ultimately had its roots in the

¹⁹⁹ Report of Jassy commandant to Krasno-Miloshevich, April 16, 1811, ANRM, Fond 1, op. 1, no. 45, Ff. 36-36rev.

²⁰⁰ “Vsepoddaneishii raport V. I. Krasno-Miloshevicha ot 15-go iyunia, 1810 g.” cited in Egunov, “Materialy dlia Noveishei istorii Bessarabii,” in *Zapiski Bessarabskogo statisticheskogo komiteta*, 146.

²⁰¹ Nikolai Dubrovin, “Kniaz’ P. I. Bagration.” In *Voennyi sbornik* 41, No. 2, (1865): 246-247.

political philosophy of enlightenment. On the one hand, they tried taking into account local conditions, laws and customs, but at the same time, sought to transform them along the rational lines and thereby help local society partake of the fruits of the civil and political existence. Already P. A. Rumiantsev in 1770 noted that, in order to secure the loyalty of the local population one should not infringe upon their liberties and render justice in accordance with their customs.²⁰³ At the beginning of the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812 Russian commander I. I. Michelson guaranteed on behalf of the Alexander I the preservation of local laws and his successor, and his successor, A. A. Prozorovskii, instructed Kushnikov to take into account “the customs of the land.” At the same time, he called Senator-President to “try as far as the situation permits, bring these customs closer to Russian practices and fundamental laws,” while P. I. Bagration spoke of the need “to approximate little by little Russian laws and customs in the governing of the principalities.”²⁰⁴ The contradiction between the two principles guiding the activities of the Russian occupations authorities will be equally characteristic of the period of 1812-1834, which is studied below. It reveals not only the usual inconsistencies of Russian imperial policy, but also one of the fundamental tensions of notion of enlightenment, upon which this policy was predicated.

Characteristic in this respect are the unpublished philosophical writings of M. M. Speranskii – the most notable early 19th century Russian statesman and reformer – which betray an unmistakable influence of the *philosophes*. Thus, reflecting on the role of the lawgiver, Speranskii proceeded from an assumption, that all human societies pass through the same sequence of “stages”, which he compared to the “ages” of human life. He pointed to that “the lawgiver cannot and should not change these ages, but he should know them precisely and govern each according to its qualities” using the law for “the preservation of the

²⁰² Radu Rosetti, “Arhiva Senatorilor din Chisinau si Ocupatia Ruseasca dela 1806-1812,” 1 and 2, *Analele Academiei Romane*, series 2, vol. 31, (1908-1909): 661.

²⁰³ OISR, kn. 1, otd. 1, (1865): 243-244.

²⁰⁴ Dubrovin, “Kniaz' P. I. Bagration,” 243-245.

society in the order of its ages” i. e. facilitating their natural succession.²⁰⁵ The same assumption was shared by F. W. Baur, the author of *Historical, Statistical and Political Notes on Wallachia*, who remarked that “the history of human mind is everywhere the same.” According to him “the first age of a people consists in barbarity and superstition.” Just like Speranskii Baur entertained the idea of slow progress from barbarity to civilization facilitated by enlightenment: “Philosophy progresses slowly with the general well-being for the liberation of peoples from the ties of ignorance and cunning, which the government imposed on them in the age of barbarity and which can no longer be endured in the age of enlightenment.”²⁰⁶ Translated in the administrative rhetoric of Prozorovskii, Kushnikov and Bagration, this philosophical understanding of human society, transformed in the conviction of the necessity to turn Moldavian and Wallachian institutions in accordance with Russian model. Whereas Russian administrators too easily put an equality mark between actual Russian institutions and the enlightenment ideal of rational and civilized government, it is important to understand that they sought transform Moldavian and Wallachian political systems in accordance Russian model because they considered the latter “rational,” not because it was “Russian.” The demand to bring Moldavian and Wallachian customs in accordance with Russian institutions, expressed by Prozorovski and Bagration, reflected their confidence that through the progress of enlightenment Russia entered the age of civilization and that enabled her to carry out civilizing mission in Moldavia and Wallachia.

At the same time, by admitting the necessity to take into account local customs, Russian administrators echoed Montesquieuian maxim to tailor the legislation in accordance with a peculiar spirit of each people resulting from a combination of climate, public mores and forms of government. Once again it was Speranskii, who gave this idea the clearest formulation among Russia authors:

²⁰⁵ M. M. Speranskii, “Filosofskie razmyshlenia o prave i gosudarstve” in *Rukovodstvo k poznaniuu zakonov*, 193.

“All kingdoms of earth proceed to perfection gradually and in the course of time, every country has its own physiognomy, given to it by nature and time; to want to change everything is not to know the human nature, the workings of habit and the local conditions; often the best transformations, which are not adopted to a people’s character, become violent and self-defeating; in any case not the people should be brought in accordance with the government, but the government with the people.”²⁰⁷

Although the society, which Russian commanders and administrators encountered in their evaluations constituted the very opposite of their idea of rational government, they were forced to take into account local conditions by something much more practical than the desire to appear magnanimous and enlightened. Lacking a Russian bureaucratic cadre, they depended upon cooperation of the boyars and therefore professed their allegiance to “local laws and customs”. The contradictory philosophic assumptions were in fact a reflection of an administrative predicament: Russians needed an orderly administration in order to obtain supplies for the army, however, the inevitable reliance on the boyars was incompatible with orderly administration.

For their part, the boyars did not fail to exploit the tension between the two fundamental assumptions, upon which Russian discourse of civilizing mission rested. Paying lip-service to the notions of rational government and public good and admitting crying imperfections of the Moldavian and Wallachian institutions, the boyars resorted to argument of the local tradition any time, when the activities of Russian occupation authorities infringed upon their privilege under the ideological banner of public interest. And since Russian administrators hardly ever mastered the intricacies of local law, which remained substantially an unwritten custom, they found themselves at a disadvantage. They could ill afford to disregard the boyar interests as long as they remained bogged down in the war with the Ottomans on the Danube and depended upon the Divans for supplies. Only a decisive military victory allowing concentration on the affairs of internal administration could open a

²⁰⁶ Baur, *Zapiski*, 28.

²⁰⁷ Speranskii, “Razmyshlenia o gosudarstvennom ustroistve imperii” in *Rukovodstvo k poznaniuu zakonov*, 253.

way out of this predicament, but by 1812 such a possibility was excluded by an impending war with Napoleon.

One should not absolutize the difference between Romanian boyars on the one hand and Russian general and administrators on the other. Both represented varieties of landed aristocracies in the overwhelmingly agrarian societies, whose administrative structures could not differ greatly in efficiency. What mattered was the difference of mental outlooks. Kushnikov and Bagration were the representatives of Russian ruling elite, which emerged in the 18th century as a result of Petrine reforms that sought to turn Russia into a well-ordered police state through comprehensive regulation and regularization of all aspects of public and private life. The compliance to the westernization program embraced by Peter the Great became a condition for preservation of nobility' privileged social status. The introduction of compulsory service for the nobility exposed it to the disciplinary practices of the well-ordered police state in a number of social spaces such as the army, civil administrative bodies, schools and cadet corps as well as the court. Imposing a service requirement upon nobles, the government also claimed the right to subject them to cultural "reeducation," which was in fact a form of social disciplining. An almost forceful inculcation of European dress habits and forms of sociability (the so-called assemblies) often subjected the noble bodies to a discipline, which was no less rigorous than military one.²⁰⁸ As in the Western and Central Europe, a corollary of this disciplining was the establishment of state monopoly on physical violence, seeking to sublimate violent and uncontrolled passions into orderly and civilized intercourse founded on the rules of politeness.²⁰⁹ The process of political and cultural westernization started by Peter the Great in Russia had as its most important result the

²⁰⁸ For the social practices of courtly etiquette and ceremony and their political effect see Norbert Elias, *Court Society*, translated by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 78-116.

²⁰⁹ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 369-370. Raeff, "Transfiguration and Modernization: The Paradoxes of Social Disciplining, Pedagogical Leadership, and the Enlightenment in the 18th century Russia." in Idem, *Political Ideas and Institutions of Imperial Russia* (Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1994), 341.

internalization of the maxims of the rational and orderly government by the elite elements of the society.

In their rhetoric Russian commanders and administrators operated with the notion of enlightenment understanding by it the historical development that their society undertook in the course of the century following the reign of Peter the Great, the distance that Moldavia and Wallachia still had to cover with the help of Russia. In the meantime, they portrayed the local society, and, in particular, the noble classes, as the very opposite of an enlightened nation, lacking right political notions and civilized sociability. The term of “enlightenment” was used in the most generalized way and served as the basic marker of cultural difference between the two societies legitimizing the relationships of dominance and dependency implied by the discourse of Russia’s civilizing mission in the region. However, this cultural difference was understood as the result of historical distance between two societies, which could be narrowed once the principalities take the road of enlightenment. At the same time, proud of their 18th century achievements, Russian authors sometimes revealed an awareness of similarity between the present state of Moldavia and Wallachia and the Pre-Petrine Muscovy. Characteristic in this respect is the description of the lifestyle of Moldavian boyars that can be found in Vigel’s description of Bessarabia:

“The similarity between the way of live of the richest Moldavians and our ancestors, however shameful such parallel can be, is striking... The boyar titles, their long vestments, long beards, high hats, rich furs that cover them, their ignorance, boorishness – all this reminds our ancient courtiers. In the everyday life this similarity is still more noticeable: there is a lack of items most necessary for making life comfortable and pleasant. Low ceilings rooms, whose furniture is limited to large carpet-covered benches, tables covered by plenty of unsavory dishes, numerous dirty servants in rags, jealousy, the exclusion of women from social life, their sumptuous apparels, diamonds, pearls and untidiness are just like our own ways of yore. If you enter their courts of justice you find yourself in an ancient Muscovite office (*prikaznaia izba*). The official papers in Moldavian... look like the ancient columns (*stolbtsy*) of the Moscow archives. In a word everything takes you to the 17th century and makes you realize the importance (*tsenu*) of Enlightenment.”²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Vigel, “Zamechania,” 30.

Vigel's words capture wonderfully the ambiguous attitude of the educated Russians towards the local society. On the one hand, the Romanian boyars were clearly portrayed as culturally different. Lacking civilized social habits, ignorant and morally corrupt, they hardly corresponded to the enlightenment ideal, which for a century after the death of Peter the Great constituted the identity of Russian imperial elite. At the same time, the image of Moldavian boyars portrayed by Vigel was quite familiar to Russian readers. It not only provided a vivid illustration of Russia's recent past, but also contained many features, which were still characteristic of the everyday life of Russian provincial nobility. Russian nobles found the image of Romanian boyars recognizable for it encapsulated part of their own collective personality that they tried to overcome and suppress, but never quite succeeded. Romanian boyar thus served as an "Other" of Russian nobleman, but this was such a recognizable and familiar "Other", that in fact it was part of the latter's self.

Neither Peter the Great nor his successors fully managed to achieve their professed goal of making Russia a European country, but, paradoxically, their apparent failure did not contradict the character of their undertaking. Moreover, the principal incompleteness of Russian variation of the "enlightenment project" became the major organizing factor of Russian history, which after Peter can be viewed as a succession of various modernization impulses. These different variants of the "enlightenment project" might have been formulated in explicit opposition to each other, but all of them tended to view Russia as a more or less empty space, whereupon a new society can be built. Russia's "enlightenment project" was rooted in the 18th century symbolic geography that perceived Russia as part of Eastern Europe, geographically and symbolically located between "Europe" and the "Orient" and constituting the space of Europe's potential expansion through the realization of its civilizing mission. If the western superiority over the "Orient" resulted from essentialization of its "otherness", cultural hegemony of Europe over its Eastern projection had to do with

perpetuation *ad infinitum* of the teacher–pupil relationship lying at the basis of any discourse of civilizing mission. What mattered was not the final result of the educative process, but constantly changing content of “enlightenment” that conditioned the perpetuation of the quasi-pedagogical authority structure.

By virtue of early started westernization Russia escaped a colonial domination by foreign power(s), yet the policies of the 18th and 19th century Russian monarchs towards their subjects allow speaking of an “internal colonization project.”²¹¹ In this respect, there was no fundamental difference between the approach of the Habsburg rulers towards the peoples populating the Danubian frontier and the treatment of the Russian peasants by the successors of Peter the Great. Before the age of nationalism producing various ethnic ontologies idealizing the peasant as the supreme embodiment of nation, the absolutist rulers and political elites of Central and Eastern Europe tended to view their peasants as “barbarians” or “children” and therefore as an object of a never ending civilizing process. Operating within this conceptual universe, Russia’s ruling class portrayed itself as the champion of European enlightenment thereby seeking to acquire and maintain cultural hegemony over all the peoples that were within the horizon of Russian expansion. What distinguished Russian Empire from the Habsburg Monarchy was the former’s overwhelming importance of internal colonization project, which left almost no energy for distant overseas ventures. In case of 18th – early 19th century Russia, the enlightenment gaze was primarily turned inwards as it largely will remain forever after, notwithstanding the period of late 19th – early 20th century, when a substantial part of Russian civilizing mission rhetoric turned towards Central Asia and the Far East.²¹² This partly explains relatively little attention that peripheral territories received in

²¹¹ Alexander Etkind, “Fuko i imperskaia Rossia: distsiplinarnye praktiki v usloviakh vnutrennei kolonizatsii,” in Mikhail Kharkhordin (ed.), *Mishel Fuko i Rossia* (SPb: Evropeiskii Universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, Letnii Sad, 2001), 166-191.

²¹² On the role of the Far East in Russian public discourse in the second half of the 19th century see Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions. Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Russian public discourse, as spaces of civilizing mission in comparison with the Russian interior at least before the middle of the 19th century.

The policies of the Russian occupation authorities in Moldavia and Wallachia in the early 19th century represent an early example of civilizing mission approach applied to imperial periphery and a rare case, when the territory in question remained beyond formal Russian borders (with the exception of Bessarabia). Symbolically, Russian conquest of the principalities in many ways represented a continuation of late 18th century colonization project in the Pontic steppe and was conceptualized as part of the general struggle of civilization represented by the Austrian and Russian Empires and barbarity supported by the oriental despotism of the Ottoman sultans taking place in the immense frontier area between southern Hungary and New Russia. At the same time, as must have become clear by now, Russian descriptive literature on Moldavia and Wallachia as well as the rhetoric of Russian administrators in the principalities was rooted in the 18th century semi-orientalizing discourse of Eastern Europe, which, alongside with the Danubian-Pontic frontier included the territories of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russian imperial core area. For Russian monarchs and imperial elite the acceptance of semi-orientalizing discourse of Eastern Europe was, at the same time, a means of escaping it and a condition of both their independence vis-à-vis the western European powers and of their political dominance over all segments of Eastern European population that still remained uncivilized no matter their formal social status. Other Eastern European nobilities either had to merge into the imperial elite or else be relegated to the status of uncivilized population together with the masses of Eastern European peasantry.

Insofar as Moldavia and Wallachian boyars never joined the ranks of Russian imperial nobility *en masse*, they were positioned on the other side of symbolic frontier of Russia's civilizing mission together Moldavia and Wallachian peasants as well as an absolute majority of the tsar's subjects. Their exclusion from the range of civilized nations served to

consolidate the collective identity of Russian nobility premised on cultural westernization, which profoundly influenced Russia's policy in the principalities. The fact that this collective identity was ideal and imagined does not make it any less real. Although the economy and social structures of Russia and the Romanian principalities might have been quite similar from retrospect, the imperial encounter contributed to the process of identity formation of Russian elite, whereby the relative differences between the two societies were absolutized and essentialized. The assertion of cultural "otherness" of the Romanian boyars in Russian imperial discourse, was not so much an "objective" evaluation of the degree of cultural westernization that the Russian elite had undergone since the early 18th century, but an important constitutive element of this westernization process, a mechanism, through which this westernized identity could be further propelled and consolidated. The difference was not so much "pre existing" as it was "performed" or "acted out" in concrete cultural encounters between the members of Russian elite and the Romanian boyars and therefore served as a crucial operative factor informing both the general attitude of the Russian educated public towards Romanian society and the concrete policies of Russian authorities during periodic military occupations of Moldavia and Wallachia.

The Ambiguities of Civilization

The position of the Romanians in the symbolic geography of enlightenment contained a significant element of ambiguity. Symbolic opposition between barbarity and civilization that constituted the basis of Russian discourse about Moldavia and Wallachia almost from the very start was compromised by increasing Westernization of the upper classes. The sphere of manners, customs and fashions offered the most remarkable developments, whereby persistent oriental traits reconciled themselves with meticulous imitation of the latest European tendencies. In this exotic melee the boundaries between the civilization and barbarity often coincided with generation and gender differences. It soon turned out however,

that these effects of “civilizing process” are not always salutary and complement rather than eliminate specifically “oriental” vices. Nevertheless, far from sowing doubts in the souls enlightened observers, such unintended consequences of civilization offered them yet another opportunity to criticize local society and consolidate their symbolic hegemony over it.

The physical appearance of the capitals and towns offered the most immediate testimony of gradual transition from the oriental to civilized ways. While Felix Fonton found Jassy “a pile of huts and boyar courts scattered chaotically in the hilly valley,”²¹³ Ignatii Iakovenko had to admit that the latter was no worse than a Russian gubernia town,²¹⁴ while quarter of a century later Petr Alabin found it “a completely European city”.²¹⁵ Similarly, viewed from afar, Bucharest offered a particularly beautiful panorama of the boyar houses amidst the greenery of the gardens, which some writers even called “feeric”.²¹⁶ A closer examination of the Romanian towns often dispelled whatever enchantment they appearance produced from afar – an observation, which was not unlike those made by European travelers upon their arrival to Moscow.²¹⁷ Perhaps the most characteristic of the general state of Romanian society in the early 19th century is the description of Giurgiu found in Anatolii Demidov’s account of his journey from Vienne to Southern Russia. An Ottoman fortress and a center of a *reaya* district before 1829, Giurgiu was returned to Wallachia through Russian mediation. In the words of Demidov, “the Barbarity was thrown beyond the Danube, but clearing Giurgiu the Muslims destroyed its fortifications. Now this town consists of a mixture of ruins and new buildings. Amidst ancient oriental chaos (*bezporiaditsy*) there emerge straight regular streets planned in accordance with the new streets existing in European

²¹³ *Vospominania*, Vol. II, 188.

²¹⁴ Ignatii Iakovenko, *Nyneshnee sostoianie Turetskikh kniazhestv Moldavii i Wallachii i Rossiiskoi Bessarabskoi oblasti* (SPB, tip. Smirdina, 1828), 15.

²¹⁵ Petr Alabin, *Chetyre voyny. Pokhodnyie zapiski v 1849, 1854, 1854-56 i 1877-178 gg.* (Moscow : Kushnarev, 1890), 24 ; Pavel Zhadovskii, *Moldavia i Valakhia v sovremennosti*, 34.

²¹⁶ Wilkinson, *Tableau Historique*, 81. Francois Recordon, *Lettres sur la Valalchie* (Paris: Lecointe et Durey, 1821), 20.

cities.” However, in Demidov’s appreciation, it would take long before Giurgiu is brought into a due state.²¹⁸

For an increasingly comfort loving creature of the 19th century, the lack of civilization sometimes acquired quite tangible forms. Thus, for the first night upon his arrival to Chisinau, where he later served as a Vice-Governor of Bessarabia, Vigel had to content himself to a pile of hay in the house of local police head instead of a bed.²¹⁹ Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii once had to write his diary on a wooden stump since there was not a single table in the village, where he stopped for a night on the way from Jassy to Bucharest,²²⁰ and Anatolii Demidov could appreciate the progress of civilization in Jassy without fully ripping its fruits: the newly build *St Petersburg* hotel in Moldavian capital, with its “large wonderfully planned rooms, parlors, numerous paintings decorating the walls” and wonderful suites, had “no furniture except for the billiard table.”²²¹ A modest though unmistakable progress in the appearance of the towns by the middle of the century recognized by the visitors did not prevent them from attributing oriental features to Romanian urban life. However, the appreciation of “oriental” features changed with time. If earlier the supposed “Asiatic” features produced in Russian travelers little beyond the annoyance at the lack of comfort, in the middle of the 19th century Russian officer Pavel Zhaddovskii found the ambiance of the nocturnal Jassy “poetic.” The noise produced by numerous taverns well after the midnight reminded him of mobile nomadic “cities” of the Central Asian steppes, with their never ending motion and hustle. Feeling electrified by this eternal motion, Zhadovskii found it “a typical feature of all southern towns.”²²²

²¹⁷ Vigel, *Vospominania*, 93; Zhadovskii, *Moldavia i Valakhia v sovremennosti*, 34. Wilkinson, *Tableau historique*, 81 compares Bucharest to a theatre decoration which charms the eyes when viewed from afar and which, on a closer examination turns out to be “a crude daub.”

²¹⁸ Demidov, *Puteshestvie*, 111-112.

²¹⁹ Vigel, *Vospominania*, 93.

²²⁰ “Iz vospominanii Mikhailovskogo–Danilevskogo,” 185.

²²¹ Demidov, *Puteshestvie*, 193.

²²² Zhadovskii, *Moldavia i Valakhia v sovremennosti*, 33, 35.

In his memoirs A. I. Ribeaupierre tells his readers that passing through the Principalities as an envoy to Constantinople in 1827 he was received by the Hospodars “with all the ceremonies and luxury of the Byzantine court.” A tasteless, purely oriental luxury reigned in Jassy and Bucharest, the dinners represented an endless succession of viands and sweets, while the beds were splendidly decorated and the pillows so heavily embroidered Ribeaupierre found them difficult to sleep on. The lack of physical comfort was compensated by every possible honor and treaties “that in Turkey are received by a man who is feared.”²²³ The heavily hellenized Romanian boyar in his long vestments, *safian* shoes (*papushi*) that barely allowed him to walk, long beard, shaven head and a huge woolen cape (*colpac*, *caciula*), idling his days away on the sofa, smoking pipe, drinking sherbet (*dulceața*) and coffee and never leaving his house except on a horse accompanied by the running gypsy vallets, became a fixture of the cultural landscape created in British, French and Russian accounts, offering an important symbol of the region’s belonging to the Orient.²²⁴

Yet, his cultural dominance soon becomes effectively compromised by the adoption of European fashions through the contacts with Russian and, to a lesser extent Austrian, officers in the course of military occupations of the principalities in the late 18th – early 19th centuries. In an act of defiance of the patriarchal boyars’ authority, the boyars’ sons, daughters and wives (*kukony*, *kukonitsy*) eagerly exchanged their oriental vestments for European dress, avidly absorbing the newest developments of the Viennese and Parisian fashions.²²⁵ Whereas F. W. Baur in the 1770s still witnessed the oriental custom of seclusion of the boyar wives,²²⁶ Bantysh-Kamenskii in 1810 could already enjoy their society in a Jassy club and, witnessing awkward imitation of the Viennese toilettes. For a ball organized by the

²²³ “Zapiski grafa A. I. Ribopiera,” *Russkii Vestnik*, no. 15, (1877): 20-21.

²²⁴ Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Puteshestvie*, 78.

²²⁵ Not without remissions, however. See William MacMichael, *Journey from Moscow to Constantinople in the Years 1817, 1818* (London: John Murray, 1819), 118, who writes that although the boyars eagerly laid aside Turkish attire for a French dress during Russian occupation of 1806-1812, the return of the Turkish authority obliged them to resume the robe and the *colpac*.

wife of the Bessarabian viceroy A. N. Bakhmet'iev during Alexander I's visit to Chisinau, the boyar daughters and wives mastered "all the luxuries of Europe and Orient" donning Turkish shawls over European dresses, while the boyars turned up in *papushi*, which the hostess made them drop just before the emperor's entrance into the ball-room.²²⁷ Despite the dancing classes, which madame Bakhmetieva organized upon learning about the emperor's visit, the public remained largely immobile and silent, and the French quadrille that was the fruit of her efforts remained unappreciated, while the emperor, who liked to dance as much as he wanted to rule the world, soon got bored as the exclusive object of everybody's attention.

Sneering at an awkward progress in European dances, Russian observers treated the traditional ones as the one of the most conspicuous symbols of local barbarity. In order dispel his boredom at Chisinau's ball Alexander I wished to see the local dance called "mitika." To Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii *mitika* appeared more like "the dance of the savages living on the islands of the Ocean." The emperor must have shared the impression of his aide-de-champ, for he asked Mikhailovskii "Do these ladies and gentlemen really find this dance enjoying?"²²⁸ Langeron had a similar impression of the local *hora* dance, which he found "the most ridiculous dance he ever saw in his life."²²⁹ Coupled with condescending description of the local dances, which remained in the eyes of the Russian and French travelers the exotic symbols of the region's barbarity, there was a growing Romantic interest in the indigenous cultures. If Carra and Langeron wondered rhetorically whether these were Wallachians who taught bears to dance or vice-versa, the nascent ethnographic interest made Demidov listen sympathetically to a song in a Wallachian tavern that "belonged to the range

²²⁶ Baur, *Zapiski*, 23.

²²⁷ Vel'tman, "Vospominania o Bessarabii," 231.

²²⁸ "Iz vospominanii Mikhailovskogo Danilevskogo za 1818 god," 78.

²²⁹ Langeron, "Journal des campagnes," 76.

of the melancholic pleas, through which unenlightened peoples render their legends and tell about their victories and hardships.”²³⁰

As the century progressed the perception of Moldavia and Wallachia as places of incomprehensible mixture of Europe and Asia, barbarity and civilization, became frequent in Western and Russian accounts of the principalities. According to Moltke, in the mid 1830s Bucharest was a city where “Asia and Europe met”, a bewildering melee of “the most miserable huts near the most modern palaces and churches of Byzantine architecture; the most abject misery reigned near the most refined luxury.”²³¹ Demidov expressed the same idea even more graphically describing the promenade of the Bucharest *beau monde* on the newly created boulevard on the outskirts of the city. The way connecting the city with the alley was still very poor and shaky, the trees on the sides of it were only three years old and, although they promised refreshing shade to the future generations, the present day Wallachians have to promenade under the burning sun. Nevertheless, the alley regularly attracted the never-ending succession of carriages and epitomized for Demidov “this diverse nation that was in the process of changing its mores and costumes.” “In the same carriage you would see women imitating Viennese toilettes and coquetry, young men dressed in European black suit together with an old boyar with a venerable and noble countenance, a long, absolutely white beard and monumental headwear introduced here by Phanariotes.”²³² Two decades later Petr Alabin, serving in the army, which occupied the principalities on the eve of the Crimean war, had a similar impression of Jassy, where he found himself amidst a crowd of “jazzy costumes... ethnic diversity (*raznoplemennost'*), stunning luxury rubbing shoulder with staggering misery, exquisite Parisian manners of some and completely savage ways of others, everywhere semi-civilized Orient, French idle talk of some and distorted barbarian

²³⁰ Demidov, *Puteshestvie*, 120.

²³¹ *Letters du Marechal Moltke sur L'Orient*, 4.

²³² Demidov, *Puteshestvie*, 108.

language of most – all this taken together produced an impression of novelty and enticed interest particularly since we found it within a step of our borders.”²³³

The development of Western forms of sociability was paralleled by new tendencies in education. Instead of the Greek as the traditional token of a learned person, the upper classes increasingly adopted French as the main means of communication. Mikhailovskii-Danivleskii was once invited to the house of a Moldovan boyar to smoke pipe, drink *dulceata* (local variation of sherbet) and enjoy the conversation with the boyar’s sons – “young people, whose education surpassed that of the Russian noblemen living in provinces.” Danilevskii found them fluent in both French and German and displaying remarkably sound judgments.²³⁴ At the same time, the British, French and Russian writers agreed that just as in the adoption of European fashions, the progress in education left much to be desired and was usually limited to the imperfect mastery of French, while the everyday life of the upper classes quickly dispelled all the literary and scientific interests that the boyar sons might have developed.²³⁵ Left to the care of gypsies swarming the houses of the boyars and corrupted by “abject servility and a base compliance with all their caprices,” the boyar sons in the appreciation of the British consul in Odessa, Thomas Thornton, entered “a world of hypocrisy and vice, without one just principle to regulate their conduct.”²³⁶ Thornton’s impression was confirmed at mid-century by Russian officer Petr Alabin, who noted the “absence of popular schools, general lack of educational institutions and a complete stagnation of literary movement.” Considering the qualities of the existing education Alabin argued that its sole aim is “to render the child an outer luster, whereas his or her heart

²³³ Alabin, *Chetyre voiny*, 23.

²³⁴ “Vospominania za 1829 god,” 184.

²³⁵ Wilkinson, *Tableau Historique*, 117.

²³⁶ Thomas Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey together with the Present State of Moldavia and Wallachia* (London: Printed for Joseph Mawman, 22. Poultry, 1807), 429; For similar observations see Francois Recordon, *Lettres sur la Valachie*, 105-108.

remains callous.”²³⁷ These shortcomings, according to Alabin, were especially obvious in case of women “who grow up without supervision and care of a sympathetic heart, unprotected from the storms of the sea of life.” As a result, half of them turn into “moral freaks,” who do not concern themselves with raising children. Conversely, Liprandi found the enlightenment of the Romanian upper class women “a century ahead of the boyars” due to their education at foreign boarding schools. However, back home selfish considerations of their parents frequently forced them into a marriage with “a bearded ignoramus or a dissolute youth, who view them first as an amusement and later as means of self-promotion.” Such circumstances, according to Liprandi, frequently caused poor women to embrace an “immoral life.”²³⁸

Together with the preference of the French to the Greek and the abandonment of the Turkish dress in favor of the European (not without remissions, however), the European observers witnessed a parallel crisis of the patriarchal family. If Francois Recordon in the early 1820s still writes about the touching instances the filial veneration of the *paterfamilias*,²³⁹ the majority of the authors mention the laxity of marital bonds and frequent divorces. Both Western European and Russian writers scandalize their readers by the stories of marriages arranged by parents with the sole goal of augmenting their fortunes, love intrigues, abductions, divorces and peaceful and sometimes even friendly coexistence of the former spouses in the high society.²⁴⁰ Thus, the memoirs of the Russian officer F. F. Tornau contain an anecdote about a boyar wife (*kukona*) playing cards at the Jassy club with her present and two former husbands.²⁴¹ Western Europeans and Russians unanimously argued that the contact with civilization brought about the adoption of its vices, but remained

²³⁷ Alabin, *Chetyre voyny*, 56.

²³⁸ Liprandi, *Obozrenie prostranstva sluzhivshago teatrom voyny Rossii s Turtsieiu s 1806 po 1812* (Spb: Tip. General'nogo Shtaba, 1954), 24.

²³⁹ Recordon, *Lettres sur la Valachie*, 108.

²⁴⁰ Wilkinson, *Tableau Historique*, 131-136; Recordon, *Lettres sur la Valachie*, 111; Zhadovskii, “Moldavia i Valakhia v sovremennosti,” 53.

uncompensated by the disappearance of ignorance and superstitions that the boyars sometimes shared with the populace.²⁴² In disparaging evaluation of Thomas Thornton, Romanians “confound whatever is most degrading in luxury with the fair fruit of civilization and in their rude adoption of European manners they plunge into promiscuous debauchery.”²⁴³ Similarly, the authors of the 19th century military-statistical survey of Moldavia refer to the higher society as an “abominable mixture of ignorance, immorality and outer luster.”²⁴⁴

The contrast between relatively successful adoption of the formal trappings of civilization and growing moral depravity became one of the leitmotifs of the Russian accounts of Moldavia and Wallachia later in the century. According to Petr Alabin, “one can see the desire to demonstrate the progress of the country and yet everywhere one encounters backwardness, the all-powerful influence of gold, descent, personal connections, intrigues, utter selfishness and irresistible pursuit of profit!”²⁴⁵ If at the beginning of the century foreign observers attributed the lack of enlightenment to the peculiarities of the lifestyle of the boyars, Alabin pointed to the necessity to develop enlightenment of the middle class. The concentration of the middle class elements on personal enrichment to the disregard of social duties and its ethnically diverse origins made Alabin wonder whether “these people without motherland in the strict sense of the term... will ever care for the true happiness of the country, its enlightenment, or bringing its mores to the level of other states.”²⁴⁶

The persistence of moral corruption in a society that Russians delivered from the yoke of oriental despotism to the benefits of civilization required some explanation. In 1828 the official Russian rhetoric still explained it as an outcome of the Ottoman yoke: “Although the

²⁴¹ F. F. Tornau, *Vospominania o Turetskom pokhode*, 1829 g., 142.

²⁴² MacMichael, *Journey from Moscow to Constantinople*, 84. On the superstition of the Boyars see Raicevich, *Osservazioni Storiche*, 133.

²⁴³ Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey*, 429.

²⁴⁴ *Voienno-statisticheskoe obozrenie gosudarstv*, 34.

²⁴⁵ Alabin, *Chetyre voiny*, 47.

[Moldavian and Wallachian] nobility acquired certain degree of enlightenment from frequent communication with us, it still harbors vices characteristic of the Turkish subjects.”²⁴⁷ A quarter of a century later, Russians already attributed it to uncritical and superficial imitation of Western, (mainly French) culture. However, the critique of public mores increasingly corrupted by the contact with Western civilization introduced a significant element of ambiguity into Russian discourse on Moldavia and Wallachia predicated as it was on Russia’s civilizing mission in the principalities assumed in the name of the same European civilization. However, much Petr Alabin might have been scandalized to find some Wallachian writers, who publicly accused Russians of corrupting public morals in Wallachia, Russia’s role in cultural westernization of the principalities was too important to overlook. The bearers of European civilization, as they originally professed themselves to be, Russians could no longer claim the role of simple observers and implicitly had to admit their complicity.

Their tendency to perceive the region as exotic further suggested their role as the teachers of evil. Crossing the Dniester as the geographical, climatic, political and cultural boundary, Russians often found themselves in a different world where the wearisome moral bonds could be loosened opening the way to vanity or sexual passion. Thus, Russian envoy to Constantinople A. I. Ribeaupierre confessed in his memoirs that, although as a Russian Envoy to Constantinople he had all the means to stop the unlawful activities of the Porte and the hospodars, he only cherished his vanity by playing the role of a “Roman proconsul” without actually persecuting anyone.²⁴⁸ If Russian diplomats relished in the attention on the part of the hospodars and their ministers, Russian officers could enjoy a similar attitude from private persons, sometimes taking for sympathy an attitude, which in fact was a mixture of

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 27.

²⁴⁷ Nicholas I’s rescript to Count Pahlen (the first president-plenipotentiary of the Divans in 1828, in S. S. Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf P. D. Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, (SPb.: Tipografia Stasiulevicha, 1882), 55.

fear and opportunism. Away from the upright world of St Petersburg, a Russian officer in Moldavia and Wallachia could enjoy local parties (*sandrafii*), where women freely engaged men for dances and the atmosphere was imbued with a “southern, passionate liberty.” In the observation of Pavel Zhadovskii, “people get acquainted very easily in Wallachia, where there is no empty ceremonies called the rules of propriety in our fashionable society that kill sincerity.”²⁴⁹ In the first half of the 19th century a Russian officer is a hero of love intrigues involving the boyar daughters and wives, which contribute to the perception Romanian women as “naturally careless,” lacking “rigid moral upbringing” and “always pursuing the sole goal of sensual pleasures.”²⁵⁰ In such representations the discourse of Russia’s civilizing mission acquired gender connotations, whereby amorous exploits of the Russian officers become an important aspect of symbolic appropriation of the region. The relationship of Russians with the people that they assumed to enlighten can be viewed not unlike a love triangle constituted by Russian officer as the bearer of enlightened rationality, an apathic Romanian boyar, irredeemably immersed in the spirit oriental intrigue and abusive despotism, and his pleasure-seeking sensuous wife.

Whereas the predominant tenor of Russian and Western European accounts of the mores and manners in the Romanian principalities was not flattering, one can also find the demands to give these societies their due for the determination, with which they embarked on the path of Enlightenment.²⁵¹ Moreover, Russian observers were not totally devoid of self-criticism and vague parallels with Russia’s own degree of enlightenment. Some travelers were stricken by the similarity between Moscow and Jassy “with its irregular streets, the

²⁴⁸ “Zapiski Grafa A. I. Ribeaupiera,” in *Russkii Vestnik*, no. 15, (1877): 20-21, further cited as Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*.

²⁴⁹ Zhadovskii, “Moldavia i Valakhia v sovremennosti,” 53.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 71.

²⁵¹ Demidov, *Puteshestvie*, 126.

number of churches and the consoling vicinity of splendid palaces and ugly huts.”²⁵² Likewise, the figure of the French tutor, “who must have been a groom in France” could have reminded Russia as much as the ringing of the Church bells celebrating another victory of Russian troops over the Ottomans.²⁵³ Moreover, sometimes the forbidden fruits of civilization were even more readily available in Jassy or Bucharest than in Russia: much to his surprise, Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii discovered in a Bucharest bookstore books that were prohibited in St Petersburg.²⁵⁴ Finally, one can mention the already quoted passage by Vigel, comparing the lifestyle of the Romanian boyars to the way of life of Russian nobility in the Muscovite period.

But even such implicitly self-critical comparisons did not compromise the basic attitude, whereby Russians as the self-proclaimed missionaries of civilization in Moldavia and Wallachia asserted their right to impose a new political organization upon society corrupted by centuries of oriental despotism and the ambiguous fruits of Western civilization. Similarly, while Russian writers never entirely denied the progress of enlightenment in the principalities, they were always anxious to stress the relative historical distance between Russians and Romanians in order to perpetuate their cultural superiority. If earlier Russian writers speak of the oriental seclusion of women or their awkward imitation of the Viennese fashions, at mid century Russian orientalist Vasilii Kelsiev no longer found faults with costumes. Nevertheless, stunned by the beauty of upper class women in Jassy opera, he still found their eyes “thoughtless and spiritless, having characteristic expression of oriental women.” He did not deny the progress of European manners, yet he emphasized historical distance between Russia and Romania. If the ways of Bessarabian boyars in the early 1820s reminded Vigel of Ancient Muscovy, Kelsiev found the flirting of Jassy’s beauties with

²⁵² Svin'in, “Iz vospominanii v stepiakh bessarabskikh,” in *Otechestvennyie zapiski*, part 15, no. 39, (July 1823): 16-17.

²⁵³ Mikhailovskii Danilevskii, “Vospominania za 1829 god,” in *Russkaia Starina*, vol. 91, no. 7-9, (1897): 184.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 190.

Romanian prince Carol I similar to the libertine habits of mid 18th century Russian court: “What I saw here (in 1867. – V. T.) was practiced in Moscow in 1757.”²⁵⁵

* * *

This discussion demonstrates that the place of Moldavia and Wallachia in Russian imperial discourse was profoundly ambiguous. On the one hand, the fundamental assumptions of this discourse were rooted in the political philosophy of the Enlightenment and had a lot in common with contemporary representations of the region produced by Western European authors. In other words, whatever Russian colonizers pronounced on the climate, landscape, politics, manners and mores of Moldavia and Wallachia, they did that from the universalistic position of enlightened Europeans rather than the particularistic positions of Russians or Slavs. Common orthodoxy and similarities found between Romanian present and Muscovite past did not prevent Russians to diagnose the local state of politics and morals as well as the ways to correct them in terms used by Western European authors. Needless to say, Western accounts of Moldavia and Wallachia themselves were extremely heterogeneous and included the themes of savagery, patriarchal purity, oriental despotism and corruption of mores caused by uncritical mimicking of European civilization. Although Russian authors reproduced all these motives, their own ambiguous position on the map of civilization and their own recent experience of cultural westernization, rendered their accounts of the principalities an irreducible peculiarity consisting of combination of ascribed difference from Romanian society and vaguely recognized affinity with it.

Russian imperial discourse on Moldavia and Wallachia represented a means of symbolic appropriation of these territories that paralleled Russian territorial expansion in the region. Analyzing Russia’s descriptive literature about the principalities, this chapter sought to demonstrate that Moldavia and Wallachia were part of symbolic frontier between

²⁵⁵ Vasiliu, Kelsiev, *Galicina i Moldavia*, cited in Gheorghe Bezviconi, *Calatorii ruși in Moldova și Muntenia*

civilization and barbarity that not only served to legitimize external conquests, but also cut across Russian society and ultimately across the consciousness of Russian imperial elite. Territorial expansion and the project of “internal colonization” thus constituted the two aspects of Russia’s “enlightenment project” that for more than a century after the death of Peter the Great and, in many respects, beyond that, influenced the development of this continental empire. Rooted in symbolic geography of enlightenment based on the division between the “civilized” countries and the East of the continent, Russia’s “enlightenment project” was a means, whereby Russian autocracy and imperial nobility sought to maintain their traditional social dominance over the masses of Eastern European peasantry, as well as political sovereignty in the face of technological superiority of the West, by claiming the role of the main champion of civilization in Eastern Europe.

The representation of Moldavia and Wallachia as parts of symbolic frontier between civilization and barbarity and, therefore, as the space of Russia’s civilizing mission, provided an intellectual horizon, within which the practical policies of Russian occupation authorities were formulated. In other words, by presenting Moldavia and Wallachia in a critical light, the imperial discourse informed the measures taken by Russian occupation authorities in Moldavia and Wallachia in 1828-1834 in order to stop the flight of the people, create stable borders, check the progress of epidemics, maintain public well-fare, increase the revenues of the principalities, eliminate corruption in local and central government, regularize administration, introduce uniform procedures and accountability of officials. The implementation of these measures aggravated the institutional peculiarity of Moldavia and Wallachia within the Ottoman Empire, weakened the control of the Ottoman government and increased Russia’s informal influence in the principalities. That is why, inasmuch as these policies were successful, one can argue that Russian discourse on Moldavia and Wallachia

(București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Române, 1962), 416.

conditioned the actual transformation of the ecology of the Danubian-Pontic frontier zone. On the other hand, there remained significant area of indeterminacy inasmuch as the empire never managed to fully control the local actors, whose reaction and resistance proved capable of intervening into the imperial agenda. Therefore, it would be erroneous to assume that the final outcome of imperial policy in Moldavia and Wallachia was predetermined the imperial discourse or depended only on balance of power between the rival continental empires. Finally, Russian Empire itself was not an immovable entity and changes in its internal administration had consequences for the relationship between imperial center and the peripheral elites. Before addressing the institutional transformation of the principalities as part of the Danubian frontier zone, one has to give account of these variables and contingencies, to which the next three chapters are devoted.

Chapter II Capodistria's "Greek Project", Bessarabian "Experiment", and Alexander I's "Constitutionalism"

The analysis of the place of Moldavia and Wallachia in Russian imperial discourse undertaken in the previous chapter revealed the importance of rhetoric of moderate reform. Postulating the necessity to change the political institutions of the principalities in accordance with the Russian model, which they considered synonymous with the rational government, Russian empire-builders sought to secure a central role for themselves in the upcoming transformation and thereby acquire an ideological hegemony over local society. Political reform was a necessary implication of the perception of the Romanian principalities as located beyond the frontier of civilization, which justified Russia's civilizing mission in the lower Danube. The discourse of Russia's civilizing mission deriving from the intellectual horizon of the 18th century enlightenment served as an important means of legitimizing imperial expansion alongside the more traditional rhetoric of the protection of Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of reform, just as any other kind of political rhetoric remained open-ended: Russian authorities could hardly monopolize the theme of reforms and local actors were quick to use it in order to achieve their own political goals. As the previous discussion demonstrated, the political elites of Moldavia and Wallachia were torn by the conflict between the so-called autochthonous (not necessarily Romanian) and Phanariote (not necessarily Greek) elements for the distribution of political authority and social privilege within the boyar class. Although theoretically this offered an expanding empire the role of an arbiter of conflicts within the local elites, in practice these conflicts accounted for the contradictions of the imperial policy. This chapter will examine the way, in which some local elite elements found Russian imperial expansion an opportunity to establish or maintain their own regional supremacy and proved capable of shaping imperial policies by speaking the language of political reforms.

For most of the discussed period the policies of the Russian Empire in Moldavia and Wallachia were influenced by its relationships with the Greek elites of the Ottoman Empire. Pursuing an aggressive policy under the ideological banner of protection of Orthodoxy, Catherine the Great sought to secure support of the Greeks, who occupied central economic, political and cultural positions among the non-Muslim subjects of the Sultan. Thus, during Russian-Ottoman war of 1768-1774, Russian naval squadron in the Aegean Sea commanded by A. G. Orlov landed a small force on the Greek shore in support of the anti-Ottoman uprising, which nevertheless was brutally suppressed by the Ottoman troops.²⁵⁶ Embarking in the wake of Kuchuk-Kainarji treaty on an ambitious colonization program in New Russia, Russian government attracted Greek commercial elements and protected Greek maritime commerce in the Mediterranean. In the early decades of the 19th century, in conditions of a rapidly growing grain export from Odessa, there developed a community of interests between the landlords of southern gubernias and the Greek merchants. Commercial ties were paralleled by political visions. The liberation of the lands of classical antiquity became an important element of legitimization of Russia's southward expansion reflected in Catherine's notorious "Greek project." In cooperation with Joseph II, Catherine proposed to conquer Constantinople, partition the Balkan possessions of the Sultan and restore "Greek Empire" on the shores of the Aegean Sea under the scepter of her younger grandson Constantine.²⁵⁷ Finally, the growing Russian influence in Moldavia and Wallachia (especially after the establishment of Russian consulates there in 1782) established a permanent contact with the Phanariote elites. Despite a derogatory attitude towards the Phanariotes characteristic of Enlightenment literature, Russian Empire did not support the demands of the Wallachian

²⁵⁶ This expedition targeted the Pelloponesian war of liberation against the Ottomans. However, given the existing correlation of the forces, the landing of the Russian troops as well as the whole uprising, which it fomented were clear adventurism for which the Greeks of Morea paid a high price after the withdrawal of the Russian troops. This explains why Catherine's propaganda in Morea during the next war of 1787-1791 was far less successful.

boyars for an autochthonous prince during peace negotiations leading to the conclusion of Kuchuk-Kainarji treaty. Instead, Russian government sought to control the appointment and deposition of the hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia on a par with the Ottomans and even found a common language with some Phanariote princes.

Nevertheless, the heterogeneity of the Greek elites made it difficult for the Russian government to retain an undisputed influence over them. Alongside the Phanariotes holding important positions in Constantinople and the principalities, there were Greek landowners in Morea and the Archipelago (kodzabasi, proestos) as well as a growing Greek commercial class in New Russia, whose representatives, involved in Mediterranean trade were also numerous in Moldavia and Wallachia. The heterogeneity of Greek elites was reproduced on the level of culture and ideology and ultimately political orientation. Whereas Phanariotes were deeply entrenched in neo-Byzantine cultural tradition and, with several important exceptions, politically oriented towards the Ottoman Empire,²⁵⁷ the new commercial class increasingly embraced the neo-Hellenic identity and after 1789 came under increasing influence of French revolutionary ideas. Nevertheless, the dividing lines were extremely blurred, and often the projects for Greek political emancipation produced in this period, represented a peculiar concoction of neo-Byzantine and republican tendencies. Particularly characteristic in this respect was the project called “New Political Government for the Peoples of Roumelia, Asia Minor, the Islands of Mediterranean, Wallachia and Moldavia” written by Rigas Velestinlis (1757-1798) in Vienna in 1796. A native of Thessalia, Rigas received a remarkable education in Constantinople becoming the secretary of the Wallachian hospodar Alexander Ypsilanti in 1780 and later serving a number of prominent Wallachian

²⁵⁷ The literature on the Eastern Question is enormous. Two studies could serve as an introduction. M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923* (London: MacMillan, 1991), and N. S. Kiriapina (ed.) *Vostochnyi vopros v politike Rossii, kon. 18-go – nachalo 20 go vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978).

²⁵⁸ The most pro-Russian of all the Phanariote hospodars of the second half of the 18th century, Alexander Ypsilanti, probably familiar with the Russian-Austrian plans of partition of the Ottoman Empire in 1787 addressed to the Austrian authorities a memoir in which he advocated the restoration of the Byzantine Empire

boyars. Under the influence of French Revolution, Rigas developed the idea of a Greek republic including all European possessions of the Ottoman Empire (with the possible exception of Bosnia and Albania) as well as the Archipelago and Asia Minor, based on the principle of religious and national equality, but having neo-Greek as the only state language.²⁵⁹

However utopian such perspectives might have been, they reflected quite real controversy within the Greek society over the agenda of political emancipation, leaving uncertain the political orientation of Greek elites in the great power struggle. Although Russia as the only independent orthodox power had a great advantage in the struggle for influence over the Balkan Christians, the local conflicts into which it rapidly became involved revealed limitations of this ideological resource. The projects of political emancipation envisioned by Greek elites as well as their actual economic, political and ecclesiastic predominance under the Ottoman tutelage were bound to generate the discontent of other Christian subjects of the Sultan. The conflict between the Phanariote princes and the autochthonous boyars in Moldavia and Wallachia in the 18th century is a particular case of this general phenomenon. Positioning itself as a protector of Moldavia and Wallachia, Russian Empire tried to play the role of an arbiter in this conflict. However, anxious to secure support of the Greek elites in the context of the great power struggle in the early 19th century it tended to be more sympathetic towards the Phanariote princes.

A good illustration of this point is the 1802 *hatt-i sheriff* issued by the Sultan under Russian pressure and regulating various aspects of internal administration of the principalities. The incursions of a rebellious Vidin *pasha* Pavzand-Oglu produced havoc in

with a Russian prince as an emperor. Notis Botzaris, *Visions balakaniques dans la preparation de la revolution Greque* (Paris: Minard, 1962), 19, note 4.

²⁵⁹ G. L. Arsh, *Eteristskoie dvizhenie v Rossii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), 100-102; Notis Botzaris, *Visions balakaniques*, 25-33.

Wallachia forcing hospodar Mihai Suțu and the boyars to take refuge in Transylvania.²⁶⁰ Responding to the boyar appeals for intervention, Russian envoy in Constantinople, Tamara, pressured the Ottoman government to reintegrate the Ottoman *reayas* on the left bank of the Danube (in order to make such incursions more difficult in future), create a national militia for the principalities, accord tax exemption, appoint hospodars for seven year term in consultation with Russia, oblige them to consult with the Divan in all important issues and limit the access of the Greeks for administrative offices. The latter point clearly reflected the demands of the autochthonous boyars formulated in the course of their struggle with the Greek relatives and clients of the hospodars. Russian foreign ministry ceased the complications created by Pavzand-Oglu and the demands of the boyars as an opportunity to further consolidate its positions in the principalities. Interested primarily in control over taxation and the appointment and the destitution of the hospodars, it was ready to concede other items in the bargaining with the Ottomans. As a result, although *hatt-i sheriff* prescribed the hospodars to employ the natives, it also allowed them to appoint “honest, educated Greeks, worthy of the office in question.” Agreeing to this qualification, Russian Foreign Ministry sought to win support among the Phanariote families.²⁶¹ Predictably, *hatt-i sheriff* failed to satisfy the autochthonous boyars, who in the following period turned towards France in the hope to attain their objectives.²⁶²

This and similar episodes created loopholes in an otherwise formidable of Russia’s ideological predominance in the Balkans and created a space for maneuver for other great powers. The ability of Russian Empire to exploit its ideological resources was further limited by a rigid hierarchy of priorities, which existed in Russian foreign policy. Being sympathetic to Greek pretensions for a dominant role in the Balkans, Russian rulers were ready to pursue

²⁶⁰ G. Grosul, *Politika Rossii v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh, 1774-1806*, 128-129;

²⁶¹ Ibid, 159.

²⁶² E. Vîrtosu, “Napoleon Bonaparte si proiectul unei republici aristo-democraticești,” *Viata Românească*, no. 6-7, (1946): 32-39.

the policy of alliance with the Greek elites only inasmuch as it did not contradict the overriding concerns of Russia's relations with Europe. In other words, Russian Empire tended to subordinate its policy in the principalities to the interests of its overall Eastern policy and the latter to its European strategy. The contradictions of Russia's relationships with the Greek and the autochthonous elites in the principalities are well illustrated by the Russian carrier of Ioan Capodistria. Revealing the interconnectedness of developments on the European, regional and local levels, Capodistria's political activities also demonstrated the ability of local actors to resist imperial agendas and significantly influence the final outcome of imperial policies. Illustrating implicit tensions between Greek and Romanian programs of political emancipation, the figure of Capodistria provides a good illustration of alternatives which existed in the historical development of the region.

Capodistria's "Greek Project"

Ioan Capodistria was born in 1776 to a noble Greek family from Corphu, then a possession of Venice.²⁶³ Located off the continental coast controlled by the Ottoman Empire, Corphu throughout the early modern period represented a "frontier island", which can be considered an element of a large frontier zone including the Dalmatian coast and *the Triplex Confinum*. Although Napoleon put an end to the millennial history of the Republic of Venice in 1797, that did not transform overnight the ecology of the frontier zone that was the product of centuries of coastal warfare and trade between confessionally and culturally diverse populations. Moreover, the legacy of the complex frontier manifested in a power vacuum, caused by the disappearance of an old power that immediately turned into a space of contest between other imperial rivals including the Ottoman Empire, Russia, France and Great Britain. The *Triplex Confinum* situation in the literal sense was reestablished with the

²⁶³ For basic biographic information on Capodistrias as well as on his political career see Patricia Cennedy Grimstead, *The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I* (Berkeley University Press, 1969); G. L. Arsh, *I. Kapodistria i grecheskoie natsional'no-osvoboditel'noie dvizhenie 1809-1822* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), as well as

formation of the French Illirian Provinces in 1809-1813, which included all former possessions of Venice in Eastern Adriatics,²⁶⁴ while Corphu was consecutively occupied by the French, the Russians and the British. The transformations in the frontier zone in the late 18th – early 19th century only emphasized the multiple and shifting loyalties of the frontier elites, and the political career of Capodistria offers a pertinent example, whose double loyalty to the Russian Emperor and the cause of Greek liberation was both a source of originality of his political visions and his nemesis. Capodistria's coming of age coincided with the end of the "Queen of Adriatic" and the French occupation of his native island. Receiving a medical, legal and philosophical education from the University of Padua, Capodistria returned home to work as a physician. Following the Russian occupation of Corphu in 1799, the young Greek got employed by a Russian military hospital. Capodistria's abilities and liberal education soon recommended him for governmental service, which he started as the Secretary of the Legislative Council of the Septinsular Republic, created under the joint protection of the Ottoman and Russian Empires in 1800. Between 1803 and 1807 he performed the functions of the Republic's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Capodistria's pro-Russian orientation reflected his conviction that the liberation of Greece could happen only with the help of Russian Empire. Therefore, he refused to enter French service after Tilsit treaty precipitated the fall of Septinsular Republic. Instead in 1808, he accepted the offer of Russian Chancellor N. P. Rumiantsev and joined Russian diplomatic service in the rank of State Councilor eventually becoming a Russian foreign minister.

Capodistria's political outlook was formed under the influence of the political philosophy of Enlightenment and reflected the complex process of formation of the modern Greek identity. Coming of age after 1789, Capodistria, just as Adam Czartoryski and Michael

Capodistria's autobiographical sketch "Precis de ma carrière politique," in *Rossiiskoe Istoricheskoe Obshchestvo*, vol. 3, 1868, further cited as RIO.

²⁶⁴ On the French Illirian provinces see Frank J. Bundy, *The Administration of the Illirian Provinces of the French Empire, 1809-1813* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987).

Speranskii, belonged to a generation of Eastern European “progressively reformist” political leaders. Critical of revolutionary excesses, Capodistria preferred to achieve of national emancipation and a more liberal political order through gradual reform and educational activities. Envisioning a new order for the post-revolutionary Europe based on national states with constitutional governments, Capodistria remained an enlightenment thinker and politician insofar as, similarly to Speranskii and Czartoryskii before 1830, he deemed these transformations possible only “from above,” i. e. by means of governmental reforms.²⁶⁵ Despite his Greek patriotism and sincere support for the cause of Greek emancipation, Capodistria was not a national leader, insofar as he sought to achieve his goals not through political mobilization and party struggle, but by securing the support of the traditional rulers by the force of his arguments. Characteristically, Capodistria, just as Speranskii and Czartoryskii, achieved most significant results when he managed to influence the mind of Alexander I. This belief in the capacity of rational argument to influence the powers-that-be testifies that Capodistria remained within the political paradigm of enlightened absolutism even if the ultimate implications of his projects led beyond that, towards a principally new political order. At the same time, as has already been mentioned, Capodistria’s activities revealed his frontier background. His course of rational political reforms succumbed to the irresolvable dilemma produced by the conflicts of interests between different frontier elites.

An interesting insight on Capodistria’s vision of Russian Eastern policy and the place of the Romanian principalities in it is provided by a memoir, which he wrote in 1810. At this time, Capodistria was living in St Petersburg formally attached to the College of Foreign Affairs, writing occasional policy papers for Rumiantsev and spending most of his time socializing in the small circle of Greek families in the capital.²⁶⁶ In this memoir Capodistria offered a way of bringing to an end a protracted war with the Ottoman Empire, which

²⁶⁵ On Czartoryskii see W. H. Zawadzki, *A Man of Honour: Adam Czartoryski as a Statesman of Russia and Poland, 1795-1831*. Clarendon Press, Oxford [England] : Oxford University Press, 1993.

appeared increasingly necessary as the new confrontation with Napoleon became imminent. Capodistria argued that the support, which the Ottomans were getting from Phanariote Greeks was crucial to their ability to withstand Russian military pressure for such a long time. Giving orders to the pashas concluding the agreements with the foreign powers, Phanariote Greeks had the same influence over the Turks, which “educated people have over ignorant, active over indolent and clever over stupid.” While their internal discords sometimes take their victims, in the moments of danger the Greeks were capable to overcome mutual hatred. Having no real fatherland, Phanariotes felt to be the heirs of Byzantium and had all reason to defend the asylum that the Ottomans offered them in the heart of their empire. Viewing Moldavia and Wallachia as their domains, Phanariotes would defend them to the end, unless Russian policy offers them an alternative.²⁶⁷

Since the Russian Empire could not offer Phanariotes a position in its central government comparable to the one they had in the Ottoman Empire and since simple guarantee of their fortunes and peaceful private existence would not satisfy their ambition, Capodistria suggested attracting them to the Russian side by the perspective of their consolidated political and cultural dominance in the principalities detached from the Ottoman Empire and placed under Russian protectorate. This could be combined with the new impulse given to the present administration of the principalities. “Recognizing the property rights, classifying the proprietors, instituting various orders of citizenship, creating public offices and assemblies with the task of codifying and supplementing local laws, founding the institutions of public education, establishing the economic, agrarian and literary societies, laying foundations for the development of commerce – such can be objects of care for the present administration.” In Capodistria’s vision, the implementation of this ambitious reform project would attract the young and the ambitious and would render the whole undertaking a

²⁶⁶ Arsh, *Kapodistria*, 18.

necessary momentum. Taking advantage of the fact that in the absence of the institution of the private property on land, the Phanariotes had to keep their fortune in gold, Capodistria advised to introduce legislation facilitating their investment in the local real estate. For a practical implementation of the plan, Capodistria suggested appointing an individual of remarkable qualities, fortune and family excellence picked among the Phanariotes currently residing in Russia in order to conduct negotiations with Phanariote elite.²⁶⁸

This utopian vista depicted by an ambitious diplomat was far away from the actual situation in the Moldavia and Wallachia under Russian occupation authorities in 1810, but it is nevertheless important for understanding Capodistria's perspectives in regard of the principalities by the time he acquired decisive influence on Russian foreign policy some five years later. His plan in respect of Moldavia and Wallachia continued the line of thought represented by Rigas Velestinlis, in which the criteria for the territorialization of the Greek ethnicity was conceived in terms of the great neo-Hellenic cultural space rather than within limits of the compact ethnically Greek territories of Morea and the Aegean Archipelago. If realized, this perspective would mean the affirmation of the political and cultural dominance of the reinvigorated Phanariote class over the principalities. Economically, the reconsolidation of the Phanariote regime under Russian hegemony in the early 1810s almost certainly would have targeted Greek immigration to Moldavia and Wallachia on an even greater scale than actually happened two decades later, when political reforms opened a way for safe investment. On the other hand, the influx of Greek population coupled with continued political monopoly of Phanariotes was bound to make the conflict between them and the autochthonous boyars endemic and create a situation not unlike the one, which existed in the Austrian Transylvania. The hierarchy of enemies of the emergent Romanian national movement would have been dominated by the Greeks, which would have offered the

²⁶⁷ "Memoire sur les moyens qui peuvent concourir a terminer la guerre actuelle entre la Russie et la Porte" AVPRI, F. 133, op. 468, no. 13377, Ff. 237-245.

Russian Empire the role of the arbiter of the interethnic relationships similar to role of the Habsburg monarchy in the post-*Ausgleich* Austro-Hungary.

Russian policy in Bessarabia in 1810s, of which Capodistria was the main architect, was in fact a continuation of this perspective. Already in late 1811, at the time of peace negotiations with the Ottomans, Capodistria wrote a memoir called “On the Present State of the Greeks,” in which he advocated Greek colonization of Crimea and Bessarabia. Concerned about the sort of his compatriots after the conclusion of peace with the Ottomans and mindful of the retaliation that the latter brought upon the Greeks in the wake of the failed uprising in Peloponnesus in 1770, Capodistria sought to secure effective Russian protection of those of his compatriots, who supported Russia in the current war. Stressing the importance of counteracting French propaganda among the Greeks in the context of the forthcoming war with Napoleon, Capodistria appreciated the appointment of the ethnically Greek Metropolitan Ignace at the head of Wallachian church as well as placing General Comnino, another Greek in Russian service, to the post of the vice-President of the Moldavian and Wallachian Divans. According to Capodistria, these symbolic steps had to be followed by measures that would secure a lasting Russian influence over the Greeks. While the question of Russian annexation of Moldavia and Wallachia was uncertain, Capodistrias nevertheless argued that “whatever the borders that Russia would establish with the Ottoman Empire, the lands that it would acquire should not fail to become the promised lands for the Greeks.” According to him, Bessarabia and Crimea were the countries where the better future of the Greeks could be achieved. In order to demonstrate the advantages of the Greek colonization of these regions, Capodistria offered the example of Trieste, which prospered after Maria Theresia decided to attract Greek merchants through the mediation of Greek orthodox clergy.²⁶⁹ Greek

²⁶⁸ A possible reference to the former Hospodar Constantin Ypsilanti.

²⁶⁹ “Memoire sur l’etat actuel des Grecs,” AVPRI, fond 133, op. 468, no. 13377, Ff. 259-260.

colonization was at the back of Capodistria's mind when he was given the task of drafting "Temporary rules for the government of Bessarabia" of 1813.

Immediately after the conclusion of the Russian-Ottoman treaty of Bucharest in May 1812, Bessarabia became the object of the activities of the last commander of the Russian army in the Principalities Admiral P. I. Chichagov. Appointed by Alexander I as the Commander of the Moldavian Army in early May 1812 to replace M. I. Kutuzov, whose conduct of the peace negotiations with the Ottomans the emperor considered ineffective, Chichagov was supposed to turn the current state of war with the Ottoman Empire into an alliance against Napoleon. The idea of organizing a diversion against the Illyrian Provinces of the French Empire with the help of the Ottomans actually belonged to Capodistria, who developed it in a memoir written late in 1811 and found among the papers of the Russian envoy to Vienna O. Stackelberg. Being quite aware of the limited forces of the Moldavian army, Capodistrias suggested the formation of the militia out of the peoples of the Danubian frontier (the Serbians, Bosnians and Montenegrins) that lived along the route of projected offensive as well as cooperation between the Russian Black sea navy and the British naval squadron in the Mediterranean. In some way the memoir became known to Russian Minister of Navy P. I. Chichagov, who presented the idea to Alexander I and managed to obtain his basic approval. In April 1812 Chichagov was appointed to replace Kutuzov at the head of the Moldavian army retaining the command over the Black Sea fleet. However, by the time Chichagov arrived to Bucharest, Kutuzov already signed peace with the Ottomans (May 16), which presupposed Russian annexation of Bessarabia, but, understandably, contained not a word about the military alliance against Napoleon. For obvious reasons, neither the Ottomans, not the British had any sympathies for such an expedition, which threatened them with the establishment of Russian hegemony in the Balkans. By August 1812 the planned

operation was irreparably overtaken by Napoleon's advance into Russian interior and Alexander I ordered Moldavian Army to withdraw to Ukraine.

After the impossibility of the "Balkan diversion" against Napoleon has become apparent, Chichagov and Capodistria turned their attention to the establishment of the administration in the annexed territory. In his letters to the emperor, Chichagov presented Bessarabia as a "beautiful country, which offers great advantages, but which needs to be given some respite." To that end, Chichagov advocated general exemption from taxes for three years as well as exemption from military draft for an unidentified period of time. Both measures were meant to attract more inhabitants to this underpopulated region.²⁷⁰ Along with these measures that were accepted in order to demonstrate the emperor's benevolence, Chichagov insisted on preserving peculiar local institutions: "Nothing should be done and established that contradicts local needs and circumstances."²⁷¹ Warning about the danger of "multiplication of authorities," Chichagov rather daringly advised the emperor not to allow "[his] administration for the moment to interfere into this affair. Otherwise, it will spoil all our future plans."²⁷² By "administration" Chichagov meant the former President of the Moldavian and Wallachian Divans, Senator V. I. Krasno-Miloshevich, who was reluctant to concede power and apparently had his own perspectives on the future of Bessarabia. Chichagov complained to the emperor that Krasno-Miloshevich was unwilling to execute his orders and characterized him as a "first-class thief, who wants to settle in Bessarabia in order to continue his tricks (*prodelki*),"²⁷³ and whose recall is necessary "in order to deliver this country from all misfortunes." According to Chichagov, Krasno-Miloshevich's behavior as the President of the Divans in the principalities "made the local population hate him."²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ V. M. Kabuzan. *Narodonaselenie Bessarabskoi oblasti i levoberezhnykh raionov pridnestrov'ia*. Kishinev: Shtiinta, 1974, 26-27, estimates the population of Bessarabia in 1812 between 256 and 300 000.

²⁷¹ Chichagov to Alexander I, Foshkany, August 6, 1812 in *RIO* Vol. 6, (1871): 28-29.

²⁷² Chichagov to Alexander I, Bucharest, August 2, 1812 in *ibid.*, 13.

²⁷³ Chichagov to Alexander I, Orkhova, September 22, 1812 in *ibid.*, 33.

²⁷⁴ Chichagov to Alexander I, Brest-Litovsk, October 9, 1812, in *ibid.*, 41.

“The Rules for the Temporary Government of Bessarabia” elaborated by Capodistrias in October 1812 represented an alternative both to the arbitrary power of Krasno-Miloshevich and the standard Russian administration. Along with the exemption from military draft (for an undefined period of time) and state taxes (for three years) the “Rules” proclaimed that the indigenous population preserves its own laws. Administration and justice were to be executed in both Romanian and Russian depending on the native language of the plaintiffs. The civil governor of Bessarabia subordinated to the Commander of the 2d army controlled all the appointment of officials in the provincial government from the number of local landlords and corresponded with the governors of the adjacent provinces as well as with the hospodars of Moldavia on matters relating to internal administration of the province. Provincial government was divided into two departments. The former dealt with laws, courts, spiritual affairs (to be later defined by special regulation), police and public instruction. The functions of the latter included collection of revenues, customs, industry and statistics.²⁷⁵

The choice of the first Bessarabian governor was no less important than the formal parameters of Bessarabian administration. Scarlat Sturdza, appointed to the office on August 7, 1812, was a prominent Moldavian boyar, who compromised himself in the eyes of the Ottomans by cooperating with the Russian authorities during the war of 1787-1791/92. Forced to immigrate to Russia after the conclusion of the Jassy peace treaty, Sturdza and his family on recommendation of Russian chancellor A. A. Bezborodko received generous grants of land in the newly annexed territories between the Bug and the Dniester rivers. Capodistria developed a lasting connection to this family, which was half-Greek (Sturdza was married to a Phanariote family of Moruzi). Sturdza’s son Alexander Skarlatovich (a literary figure of some importance) became Capodistria’s confidant, while his daughter Roxandra Scarlatovna,

²⁷⁵ A. N. Egunov (ed.) “Materialy dlia noveishei istorii Bessarabii.” *Zapiski Bessarabskogo Statisticheskogo Komiteta*, vol. 3 (Kishinev, 1868), 109-110. (Art. 11) Henceforth cited as *Bessarabskii Statisticheskii Komitet*.

(an influential lady-in-waiting of the empress Elizaveta Alexeevna, future countess Edling and the author of famous memoirs) was courted by Capodistria. Personal relations apart, the appointment of the first (and the only) native governor of the newly annexed region was an important symbol of the new policy. Chichagov's instruction to Skarlat Sturdza also written by Capodistria, explicated the rationale of Bessarabian autonomy and defined the political task of Bessarabian governor as "drawing the attention of the neighboring peoples to this region." Apprehending the possible loss of Russian influence over the Balkan peoples as the Russian army withdrew to the North, the instructions admonished Sturdza to prevent this by making the inhabitants of Bessarabia "feel the advantages of the fatherly and lavish government... The Bulgarians, the Serbs, the Moldavians and the Wallachians are seeking a fatherland. You can offer them one in this land."

In order to achieve that the instructions prescribed Bessarabian governor to "secure the property of each individual, facilitate the obtaining of new property by the newcomers as well as secure a just distribution of the public offices so that the justice of your subordinates make Bessarabian inhabitants forget the absence of codified laws."²⁷⁶ Formulating the tasks of the new authorities, Capodistria defined Russian policy in the region in terms of the civilizing mission and gradual political reform: "The true happiness of a people can hardly be achieved in short time. First, it is necessary to study the state of the people in detail and decide what is vicious in it. After this is done, one can compose a plan, the implementation of which could gradually bring this people to a possible degree of perfection."²⁷⁷ The new administration had to bring the people to perfection by correcting its vices through means that were in accordance with local conditions. In other words, it had to adapt to local conditions and change them at the same time. In this respect, Sturdza's task was formulated in somewhat

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 112.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 111.

paradoxical Montesquieuian terms of changing the bad public spirit by means of good legislation, which at the same time had to be in accordance with the mores of the people.

Seeing the goal of Bessarabian autonomy in preserving Russia's influence over the Balkan peoples, Chichagov and Capodistria failed to recognize the potential contradictions implicit in such a policy. Placing Serbs and Bulgarians on a par with Moldavians and Wallachians as peoples, who had to be attracted to Bessarabia, they missed important differences in these peoples' relationship to the region. Whereas the former lacked indigenous nobility and came to Bessarabia as colonists, the latter were represented by the Moldavian boyars, who claimed certain historical rights. The recognition of such historical claims was likely to come in contradiction with privileges that were customarily granted to colonists in New Russia. The situation was further aggravated by the heterogeneity of the new province. Although the entire territory between the Dniester and the Pruth rivers originally belonged to the principality of Moldavia, the establishment of the Ottoman dominance entailed alienation of the lands around the fortresses Kilia, Ismail, Akkerman and Bender in the south and Khotin in the north and their transformation into Ottoman *reyas*. Besides, the Budzhak steppe located between the lower courses of the Dniester, the Pruth, the Danube and the Black Sea came to be populated by the Nogays vassals of the Crimean Khans.²⁷⁸ The rest of the territory between Pruth and Dniester by 1806 remained part of Moldavia and was populated by Romanian peasantry working on the lands of the absentee Moldavian boyar landlords. Finally, Russian government had no decided preference in favor of noble or peasant colonization. Those Moldavian boyars (including Scarlat Sturdza himself), who were given empty lands between the Bug and the Dniester after 1792 proved to be poor colonizers.²⁷⁹ Nevertheless, at the beginning of Russian occupation of the

²⁷⁸ After Russian annexation of Crimea, these lands went to the Ottomans.

²⁷⁹ For the failure of the pro-Russian Moldavian boyars to colonize the lands granted to them to the east of Dniester by Catherine II after the Jassy Treaty of 1792 see PSZ, ser.1, vol. 18, no. 21581, no. 22849. As late as 1808 part of the

principalities in 1806-1808 Alexander I promised to respect for local laws and customs, which made Russian authorities responsive to the demands of the boyars.

The first measures on the administration of Bessarabia were taken already during the 1806-1812 Russian-Ottoman war. In response to the petition of the Moldavian Divan, Alexander I agreed to acknowledge their claims of some Moldavian boyars on the lands around the Ottoman fortress Khotin, which were turned in *reaya* in 1713. A number of boyars were appointed by the Senator-President of the Moldavian and Wallachian Divans S. S. Kushnikov to form an “investigation commission” charged with examination of the documents covering the property rights.²⁸⁰ Despite the reported cases of corruption in the commission, the distribution of lands in Khotin *reaya* continued. The easiness with the Moldavian boyars confirmed their old titles on land and/or acquired new lands in Bessarabia suggests that Russian authorities viewed the region as a territory with landed nobility and local institutions rather than “an empty space” that had to be colonized with just anyone willing to do that.²⁸¹ Nevertheless, already before 1812 the activities of Russian authorities in Bessarabia also resembled colonization policies pursued in New Russia. Thus, in 1807 they ordered resettlement of several thousand Nogays from the Budzhak steppe. As a former possession of the Ottoman sultans and Crimean Khans, this territory became a crown land after Russian annexation. Although as in case of Khotin *reaya*, the government distributed part of these lands to Moldavian nobility, the Budzhak steppe after the resettlement remained largely unpopulated and providing space for more intensive colonization policies.²⁸²

The influx of transdanubian settlers (mostly Bulgarians) started during the war 1806-1812. The continuous warfare along the Danube caused the dislocation of the population. The

lands granted in 1792 were still unsettled and the government had to introduce fines to be paid by the landlords for any 30 desiatins of the unsettled land. Ibid., vol. 20, no. 24809.

²⁸⁰ See P. Khalipa, “Opisanie arkhivov gg. Senatorov predsedatel'stvovavshikh v Divanakh Moldavii i Wallakhii v 1808-1812 gg.” in *Trudy Bessarabskoi Arkhivnoi Komissii*, vol. 1 (Kishinev, 1907), 335.

²⁸¹ Generally, the boyars appropriated 117 thousand desiatiny. N. I. Meshcheriuk, *Anti-krepostniceskaia bor'ba gagauzov i bolgar Bessarabii v 1812—1820*. (Kishinev: Gosizdat MSSR, 1957), 20.

retreating Ottoman armies practiced traditional “scorched earth” policy forcing the local Bulgarian population to move to the south in order to deprive the Russian army from supplies, while Russian troops took every opportunity to bring the Bulgarians back. In order to avoid these hardships, significant number of Bulgarians crossed the Danube and settled in the principalities, where they soon faced the rapacious local officials. Taking advantage of the situation, Russian Commander-in-Chief P. I. Bagration, in cooperation with the governor of Odessa Duke de Richelieu, tried to organize their settlement in the Kherson gubernia. Even in the midst of the campaign, Russian military did not forget about the “population politics”, which consisted in replacing the nomadic and semi-nomadic population with the agriculturalists. In the opinion of the Russian government, the sedentary Bulgarians were preferable to the semi-nomadic Nogays, who occupied the Edisan and the Budzhak before the Russian advance.

The would-be settlers were lukewarm about the distant Kherson lands and preferred a location closer to the border, which could allow them to leave if their expectations get disappointed.²⁸³ In April 1811, the newly appointed Commander of the Russian army M. I. Kutuzov encouraged the settlement of Bulgarians on the lands of the left-bank Ottoman *reayas* Braila, Giurgiu offering them a land allotment, an exemption from taxation for three years and organizing them in militia units with the task of protecting the left bank of the Danube.²⁸⁴ Half a year later, the newly appointed head of settler’s administration, A. Koronelli, suggested Bessarabia and, specifically, the Budzhak (which became the crown land), the place of settlement and advocated granting the colonists the status of a Cossack

²⁸² On a general discussion of colonization in New Russia and the steppe region see Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field. Empire and Colonization in Russian Steppe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

²⁸³ In early 1811 Bagration’s successor Kamenskii and the President of the Divans Senator Krasno-Milashevich once again tried to attract transdanubian settlers to Kherson lands, but again to no avail.

²⁸⁴ In K.R. Kyrzhanovskaya and E. M. Russev (eds.), *Istoria Moldavii. Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 2 (Kishinev: Akademia Nauk MSSR, 1957), 1. Henceforth cited as *Istoria Moldavii*.

military formation.²⁸⁵ Given the eventual outcome of the Russian-Ottoman war, which brought about Russian annexation of Bessarabia, by left Wallachia and the main part of Moldavia within the Ottoman Empire, this was a fortunate option for the Bulgarians.

The behavior of the Bulgarian settlers during the war and in the immediate post-war period revealed all the characteristics of a frontier people, defying the straightforward designs of the Russian authorities and exploring the ambiguities of the frontier position. Securing a place near the frontier, they settled Bessarabia in the most chaotic manner occupying along with the empty crown lands of the Budjak steppe, the settlers often occupied the properties of the local landlords. The latter's attempt to collect taxes and demand seigniorial dues from the settlers clashed with their idea of privileges promised by the Kutuzov. Defending their interests against the landlords, the settlers played various local and central authorities against each other invoking the promises of the Russian commander, asking for a paramilitary status and refusing to deliver the oath of loyalty before their privileges were confirmed.

One can see that still before the conclusion of the Bucharest treaty and the formal annexation of Bessarabia, Russian authorities rather unconsciously employed the elements of the two different and potentially contradicting approaches in the administration of the region. On the one hand, their willingness to cooperate with Moldavian nobility resulted in the adoption of a very liberal policy in respect of the Moldavian boyars' claims to the lands of the Ottoman *reaya* and Budzhak. On the other hand, the "emptiness" of the Budzhak suggested the adoption of the colonizing policies and led to the settlement of the trans-Danubian Bulgarians. While both policies were meant to increase Russia's influence in the region by making Bessarabia a "new homeland" for the Balkan Christians, Russian-policy makers failed to foresee possible complications resulting from different social profiles of the potential colonists. Whereas "Moldavians" and "Wallachians" meant first of all the boyars,

²⁸⁵ "Kratkaia zapiska A Ia. Koronelli Kutuzovu o Zadunaiskih pereselentsah 15 noiabria 1811g." In *Istoria Moldavii*, 28.

other Balkan peoples coming to Bessarabia were overwhelmingly peasants and lacked indigenous nobility whatsoever. The former were attracted to Bessarabia by a possibility to restore their property in the territories alienated during the Ottoman dominance, the latter were colonists *sensu strictu* seeking to evade the dominance of the landlords. This potential cause for conflict was reinforced by disorderly manner, in which both the distribution of lands to the nobility and the colonization proceeded before and after 1812. Soon after the Moldavian army left the principalities and Bessarabia in order to stop Napoleon's army at Berezina, the frontier populations drew imperial authorities into local conflicts, which seriously compromised the realization of Capodistria's reform plans.

Russian Policy in Moldavia and Wallachia after the Peace of Bucharest

The conclusion of the peace of Bucharest placed the Greeks, who occupied important posts in the principalities during Russian occupation in a difficult situation. Despite the amnesty stipulated by the treaty those suspected of pro-Russian sympathies had reasons to worry about their safety and preferred to emigrate. The execution of Prince Demetrius Muruzi, the official representative of the Ottoman Empire at the peace negotiations ordered by the Sultan for ceding Bessarabia to Russia, was too stark an example of punishment for pro-Russian sympathies. Nevertheless, pro-Russian partisans did not abandon the hopes to return to power in the Principalities and staked on future Russian intervention. Some of them viewed the termination of wars in Europe and the Congress of Vienna as an opportunity to internationalize the Greek issue by drawing the attention of Alexander I to the Balkan issues once again. Others took advantage of the appointment of the new Russian envoy to Constantinople G. A. Stroganov in order to expose their views. In their memoirs addressed to Russian government a number of dignitaries offered a critique of the Russian policy before 1812 and developed an agenda for the political reform in the principalities grounded in a broader vision of Russia's dominance in the Balkans.

One of such memoirs was written by former Hospodar of Wallachia Constantin Ypsilanti. Son of Alexander Ypsilanti, who ruled Wallachia in 1774-1782, Constantin Ypsilanti made a brilliant career becoming the High Dragoman (Interpreter) of the Porte in 1797-1799, at which time he contributed to the creation of the Republic of Seven Islands under Russian protectorate.²⁸⁶ After a short tenure in Moldavia in 1799-1801, he managed to obtain Wallachian throne with Russian support in the wake of 1802 *hatt-i sheriff*. As any other Phanariote prince Ypsilanti functioned as a double agent having his emissaries in Vienna and making overtures to France. Nevertheless, aiming to secure a hereditary tenure for his family in Wallachia and extend it over Moldavia, Ypsilanti eventually cast his lot with Russia evoking the ideas of Catherine's "Greek project," which presupposed among other things a unification of Moldavia and Wallachia into a kingdom of Dacia under Russian protectorate. At the beginning of Alexander I's reign, the idea resurfaced in a report of the emperor's "young friend" V. P. Kochubei, who insisted that in case of the partition of the Ottoman Empire Moldavia and Wallachia should not go to Austria, but be united into one state under Russian protectorate.²⁸⁷ The unification of the principalities under Russian protectorate or their direct annexation had an important place in Adam Czartoryski's plans of Balkan federation, through which this foreign minister of Alexander I sought to counteract the French influence in the region. Secretly encouraging the Serbian revolt of 1804, Ypsilanti immediately offered his services of mediation between the rebels and the Russian emperor pursuing a distant objective of turning Serbia into yet another Phanariote principality. Finally, the Hospodar started lobbying the idea of recreating a viable military force in the form of Hellenic corps, enabling Wallachia to withstand the attacks of the independent Danubian

²⁸⁶ Botzaris, *Visions balkaniques*, 44.

²⁸⁷ Grosul, *Politika Rossii v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 141 with reference to M. I. Bogdanovich, *Istoria tsarstvovaniia imperatora Alexandra I i Rossii v ego vremia*. vol. 1 (Spb.: tip. S. Strugovshchikov, G. Pokhitonov, N. Vodov i Co, 1859), 47.

pashas.²⁸⁸ Although the boyar opposition and French diplomatic agents managed to obtain his deposition August 1806, Ypsilanti returned at the beginning of the Russian-Ottoman war in December 1806 in capacity of a hospodar of both principalities. However, his political dreams never fully came true. He was unable to overcome the boyar opposition or progress with the formation of the Hellenic corps and soon clashed with Russian military command over the problem of supplies.²⁸⁹ Czartoryski's retirement from the position of Russia's foreign minister, conclusion of the Tilsit treaty with Napoleon and the truce of Slobodzeia with the Ottomans precipitated Ypsilanti's replacement by a Russian President at the Divans. Ypsilanti was ordered to move to Russia where he spent the rest of his days dying in 1816 in Kiev.²⁹⁰

Reluctant to abandon his ambitions, in 1816 Ypsilanti made one last attempt to provoke the emperor for a more active policy in the Balkans in general and the principalities in particular. In April and May 1816 he presented Alexander I two memoirs, which outlined a grand plan for Russia's policies in the East and at the same time contained any aspect of his personal political agenda that he had been pursuing in the 1800s.²⁹¹ Assuming the inevitability of eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Ypsilanti argued that neither partition nor a preservation of a weak neighbor suited Russian interests. The former would overextend the Russian borders, whereas the latter always gave European powers an opportunity to provoke the Ottoman Empire for a new war against Russia. Instead, evoking Catherine's "Greek project," Ypsilanti proposed Alexander I a direct attack on the Ottoman Empire, the occupation of all its Balkan provinces and the creation of an Eastern Empire under the scepter of one of the emperor's brothers. Whether Ypsilanti believed Catherine's

²⁸⁸ Botzaris, *Visions balkaniques*, 46, 64.

²⁸⁹ G. J. Jewsbury, *Russian Annexation of Bessarabia, 1774-1828. A Study of Imperial Expansion* (New York: Eastern European Monographs, 1976), 40-42.

²⁹⁰ Mischevca, *Constantin Ypsilanti*, 73.

Greek project feasible or not, his personal interest consisted in returning to the thrones of Moldavia or Wallachia (possibly both) and this was reflected in the intermediary steps that Russian Empire had to make in pursuit of a greater goal. Referring to the Balkan plans of Adam Czartoryski, the former hospodar suggested creating a “belt of small buffer states with a nearly independent status and having armed forces, upon which Russia could rely in case of war.” Consolidating Moldavia, Wallachia and Serbia in this way, Russia could then demand autonomy for Bulgaria, which would become “a new Serbia.”²⁹² As a technical ruse aimed to pacify the Ottomans and demonstrate Russia’s disinterest to other powers, Ypsilanti suggested the temporary return of Bessarabia to Moldavia, but even this idea was formulated with the perspective of his return to Moldavian throne.

Another ambitious program for Russian policy in the Balkans was offered in the memoir of the former Metropolitan of Wallachia Ignace, who became one of Capodistrias’ correspondents in the period. Originally a Metropolitan of Arta in Epyr, Ignace for a number of years was a confidant of the famous Ali-Pasha of Yanina. At the same time, after the establishment of the Septinsular republic, Ignace developed pro-Russian sympathies and in 1806 came to Ionic Islands, where he got acquainted with Capodistria. Following him, Ignace moved to St Petersburg, where he obtained Alexander I’s personal audience and presented to the Russian emperor the memoir on the state of the Greek Orthodox Church actually written by Capodistria. With the help of Russian government, Ignace obtained the position of Metropolitan of Wallachia. However his tenure in Wallachia proved to be a short one: he soon faced the opposition of the autochthonous boyars and had the reason for fear for his

²⁹¹ “Aperçu sur l’état actuel de l’Empire Ottoman présenté à Sa Majesté Impériale par m. Le prince Ypsilanti,” St. Petersburg, April 2, 1816, AVPRI, fond 133, op. 468, no. 2309, Ff. 132-144rev., and “Des relations de la Russie avec l’Empire Ottoman” Ibid., Ff. 173-184.

²⁹² Ypsilanti referred to Catherine’s policy towards Crimea allowing for the possibility of eventual annexation of Moldavia and Wallachia.

personal safety after the conclusion of the peace of Bucharest.²⁹³ Therefore, Ignace preferred to leave Wallachia after the retreat of Russian troops and came to Vienna at the time of the congress in order to lobby the Greek cause together with Capodistria. Eventually settling in Italy, Ignace never abandoned his ambition to regain the desired office and pinned his hopes on resumption of aggressive Russian policy in respect of the Ottoman Empire.

According to Ignace, whereas formerly religion was the only factor that preserved the national distinctiveness of the Balkan Christians, the spread of enlightenment fostered patriotic feelings among them.²⁹⁴ In order to prevent the influence of the non-Orthodox powers over Balkan peoples, Russian Empire should in future avoid the mistakes it committed in the administration of Moldavia and Wallachia during previous wars. In an attempt to imitate the French ways of administration in 1806-1812, Russian authorities forwent simple schemes used during previous wars and created “a system that exhausted the resources of the country and hampered the actions of the army as well as alienated the minds of the people and inspired them with reluctance to join the Russian Empire.” Instead, of “threatening Moldavians and Wallachians with all the rigors of a military rule,” the basis of the Russian policy should have been the local legislation rooted in Roman law and the ancient usages of the countries as well as the *firman*s of the Sultan and hospodars’ diplomas.²⁹⁵ Ultimately, if it were not for the abusive, destructive and hideous administration, that excluded the local elements from the government, a hasty peace with the Ottomans leaving Wallachia and most of Moldavia in possession of the Ottomans would have been unnecessary. Placing the principalities under the direction of a man “capable by his enlightenment and his wisdom” would have allowed the dispatch of all the Russian army in

²⁹³ See T. G. Bulat, “Stiri despre conspiratie boiereasca contra mitropolitul Ignatie grecul al Ungrovlahiei,” *Revista istorica*, 1936, no. 2-3, and 1937, no. 1-4 as well as AVPRI, fond 321, op 530/3, no. 105, “About the apprehension of the Metropolitan Ignace to remain in Wallachia after the evacuation of the Russian Troops, 1812.”

²⁹⁴ “Memoire sur L’etat actuel de l’Empire Ottoman et sur les moyens d’y etablir L’influence Russe,” Vienna October 27, 1814, AVPRI, fond 133, op. 468, no. 2309, F. 105rev.

the Principalities to the North to fight with Napoleon, without the abandonment of the important military position along the Danube.²⁹⁶

On the basis of this critique, Ignace outlined an ambitious program of activities in the upcoming years. According to him, “however rich and beautiful the Danubian provinces are, they do not form the natural limit of the Russian empire.” In Ignace’s vision, Balkan range provided the perfect bastion, behind which Russia could entrench itself if the jealousy of European powers prevents her from destroying the Ottoman influence in Europe altogether.²⁹⁷ To achieve that objective, Russian arms had to be supported by the power of opinion.²⁹⁸ In order to thwart the Ottoman designs “to make Russia hateful in the principalities” it was necessary to secure the correct fulfillment of the Bucharest treaty, exclude the possibility of the invasions of the Danubian pashas, secure the collection of taxes in accordance with the old system established by the hospodars Mourouzi and Alexander Ypsilanti after Kuchuk-Kainardji treaty of 1774 as well as to create the quarantine along the Danube under the supervision the Russian and Austrian consuls.²⁹⁹ These measures providing security of Russia’s southern provinces were to be combined with the support of the Serbs in their demand to stop the persecutions by the Ottomans and to appoint of a benevolent ruler.³⁰⁰ In order to secure the loyalty of the Greeks towards Russia, Ignace suggested making donations to the three Greek philanthropic societies (one of which, incidentally, was headed by Ignace himself), offering stipends to the Greek students in the Western Universities as

²⁹⁵ “*Precis historique de la dernier guerre entre la Russie et la Porte*,” *ibid.*, 117-125rev.

²⁹⁶ *Memoire*, AVPRI, Fond. 133, op. 468, no. 2309, F. 106rev. According to Ignace, these inadequacies of the Russian policies during the war were partly redeemed by the activities of the last Commander P. V. Chichagov, who simplified the system of administration and placed the Divans once again in the full charge of affairs. Moreover, Ignace enthusiastically embraced the idea of the Balkan diversion and regretted the fact that this ambitious project was abandoned. In his opinion the popularity of Chichagov’s measures demonstrated that “the principalities entrusted to a good administration could not only provide the necessary supplies for the 50000 Russian army, but also offer necessary sums either for the mobilization of the Bosnian and Bulgarian peoples [supposedly against Napoleon -V. T.] or for the organization of the diversion in the interior of the Ottoman Empire.”

²⁹⁷ “*Precis*,” AVPRI, Fond. 133, op. 468, no. 2309, F. 125.

²⁹⁸ “*Memoire*,” AVPRI, Fond. 133, op. 468, no. 2309, F. 103rev.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, F. 107rev.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, F. 108.

well as attracting young Greeks to the Russian educational institutions. Finally, a wise administration in Crimea and the newly annexed Bessarabia had to include the establishment of the Greeks schools and printing presses as well as the development of the commerce. Greece, in the words of Ignace, was ready to “listen the language” “appealing to its mind and heart.”³⁰¹

Yet another memoir was written by an Armenian banker (*sarraf*) Manuk Mirzaian (Manuk-bey), a client of the famous *pasha* of Rushcuk (and eventually a visir) Mustafa-pasha Bairaktar and a close collaborator of Constantine Ypsilanti. At the time of the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812, Manuk monopolized the commerce between Ruschuk and Bucharest and serving as an important liaison between the two banks of the Danube. After the death of Mustafa-pasha in 1808, through the intercession of Ypsilanti, Manuk became a Russian subject actively collaborated with Russian occupation authorities and obtained the cross of St Vladimir in recognition of his services. After the conclusion of peace of Bucharest, in 1813 Manuk immigrated to Transylvania, and like Ignace came to Vienna at the time of the congress. Received by Alexander I he asked the emperor for the permission and help to build an Armenian town in Bessarabia. Alexander granted Manuk the rank of the actual state councilor and offered him to move to Russia. Manuk settled in Bessarabia, where he bought a large estate. Despite the support of the emperor, his project of an Armenian town in Bessarabia was never quite realized. Enjoying great respect among the Armenian merchants of the Danubian towns Manuk even after his settlement in Bessarabia continued to provide Russian government with the information on the situation in the principalities.³⁰²

Like the Metropolitan Ignace, Manuk-bey tended to be critical of Russian policy during the previous period. According to him, instead of protecting the rights of the Moldavia and Wallachia, Russia defended the interests of hospodars, whereby Russian protection

³⁰¹ Ibid., Ff. 110-110rev.

became one of the factors contributing to the misfortunes of the principalities. To illustrate the ineffectiveness of Russian protection system Manuk-Bey pointed to the violation of the Bucharest treaty that presupposed the exemption of Moldavia and Wallachia from taxation for two years. According to the information that he received, the *caimacams* (representatives) of the new hospodars appointed after the conclusion of peace immediately proceeded to collect taxes. In order to make the Porte return the unlawfully collected sums, Manuk-bey suggested concentrating Russian troops on the border and demanding the concession of the Moldavian territory between the Pruth and the Siret rivers to Russia in compensation, pointing to the Austrian annexation of Bukovina in 1775 as a historical precedent. Alternatively, Russian envoy to Constantinople could demand the deposition of the hospodars, who sanctioned the collection of taxes by their representatives, and their replacement by the hospodars elected by the nobility of the principalities leaving the two powers the right to depose them in case of misdemeanor. The temporary suspension of taxes in realization of the principles of the Bucharest treaty could be made a precondition of their election.³⁰³

All these memoirs passed through the hands of Capodistria, who was placed in charge of Russia's Eastern policy upon the return of Alexander I from the Congress of Vienna. Clearly, the idea of using the advantages of his position in the interests of the Greek emancipation was not foreign to him. However, Capodistria realized already in Vienna that the emperor was determined to subordinate Russia's policy in the East to the interests of the monarchical cooperation in Europe rather than pursue an aggressive course in respect for the Ottoman Empire advocated by Ypsilanti, Ignace and Manuk-bey. Although the Christian Saint Alliance could not include the Sultan, there was no question of the European monarchs

³⁰² A. F. Miller, *Mustafa Pasha Bairaktar. Osmanskaia imperia v nachale 19-go veka* (Moscow : Nauka, 1947), 200-201 and note 69 on pages 422-423.

³⁰³ "L'annexe a la notice additionnelle ou memoire pour servir d'instruction au Baron Stroganoff." AVPRI, F. 133, op. 468, no. 2309, F. 229-234.

encouraging disloyalty of the subjects towards their sovereign even if the latter was a Muslim. After it became clear that Alexander I was unwilling to raise the Greek question at the Congress, Capodistria abandoned for the time being the idea of immediate liberation of the Greeks with the Russian support and concentrated on the education of the new Greek elite. That is why, although Capodistria supplied the newly appointed Russian envoy to Stambul G. A. Stroganov with the memoirs of Ignace, Ypsilanti and Manuk-bey, the basic assumptions of ministerial instructions that he wrote for Stroganov differed substantially from the premises of the authors of the three memoirs. Whereas Ypsilanti, Ignace and Manuk-Bey explicitly or implicitly assumed the close collapse of the Ottoman Empire and insisted upon an active and even aggressive policy towards it, Stroganov was advised neither to treat the Ottoman Empire as a state as stable as others (the position of Great Britain and Austria) nor view it like Ypsilanti as a decaying policy on the verge of collapse. Instead, in its relationship with the Ottoman court Stroganov was ordered to adopt some sort of a middle stance consisting in convincing the Sultan of the amicable attitude of the Russian Emperor and his desire to contribute to a peace between the Sultan and his Christian subjects through fulfillment of the conditions Russian-Ottoman treaties. The instructions plainly excluded the possibility of a war with the Ottoman Empire and thereby disqualified the devices of diplomatic pressure and war threats that were practiced under Catherine the Great.³⁰⁴

The inflated rhetoric of brotherly and Christian unity of European monarchs employed by Alexander I represents a major problem when dealing with Russian foreign policy during and after the Vienna Congress. On the one hand, the “sublime mysticism” of the Saint Alliance can be treated as a wily guise, behind which the Emperor hid the

³⁰⁴ The Instruction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to G. A. Stroganov, *Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX i v nachale XX veka*, ser. 2, vol 1 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1974), 173-175. (Further cited as VPR). In his rescript to Stroganoff from June 30, 1816 Alexander I wrote that the fulfillment of the Bucharest treaty will bring about “the peace with between the Porte and its own Christians subjects who will be satisfied thereby; Its benevolent power will spread over the rebellious provinces that at present make her face a hard choice: to witness the partition of its possessions or contribute to the establishment there of the foreign influence. By sticking to the

considerations of *realpolitik*. Whatever the nature of his mysticism, Alexander I undoubtedly used the rhetoric of brotherly monarchical unity against his opponents at the Vienna Congress.³⁰⁵ Yet, the emperor's Eastern policy, whether out of virtue or necessity, did correspond to conservative maxims of 1815 settlement. Although the Saint Alliance failed to include the Ottoman sultan, Alexander I refused to pose the question of partition of the Ottoman Empire at the Congress of Vienna and in the years that followed. Among other things, this meant the abandoning of the attempts to annex the Moldavia and Wallachia, or even insist on the fundamental reforms of the local institutions, which would further limit the Ottoman control over the principalities. Instead, it meant the resumption of a pre-1806 situation, in which Russian consuls in Moldavia and Wallachia as well as Russian envoy in Constantinople made periodic demarches against the encroachments on the privileges of the principalities in terms of taxation, succession of the hospodars or the distribution of the governmental offices between Greeks and Romanians. Since the emperor was indisposed to apply force, such demarches inevitably tended to become formal and hardly changed the situation in the principalities.

Characteristic in this respect was the position of Russian foreign ministry in respect of violations of the existing agreements between Russian and the Ottoman Empire in the matters of taxation in Moldavia and Wallachia.³⁰⁶ One of the items on Stroganov's agenda was bringing the taxation in the principalities back to the level stipulated by the 1802 *hatt-i sheriff* and securing two year exemptions presupposed by the Bucharest treaty, which were ignored by the newly appointed hospodars. On November 17, 1817 the Russian Consul in Jassy A. N. Pizani submitted a note to the Moldavian Hospodar Scarlat Callimachi protesting against the

Bucharest treaty the Porte will liberate itself from this influence and, having re-established its status of an independent power, it will be able to use for its own benefit the enormous resources that it has." Ibid., 221.

³⁰⁵ Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22* (Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 159.

unsanctioned introduction of the extraordinary tax of 1000000 piastres.³⁰⁷ In December 1817, Russian Consul General in Bucharest A. A. Pini reported the same violation of the existing treaties by Wallachian hospodar Ioan Caragia.³⁰⁸ The reports of the consuls turned into Stroganov's note to the Porte from April 12, 1818 demanding the end of the unauthorized taxation.³⁰⁹ In his report to the ministry, Russian envoy suggested to apply pressure on the hospodars, whose seven year tenure established by 1802 *hatt-i sheriff* was coming to an end and suggested a number of candidates.³¹⁰ However, the envoy's impetuosity at times worried Alexander, who was anxious to demonstrate his peaceful intentions to the Ottomans and European powers. Capodistria had to point to Stroganov that his note compromised Russia's peaceful policy to Porte in the eyes of the European powers. The minister once again reaffirmed the impossibility of war with the Ottomans and suggested to adopt an "amicable and passive stance" in the negotiations with the Ottomans. This policy was supposed to demonstrate to the Western powers that Russia only aims to secure the fulfillment of the clauses of the Bucharest treaty and that, should the Porte interrupt the negotiations, the Russian government would preserve the status quo.³¹¹ As a result the tone of Stroganov's dispatches to the hospodars got milder and he even promised to work out a scheme to increase the civil list of the Moldavian Hospodar.³¹²

Despite a low profile of the Russian policy in the Balkans conducted in the conservative spirit of the Saint Alliance, the pro-Russian boyars residing in the principalities addressed to the Russian authorities a number of projects for the reorganization of their

³⁰⁶ The Bucharest treaty specified fixed amount of taxes that were to be collected in the two principalities and prohibited the Hospodars to introduce the new ones. It also prohibited the exact taxes retroactively for the period of 1806-1812 war. Both these conditions were never fulfilled.

³⁰⁷ VPR, ser 2, vol II, (Moscow: Politizdat, 1977), 66-68.

³⁰⁸ A. A. Pini to G. A. Stroganov, December 25, 1818, *ibid.*, 130-135.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 316.

³¹⁰ G. A. Stroganov to K. V. Nesselrode, February 16, 1818, *ibid.*, 238. According to the Hattisheriff of 1802 the Hospodars were to be appointed for a 7 year term. Their deposition before the expiry of the term as well as the ordinary or extraordinary appointment of their successors had to be mutually agreed upon by Ottoman and Russian Empires. The conditions of 1802 hattisheriff were confirmed by the Bucharest treaty of 1812.

³¹¹ Capodistrias to G. A. Stroganov, Odessa, May 6, 1818, *ibid.*, 362-363.

political institutions. Adopting the rhetoric of political reform based on the rational principles, the boyars sought to secure support of the Russian authorities in their never-ending struggle with the Phanariote hospodars. One of such projects submitted by Iordache Rossetti-Rosnovanu, who actively collaborated with Russian provisional authorities in 1808-1812 serving in the position of the Moldavian *vestiar* (treasurer).³¹³ Evoking the principle of separation of powers, the project presupposed the division of the Divan into the judicial and administrative chambers, which acquired executive prerogatives only when united into a common assembly. Pursuing the goal of rationalizing administration, the Rossetti-Rosnovanu attempted to define the functions of the administrative chamber stressing the importance of collecting statistics of population, agriculture and commerce, strict control over the distribution of *scutelnici* and supervision of the activities of *ispravniks*, public funds and philanthropic organizations. Rossetti-Rosnovanu's project sought to increase the role of the Divan members and first of all of the *vestiar* at the expense of the princely authority.

However, the Phanariote princes proved capable of using the reforming rethoric to their own advantage as well. The reigns of the Wallachian hospodar Ion Caragea (1812-1818) and his Moldavian counterpart Scarlat Callimachi (1812-1819) were remarkable for the adoption of the codes of law. Elaborated in the tradition of the Phanariote legislation of the 18th century on the basis of the Byzantine legal tradition, but with some input of modern European legal theory, the codes of Caragea and Callimachi sought to strengthen the authority of the prince. The rhetoric of enlightened reform was also used by Callimachis' successor Mihai Suțu (1818-1821), who wrote a memoir addressing the problem of finances and suggesting to increase taxation of the foreign subjects, customs duties and salt prices in

³¹² G. A. Stroganov to Callimachi, June 1, 1818 *ibid.*, 397.

³¹³ "Memoire adresse a Stroganov au sujet de la reorganization administrative et judiciaire de la Moldavie," in Vlad Georgescu (ed.) *Memoires and projets de reforme dans les principautes Roumaines, 1769-1830*. (Bucharest : Association internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Europeen, 1972), 80-83.

order to cover the budget deficit resulting from inflation. It also indicated the necessity for a more equitable distribution of taxes among the tax-paying population.³¹⁴

Responding to these reform initiatives in the name of Alexander I, Capodistria wrote to Stroganov that the emperor “wishes that the Divans acquire greater prerogatives and greater independence particularly in financial matters and laws on taxation and management of state revenue.”³¹⁵ However, the difficulty of introducing these ameliorations under the traditional system of consular protection and conservative approach adopted in Russia’s Eastern policy was aggravated by the hidden ethnic and social divisions within the Moldavian and Wallachian elites. The eighteenth century tensions between the Phanariote hospodars and their Greek clients on the one hand and the autochthonous (Romanian) boyars on the other continued after 1812. Immediately after he occupied Wallachian throne, Ion Caragea sent to exile the leaders of the autochthonous boyars Grigore Ghica, Constantine Balaceanu and Constantine Philipescu. In 1817, after unsuccessful plot, the latter was sent out of the country once again and soon died under mysterious circumstances.³¹⁶ The existence of similar tensions in Moldova is testified by an anonymous memoir dating from this period and containing an outline of Moldavian history.³¹⁷ Reproducing a stereotypical view of the Phanariotes, the memoir emphasized malicious role of the Greeks in distorting the spirit of the treaties concluded between Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire, destroying the military spirit of the people and exposing the country to the ravages of their numerous clientele. Another similar memoir decried the social consequences of rule of Phanariote princes, whose

³¹⁴ “Memoire sur l’Etat actuel des finances de la Principate de Moldavie,” in Ibid., 83-90.

³¹⁵ Capodistria to Stroganov August 3, 1820, cited in *Mezhdunarodnyie otnoshenia na Balkanakh, 1815-1830* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 86.

³¹⁶ *Mezhdunarodnyie otnoshenia na Balkanakh, 1815-1830*, 84.

³¹⁷ “Memoire exposant la situation de la Moldavie, l’historique de ses relations avec la Porte et son systé d’administration.” In Vlad Georgescu (ed.) *Memoires et projets de reforme*, 90-97.

indiscriminate distribution of noble titles and offices created new fortunes undermining the stability of social structure, status and property.³¹⁸

As if responding to such complaints, Stroganov defined the predominance of the Phanariotes in the administration of the principalities as an evil and ordered Russian consul General in Bucharest Alexander Pini to contribute to the implementation of the 1802 *hatt-i-sherif* allocating to the Romanians the most important judicial and administrative positions.³¹⁹ However, it must be remembered that the same *hatt-i sheriff* permitted the hospodars to appoint to the same offices Greeks of special merit. Stroganov's recommendations were ambiguous also because there were addressed to a Greek native of Constantinople. Small wonder that the autochthonous boyars perceived both Pini and his co-national colleague in Jassy Andrei Pisani as enemies rather than protectors. Their frustration was expressed in a letter addressed by Moldavian logothets Vasile Ghica and Lupul Bals to Bessarabian Metropolitan Gavriil Banulesco-Bodoni. Using the Metropolitan as an alternative source of communication with Russian government, the Moldavian boyars complained that the Russian Consul became the best friend of the hospodar. Instead of vindicating the rights of the autochthonous boyars against the encroachments of Phanariotes, he became the informant of the hospodar about the boyar opposition and the abettor of the hospodar's abuses.³²⁰ It is difficult to tell whether these accusations had real grounds or were the product of local intrigues, but they testified to the existence of important local tensions, which neither the "Greek project" of Capodistria, nor the Saint Alliance of Alexander I took into consideration.

³¹⁸ "Memoire concernant le statut international des Principautes... ainsi que l'influence des ses relations sur les rapport sociaux internes." Ibid., 97-101.

³¹⁹ G. A. Stroganov A. A. Pini, May 1, 1817, in VPR, ser 2, vol. II, 531-532.

³²⁰ "Zapiska prilozhennaia k pis'mu mitroloitu Gavriilu ot 15go decabria, 1816go goda." in N. Dubrovin (ed.) Sbornik istoricheskikh materialov izvlechennykh iz arkhiva sobstvennoi E. I. V. Kantseliarii, no. 7. (Moscow: 1895), 349.

Bessarabian “Experiment”

In early 1816, soon after Alexander I's return from Europe, Capodistria had the possibility to return to the affairs of Bessarabia, where his grandiose plans stumbled over the lack of personnel capable to implement them. The choice of Sturdza as the first governor was motivated by the loyalty demonstrated by this boyar to the Russian cause and Capodistria's personal relations to his family, rather than his administrative abilities. While Sturdza might have been efficient as a liaison between Russians and the Moldavian Divan during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1787-1792, he was hardly up to the task of “perfecting the character of a people” or pursuing an energetic colonization policy. On June 17, 1813, the nonagenarian and almost totally paralyzed, Sturdza was removed from his post.³²¹ For a moment Bessarabia remained without effective governance. Chichagov, failing to destroy the French army at Berezina fell out of Alexander I's favor and was replaced by Barklay-de-Tolly, who neither had any experience of nor interest in Bessarabia. Formally, the local authorities came to be subordinated to St. Petersburg Governor-General and interim Minister of Police S. K. Viazimitinov, who according to the testimonies of contemporaries, lacked initiative whatsoever.³²² This for a moment left Bessarabian autonomy without an influential advocate and effective supervision. As a result, the situation in Bessarabia almost got out of control and threatened to put a rather ignominious end to the ambitious undertakings of the emperor and his advisors.

The contradictory character of Capodistria's policy of constructing the “new homeland” for the Balkan peoples through preservation of local laws produced its results. In the absence of land survey, the settlement of the colonists and reclamation of boyar

³²¹ Alexander I to Viazimitinov, June 17, 1813 in Dinu Postarencu, *O Istorie a Bassarabiei in Date si Documente 1812- 1940* (Chisinau: Cartier Istoric, 1998), 71. Formally, Sturdza was given a leave until recovery and Gating was appointed as an interim Governor.

³²² In 1811-1819, alongside the Ministry of Interior, there existed a Ministry of Police formally headed by A. D. Balashev. This ministry was in charge of most of the matters usually performed by the Ministry of Interior,

landholding in the former Ottoman reayas proceeded chaotically and soon led to clashes. Thus, a number of Bulgarian settlers occupied some newly reclaimed possessions of the Bessarabian landowner Emmanuel Balș, a Moldavian boyar, who emigrated to Russia together with Scarlat Sturdza in 1792 and obtained high rank at the court. After the authorities decided to settle the transdanubian colonists on the crown lands in the Budzhak steppe, those who originally occupied the lands of Balș, took their possessions and houses and moved to the crown lands.³²³ This targeted the dispute between Balș and settlers, whereby the former demanded that the latter pay seigniorial dues in accordance with the laws and customs of the land confirmed by the “Temporary Rules for the Government of Bessarabia of 1813”. On their part, the settlers referred to Kutuzov’s 1811 manifesto and refused to take the oath of loyalty before their free status is confirmed by the authorities.³²⁴

In addition, the two conflicting sides explored the poorly delimited jurisdiction between Russian civil and military authorities in the region. When Bessarabian provincial authorities under the pressure of the landlords ordered the return of the settlers to the private lands and fulfillment of seigniorial dues, the latter addressed the command of the Second Army asking them to organize them into Cossack formations in the manner of the Don Cossack Host and grant them the right to settle on the crown lands along the Danube. Authorized by the Interim Minister of Interior I. K. Kozodavlev, the Commander of the Second Army L. L. Bennigsen ordered the formation of an investigation commission.³²⁵ As soon as the commission, headed by Bennigsen’s subordinate and future Decembrist Iu. M. Iushnevskii, arrived to the place in late March 1816, it took the side of the settlers and argued

including the correspondence with gubernia governors. Since Balashev was frequently away on diplomatic missions, the Ministry of Police was run by Viazimitinov.

³²³ The situation was further complicated also by the fact that along with the families of the Bulgarian settlers that moved to Balș’s lands after the 1811 Kutuzov’s proclamation, those who decided to move to the crown lands there were: 1) Bulgarians that settled in Bessarabia after the Russian-Ottoman war of 1787-1791 and 2) a number of Romanian peasants.

³²⁴ See Kutuzov’s message to transdanubian settlers from April 26, 1811, *Istoria Moldavii: Dokumenty i materialy* (Kishinev: Stiintsa, 1957), 1.

³²⁵ Documents from September 8 and 20, 1815 respectively in *ibid*, 100-103.

for the end of the forced transfer of the transdanubian settler back to the private lands since that would cause their ruin and would be contrary to the aims of the colonizing policy of the government.³²⁶

To make matters worse, 1814 witnessed the beginning of peasant flight from Bessarabia beyond Pruth caused by several consecutive crop failures and the rumors about the impending enserfment. Although this emigration was partially compensated by the influx of the German colonists from the former Duchy of Warsaw, the total population of Bessarabia in 1814 decreased by ca. 1000.³²⁷ The emigration beyond Pruth continued in 1815, when 3353 families of Moldavian and Ukrainian peasants fled to Bukovina and many more were about to do so. Even more important than sheer numbers, was the political aspect of the peasant emigration: the inhabitants of Bessarabia were flying from the “advantages of the fatherly and lavish government” of the Russian tsar, which in the longer run could hardly make Russia more attractive to the peoples of the region. In order to prevent this unfavorable outcome, Russian authorities resorted to the help of their partisan Metropolitan Gavriil Banulescu-Bodoni. The latter used his priestly authority to stop many peasant families, who were about to cross the Pruth by officially dispelling the rumors of enserfment.³²⁸ In addition to that, the government exempted the population from state taxes for 3 years and from military recruiting for 50 years. These measures eventually reversed the situation and in 1818 9000 Moldavians returned to Bessarabia.³²⁹

The intervention of the Metropolitan Banulescu-Bodoni saved the situation, but the problem remained. Flying beyond the Pruth in 1814-1815, the Bessarbian peasants revealed their discontent in the same way, in which the Romanian peasantry of the 18th – early 19th

³²⁶ Ibid, 125-128.

³²⁷ Kabuzan, *Narodonaselenie*, 29.

³²⁸ See Prot. Kunitskii’s testimony in the *Khersonskie eparkhial’nyie Vedomosti*, no. 18, (1861): 88.

³²⁹ In 1815 the authorities counted 73,704 households or the total of 368,520. The first family census in 1817 indicate 98, 526 families or the total of 491,685 people. This increase reflected both the influx of Podolian peasants and the better counting of the authorities. Kabuzan, *Narodonaselenie*, 29-30.

century reacted to the conditions of continuous war, state and seigniorial exploitation in a frontier region. Four years after the formal annexation, the Bulgarian settlers still did not swear the oath of allegiance to the Russian crown, and conditioned their loyalty on the positive solution of their conflict with the landlords and receiving a privileged status. Not only the peasantry or the settlers sought to exploit their frontier position flying or threatening to fly in order to obtain concessions from the imperial authorities. Thus, the Moldavian boyars, who at first revealed the desire to become Russian subjects, repeatedly asked the Russian government for the extension of the term, before which they had to sell their estates in the principality and settle definitively in Bessarabia. In doing so they sought to secure the possibility to leave Bessarabia in case the conditions created by the imperial authorities fail to meet their expectations. The new border on the Pruth patrolled by the Cossack detachments, some of which included large numbers of Muslims, remained poorly guarded and, consequently, permeable for the population movements, smuggling and epidemic diseases such as plague, which penetrated in Bessarabia in 1819 and again in 1824. Long after the stabilization of the situation in Bessarabia, the region retained the character of a frontier making impossible the introduction of serfdom and becoming a haven for the runaway serfs from inner gubernias as well as bandits and robbers, who still troubled the local authorities in the early 20th century.

Poor control of Russian authorities over the newly annexed region was aggravated by an acute lack of information. As late as 1815, Russian Senate did not know whether the inhabitants of Bessarabia were Christians or Muslims. In such a situation the future of Bessarabian experiment came into dangerous dependence upon the reports of local Russian officials, who might have been unaware of the rationale of Bessarabian autonomy. One of such reports was provided by the official of the Foreign Ministry, the Actual State Councilor L. S. Baikov. Benefiting from his experience of the region as an official at the diplomatic

chancellery of the Russian army during the 1806-1812 war, Baikov wrote a memoir addressing some of the general issues taking a critical stance towards traditional local institutions. According to him, “both principalities (Moldavia and Walachia – V. T.) do not have other laws than the self-will of the government and some commandments of Justinian, that are poorly known. The local customs are essentially the right of the powerful and the one who gives a greater bribe.”³³⁰ As a way out, Baikov suggested bringing local administration as much as possible in accordance with standard Russian scheme and subordinating it to Senate and the ministries. “If, for some reason it is impossible to establish Russian guberna administration in Bessarabia..., rather than initiating improper and harmful innovations, it would have been better to follow the rough-and-ready examples of Georgia and Tavrida. In this case, the government of the province, like all others existing in the whole empire, would be subordinated to the Senate and other governmental bodies (pravitel’sstva) without any infringement on [local] privileges.”³³¹

The former commander of Khotin fortress, major general of Dutch origin I. M. Garting, appointed the military governor of Bessarabia after the removal of Sturdza, fully shared this viewpoint. First of all, he had a rather frustrating experience of collaboration with the members of the Provincial Council appointed from those few boyars, who were present in Bessarabia as of February 1813. The latter, according to Garting, were incapable of either Russian or Moldavian service. “Using the majority of the votes they have and defending themselves by numerous obscure customs, of which they never produce testimony, they infringe on, rather than redress, justice.”³³² Garting suggested replacing them by Moldavian boyars, who came to Bessarabia later (after making the necessary orders concerning the administration of their estates in the principality) and proved to be more qualified for the

³³⁰ Cited by Nakko, “Ocherk grazhdanskogo ustroistva Bessarabskoi Oblasti s 1812 po 1828 gg,” in *Zapiski Imperatorskogo Odesskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei* 22, (1900): 120. (Baikov’s Memoire is published in *Zapiski Odesskogo Obschestva Istorii i Drevnostei* 20)

³³¹ Ibid., 121-122.

positions of government councilors. Nevertheless, this was temporary measure that hardly solved the basic problem. Like Baikov before him, Garting advocated Tavridic administrative model on the ground that it was also “a part of the Ottoman Empire lacking any laws” offering at the same time “special perspectives for colonization and the development of commerce.”³³³ In order to correct the vices of local administration, Garting sent to the Ministry of Police “Project for the formation of the Civil Administration,” seeking to bring Bessarabian government in conformity with the principles of Russian internal administration.

Garting’s designs to curtail Bessarabia autonomy provoked discontent of the local nobility, who expressed it in the petitions to the Committee of Ministers, its president Count Saltykov and the tsar himself. The nobles’ biggest outrage was caused by Garting’s alleged use of corporal punishment towards them. The petitions blamed Garting of all abuses and requested the emperor to replace him with a “native Moldovan, familiar with our character, faith and laws”. Above all they challenged his opinion about the non-existence of local legal tradition: “How can one speak of the absence of Moldavian laws if for four centuries Moldova has been governed by its own laws and rules? Are there no ancient Moldavian customs and unchangeable rules? Are there no printed laws (pravila) of Basil the Voevod? Are there no legislations issued by various Hospodars in different epochs? Is there no jurisdiction on the basis of laws of Justinian and other Greek emperors?”³³⁴ For better chances to be heard by the emperor, Bessarabian boyars asked Moldavian Metropolitan Gavriil Banulescu-Bodoni for mediation taking into account his services to the Russian Empire. In order to please the Metropolitan, their petition contained the demand to appoint him the president of the Provincial court in accordance with the Moldavian and Wallachian practice, whereby the Metropolitans were permanent members of the Divans. Supporting the

³³² Garting to Viazimitinov December 23, 1814 in *Bessarabskii Statisticheskii Komitet*, 115.

³³³ Nakko, “Ocherk grazhdanskogo ustroistva Bessarabskoi oblasti s 1812-1828 gg.” 126.

³³⁴ Bessarabian boyars asked to replace Garting with F. I. Catargi, who was a major-general in Russian service. A. Stadnitskii, Gavriil Banulescu-Bodoni (Kishinev: Sliomovich, 1894), 283.

cause of the Bessarabian nobility, Gavriil addressed a letter to the Procurator of the Holy Synod, A. M. Golitsyn, in which the argument about the existence of the indigenous legislative tradition in Bessarabia was developed further. Having absorbed some of the influences of the 18th century “Transylvanian School”, and in particular its theory of the Romanians’ descent from ancient Romans (he was born in Transylvania), Gavriil portrayed Bessarabian laws and customs as rooted in the Ancient Roman past. According to him, “Moldavia as Roman colony has enjoyed Roman laws; later it became part of Constantinople Empire and both Christian and Muslim rulers never attempted at its privileges.” As to the infringements on laws, Gavriil argued, one could take them as proofs of their existence.³³⁵

The nobility’s addresses and Gavriil’s intervention coincided with return of Capodistria’s to Russia in his new capacity of State Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The fact that Bessarabian affairs were placed under control of the foreign ministry and more specifically, the head of its Asiatic Department was more than a coincidence or simply a manifestation of Capodistria’s interest. Like newly annexed territories in Central Asia and the Steppe region later in the century, Bessarabia was placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a territory poorly integrated into the empire and still requiring colonization. Reacting to the petitions of Bessarabin nobles, in May 1815 Capodistria dispatched to Bessarabia a trusted person with the task of collecting the information on local laws. P. I. Svin’in, better known as the editor of literary journal “Notes of the Fatherland”, was originally a diplomat, who, among other things, served under Commander of Russian Navy in the Mediterranean D. N. Senyavin and was in touch with the authorities of the Republic of Seven Islands, whereby Capodistria came to know him.³³⁶ Bessarabian boyars must have found common language with Svin’in for he confirmed existence of the local

³³⁵ Ibid., 287

³³⁶ I am grateful to Dr. Alexandra Bekasova for this reference.

legislation dating back to Roman-Byzantine past. In his lengthy “Description of Bessarabian Province” Svin’in mentioned a collection Justinian laws named “Vasilika” introduced by the hospodar Alexander the Good in the beginning of the 15th century, Vasilie Lupu’s code of 1646, the codes of Leo and Armenopulos as well as scrupulously enumerated the varieties of *hrisovuls*, *firmands* and *hatt-i sheriffs* active on the territory of Bessarabia. He attributed the abuses, which were taking place in provincial administration to the spirit of Ottoman despotism and not to the imperfection of local laws. Along with collecting information, Svin’in was charged with an unrealistic task of systematizing local laws. Realizing the unfeasibility of such a task, Svin’in delegated to a noble committee that predictably did not finish its work before his departure or ever after.³³⁷

Responding to crisis in Bessarabia, Alexander I in his rescript to Metropolitan Gavriil of April 1, 1816, explicated the rationale of his policy: “Basing the temporary administration it on its ancient customs and privileges I wished to learn from experience (*opyt*) and expected that time and circumstances as well as precise information on all sides of its life would show me what is to be expected from this experiment.” Upon learning with regret about mismanagement and abuses that cause the flight of the peasant beyond the Pruth, the emperor decided to send his emissary to redeem the situation. Continuing the tendency of the 1813 “Temporary Rules,” Alexander I declared that his intention was to give Bessarabia “a government in accordance with its mores, customs and laws. All the *estates* (*sostoiania zhitelevi*) have an equal right on the heritage of their ancestors and my benevolence. All clergy, gentry, townspeople (*grazhdanstvo*) and peasants (*narod*) must find defense and protection under the new establishment (*obrazovanii*).”³³⁸

³³⁷ P. Svin’in, “Opisanie Bessarabskoi Oblasti,” in *Zapiski Odesskago Obschestva Istorii i Dreevnostei* 6, (1867): 223-224. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs soon recalled Svin’in, who undertook an unauthorized trip to Jassy in order to collect the information on Moldavian legislation, making the Ottoman authorities suspicious. L. A. Kasso, *Rossia na Dunae i obrazovanie Bessarabskoi oblasti* (Moscow: tip. Snegirevoi, 1913), 210.

³³⁸ RGIA, fond, 1286, op. 2, no. 70, Ff. 57-58.

Alexander I reacted to the disorders in Bessarabia similarly to the way, in which the 18th century monarchs reacted to the news about mismanagement in this or that gubernia i. e. by dispatching a high ranked official to investigate the abuses and punish the culprits. Most often, this high ranked official was a senator and his activities were called “senator revision.” Thus, after cooperation with Constantine Ypsilanti at the beginning of the Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812 failed, the emperor appointed senators to preside in Moldavian and Wallachian Divans with the task of securing the functioning of local administration and supplies for the army. In 1816 Alexander I again appointed a senator K. I. Moderach in response to the news of local disorders. Yet, Moderach’s poor health made him unable to take the task, and the emperor eventually chose the military governor of Podolia A. N. Bakhmet’ev as a substitution.³³⁹ The elevation of Bakhmetiev to the status of Alexander’s “Bessarabian viceroy”, served to stress the emperor’s personal relationship to the newly annexed territory and its special status within the Russian Empire. The viceroy was supposed to report directly to the Emperor, and a special Bessarabian Committee chaired by Capodistria was created in St. Petersburg to coordinate the activities of local authorities.

The emperor’s rescript to Bakhmet’ev from May 21, 1816, written by Capodistria, viewed “the provincial government in accordance with its native laws, mores and customs” a condition for the “the advantages of the paternalistic government based on the Christian faith” promised on behalf of the emperor at the moment of annexation. One can see how a single paragraph of official rhetoric included both the statement of traditional benefits to be expected from the tsar (*chadoliubivoie i na khristianskoi vere osnovannoie pravlenie*) and an untraditional means to achieve this end (*osoboie oblastnoie upravlenie, soglasnoie s korennyimi zakonami, s npravami i obychaiami*). Such a government was to secure the rights

³³⁹ Kiselev reports that in his conversation with the emperor after his inspection trip he suggested Bakhmet’ev as a possible candidacy for a Bessarabian viceroy, Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol.1, 34.

and privileges of all categories of population and aimed at “a gradual development of the resources, with which nature so lavishly provided this land.”³⁴⁰

The instruction attached to the report developed theses principles. “The system” that was adopted for Bessarabia was “in full accordance with the one that His Majesty chose to follow in other territories acquired during the reign of His Majesty.” The territories referred to in the document were Finland (annexed in 1808) as well as the greater part of the Duchy of Warsaw (annexed in 1814). In this way Bessarabian administrative experiment was placed in line with the Charter of the Great Duchy of Finland of 1809 and the Constitutional Charter for the Kingdom of Poland of 1815. The fundamental assumption of this approach, according to the instruction, consisted in the recognition of impossibility to achieve “the happiness of the people... through force.” “Can one hope, asked the instruction, that a people change its nature (*svoistvo*) to suit the kind of government quite alien to it.?” The desire to convince the inhabitants of the neighboring Ottoman territories of the “peaceful intentions” of the emperor was an additional rationale for the adopted course.³⁴¹ In order to achieve these general objectives, Bakhmetiev first had to bring the administration back to the simple principles defined in Chichagov’s instructions to Sturdza, investigate the abuses of the officials and replace them by capable indigenes.³⁴²

In his confidential private letter to Bakhmetiev, Capodistria explained the abuses that were rampant in Bessarabia in the first years after the annexation by the “vices that are characteristic of this country” augmented by “venality of the officials that were hitherto employed in its administration.” In the words of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, “this country had received only Moldavian i. e. Turkish education. The officials are used to oppress the people and enrich themselves at people’s expense. It is not difficult to explain the hardships that Bessarabia had suffered if one adds to that the venality of the Temporary

³⁴⁰ RGIA, fond. 1286, op. 2, no. 70, Ff. 18-19.

³⁴¹ Ibid., Ff. 25-26.

government,” which Bakhmetiev was going to find on the spot.³⁴³ Putting an equality sign between Moldavian mores and Ottoman despotism and admitting the imperfection of his original scheme, Capodistria nevertheless continued to insist on the preservation of local peculiarity as a means towards a larger strategic goal of securing influence over Balkan peoples, whose loyalty to Russia might have faltered after a hasty conclusion of Bucharest treaty. Bakhmet’ev’s task was to demonstrate in practice that “along with the preservation of the region’s distinct and national character, it is possible to make it useful for the Empire in respect of finances, population, commerce and politics.”³⁴⁴ Once again Capodistria seems to have ignored multiple meanings that local actors tended to attribute to the governmental rhetoric of “distinct and national character” of the region. Whereas for transdanubian settlers it might have meant a “new homeland,” Moldovan boyars were likely to take it for a confirmation of their historical rights over the region.

The new statute had to be elaborated by the viceroy in concert with the general assembly of both executive and judicial departments of Bessarabian government. It had to include four indispensable parts: the definition of rights and duties of all classes of population,³⁴⁵ the mode of election into both departments of provincial government and districts *ispravniks*, a definition of the forms of jurisprudence and a statute of the internal and border police.³⁴⁶ Autonomous status of Bessarabia was reflected by special relations that it had with other gubernias of the Russian Empire and with the principality of Moldavia. Since there was no serfdom in Bessarabia by 1812,³⁴⁷ the instructions specified that in case of the resettlement of private serfs in Bessarabia from the left bank of the Dniester the latter ceased to be considered serfs and acquired all the rights “enjoyed by the local inhabitants.” The

³⁴² Ibid., F. 29.

³⁴³ Capodistria to Bakhmet’ev, June 4, 1816 in *Istoria Moldavii*, 206.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 205.

³⁴⁵ Leaving intact the social structure of the population, the instruction nevertheless insisted upon abolishing scutelnici, peasants entering into personal dependence upon the boyars and thereby exempted from state taxes.

³⁴⁶ RGIA, Fond. 1286, op. 2, file 70, Ff. 30-33.

rationale of this measure was to prevent “pernicious discord” and “envy (*zavist*)” between peoples.”³⁴⁸ Preservation of amicable relationships with Moldavia was necessary since the new border on the Pruth divided the land possessions of the Moldavian boyars. The latter were given a year and a half to sell their lands in either Moldova or Bessarabia and decide upon the place of living. The petitions of the boyars and Gavriil’s intercession won them the right to preserve their possessions on both sides of the Pruth, which was confirmed by 1816 instruction. Offering the extension of the deadline Russian government clearly sought to attract the Moldavian boyars to its side.³⁴⁹

The appointment of the emperor’s viceroy brought about the new stage in the conflict between the Bessarabian landlords and the transdanubian settlers. Sensing the increased attention of imperial government to the problems of the new region, both sides sought to use what could be the last opportunity to solve the conflict in their favor. The intrigue consisted in the fact that the sympathetic position of the central government vis-a-vis the settler’s cause came together with a new surge of the rhetoric of the respect of local customs and traditions and a new stage of the administrative experiment. Bakhmet’ev’s first measure was to communicate the intentions of the emperor to the local population in order stop the flight of the peasantry and make it swear the oath of loyalty that had not been taken yet. In his address, Bakhmet’ev declared that “Bessarabian province will be governed on the basis of its fundamental laws in accordance with its mores customs and privileges belonging to each estate.” Besides, the address contained the exemption from military recruitment, the right to export cereals and cattle as well as the right to present the grievances to the viceroy.³⁵⁰ Bakhmetiev’s first measure in respect of the settlers was to stop any transfers of people to or

³⁴⁷ With exception of Romai serfs, who constituted about one percent of Bessarabian population and acquired personal freedom in the 1860s.

³⁴⁸ RGIA, fond 1286, op. 2 no. 70, F. 46.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.. Ff. 47-49.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., Ff. 59-60.

from the crown lands until the definitive solution was reached.³⁵¹ At the same time, he advised against the formation of the Cossack army out of the Bulgarians and suggested giving them the status of colonists, pointing to their successes in agriculture and failures in war as well as expressing a concern about their loyalty of these former Ottoman subjects in the proximity of the border.³⁵²

Dissatisfied with measures taken by Bakhmetiev, the landlords sent a new address to the tsar basing their demand for the return of the settlers to their lands by reference to local legal tradition. They referred to Justinian's code prohibiting peasants to change the landlords at their own discretion as well as a number of important precedents when disputes between the landlords and the fugitive peasants were solved in favor of the former.³⁵³ Responding to the boyar address, Capodistria ordered Bakhmet'iev to give this matter a serious consideration. The latter, in his turn sent all the attending documents to the "Temporary Committee" presided by Bessarabian Civil Governor I. Kh. Kalageorgii, which was charged with the solution of the region's outstanding problems. The composition of the Committee (two "Russian" members, Kalageorgii and Iushnevskii, and nine locals) influenced the way it treated the matter. The "Russian" members took the side of the settlers, while the Romanians sided with the landlords' cause.³⁵⁴ While the final solution of the question ultimately depended on the emperor, Bakhmetiev took measures that ultimately helped to overcome the hidden contradiction of Capdistria's policy of stimulating colonization through preservation of local laws and customs. Presiding over the elaboration of the new institutions of new nobility-based Bessarabian autonomy, Bakhmetiev at the same time appointed a Russian

³⁵¹ See Bakmetiev's order from July 1, 1816, in *Istoria Moldavii*, 224

³⁵² Bakhmet'ev to Alexander I July 3, 1816 i *ibid.*, 225-228.

³⁵³ July 26, 1816, in *ibid.*, 252.

³⁵⁴ See the reports of the Temporary Committee from June 23, August 1 and August 11, 1817 all in *ibid.*, 415-426, 426-431, 432-433.

officer of Bulgarian origin as a head of temporary administration of the Bulgarian settlers with six subordinates in each of the districts populated by settlers.³⁵⁵

Along with these measures aiming to solve the dispute between colonists and landlords, the “Temporary Committee” was charged with elaboration of the draft of the statute prescribed by the emperor’s instruction. However, the committee failed to produce the desired statute because of the conflict that developed between Bakhmet’ev and Kalageorgii as well as failure of its noble members to participate regularly in deliberations. Willing to remain the sole arbiter of local legal tradition based on unwritten custom interspersed with fragmented borrowings from Byzantine law, Bessarabian nobility was reluctant to contribute to formal fixation of rights and obligations that necessarily would diminish its actual role in local affairs. As a result, the bulk of the work over the statute was done by Bakhmet’ev’s chancellery that Bakhmetiev took from Podolia, namely by its head G. Krinitskii.³⁵⁶ The draft of the statute produced by the beginning of 1817 was sent to St Petersburg, where it was reviewed by Capodistria and received the tsar primary approbation. The authors of the Statute were given the task to complement the draft with clauses, which would specify the rights and duties of each stratum (*sostoiania*) of local population. Drawing a lesson from the complications generated by the administrative chaos of the first years after the annexation, St. Petersburg policy-makers sought to forestall possible fears and apprehensions of Bessarabian population about their rights.

No less important, was the manner in which the new Statute was introduced. Taking advantage of Alexander I’s decision to take an inspection trip around the southern provinces of the Empire, Capodistria convinced the emperor to visit Bessarabia *en route* to Crimea. The emperor’s personal visit to Chisinau, accompanied by formal approval of the Statute was supposed to give greater weight to the new institutions and stress the Alexander’s

³⁵⁵ Bakhmet’ev to Vakioti, July 10, 1816, in *ibid.*, 236-239.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

benevolence to and special care for the newly annexed region. The timing of the visit, which was planned after the first session of the Polish Sejm, suggested a relationship between Polish and Bessarabian autonomy, and reflected the general approach adopted by the emperor in respect of the newly acquired territories. Although Alexander I's experience of Bessarabia must have been disappointing. Nevertheless, by the end of his short stay in Chisinau the Emperor changed his opinion and, in a mood of sentimentalist contemplation, even called Bessarabia a "golden country."³⁵⁷ On April 29, after receiving the delegation of the Bessarabian nobles, the emperor approved the "Statute for the Formation of the Bessarabian Province," which provided the legal basis for its autonomous administration for the following decade. The emperor's rescript to Bakhmet'ev accompanying the Statute declared that "Bessarabian province retains its national character and therefore receives a special form of administration."

Adopting a statute, which consolidated the place Bessarabian nobility in local administration, Alexander I, at the same time, made a cautious qualification that "this limitless good should not be the exclusive privilege of one estate of the inhabitants." Finding the peasantry "oppressed by the yoke imposed on them by self-interest and ignorance," the emperor expressed a wish that "a permanent and firm vigilance of the Government seek to liberate them from this extreme evil."³⁵⁸ In practical terms this meant that the peasantry retained its personal freedom from the landlords, while their property was placed "under the custody of the government." All peasants, regardless of the category of land were to pay the state taxes.³⁵⁹ This meant the abolition of the institute of *scutelnici*, which was found incompatible with Russian fiscal practices and which Alexander I considered as "an anticipation of the measures that the Government will use to open the way for true success of

³⁵⁷ See the account of Alexander I's visit in A. F. Vel'tman, "Vospominania o Bessarabii," 231, and A. I. Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, "Puteshestvie s Imperatorom Aleksandrom I po Juzhnoi Rossii v 1818-m godu," *Russkaia starina*, Vol. 79, no. 7, (1877). 78.

³⁵⁸ "Ustav obrazovania Bessarabskoi oblasti," PSZ, ser 1, vol. 35, no. 27,357, 222.

enlightenment in this country.”³⁶⁰ Finally, guarding his bets, the emperor introduced the Statute only provisionally, pointing out that it should be tested by time “time and experience” before receiving an ultimate confirmation.

The solution that Alexander I adopted on the issue of colonists likewise reflected his reluctance to abandon himself to the good will and administrative capacities of Bessarabian nobles. Consolidating Bessarabian autonomy based on the preservation of local laws and wide participation of the nobility in local government, the emperor at the same time exempted the colonists from the jurisdiction of the Bessarabian provincial authorities and subordinated them to the Board of the Foreign Settlers of the South of Russia. The appropriate ukase was prepared in advance by Major General I. N. Inzov, incidentally a Bulgarian by origin, and presented for the emperor’s signature simultaneously with the Statute.³⁶¹ If the petitions of Bessarabian nobles and Metropolitan Gavriil skillfully exploited Alexander’s policy of preservation of peculiar political institutions in the newly annexed territories, the activities of Jiushnevskii, Kalageorgii and Inzov demonstrate that the colonists also had their “lobby”, which appealed to the tradition of colonization policies pursued in New Russia since 1760s. Placing the colonists under a separate administration was tantamount to recognition that the southern part of Bessarabia with its special prospects for colonization differed in character from its central and northern parts and cannot be governed by Bessarabian Supreme Council dominated by local nobles.

The usual inadequacies of imperial administration apart, the reason why it took Russian authorities seven years to solve this conflict was the conflicting nature of the obligations they undertook at the moment of annexation of Bessarabia. On the one hand, given their desire to retain influence over Moldavia and Wallachia, the Russian government could not afford the luxury to solve the question by a simple administrative fiat at the expense

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 230.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 222.

of the local nobles. On the other hand, insofar as the Russian authorities sought to colonize the under populated region and turn it into a prosperous country able to further attract the interest of the Balkan Christians, they could not ignore the interests of the transdanubian settlers and leave them at the landlords' discretion. Therefore, their complex if somewhat contradictory goals made the imperial authorities in the region seek to strike a balance between the conflicting interests of the landlords and the settlers in a rather self-defeating attempt to make Bessarabia attractive for both.

Nevertheless, even after the solution of the conflict between transdanubian settlers and Bessarabian landlords, Capodistria seems to have underestimated the tension between the rhetoric of "conservation of local laws and customs" and the policy of colonization. Two years after the transdanubian settlers were placed under Board of the Foreign Settlers of the South of Russia, the administration of colonists was once again combined with government of Bessarabian province. In 1820 the Head of the Board of Foreign Settlers Lieutenant-General I. P. Inzov replaced Bakhmetiev as Bessarabian viceroy. In his instructions to Inzov, Capodistria reaffirmed the rationale of Bessarabian "experiment" based on a combination of "the laws and customs, of the languages and of privileges of the country, with a promise to found there on the basis of these concessions a regime conforming to the national spirit of the inhabitants, to their needs and their habits."³⁶² However, the first years of operation of the Statute and Inzov's activities soon demonstrated to Capodistria the necessity of some modifications. A Bulgarian by origin and supporter of colonists, Inzov found the privileges of Bessarabian nobles abusive. Taking advantage of the conflict between various factions of Bessarabian nobility, he adopted harsh measures regulating the election to the positions in provincial and district administration as well as initiated the process of verification of noble

³⁶¹ See the decision of the Committee of Ministers from 18 October, 1819 in *Istoria Moldovy*, 537-539.

³⁶² "Projet d'instruction pour le General Inzoff", June 27, 1820, cited in Patricia Kennedy-Grimstead, "Capodistrias and the New Order for Restoration Europe: The Liberal Ideas of a Russian Foreign Minister, 1814-1822", *Journal of Modern History* 40, no. 2, (1968): 182.

titles, which significantly reduced the number of recognized noble families in Bessarabia.³⁶³ This made Capodistria recognize the necessity of some centralization measures aiming to create “a firm and permanent link between peculiar local government and the general administrative system of the state.”³⁶⁴ Nevertheless, having admitted the imperfections of the Statute, Capodistria continued to consider it “a firm foundation of well-being of Bessarabia.”³⁶⁵

Alexander I’s “Constitutionalism”, Russian Foreign Policy and the Greek Crisis

The rhetoric of “national government” accompanying the elaboration and introduction of Bessarabian Statute of 1818 reflected an attempt of the monarchy to fill in the voids left by traditional Russian imperial myths with the help of the political philosophy of Enlightenment. By the turn of the 19th century (and in some cases even earlier) the potential of these mythologies was exhausted as Russian expansion stepped beyond the traditional symbolic limits. By no stretch of imagination could the annexation of Finland in 1809, Mazovia and Warsaw in 1815 or Bessarabia in 1812 be accommodated within the myth of “Gathering of the Russian lands” or claiming the inheritance of the Golden Horde.³⁶⁶ In order to legitimize the annexation of these territories, Russian monarchy sought to incorporate elements of local political traditions into imperial ideology and at the same time give the latter a more or less systematic form. In order to achieve these somewhat contradictory objectives, in its relationship with the elites of the Western borderlands, the Russian monarchy adopted the political language of contemporary constitutionalism giving it an altogether untraditional interpretation.

³⁶³ Nakko, “Ocherk grazhdanskogo ustroistva Bessarabskoi Oblasti s 1812 po 1828 gg,” 191-193.

³⁶⁴ “Vsepoddaneishii doklad stats-sekretaria grafa I. A. Kapodistria ob upravlenii Bessarabskoi oblastiiu za 1816-1820 gg.” (March 17, 1822), *Nestor*, No. 7, 2005, 63.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁶⁶ Andreas, Kappeler, “Formirovanie Rossiskoi imperii v XV – nachale XVIII veka: Nasledstvo Vizantii Rusi i Ordy,” in A. I. Miller (ed.) *Rossiskaia Imperia v strannitel’noi perspective* (Moscow: Novoie Izdatel’stvo, 2004), 94-116.

Constitutional settlements adopted in 1809 in Finland and in 1815 in the Kingdom of Poland sought to secure cooperation with regional elites and potentially provide the models for the rest of the empire. In this respect, Alexander I's speech at the opening of Polish Sejm in 1818, which was written by the emperor himself in cooperation with Capodistria, reveals the fundamental assumptions of this kind of "constitutionalism." "The organization that previously existed in your country allowed immediate introduction of the one that I give to you. In this way I put into practice the principles of these liberal (*zakonno-svobodnyie*) institutions, which have always been the object of my care and whose salutary influence I hope to extend with the help of God to all the countries that providence entrusted me. You give me a means to demonstrate to my country, what I have been preparing for her and what it will obtain as soon as the aspects of this important necessary work will be effected."³⁶⁷ One can see that 1) the emperor found it possible to grant a constitution to the Kingdom of Poland given its degree of enlightenment reflected in the organization that has previously had; 2) the emperor found the Kingdom of Poland more civilized than other territories of the empire, which is why Polish constitution was to serve as model and example for the upcoming liberal institutions for the rest of the empire; 3) the emperor considered both the Polish Constitution and the future institutions for the Russian Empire as his benevolent grant rather than concession to any "demands," or recognition of any historical privileges.

The Warsaw speech of Alexander I contained important principles, on the basis of which emperor sought to redefine and systematize a sprawling imperial space. Since the early 18th century the monarchy accorded a privileged political status to the elites of the Western borderlands that played an important role in Russia's westernization. These territories retained peculiar political institutions differing from the dominant administrative scheme. By confirming the traditional privileges of the Baltic German nobility, Peter the Great placed

³⁶⁷ Alexander I's Speech at the Opening of Polish Sejm on March 15, 1818, RGIA, fond 1005, op. 1, no. 7, Ff. 2-4.

Livland and Estland on a special status within the empire, which soon became the desired ideal for the representatives of other regional elites such as the Cossack *starshina* of the Ukrainian Hetmanate. Or, alternatively, a special, but not necessarily inferior, place in the imperial space could result from the territory's underdevelopment. One can think of New Russia in the 1770s and 1780s as the example of such a territory, where the initial wilderness and the imperative for development justified the suspension of norms, which existed elsewhere. Various autonomous political forms introduced in the Duchy of Finland, the Kingdom of Poland and in Bessarabia represented a continuation of this tendency in the early 19th century. What called them to live was the growing dissatisfaction with the functioning of standard gubernia administration and the necessity to fill in the legitimacy voids resulting from the inapplicability of the traditional imperial myths to these outreaching territories.

However, by providing some regional elites with special political institutions, the monarchy implicitly demonstrated to the nobility of central regions that it considered them less enlightened and civilized. Russian nobility and officialdom inevitably resented a privileged political status of the some regional elites producing a counter-discourse that questioned the assumption that the nobilities of Western borderlands were more enlightened and civilized. The acrimony, with which Russian nobility met Alexander I's Warsaw speech of 1818 reminds one of the clashes between Great Russian nobility and the nobility of the Baltic Provinces and the Cossack *starshina* over their privileged status during the 1767 Legislative commission convoked by Catherine the Great.³⁶⁸ N. M. Karamzin, V. N. Karazin, A. A. Zakrevskii and A. P. Ermolov in 1818 just like M. M. Shcherbatov in 1767, opposed a vision of the imperial space, whereby certain regional elites in the Western parts of the empire were deemed more enlightened than the Russian nobility and served the models for

³⁶⁸ Isabel' de Madariaga, *Rossia v epokhu Ekateriny Velikoi* (Moscow: Novoie Literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002), 283.

the development of the latter.³⁶⁹ The role of Capodistria in the formulation of this approach was not a secret for them producing a very symptomatic response on the part of Vasil Karazin: “Well, well, you cursed Greek soul, Mister D’Istria! Here is how you made our Alexander speak from the miserable throne of Warsaw! That Hell takes you, canaille! Such are the rogues (sahari) that surround the emperor instead of the Panins, the Zubovs etc. etc., who are left idling in their dens, suckling their paws. Can’t the emperor really stand anything Russian?”³⁷⁰

Alexander’s peculiar way of dealing with the resentment of the Great Russian nobility was to extend the constitutional regime existing in the Kingdom of Poland onto the whole of the empire and accord to the Great Russian nobility and all other regional elites the same political liberties. On Alexander I’s order in 1819-1820 the Imperial Commissioner in the Kingdom of Poland N. N. Novosil’tsev and his chancellery including P. I. Pechar-Dechamp and P. A. Viazemskii elaborated perhaps the most ambitious project of the whole reign – the Constitutional Charter of the Russian Empire.³⁷¹ The key element of the proposed settlement was the “federal” structure of the Empire.³⁷² According to the idea of its authors, the Kingdom of Poland (along with the Grand Duchy of Finland, Georgia and Bessarabia) would cease to be administrative anomalies as soon as the whole empire gets divided into twelve autonomous viceroyalties “according to the density of population, distances, and taking into consideration the mores, customs and local laws” united by central ministries and the legislative (the State and the Seims of viceroyalties) the structure of which reflected the new territorial units into which the empire was to be divided (art. 91).³⁷³ In other words,

³⁶⁹ For the reaction of the Russian nobility to Alexander I’s speech before Polish Seim see S. V. Mironenko, *Samoderzhavie i reformy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 159-161.

³⁷⁰ Karazin’s memoirs cited in G. V. Sirotkin, “Bor’ba v lagere konservativnogo russkogo dvorianstva po voprosam vneshnei politiki posle voyny 1812 goda i otstavka Kapodistrii,” in *Problemy mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii i osvoboditel’nykh dvizhenii* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi Pedagogicheskii Institut, 1975), 41.

³⁷¹ For the details of elaboration of the Charter see S. V. Mironenko, *Samoderzhavie i reformy*, 163-206.

³⁷² For an interpretation of the Constitutional Charter as a “federal” document see George Vernadsky, *Gosudarstvennaia Ustavnaia gramota Rossiskoi imperii*. (Prague, 1925)

³⁷³ Theodore Schiemann (ed.), *Gosudarstvennaia ustavnaia gramota Rossiiskoi imperii* (Berlin, 1903).

Alexander I's response to criticism of his Polish policy was to trivialize the Polish liberties rather than abolish them altogether. Characteristically, the Polish Constitution was to be replaced by the new constitutional document embracing the whole empire.³⁷⁴ The latter was justified by the similarity of principles of the Polish Constitution and the Constitutional Charter and the impracticability of the two constitutions within the Empire. The Kingdom of Poland was to be called a viceroyalty governed in accordance with the Constitutional Charter and the civil and criminal codes existing in the Kingdom of Poland.

Although the Charter introduced "popular representation," emperor retained exclusive legislative initiative as well as the ability to influence the composition of the State and provincial Seims. The State Seim convoked every five years was composed of the Seims of Viceroyalties (art. 100). The Seims were to consider the projects of the local and general laws sent for their consideration by the emperor as well as budgets and yearly reports of the viceroys on all the aspects of the government (arts. 103 - 104, 115). Besides, their competence included the discussion of the instructions given to the deputies by the electors and make their content known to the emperor (art. 103). Organized in this way the Seims had to fulfill two functions: mobilize the public support for the emperor's policies and provide him with information on the interests of various social strata. At the same time, the emperor had the possibility to define the social profile of the Lower Chambers depending on the population. The Charter thus represented an ingenuous attempt to reserve the maximum space for maneuver for the monarchy and minimize its commitments to any social group (provincial nobility, nascent central bureaucracy) or regional elite. The character of the Charter and Alexander I's "constitutionalism" in general could be described in the same terms, which Speranskii used in respect of his "Plan of the Comprehensive State Reform" elaborated a decade earlier. As opposed to the constitutions of virtually all other states, "formed in

³⁷⁴ The draft of the corresponding decree cited by George Vernadskii, *Gosudarstvennaia Ustavnaia Gramota Rossiskoi imperii*, 42-43.

different times, fragment by fragment, usually amidst severe political revolutions (*prevraschenii*)... Russian constitution, according to Speranskii, had to owe its existence... to the benevolent inspiration of the higher power, which having established the political existence of its people, would give it the most rational forms.”³⁷⁵ The theme of constitution as the benevolent gift of the monarch to his subjects, and especially to the elites of the newly annexed territories, was just as important for Alexander I’s “constitutionalism” as element of rationalization of the internal administration mentioned by earlier scholars.

Yet, the importance of Alexander I’s “constitutionalism” went beyond rationalization of internal government or the relationships with the regional elites and had important implications for Russian foreign policy in 1815-1820. Facing a coalition of Austria and Great Britain at the Vienna Congress, Alexander I responded by putting forward the idea of Saint Alliance of Christian monarchs. His version of monarchical unity, however, differed substantially from the political legitimism of Metternich. Sensing that the latter would first of all benefit Austria by restoring its hegemony in Germany and Italy, Alexander I considered the idea of keeping Ioachim Murat on the throne of Naples and actively advocated Prussian annexation of part of Saxony as a compensation for Russian control over the bulk of the former Duchy of Warsaw. The positive side of this opposition to strictly legitimist principles was the support of moderate constitutional settlements such as the French Constitutional Charter of 1814, the constitutions of Bavaria and the Grand Duchy of Baden as well as the advocacy of constitutional settlement between the Spain and its rebellious colonies. This policy of monarchical constitutionalism sought to exploit the European monarchs’ creeping sentiment of impossibility to rule in pre-revolutionary ways and represented an attempt to win the loyalty of the moderate oppositionists in the struggle with radicals. As has been indicated, Alexander I never considered constitution a mutually binding contract between

³⁷⁵ Mikhail Speranskii, “Plan vseobshchego gosudarstvennogo obrazovania,” in *ibid*, *Rukovodstvo k poznaniuu zakonov* (St Petersburg: Nauka, 2002), 342.

himself and a regional elite, but rather his magnanimous gift to the latter, through which he hoped to disarm the opposition. The creation of the Constitutional Kingdom of Poland, which bewildered Alexander I's councilors and adversaries alike, makes some sense if viewed from this perspective. On the other hand, professing the principles of monarchical constitutionalism was an attempt to win the popularity among the moderate European oppositionists to their respective governments (e. g. Alexander I's overtures to British liberal opposition to Castlereagh during his visit to London in 1814 or playing with Italian opposition to Metternich in 1818).³⁷⁶

Capodistria actively supported the emperor in this policy and even went beyond him in an attempt to give it a systematic exposition as an alternative strategy of dealing with the danger of revolution in post-1815 Europe. His letter to the French Foreign Minister and former Governor-General of Odessa Richelieu written in August 1820, after the beginning of the Spanish and Italian revolutions, is particularly revealing in this respect. Capodistria portrayed the revolutions in Spain and Naples as the result of subversive activities coordinated from "Paris clubs" by people "brought up in the school of popular despotism of the French revolution." Calling this the general "the malady of the century," Capodistria nevertheless pointed out that the social edifice collapsed in the countries where the government "got isolated as a result of an absurd and arbitrary administration." Conversely, the revolutionaries failed everywhere "where wise institutions opposed to their seductions the invincible presence of laws, guaranteeing, alongside with a firm authority, the legitimate rights and interests of the people." Following this, Capodistria contrasted the situation Germany and Prussia with the conditions in Spain and Naples. Whereas the former had adopted or were about to adopt constitutions, the latter failed to win support of their

³⁷⁶ Alan J. Reinerman, "Metternich, Alexander I, and the Russian Challenge in Italy, 1815-20," *Journal of Modern History* 46, no. 2 (1974): 262-276.

subjects.³⁷⁷ Capodistria was writing to Richelieu from Warsaw, where he arrived together with Alexander I for the opening of the Polish Seim. Taking place before the Troppau congress of the Saint Alliance scheduled to discuss the revolutions in Spain and Italy, the session of the Polish Seim had to demonstrate the advantages of the monarchical constitutionalism over the narrow-minded legitimism of Metternich. Indicative of the hopes that Capodistria and Alexander I pinned on the smooth operation of Polish Seim is the letter, which Capodistria addressed from Warsaw to Russian envoy in Berlin Baron Alopeus: “At the time when so many deplorable events appear to undermine all confidence, it’s consoling to find at least one country in Europe where the social order is founded in good faith and regulated according to the liberal principles.”³⁷⁸ However, the plan did not work, for during the Seim sessions Alexander I encountered strong opposition of Polish liberals.³⁷⁹

After a key element of the alternative European settlement failed justify the tsar’s expectations, Metternich made a decisive attack on the whole policy of monarchical constitutionalism during meetings with Alexander I at Troppau. In order to demonstrate the dangers of Alexander I’s “liberal” policies, he portrayed the revolutions in Spain and Naples, Polish opposition and even the mutiny of Semenovskii guards regiment in St. Petersburg as elements of one revolutionary plot directed by mysterious “Paris Committee”. At the same time, Metternich appealed to emperor’s cherished idea of Saint Alliance as the only way to counteract this revolutionary plotting. Whereas the Polish opposition demanded from Alexander I to act as a true constitutional monarch, Metternich wanted him to be a true legitimist. Alexander I resisted this double attempt to impute him conflicting commitments that he never made, but under the pressure of new revolutionary wave in Europe and conservative opposition at home he was forced to make a choice. Metternich’s skillful

³⁷⁷ Capodistria to Richelieu, August 22, 1820, Warsaw, *RIO* 54, (1886): 548.

³⁷⁸ Cited in Patricia Kennedy-Grimstead, 188.

³⁷⁹ Thackeray, Frank W. *Antecedents of Revolution: Alexander I and the Polish kingdom, 1815-1825* (Columbia University Press Boulder [Colo.]: East European Monographs, 1980).

exploitation of Alexander I's fear of secret societies bore its fruit and for the time being Alexander I abandoned both the attempts to challenge Austrian dominance in Germany and Italy and the political reform at home. An ideological concession to Metternich's legitimism entailed a sacrifice of real political interests after the beginning of Greek uprising in March 1821.

Capodistrias was not a doctrinaire. Facing insurmountable obstacles in the realization of his Greek project after 1812, he revealed flexibility, which allowed him to retain the influence over Russian foreign policy for a long time. Sympathizing with the goal of Greek liberation, Capodistria nevertheless remained a champion of compromise and moderation. He understood that the general tenor of Alexander I policy after the Congress of Vienna made unlikely Russian-Ottoman war in support of the Greek rebellion advocated by the more radical Greek leaders. That is why he concentrated on building up a new Greek elite through educational policies preparing the ground for the establishment of the Greek independence when the European context in general and Russian foreign policy in particular would be more propitious. With this aim he established the Greek "Society of the Lovers of the Muses" (*Philomusos Etaireia*) during the Vienna Congress.³⁸⁰ Very soon however, his name and institution came to be used by the followers of the "Friendly Society" (*Philikí Etaireía*) formed in Odessa in the autumn of 1814 by three Greek merchants and promoting a much more radical solution to the Greek grievances. Deceived by traditional image of the Russian tsar as the protector of Orthodoxy, the *etairists* saw Capodistria as the natural leader of the Greek revolutionary movement and even offered him to become the head of *Philikí Etaireía*, an offer that he turned down with indignation.³⁸¹ Nevertheless, the *etairists* continued to use Capodistria's name in order to mobilize support among Greeks in both Russia and the

³⁸⁰ The goal of the society was to raise funds for the creation of Greek academies at Athens and mount Pilon. Alexander I and a number of European dignitaries made considerable donations. Botzaris, *Visions balkaniques*, 69.

³⁸¹ Arsh, *Kapodistria*, 202-205.

Ottoman Empire, placing Russian foreign minister in a very awkward situation. In his letters to the Greek leaders both in Russia and abroad he repeatedly insisted that he never supported the idea of a revolutionary uprising. Although Capodistria's true intentions were the development of Greek education, "some intrigants deliberately misinterpret them and attribute to the Society of the Lovers of the Muses a different motive and the pursuit of more far reaching goals."³⁸² At the same time, Capodistria could do very little to stop the activities of the *etairists*, caught as he was between the moral bonds towards his co-nationals on the one hand, and the loyalty to the tsar and his political convictions on the other.

Etairists' calculations were not entirely self-serving. Russian authorities in Odessa and Bessarabia were accustomed enough of Russian protection of orthodox co-religionists to turn a blind eye to *etairists'* military preparations even without an explicit order of the emperor.³⁸³ By early 1821 they concentrated about five hundred armed supporters in Bessarabia and on February 22, crossed the Pruth and occupied Jassy. Their leader was Alexander Ypsilanti, the son of pro-Russian hospodar Constantine Ypsilanti and a former aide-du-champ of Alexander I. From Jassy Ypsilanti issued a proclamation to the Greek nationals of the Balkans calling for a struggle against the Sultan relating it to the struggle of European peoples for their rights and promising "the appearance of a great power protecting our rights" – a veiled reference to Russia. In his letter addressed to Alexander I on the same day, Ypsilanti argued that the uprising of the Greeks comes from God and that Providence has chosen the tsar to help it. Adopting a clearly mystical language, the leader of the rebels sought to appeal to Alexander I's well known mystical inclinations.³⁸⁴ Ypsilanti's letter to Odessa Governor-General A. F. Langeron written already in Jassy demonstrates that his game

³⁸² Capodistria to Vardaloakhos (the Rector of the Greek Higher Commercial Schools in Odessa) January 3, 1820, cited in Arsh, *Kapodistria*, 292-294. Capodistrias wrote similar letters to the Walachian Metropolitan Ignace, Russian consul in Apulia and the Archipelago L. P. Benacki and to the ruler of Mani Petro-bei Mavromikhalis.

³⁸³ Arsh, *Eteristskoie dvizhenie v Rossii*, 262-263.

was essentially a bluff. Ypsilanti tried to convince Langeron that the emperor knows everything and that Langeron risks nothing allowing the Greek detachments formed in Odessa join his forces in Moldavia.³⁸⁵ The same bluff was used in order to enroll the Greeks (including the Moldavian hospodar Mihai Suțo) and even some Romanian boyars of the principalities into the movement.³⁸⁶ The whole strategy of the *etairists* in fact hinged upon the inevitability of Russian military intervention on behalf of the Greeks after the uprising had been proclaimed in the name of the Russian tsar by his former aide-du-champ. Yet, as is well-known, Russian intervention failed to materialize and, in order to understand why, the character of the foreign policy of Alexander I after the Congress of Vienna should be taken into consideration.

The failure of monarchical constitutionalism as strategy of the compromise between the imperial and regional elites and an alternative political settlement for the restoration Europe resulted from the lack of an original political language. In the absence of it, Alexander I and his foreign minister used elements of the existent political idioms of constitutionalism and monarchical unity. As has been demonstrated, Alexander's understanding of both elements in this strategy was rather unconventional. A fragile combination of poorly articulated ideas, monarchical constitutionalism of Alexander I and Capodistria succumbed to the pressure of traditional interpretations of constitution and monarchical unity articulated, respectively, by Polish opposition at the 1820 Seim and Metternich. Forced to be either a champion of legitimism or a constitutional monarch, Alexander I chose the former. In a situation of new wave of European revolutions that could not have been different. At such a moment of high ideological tension there came the explosion of the Greek rebellion in the principalities in March 1821. Alexander I who already

³⁸⁴ Both Ypsilanti's appeal to the Greeks and his letter to Alexander I are published in Notis Botzaris, *Visions balkaniques*, 227-230.

³⁸⁵ Cited in Arsh, *Eteristskoie dvizhenie v Rossii*, 309.

³⁸⁶ A. Otetea, *Rascoala lui Tudor Vladimirescu*, 181.

had to admit at Troppau that his “liberal” policies were a mistake and demonstrated determination to quell the Italian revolutions by dispatching Russian troops to the peninsula, now found himself implicated in a revolutionary uprising against a lawful sovereign. Although the Sultan was never a part of the brotherly union of the three Christian monarchs concluded in Vienna, Alexander I himself decided to sacrifice the traditional active policy in the East to the still grander vision of the monarchical unity in Europe, whether as a strategy of preventing a new revolution or a means of achieving Russian hegemony on the continent. Predictably, the emperor denied any implication in the affair and denounced attempts to use his name for the support of the rebel’s cause.³⁸⁷ Such an outcome meant the failure of Capodistria’s policy of peaceful and gradual emancipation of his co-nationals from the Ottoman dominance. Not unlike *etairist* rebels, Metternich, preferred to disregard the difference between *Philomusos Etaireia* and *Philiki Etaireia* and sought to portray his diplomatic rival as the secrete instigator of the revolutionary rebellion. In less than a year after the beginning of Greek uprising, Capodistria lost the remnants of his former influence over the tsar, leaving Russia forever in 1822.

Capodistria’s carrier in Russia demonstrates the vulnerability of the reforming policy in the epoch of sharp polarization produced by the revolution. Representing alongside Michael Speranskii and Adam Czartoryski the generation of the late enlightenment statesmen, the figure of Capodistria symbolized the ultimate impossibility of enlightened absolutism in a political universe increasingly defined by the ideological divide between the conservatives and the liberals. In this new political context, the 18th century belief that society is identical with the state and therefore could be rationally governed from a single point was no longer tenable. Adopting a conservative attitude, absolutist rulers conceded to the revolutionary forces the monopoly for political change and with it, an important source of

³⁸⁷ The Tsar’s disapprobation was communicated to Ypsilanti by Capodistria in private letter on March 26, 1821, published in Notis Botzaris, *Visions balkaniques*, 230-232.

legitimacy. The political paradigm to which Capodistria belonged presupposed the readiness of an absolute ruler to follow the logic of reform unswervingly and embrace even the most radical implications of the reforming policy. Only in this way the monarchical government could retain the role of an undisputed moral leader and thus an ideological hegemony over all social groups. Any reticence on the part of the ruler, however natural in view of the revolutionary excesses, opened the space for formation of alternative political forces claiming the function of social leadership, which in Russian case took the form of intelligentsia. The ensuing political struggle between the intelligentsia and the government had dramatic consequences not only for Russian *ancien regime*, but also for the civil society as a whole.

Capodistria's role of a Greek political leader brought the limitations of the reforming policy in particularly sharp focus. In order to better account for these limitations it might be worthwhile to compare his political carrier with the carrier of Adam Czartoryski. Both statesmen at some point were in charge of Russian foreign policy and used this position in order to implement a scheme of collaboration between the Russian Empire on the one hand, and Polish and Greek elites on the other. In both cases this collaboration was to be achieved through some sort of constitutional settlement, which integrated the elites in question into imperial government and at the same time secured their regional dominance. Champions of political liberation of their compatriots through moderate reform and compromise, both Czartoryski and Capodistria soon came under a double attack of radicals among their co-nationals and the conservatives among the imperial elite that ultimately cost them their political carriers. Their course of peaceful and gradual political enfranchisement of their co-nationals could not satisfy the maximalistic aspirations of Polish and Greek radicals, while the Russian and European conservatives found their policy a dangerous play with liberalism compromising the spirit of monarchical restoration and legitimism. Significantly, Capodistria and Czartoryski left Russian service at about the same time, after which their ways

remarkably diverged. Whereas the former retained his pro-Russian orientation long after he left Russia to become eventually the first president of Greece in 1827-1831, the latter ended up as the leader of the strongly anti-Russian Polish emigration. This contrast is indicative of the difference in the relationship between Russian Empire and the Greek and Polish elites respectively. While the bulk of the Polish *szlachta* after 1795 came to be Russian subjects of questionable loyalty, the Greek remained overwhelmingly under the Ottoman dominance treating Russia as a possible ally in the struggle for liberation. While Poles and Russians were divided by confessional boundaries, both Russians and Greeks exploited their common Orthodoxy. The Polish elite was a relatively mobilized group sharing common culture, deeply nostalgic of the old Commonwealth and seizing every opportunity to restore it. The Greek leadership was much more culturally heterogeneous and much more undetermined about the form and territory of future Greek polity. Yet, despite the difference of their basic situations in both cases there was some potential for strategic alliance with the Russian Empire. Both Capodistria and Czartoryski sought to exploit this potential and both ultimately fell prey to the contradictions between imperial and national agendas.

Capodistria's case also demonstrates the inability of imperial policy-makers to control the implications of their policies in a complex institutional and ideological environment. Thus, Capodistria's project of turning Bessarabia into a new homeland for the Balkan peoples was plagued from the beginning by the ambiguity of colonization vs. cooperation with local nobility, which was immediately exploited by local actors. The personality of Capodistria encapsulates a more general predicament of relationships between empire and regional (local) elites demonstrating the reversibility of power relationships between them. Behind the attempt of the Greek radicals to impose upon Russian Foreign Minister the role of the leader of Greek liberation movement, there was a much more ambitious tendency to manipulate with Russian foreign policy by invoking the rhetoric of protection of orthodox co-religionists,

which the tsars widely used in the past in order to create a fifth column in the rear of the Ottoman armies. Calling the bill due in February 1821, the *etairist* leaders sought to make Russian Empire serve the interests of the Greek cause. Their failure brings about the problem of continuity vs. discontinuity of Russian imperial policies in general, and the policies in Romanian principalities in particular, and here again the figure of Capodistria is very symbolic. Although one encounters a number of recurrent ideas, themes and symbols, be that the protection of Orthodoxy, the “Greek project”, reform of local political institutions or the monarchical unity, all these elements were too heterogeneous to be incorporated into single grand strategy. Finally, the tragic end of Capodistria’s Russian carrier is a striking illustration of hierarchy of priorities in imperial policies, whereby Russia’s continuous fixation on Europe produced discontinuities in imperial policies in the Balkans and the principalities.

Chapter III Administrative Assimilation of Bessarabia and the Contemporary Debates on the Administrative Reform in Russia

Bessarabian “experiment” proposed by Capodistria and supported by Alexander I represented an application of the 18th century political philosophy to the task of empire building. Pursuing real political objectives of retaining the moral influence over the orthodox subjects of the Sultan this policy was conceived in terms of Montesquieu’s “Spirit of Laws”. Aiming to transform the public mores corrupted by oriental despotism and secure the well-being of the new subjects, the tsar and his minister took care to tailor their measures in accordance with local customs and traditions. In comparison with the classical enlightened despots like Joseph II or Catherine the Great, who pursued a rational (re)organization the society through the application of uniform procedures to the disregard of local peculiarities, the approach of Alexander I was a step forward insofar as it sought to “humanize” the state rationality and attenuate the earlier excesses. A personal and sentimental relationship of the emperor to the newly annexed territory is demonstrated by the concluding fraze of his rescript to Bessarabian viceroy Bakhmetiev, which approved the Bessarabian Statute: “I saw this country. I will see it again if God permits. I hope to find in it the fruits of my institutions and, at the same time, the fruits of diligence and zeal of the officials entrusted to preserve these institutions.”³⁸⁸ Nevertheless, as was frequently the case Alexander I’s best intentions were deceived, and the end of Bessarabian “experiment” proved to be as grim as its beginning seemed auspicious. In the evaluation of the emperor’s aide-du-champ A. I. Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii who visited Bessarabia a decade later “if anything, things became worse here than they were eleven years before.” While previous discussion demonstrated the capacity of the local actors to thwart the designs of the central authorities, this chapter will examine the

³⁸⁸ See Alexander I’s rescript to A. N. Bakhmet’ev attached to “Ustav Obrazovania Bessarabskoi provincei,” April 29, 1818, PSZ, ser 1, vol. 35, no. 27,357, 222.

institutional transformations of the imperial government, which contributed to the curtailment of Bessarabian autonomy.

The interpretative strategy adopted in this chapter consists of placing the Bessarabian “Constitution” of 1818 into a broader context of debate on the administrative reform in the Russian Empire between 1815 and 1830 between the proponents of greater bureaucratization and those, who sought to restore the role of the nobility in the central and local government. Neither the introduction nor the subsequent curtailment of the Bessarabian autonomy can be adequately understood without an examination of the failed attempt to reinvent the “empire of the nobility” undertaken by the emperor and some of his advisors in 1815-1825. It will be demonstrated that the reduction of the Bessarabian autonomy was as much a result of internal contradictions of the “noble empire” paradigm as it was a consequence of the relative victory of the bureaucratization tendency. On a more theoretical level, I will argue that both bureaucratization and (re)invention of the “empire of the nobles” were varieties of the general process of systematization and rationalization of the imperial government in the 18th – early 19th centuries. In other words, bureaucratization alone does not exhaust the notions of systematization, but rather the two represent alternative modes of realization of the well-ordered police state ideal of the 18th century.

Before I proceed, it is necessary to define a number of terms hitherto used. Systematization is understood here as the process of historical evolution of attitudes, “through which the servitors gradually came to organize themselves to some extent around their common pretense and/or aspiration to operate within a formal legal-administrative system.”³⁸⁹ In other words, it is a belief common to all the elements of the political system and all participants in the political struggle that administration should be carried out in systematic and orderly manner. This assumption became an implicit rule of the game in the

³⁸⁹ George L. Yaney, *The Systematization of Russian Government, 1711-1905* (Urbana Chicago London: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 5.

18th century imposed upon its participants by the Russian monarchy in its pursuit of the ideal of well-ordered police state. Hence, in the given periods, different statesmen pursued their political agenda by diagnosing current situation as that of an administrative chaos and presented their measures as the realization of the ideals of a systematic and orderly government. Systematization should not be conflated with centralization or unification, although these were often parallel processes. Centralization and/or unification were the policies pursued by the European absolutist regimes in an effort to mobilize greater resources in an increasingly competitive international environment without at the same time changing the traditional social structure, upon which their legitimacy was based.³⁹⁰ In other words, centralization/unification was a resource mobilization strategy of the rulers, whereas systematization was the article of faith of the servitors imposed upon them by the policies of the rulers. Or, alternatively, it was a part of the common political culture uniting the rulers and the elites, which emerged in Russia as the result of Peter the Great's reforms. A common systematization attitude could cover a wide variety of the political-administrative models.

The administrative system of a polity dominated by the ideal of systematization can be organized functionally or territorially. The former presupposes a linear chain of command and strict subordination combined with increasing monopolization of activities within one sphere by a given administrative body. The personnel running the system are usually detached from a concrete place and therefore soon develop a "capital city" mentality in the treatment of local problems. In this respect it displays the features of a classic Weberian bureaucracy. In the given period the "functional logic" manifested itself in creation and consolidation of the ministries. Conversely, an administration based on "territorial" principle is characterized by a concentration of prerogatives in all domains in a given territorial unit in the hands of one official or group of officials. The problems and ways of their solution are

³⁹⁰ For a classical sociological treatment of the process placing it in a wider perspective see S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (New Brunswick (U.S.A.): Transaction Publishers, 1963, 1993).

thus territorially specific as is the knowledge necessary to run this kind of administration. That is why, under the “territorial” form of government, the socially prominent elements play a key role. It is usually characteristic of societies, in which the power of the noble class is still unchallenged, while the “functional” government is usually found in a more differentiated and conflictual society, requiring an “impartial” mediation of a bureaucratic class.³⁹¹ In the given period, provincial administration headed by viceroys possessing wide autonomy represented the concrete embodiment of the “territorial” principle. Finally, and most importantly, one should avoid thinking of the ministerial/functional/bureaucratic/uniform on the one hand, and viceroyal/territorial/noble/diverse as a rigid grid of oppositions. Instead, all these features composed a flexible system of variables. As will be demonstrated, there could be “territorial” forms of administration that were characterized by high uniformity and those allowing for greater diversity. Similarly, ministries did not always imply a bureaucratic command structure, while viceroys could sometimes act as promoters of bureaucratization.

“The Statute for the Formation of Bessarabian Province”

The basic dimensions of Bessarabian autonomy were present already in the draft of the statute produced by Bakhmet'ev's chancellery in 1817. This draft presupposed the formation of Supreme Council as the highest “provincial government” that included the president (viceroy or military governor) civil governor, vice governor, the presidents of the Criminal and Civil courts and six deputies from Bessarabian nobility including the marshal of the nobility elected every three years.³⁹² Supreme Council was the highest court of appeal that decided all administrative and judicial questions by a majority of the votes. Those decisions that were made within the limits of the existing legislation were immediately carried out although they could be appealed post factum in the State Council through the mediation of Ministry of Justice and Procurator General. The “legislative” functions of the

³⁹¹ John LeDonne, *Ruling Russia: Politics and Government in the Age of Absolutism, 1762-1796* (Princeton N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 16.

Supreme Council were formulated with characteristic vagueness: “all extraordinary matters of special importance requiring new legislation (*postanovlenia*) that would abolish or complement the existing laws (*postanovlenia*)” were to be considered by the General Assembly of the Supreme Council on a presentation of viceroy or civil governor.³⁹³ The opinions of the Supreme Council on such matters were to be presented in the State Council through Procurator General. Executive (*rasporiaditel'nyie*), fiscal and criminal cases were to be conducted in Russian, while civil cases in Romanian.

The structure of the new government reflected the principle of separation of executive and judicial functions. The provincial administration was divided into the executive and fiscal boards on the one hand, and the judicial (*suda i raspravy*) on the other. The former, bearing the name of the Bessarabian Provincial Government proper, consisted of executive and financial expeditions operating separately on the matters of routine and uniting to consider the matters of special importance.³⁹⁴ Like the Supreme Council, the executive expedition was partly formed through election. Each time, it was separately decided on the language of transaction depending on the character of the case. The only part of the province government, which remained beyond the competence of the Bessarabian Supreme Council and Province government, predictably, were the finances. The provincial expenditure was controlled by the ministry of Finances.³⁹⁵ The judiciary divided into criminal and civil parts was partly appointed, partly elected from the local nobility for three year term. Criminal cases were to be judged in Russian and in accordance with Russian laws. Civil cases were to be judged in accordance with “Moldavian rules and customs” and in Romanian. In case the plaintiff was the state, the case was to be judged in accordance with Russian laws, but at the same time it

³⁹² PZS, ser. 1, Vol. No. 27.357, 223.

³⁹³ A. N. Egunov (ed.) “Materialy dlia noveishei istorii Bessarabii,” In *Zapiski Bessarabskogo Statisticheskogo Komiteta*, Vol. 3, (Kishinev, 1868), 147.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 148.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 149.

was prescribed to follow the rights, privileges and customs of the lands in the matters that concerned private property.³⁹⁶

The whole territory of Bessarabia was divided into six districts “equal as much as possible in territory and population.” The districts in their turn had to be divided into parts (*volosti*) “for the easiest execution of police” in accordance with territory and density of population of each district. The district administration consisted of *ispravniks* and four councilors (*zasedatelei*) elected by the district gentry and confirmed by the viceroy. The *ispravniks* had to perform the function of Russian Lower Land Courts and were to operate on the basis of the same rules. The agents on the *volost’* and village level were *ocolași* and *dvorniki* respectively, appointed by the district board (*ispravnichesto*) with agreement of the village communities. The draft pursued the principle of the separation of powers on the local level. Police functions performed by *ispravniks* were separated from dispensation of justice, which was entrusted to the district courts. Consisting of a judge and two members elected by district nobility, the district courts had in the competence both civil and criminal cases. The authors of the Statute also sought to separate police from fiscal matters and entrusted the latter to district treasury/fiscal boards.³⁹⁷ Besides, the draft of the Statute introduced the institute of procuracy. Appointed by the crown, the province procurator as well as the procurators in each district had to act on the basis of the general rules regulating the activity of procuracy in Russia, but, at the same time, take into consideration local circumstances and the form of local administration.³⁹⁸ Finally, the draft of the Statute presupposed the creation of the town governing boards on the basis of Catherine II’s Charter to the Towns of 1785 as well as establishment of city police, medical and postal service, and province architect as well as the board of public welfare (*prikaz obshchestvennogo prizrenia*), land survey board

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 150.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 152.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 150.

(*mezhevaia kontora*), which included three positions to be filled by noble election.³⁹⁹ The draft also mentioned the rights of different social categories the confirmation of which had to be preceded by the division of all inhabitants into classes. It confirmed the provision of Temporary Rules for the Government of Bessarabia of 1813 whereby Bessarabian boyars obtained the rights of the Russian nobility, but at the same time retained their “ancient privileges.”⁴⁰⁰

In the main outlines the 1817 draft differed little from the eventual Statute for the Formation of Bessarabian Province that was provisionally approved by the emperor during his visit to Chisinau on April 29, 1818.⁴⁰¹ In accordance with the Statute, in order to have legal force, the decisions of the Council had to be taken by a quorum of no less than six members. Another important change referred to the language of the official transactions. The 1817 draft allowed Romanian only as the language of transactions on cases of civil litigations involving the local inhabitants. According to the 1818 Statute, besides the civil cases, which were to be judged “in accordance with Moldavian laws and customs,” “Moldavian language” also had to be used on a par with Russian in all executive, administrative (*rasporiaditel’nyie*), fiscal and criminal cases “in conformity with the laws of the Russian Empire and preserving the rights, and customs of the land in what refers to private property.”⁴⁰² The Statute also contained a much more detailed description of fiscal procedures. Bessarabian government had to report to the Ministry of Finance on all kinds of state revenue. At the same time, it acquired the right to use one tenth of province’s revenue for the local development.⁴⁰³ All these transformations were made in the direction of greater autonomy.

Although Alexander I’s rescript to the viceroy Bakhmet’ev stressed that “the limitless good” of Bessarabian autonomy should not favor only one estate,” in practice the Statute

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 151-154

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁰¹ “Ustav Obrazovania Bessarabskoi Oblasti.” in PZS, ser. 1, Vol. No. 27.357

⁴⁰² Ibid., 224, 226-227.

favored local nobility. For one thing, it presupposed 15 positions in the central bodies and 48 positions on the district level to be filled by noble election (against only 13 positions to be filled by appointment, all of which were in the government of the province.⁴⁰⁴ This left no doubts about the effective dominance of local nobility in provincial administration. The 1818 Statute also contained a detailed description of privileges and duties of each social stratum. By and large, it meant the preservation of the social status quo in the sense that it neither abolished the peculiar Moldavian social categories of *boerinași*, *mazili*, and *ruptași*, nor re-introduced formal personal dependence of Bessarabian peasants on their landlords abolished during Phanariote period. At the same time, there was a tendency make sense of these unfamiliar social categories and treat them in terms of their closest Russian counterparts. Thus, *boerinași*, or people of the non-noble origin who in Moldavia occupied the lower official positions, were given the privileges of Russian personal nobility and exempt from taxation. The statute also confirmed the privileged status of *ruptași* (the children of priests) and *mazili* (impoverished noblemen, similar to Russian *odnodvortsy* (single-homesteaders)), who were exempt from corporal punishment and some of the taxes.⁴⁰⁵

Bessarabian Experiment and the Debates on the Administrative Reform of the Russian Empire in the 1810s and 1820s

In the realization of goals set by the Ministerial Instructions, the first Bessarabian Viceroy Bakhmetiev was to rely on a small staff consisting of officials transferred from other gubernias. One of them was former Civil Governor of Ekaterinoslavl gubernia I. Kh. Kalageorgii and a protégé of I. A. Capodistria. His relationship with Bakhmetiev became strained from the very start. Kalageorgii was complaining of Bakhmetiev's attempt to exclude him from effective participation in the government. According to Kalageorgii's reports to St Petersburg, Bakhmetiev was violating the elective principles that he was

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 226.

⁴⁰⁴ This calculation excludes the number of the town police officials, who were also appointed by the Crown.

supposed to introduce in the new government. Instead of organizing the new elections into the provincial government on the basis of the district deputies' vote, Bakhmetiev held "elections" among the existent members of the government, who predictably voted for each other. The rationale was probably to minimize the interference of locals into his designs. Given the passivity the members of the existent government, Bakhmetiev clearly preferred their unrequiring presence to new electives, which might turn out to be less compliant. No less arbitrary, according to Kalageorgii, were the actions of Bakhmetiev in respect of elaboration of the Statute. Kalageorgii had no part in it whatsoever. After the project was produced it was presented to the Temporary Committee headed by Kalageorgii for approval and not for discussion. Disagreement with the principal points of the draft made Kalageorgii write his "Memoir."⁴⁰⁶

In his "Memoir" Kalageorgii suggested redirecting the ongoing reform of Bessarabian administration towards greater conformity with the Russian institutions arguing that an overall "cohesiveness and unity in the imperial administration" would "provide the government with sure means to secure the well-being of its subjects."⁴⁰⁷ In his opinion, Bessarabia was not so distant from the center to justify a special administration for it. Thus, he suggested turning the Supreme Council proposed by Bakhmet'ev project into Civil Court of Bessarabia solving the cases of litigations among private individuals and subordinated to the Senate as the last court of appeal. He also applied the ministerial scheme to define the status of the civil governor and all other divisions of Bessarabian government. Kalageorgii considered the post of the viceroy temporary, and suggested to appoint a military governor as the head of the provincial administration. The civil governor had to execute all the functions that were normally assigned to his counterparts under the standard *gubernia* scheme, which

⁴⁰⁵ PSZ, Ser 1, vol. 35, no. 27,357, 229-230.

⁴⁰⁶ RGIA, Fond 1286, op. 2, no. 284, Ff. 1-5.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., F. 9.

maid his direct subordination to the viceroy inadequate.⁴⁰⁸ The government was to be divided into four parts, each of which was to be subordinated to the appropriate central body. The first division was to deal with all matters that were normally in charge of *gubernia* boards in central Russia and its decisions could be appealed to the First Department of the Senate. The second division dealing with fiscal matters was to be controlled by the Ministry of Finances. The third and the fourths divisions (criminal and civil courts) were also to be directly or indirectly subordinated to the Senate.⁴⁰⁹ Kalageorgii also suggested subordinating procurer of the province to the Ministry of Justice and thereby make him independent from local authorities. Since the competence of the district courts included the criminal cases that were to be solved in accordance with Russian legislation, Kalageorgii found it necessary to appoint one Russian official to each district court.⁴¹⁰

The “Memoir” was sent to St Petersburg accompanied by a critical commentary written by Bakhmet’ev or a member of his chancellery at his request. This refutation, developing the principles of the emperor’s instructions conditioned the attainment of happiness and well-being of the inhabitants of the province by introducing an administration that would secure the local rights and privileges.⁴¹¹ According to Bakhmet’ev, the reason for leaving to the region its ancient right were not its remote location, but is special political relationship to the empire. In order to illustrate his argument, Bakhmet’ev referred to Finland situated in the vicinity of St Petersburg, but nevertheless enjoying a special status. This provides yet another proof that Bessarabian administrative experiment was conceived as part of a general policy of giving autonomous political status to the newly annexed territories.⁴¹² The rest of the Bakhmet’ev’s memoir contained a point by point refutation of Kalageorgii’s

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., F. 11

⁴⁰⁹ In Kalageorgii’s scheme the criminal court was subordinated directly of the Judicial Senate, while civil court indirectly through the Supreme Council of Bessarabia.

⁴¹⁰ RGIA, Fond 1286, op. 2, no. 284, Ff., 12-13.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., F. 32.

⁴¹² Ibid., F. 36.

propositions denouncing them as contradictory to the purport of the emperor's instructions. Addressing the issue of the civil governor and his relationships with the central government bodies and with the viceroy, Bakhmet'ev's memoir referred to currently existing rules in accordance with which civil governor was subordinated to governor-general. Like Kalageorgii, Bakhmetiev also referred to the general Russian administrative practice, yet with the opposite aim: to demonstrate the omnipresent subordination of the civil governments to governors-general.⁴¹³

The references to the current Russian administrative practice to support two opposite conclusions is indicative of the extreme confusion, which dominated in Russian provincial administration and reflected a general lack of subordination between various central and local bodies. Thus, the executive power was divided between the First Department of the Senate, the State Council, the ministries and the governors-general. This institutional indeterminacy manifested itself on the level of administrative discourse. Bakhmet'ev's and Kalageorgii's disagreements were paralleled by debates on the administrative reform for the Russian Empire that were going on in the 1810s and 1820s, which allow placing Bessarabian administrative experiment in the context of Russian rulers' attempt to improve provincial administration.⁴¹⁴ Various projects of administrative reform elaborated in the post-1812 period were submitted by the champions of the ministerial government and the advocates of the division of the empire into viceroyalties. On the surface, the authors of these projects took the malfunctioning of the administration for an opportunity to redistribute powers in favor of "their" institution. Such practical motives of self-aggrandizement undoubtedly played a part, characteristic as they were of the factional nature of the monarchical politics. However, neither individual ministers nor particular governors-general or other officials who submitted

⁴¹³ Ibid., F. 41.

⁴¹⁴ Kalageorgii's arguments did not have their result and soon he was replaced by Katakazi as the Civil Governor and Nedoba, as the Head of the Temporary committee. Nakko, "Ocherk grazhdanskogo ustroistva Bessarabskoi Provinciei s 1812 po 1828 gg," 156.

projects of administrative organization were formed “parties” or “interest groups” (however loosely one uses this term), which characterized the politics of autocracy in the period of the Great Reforms of the 1860s.⁴¹⁵

Instead, of the consolidated struggle between the “ministers” and “governors-general” there was a highly personal struggle between individual officials that is so natural of monarchical politics that manifested itself on the level of administrative discourse in the collision between two models of well-ordered police state. Central to this collision was the role of the provincial nobility in local administration. The majority of the projects for the reform of provincial administration drawn after 1810 identified the despotism “of the governing places (*upravliaiushchie mesta*) and persons having legally undefined power,”⁴¹⁶ and, first of all, the despotism of the governors, as the main problem that required solution. However, insofar as the arbitrariness of the governors was an outcome of stagnation of provincial collegial bodies created in 1775, the authors of the 1810s and 1820s projects of administrative reform were also proposing various solutions to the problem of inactivity of the provincial nobility. In this respect, the 1810s-1820s debates witnessed the confrontation of those, who sought to retain the decisive role of provincial nobility in local administration introduced by the 1775 *Gubernia* Statute of Catherine II and the advocates of bureaucratic absolutism, who suggested replacing the principle of election that frequently brought into local government incompetent official by appointment. As will be demonstrated, the ultimately victorious party of bureaucratic centralists included, alongside the ministers of finance, some of the viceroys (governor-generals). The ambiguous attitude of governors-general towards local nobilities reflected an important transformation of this institution since the time of Catherine the Great. Without this additional specification it would be impossible

⁴¹⁵ Alfred J. Rieber, “Grupovye interesy v bor’be vokrug Velikikh Reform,” in L. G. Zakharova et al. (eds.) *Velikie reformy v Rossii, 1856-1874*. (Moscow: MGU, 1992), 44-72.

⁴¹⁶ Balugianski, “Rassuzhdenie o sredstvakh ispravleniia uchrezhdenii i zakonodatel’sstva v Rossii”, RIO, Vol. 16, (1890): 33.

to explain why the 1818 Statute introduced by the first Bessarabian Viceroy A. N. Bakhmet'ev was abolished the third Bessarabian Viceroy, M. S. Vorontsov, and why the latter introduced the “assimilationist” measures that Kalagorgii advocated under the umbrella of “ministerial government” rhetoric.

The *Gubernia* Statute of 1775

Chichagov's rather daring advice to Alexander I “not to allow his administration to interfere into Bessarabian affairs” cited in the previous chapter reflected not only a personal conflict between the last commander of the Moldavian army and the last Senator-President of the Moldavian and Wallachian Divans V. I. Krasno-Miloshevich, but also a more fundamental concern with the state of chaos existing in internal government of the empire, which could foil the Bessarabian experiment. The “administration” that Chichagov had in mind was introduced in Russia by the famous *Gubernia* Statute (*Ulozhenie o guberniakh*) of 1775. By the second decade of the 19th century it was increasingly malfunctioning, making the emperor and his advisors look for alternative models and consider reform of the existing provincial institutions. The administrative reform undertaken by Catherine immediately after suppression of the Pugachev rebellion in 1775 sought to accommodate the interests of the nobility and, at the same time, create a better police in the country side. The peculiarity of Catherine's approach consisted in viewing these two problems as interrelated and assuming the possibility to settling the former by solving the latter. The provincial nobility had to assume greater part in local administration, and was obliged to run it with greater diligence and effectiveness. For its part, the monarchy strengthened the noble monopoly over serf ownership and increased the salaries of elected officials in provincial administration.

In accordance with the 1775 Statute, a standard *gubernia* had a population of 300-400 thousand divided into 10 – 12 districts of 20 to 30 thousand people. *Gubernia* administration was originally headed by general-lieutenant or viceroy (*namestnik*), who usually was in

charge of a number of *gubernias*. With the help of a small viceroial board (*namestnicheskoie pravlenie*) he performed the functions of general supervision over all branches of local administration (executive, fiscal, judicial) and commanded local troops in a number of *gubernias*. His immediate subordinate in individual *gubernias* was the governor, who, unlike the viceroy, did not have the right of personal report to the monarch, but was instead more involved in the day-to-day business of government as the head of the *gubernia* board consisting of vice-governor, treasurer, procurator, surveyor and the director of economy. Vice-governor was in charge of the fiscal chamber consisting of director of economy, a councilor, two assessors and the *gubernia* treasurer. Its function was the supervision and record of revenue collection as well as the stimulation of the welfare and economic development. The departments of criminal and civil affairs each consisting of a president and two councilors concluded the highest stratum of *gubernia* administration. The two departments served as courts of appeal to the decisions of a number of *gubernia* “estate” courts. The Superior Land Court (*verkhonii zemskoi sud*) tried all the cases involving *gubernia* nobles. The *Gubernia* Magistracy performed the same function in respect of the burghers and Superior Peasant Court (*Verkhniaia Rasprava*) in respect of the free peasants. Besides these “estate” courts, there were the so-called the Conscience Courts dealing with the petty cases and those involving representatives of different social groups.

At least in theory, district administration did not have an executive official of comparable importance to the governor at the *gubernia* level. Its main executive body was the Lower Land Court headed by *ispravnik* or land captain and consisting of four deputies. Along with the execution of the orders of the *gubernia* board and the decisions of the courts, it performed the function of general “policing” in the countryside. At the district level there were fiscal chambers, District Court, City Magistracy and Lower Land Courts acting as the local agencies of Gubernia Fiscal Chamber, The Supreme Land Court, *Gubernia* Magistracy

and the Superior Peasant Court respectively. The peculiarity of the 1775 Statute was that the bulk of the positions in the *gubernia* and district courts were to be filled on the basis of election by the nobles, the burgers and the free peasants.⁴¹⁷

In order to control the functioning of various branches of *gubernia* administration the reform 1775 presupposed the institution of procuracy headed by *gubernia* procurator with two deputies (*striapchie*) on civil and criminal affairs. Each “estate” court had a procurator with two associates (*striapchie*). In the districts, the institution of procuracy was represented by district associates. Ironically, the institution placed to secure the right functioning of the system proved to be its weakest link. Although the *gubernia* procurator was formally charged with control of the legality of the actions of the governor and vice-governor, his rank, salary and often his social origin were inferior to those of the governor and vice-governor. His deputies at the courts were rarely appointed at all depriving him of the actual means to control the operation of *gubernia* bodies.

The collegial principle applied to provincial administration presupposed that the government apparatus will be numerous enough to absorb a large part of nobility and provide a more satisfactory distribution of spoils. On the other hand, the practice of the 18th century collegial government secured that the political activities of the nobility will be neutralized. The new provincial administration had many features of the Governing Senate created by Peter the Great in 1711. It responded to the outside stimuli e. g. the petition of private person appealing the decisions of lower courts or an order of the ruler, but it neither defined the directions of the governmental activities, nor produced new law on its own initiative leaving the monarch exclusive liberty to determine the directions of state policy.⁴¹⁸ This institutional

⁴¹⁷ Out of 15000 officials added to the provincial government between 1775 and 1779 10, 608 were elective (2,704 peasants, 3,851 burgers and 4,053 nobles. There were 493 elected ispravniks and 1,972 there elected deputies. All elected positions were paid with salaries ranging from 360 rubles per year for members of superior land court to 200 rubles for the deputies of the ispravniks. Jones, *The Emancipation of Russian Nobility*, 240.

⁴¹⁸ George Yaney, *The Systematization of Russian Government, 1711-1905* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 77-78.

solution was complemented by Catherine's skillful manipulation of several competing aristocratic kinship and patronage networks that "supervised the recruitment and training of personnel for high office and supplied organizational cohesion that made for effective policy implementation."⁴¹⁹

Seeking to forestall major disorders in the provinces with a help of a more elaborate structure of provincial administration largely based on the participation of local nobles, Catherine the Great sought to involve all the upper strata of the society into the task of executing the general police in the provinces. Reflecting the reinforced concern of the government with the police all over Europe, Catherine II's legislation of the 1770s and 1780s produced a peculiar version of well-ordered police state irreducible to either French or German sources.⁴²⁰ The reforms of the 1770s and 1780s had one important peculiarity: this proliferation of police was to be based not on the new cameralist trained bureaucracy, but on the newly re/formed semi-autonomous social groups. While Catherine II's Charters for the Nobility and Towns (accompanied by the designed, but never introduced Charter for the State Peasants) had the appearance of consolidating traditional social estates at the moment when these were about to crumble in the West, the social institutions that they sought to create differed markedly from medieval autonomous corporations. The estate institutions created by Catherine the Great were specially designed to perform disciplinary functions and sought to achieve the disciplinary effect through "policing by proxy." The number of individuals subjected to social disciplining in this case had to be well beyond the aspiration of any bureaucratic class, while the impersonal and subtle mechanisms of collective surveillance had to secure the socialization of individuals much more effectively than stark coercion or quasi-

⁴¹⁹ David Ransel, *The Politics of Catherinian Russia. The Panin's Party* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 1. LeDonne, *Ruling Russia*, 24-25.

⁴²⁰ The question of Catherine's imitation of foreign models was addressed in the discussion between Mark Raeff, Isabel de Madariaga, Edward L. Keenan, and James Cracraft in *Slavic Review* 41, no., 4. (1982): 611-638, particularly the contrasting positions of Raeff and De Madariaga who emphasized, respectively, German and French sources.

legal bureaucratic regulations. Thus, the provincial noble assemblies were a much more subtle and effective way to impart the habits of politeness and sociability onto larger society than Peter's notorious shaving of beards. For its part, the Charter to Towns marked one of the most important attempts of the government to create a "burger" counterpart to the noble "society."

Alongside with the definition of the estate privileges of the nobility and the burgers, the charters also outlined the functions and duties of noble and town assemblies placing them within the general hierarchy of delegated authority and policing. The personal enlightenment of the sovereign, which was a necessary assumption in the age of enlightened absolutism, guaranteed the choice of the most enlightened representatives of the elite as viceroys in the provinces, while the latter, in turn performed the civilizing function in respect of provincial nobility. The gubernia institutions (noble assemblies and custodian boards) were designed as civilizing milieu and institutional means to check the arbitrariness of individual serfowners in respect of their serfs. This accorded with the attempts of individual serf owners of the second half of the 18th century to maintain order in the villages and promote moral and economic well-fare of their peasants on the basis of the cameralist inspired regulations, which some authors call "enlightened seigniorialism".⁴²¹ Finally, the authority in the villages was based on the cooperation between seigniorial agents and peasant elders, which corroborated with the functioning of peasant commune.⁴²² In this system, the conference of political authority in accordance with personal enlightenment of the individual (the monarch, the viceroy, the landlord, the peasant patriarch) was counterbalanced by the disciplinary effects of surveillance and regulation through impersonal collectives (noble and town assemblies, the

⁴²¹ Edgar Melton, "Enlightened Seigniorialism and Its Dilemmas in Serf Russia, 1750-1830," in *The Journal of Modern History* 62, no. 4 (1990): 675-708.

⁴²² Stephen L. Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia. Petrovskoie, a Village in Tambiov* (Chicago University Press, 1986), 128.

peasant commune).⁴²³ The paternalistic model of authority thus coexisted with disciplining in and by social groups in an ambitious project of internal colonization.⁴²⁴

Never actually achieving professed goals, Catherine's reforms standardized the criteria of nobility, provided for a better understanding of nobles' rights and obligations and stimulated the development of specific social habits and noble culture. Confirming the formal liberation from compulsory state service of 1762, the monarchy nevertheless managed to strengthen the service ethos of the Russian nobility, prevent the formation of the oppositional ideology and improve the quality of provincial administration. Even the preservation of serfdom paradoxically contributed to the integration of the noble estate into the state apparatus and strengthened the service ethos. Giving the nobility exclusive right to own serfs Catherine II viewed the *pomeshchiks* as a variation of state officials, who by virtue of their personal enlightenment were to perform the police functions over the ignorant peasantry. At least ideally then, the *pomeshchiks*, even after they retired from military or civil service, still continued to perform a variation of public office. Needless to say, the overwhelming majority of *pomeshchiks* failed to be up to the expectations. However, while they often engaged in the worst kind of abuses they never openly questioned this ideal model imposed by the monarchy.

Although the reform initially improved provincial administration and was instrumental in the solution of important predicament in the relationship between the monarchy and the nobility, its success proved to be short-lived. Despite substantial increase in the state expenditures on provincial administration, local administrative positions remained underplayed, which was further aggravated by a financial crisis of the late 18th century. As a

⁴²³ For the general discussion of the functioning of the collective in social disciplining in Russia see Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia. A Study of Practices* (Berkeley, Calif. : University of California Press, 1999).

⁴²⁴ Alexandr Etkind, "Fouko i Impersakia Rossia. Distsiplinarnyie praktiki v usloviakh vnutrennei kolonizatsii," in Oleg Kharkhordin (ed.) *Mishel Fuko i Rossia*. SPb.: Evropeiskii Universitet v Sankt Peterburge: Letnii Sad, 2001, 166- 191.

result, provincial bodies failed to attract the most active and capable elements among the nobility, who preferred a career in the capitals. The incessant wars of the 1787-1815 turned the resources of the state as well as the attention of the ablest representatives of the provincial gentry away from internal development. Soon after Catherine's death, Paul I, partly out of personal dislike of his mother and partly responding to the actual problems with internal administration, greatly simplified local government by cutting the number of officials and the salaries to be paid to them. First, he abolished the institute of viceroys. Instead, the institute of military governors was created and the size of *gubernias* was increased (esp. in the lands of former Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth and the New Russia reducing the total number of *gubernias* from 50 in 1796 to 41 in 1801. Also abolished were the *gubernia* "estate" courts. The district courts lost its exclusively noble character and turned into all-estates court except for the burgers, who retained their city magistracies. The chambers of criminal and civil justice were united into a single chamber of justice and execution (*palata suda i raspravy*). However, these measures failed to stop abuses and disorders continued on an even greater scale. Although Alexander I immediately reconfirmed the *Gubernia* Statute, recreated all the "estate courts" and other *gubernia* bodies, continuous wars, financial crisis and new administrative reforms consisting in the creation of the ministries produced a veritable havoc in imperial administration.

The 1775 reform of provincial administration was paralleled by the gradual abolition of the central colleges, whose functions were relegated to various *gubernia* boards and chambers. The Senate or more precisely the General Procuror of the Senate performed the functions of central control over the functioning of the provincial administration. The central colleges restored by Paul I predictably started to compete with the Senate and the *gubernia* boards over prerogatives. The situation was further complicated by the creation of ministries in 1802 that soon started a struggle with the Senate, the colleges and the *gubernia* boards for

control over various provincial bodies. However, it took them several decades before ministries managed to oust or subsume rival central bodies and establish control over certain segments of local administration. In the meantime, the local authorities devised schemes in order to avoid responsible decisions and became increasingly arbitrary.

These institutional transformations generated new tensions within imperial elite. The beginning of Alexander's reign witnessed the struggle between the so-called "senatorial party" and the champions of ministerial government including the emperor's "young friends" and later M. M. Speranskii.⁴²⁵ The period of uncertainty in the relationships between monarchy and nobility started after Catherine's death continued for first part of the reign of Alexander I as the emperor's attention was consumed by European politics leaving no time for an in depth reform of internal administration. At the end of Napoleonic wars, the monarchy faced an alternative of restoring an "empire of the nobility" i. e. returning to the principals of Catherinian legislation or further consolidating the ministerial government. Its decision to follow one course or another had significant implications for the relationships between imperial center and the elites of the borderlands and proved to be an important factor of Russian policy in Moldavia and Wallachia.

Along with the shaken faith of Russian imperial elite in the virtues of standard *gubernia* administration, there were other reasons making it inapplicable for Bessarabia. Out of 75 officials of *gubernia* administrations nobles would elect one third. Since free peasants could not elect their peers in Superior Peasant Courts its 10 positions were virtually always filled by noble candidates as well.⁴²⁶ At the district level nobles would elected *ispravniks* and members of Lower Land Courts (40-50 vacancies), District judge and members of District Court (30 memebtrs). This brought the number of elected position to be filled by nobles to

⁴²⁵ See David Christian, "The 'Senatorial Party' and the Theory of Collegial Government, 1801-1803", *Russian Review* 38, no. 3 (1979): 298-322; M. M. Safonov, *Problema reform v pravitel'svennoi politike Rossii na rubezhe XVIII I XIX vv.* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1988).

⁴²⁶ Almost as many local nobles would get into gubernia government by appointment.

100 per *gubernia*. In order to make the election principle meaningful the number of nobles with right to participate in elections had to be three or at least two times larger. Neither in 1812, nor 10 years after the annexation was Bessarabian nobility numerous enough to operate the full-fledged *gubernia* administration. The first verification of noble titles undertaken in 1821 left only 170 noble families out of the initial number of 250. The actual number of nobles capable and/or qualified to occupy positions in local administration was no more than one hundred. Bessarabian nobility was not only not numerous enough, but also unevenly distributed on the territory of Besarabia. While some of the northern districts came close to the required number of nobles, the three southern districts taken together had only 5 nobles.⁴²⁷

The insufficient number of the local nobles qualified to take the elected positions in the *gubernia* administration could theoretically be compensated through direct appointment to some of the elected positions as has been the practice in Tavrida *gubernia*. Caused by the lack of the Russian speaking Tatar nobles as well as the government's deep-seated mistrust (despite the official declarations to the contrary) of the Muslims, this practice meant filling the formally elective positions with government's appointees selected from the officials of other *gubernias*. Yet, given the acute lack of "professional" officials in the early 19th century,⁴²⁸ this led to the concession of the administrative posts to all sorts of bureaucratic rabble. Predictably, the abuses were not long in waiting and the government had to appoint special committee in 1815 for investigation.⁴²⁹ Obviously, this was yet another factor behind Chichagov's advice to the tsar not to allow his administration to interfere into Bessarabian affairs.

⁴²⁷ Jewsberry, *Russian Annexation of Bessarabia*, 122, 129-130.

⁴²⁸ The lack of officials is demonstrated by the ukaz from December 3, 1808 that allowed recruiting low chancellery officials from tax-paying categories (excluding serfs). An 1811 ukaz even allowed their recruitment into central bodies: the chancellery of the Senate and the Ministries. E. P. Eroshkin, *Krepostnicheskoie samoderzhavie i ego politicheskie instituty* (Moscow: Mysl', 1981), 64.

⁴²⁹ See Alexander I' ukaz to Kherson Military Governor Langeron May 4, 1816. PSZ ser 1, vol. 18, no. 26254

“Territorial” or “Functional” Administration

One way of solving the problem of inoperation of nobility-based local administration was to strengthen supervision over them by reintroducing the institute of viceroys throughout the empire. This measure was advocated by a number of statesmen including V. P. Kochubei (Chairman of the State Council), N. N. Novosil'tsev (Imperial Commissioner in the Kingdom of Poland in 1815-1830), A. D. Balashev (Minister of Police in 1811-1819 and the Governor-General of Riazan' in 1819-1825) as well as a M. M. Speranskii, who partly managed to regain the confidence of the emperor after his 1812 fall from grace, and in 1819-1821 served in the capacity of the Governor-General of Siberia. The latter's involvement into the affairs of local administration made him abandon the “bureaucratic” approach of his early days and turned him into a moderate advocate of the “territorial” government. However, the initiative behind the reintroduction of the governors-general belonged to the emperor himself and was one of his most cherished ideas.⁴³⁰

Following the advice of V. P. Kochubei,⁴³¹ the emperor ordered to write a plan for a systematic introduction of the viceroyalties in all parts of the empire. According to the 1816 “Project for the Establishment of Viceroyalties,”⁴³² the territory of the empire was to be divided between 10 or 12 viceroys, who had to supervise over the implementation of law and the directives of higher bodies in the *gubernias* assigned to the given viceroyalty (*namestnicheskii okrug*) (§§. 1, 7). With the help of Viceroyal Council consisting of the officials in charge of general police, (medicine, population industry, communications),

⁴³⁰ I. D. Lukovskaia, D. I. Raskin, (eds.) *Institut General-gubernatorstva i namestnichestva v Rossiiskoi imperii* (Izdatel'stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta, 2001), 72. The 1800s – early 1810s witnessed the appointment of the new governors-generals not only in the border regions, but also in the central provinces of the Empire. Besides Kiev, Podolian, Lithuanian, Little Russian and Belorussian governors-general Alexander I created in 1809 the Viceroyalty in Tvier'. See George Vernadsky, *Ustavnaia gramota Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 34-35.

⁴³¹ V. P. Kochubei, “Ob ustroistve verkhovnykh pravitel'stv v Rossi.” *RIO*, vol. 16, (1890), 16.

⁴³² According to I. D. Lukovskaia, D. I. Raskin, *Institut General-gubernatorstva*, 72, the project might have been written either by N. N. Novosil'tsev, the Imperial Commissioner in the Kingdom of Poland and a former member of the Unofficial Committee, or by the Minister of Police A. D. Balashov. The project was published in *Materialy Vysochaishe uchrezhdennoi komissii po reforme gubernskikh i districtnykh uchrezhdenii. Otdel Istoricheskii i Administrativnyi* (Spb, 1870), 2-45.

taxation, courts and public instruction (§. 67), the viceroy had to protect the rights of various estates (*sostoiania*) (§. 10) and prevent the abuses in respect of the peasantry (§§. 11, 12). Besides the functions of protecting the law and the rights of the all social strata, viceroy had to take care of people's morals, fighting with prejudice, false beliefs and everything, which can compromise public order and tranquility. In other words, his activities were to embrace the domain of police in the 18th century sense of the term. He also had to coordinate the activities of the *gubernia* bodies de-centered by Paul I's abolition of the institute of the viceroys. If implemented, all these measures would have strengthened the *gubernia* government at the expense of the central bodies by increasing the amount of business that could be handled at the local level. Viceroys and special local councils as institutions of supervision and coordination would play an important role in all subsequent projects based on the principles of territorial government.

Given the task of elaborating on the 1816 "Project on Viceroyalties," Speranskii developed a typology of central and local institutions of supervision. According to his classification, to the former belonged the Senate and the ministries, which he helped to create in 1802-1811. Given the already mentioned passivity of the Senate,⁴³³ his grouping is very revealing about Speranskii's understanding of the role of the ministries. By placing the ministries alongside the Senate as the institutions of central control, Speranskii revealed the distance, which existed between early 19th century notions of ministerial government and the policy forming bodies, in which the ministries turned later in the century. However, Speranskii's own experience as the Governor-General of Siberia demonstrated the insufficiency of central supervision over the *gubernia* administration performed by the Senate and the ministries. Hence his support of the viceroyalties as an institution of permanent local control and supervision.⁴³⁴ In contrast to poorly defined prerogatives of the actually existing

⁴³³ George Yaney, *The Systematization of Russian Government*, 77-78.

⁴³⁴ Speranskii, "Vvedenie k namestnicheskomu (oblastnomu) uchrezhdeniiu," in *Materialy*, 74.

Governors-General, encouraging their despotic rule, Speranskii sought to define viceroalties as a central institution of local control. In doing that he compared viceroalties to the institution of periodic Senate revisions of the individual *gubernias* introduced by Peter the Great, but argued that the permanent character of viceroalties would make them more effective. At the same time, defining viceroalty as a “ministry acting on the spot, and belonging to the general structure of all the ministries, the Senate”, Speranskii operated within the paradigm of 18th century senatorial government.⁴³⁵ To tie the three institutions together, Speranskii suggested that the viceroys *ex officio* become members of the First Department of the Governing Senate and of the Committee of Ministers.⁴³⁶ Thus, for Speranskii there was no contradiction between the existence of the ministries and senatorial government. Both ministries and the Governing (*Pravitel'stvuiuschii*) Senate were in his opinion executive institutions. However, “executive” in this context meant *control* over the execution of the law rather than promotion of certain policy in a specific domain as will be the case later in the century, when Russian politics will be increasingly dominated by the rivalry of different ministries.⁴³⁷

Speranskii's theoretical observations on the correlation between various central agencies were accompanied by concrete proposals for reform of local administration, which were generated by his experience as the Governor-General of Siberia.⁴³⁸ As has been mentioned before, the abolition of the viceroalties by Paul I left *gubernia* administration significantly de-centered. In the absence of viceroyal boards (*namestnicheskie pravlenia*) there was no body, which would bring together all the major links of *gubernia* administration.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 74, 77. Similar idea of ministerial supervision as a complement to the procuracy and Senate Supervision can be found in D. Troschinskii, “Zapiska o Ministerstvakh,” RIO, vol. 3, (1867): 43.

⁴³⁶ Speranskii, “Vvedenie k namestnicheskomu (provincenomu) uchrezhdeniiu,” *Materialy*, 83.

⁴³⁷ Troschinskii, “Zapiska o Ministerstvakh,” 35, also defines the Senate as the highest executive body (*verkhovnoie ispolnitel'noie mesto*). By “executive” he means declaration of laws and ukazs and supervision over their implementation.

⁴³⁸ Speranskii first wrote “Vvedenie k proektu gubernskogo uchrezhdenia” in *Materialy, Administrativnyi Otdel*, part 1, 1-13. This was approved by the Committee and provided the basis for the “Projekt uchrezhdenia dlia upravleniia gubernii,” Ibid., 15-53.

At the district level there was no such body from the very start. Seeking to provide such links and thereby render local administration more capable of acting independently on ordinary matters, Speranskii appointed district governors (*uezdnyi pravitel'*) from the landowners of the district and created *gubernia* councils that had to act as “miniature ministries of interior on the spot.”⁴³⁹ The members of the councils were to be in charge of various branches of *gubernia* administration and the governor was not authorized to take any decision without consultation with them.⁴⁴⁰ *Gubernia* councils were supposed to solve the problem of top-heaviness of Russian administration, by assuming the task of running local affairs without minute intervention of central bodies and leaving to the Senate, the ministries and the viceroys. This division of functions between central and local bodies as well as collegial principle of operation of *gubernia* councils demonstrates that in his post-1812 period Speranskii *de facto* recognized the virtues of Catherine’s administrative reform, which he criticized so much in the first part of his career.

Although the institute of the viceroys was an organic part of the 1775 *Gubernia* Statute, it proved to be difficult to accommodate them with the recently created ministries. Sensing the potential tension between the two institutions, the authors of the 1816 project and later advocates of the viceroyalties sought to divide the functions of viceroys, *gubernia* bodies and ministries. This was to be achieved by limiting the functions of viceroy to those of supervision. The 1816 Project assumed that viceroys would not interfere into the day-to-day business of administrations in the *gubernia* government, that would correspond on the matters of routine with the ministries (§. 31). A. D. Balashev appointed Governor-General over the five central Russian *gubernias* in 1819 in order to test the new model, sought to differentiate between *supervision* (*nadzor*) and *administration* (*upravlenie*) by classifying *gubernias* into those which are *governed* by a governor-general and those, which are placed

⁴³⁹ Raeff, *Speranskii*, 286.

⁴⁴⁰ Speranskii, “Vvedenie k proektu gubernskogo uchrezhdenia”, *Materialy.., Administrativnyi Otdel*, part 1, 10.

under *supervision* of a governor-general. In the former case, *gubernia* governor had to execute the orders of the governor-general, whereas in the latter, he had to apply the *ukases* and directives of the central government without waiting for the authorization of the governor-general. According to Balashev, this distinction was crucial for assigning responsibility. In the case of a supervising viceroy, the responsibility for taking decisions rested with the central ministries and the governor. Balashev placed himself in the category of supervising governors-general pointing to the impracticability of his immediate involvement into the government of the five *gubernias* he was in charge of.⁴⁴¹ Thus, taking responsible decisions distinguished administration (*upravlenie*) from supervision (*nadzor*). Yet, the 1816 project presupposed the viceroy's intervention for the solution of the emergency cases, when waiting for the directive of central government would cause harmful delay (§. 31). In this case a viceroy had to act like a minister on the spot and assume the responsibility (§. 33). Since the project did not offer any criteria for distinguishing "emergency cases", the division of the functions of administration and supervision between the viceroys and the ministries remained incomplete. The advocates of ministerial government immediately pointed to this shortcoming of the project.

In the given period, Minister of Finances D. A. Guriev became the most outspoken opponent of the "territorial" model of administration. Being an advocate of the functional division of powers, he criticized the unification of all powers at the regional level in the hands of a viceroy, who would inevitably acquire executive functions alongside with those of supervision. According to Gur'ev, the appointment of viceroys with so wide a competence would destroy the existing ministerial system that just started to take roots. In Gur'ev's vision the ministry was likened to a panopticon operating in a completely homogeneous administrative space, perfectly transparent for minister's orders and uncompromised by any

⁴⁴¹ "Obozrenie grazhdanskogo upravlnia po guberniam i nekotoryie soobrazhenia po semu predmetu Riazanskogo General-Gubernatora General Ad'iutanta Balasheva" in *Materialy*, 121-122.

other *loci* of power (i. e. viceroys): “Each ministry must have its own sphere clearly defined, so that the *radii* could freely penetrate from the center to the very limits of the sphere and the minister could use each *radius* to translate his orders to the most distant limits of the State without the interference of any other power.”⁴⁴² In order to secure the operation of this principle, each ministry should have “dependant middle and lower governmental bodies in *gubernias* and districts, through which the ministry could act on the whole expanse of the Empire.”⁴⁴³ The lowermost agencies of the ministry and its departments were seen as performing the function of police i. e. prevention and correction of abuses. “In them the subjects of the emperor should find their immediate protectors from oppression and injustices that are presently inflicted upon them by their peers and all kinds of governmental agents.”⁴⁴⁴

Together with other champions of the ministerial governments like M. A. Balugianskii (a Hungarian-born lawyer who entered Russian service and worked in the Ministry of Justice) and the Senator D. A. Troshchinskii, Guriev admitted that the structure of the ministries themselves left much to be desired. The formula of hierarchical subordination and rationalistic distribution of activities between various parts of every ministry introduced by Speranskii in the 1810 “Institution of Ministries” quickly revealed the predominance of the chancelleries which, according to Gur’ev, was the main cause of mal-functioning in the administration.⁴⁴⁵ Just like the *gubernia* authorities, lower subdivisions of ministerial departments and their heads tended to avoid responsible decisions and simply relayed the cases for the attention of the ministers, producing overcentralization.⁴⁴⁶ To correct the situation, Gur’ev, Balugianskii and Troshchinskii suggested transforming ministerial

⁴⁴² A. D. Gur’ev, “Mnenie Ministra Finansov o proekte ucherezhdienia o Namestnikakh, soobschennoie emu po Vysochaishemu povelelniiu,” *Materialy*, 48.

⁴⁴³ Gur’ev, “Ob ustroistve verkhovnykh pravitel’stv Rossii,” December 1, 1815, RIO, vol. 16, (1890): 64.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁴⁵ Troshchinskii, in “Zapiska o ministerstvakh,” RIO, vol.3 (1867): 37-40 similarly emphasized the importance of the collegial principle for preventing arbitrary decisions and criticized the chancelleries conducive to arbitrariness.

⁴⁴⁶ “Balugianskii, “Rassuzhdenie o sredstvakh ispravleniia ucherezhdenii i zakonodatel’sтва v Rossii,” RIO, vol. 16, (1890): 32-33.

departments from chancelleries, which they were for the moment, into the collegial boards that would take responsible decisions, i. e. correct the infringements upon the presently existing laws and make representations on cases requiring new legislation.⁴⁴⁷ Meant as the “cradle of future senators, ministers and *gubernia* governors,”⁴⁴⁸ these collegial bodies in the ministries were to run the day-to-day business in their respective “branches.”⁴⁴⁹ Hence their incompatibility with any alternative, e. g. territorial *loci* of decision-making. “The unity of rules and action is the basic foundation of the ministries.” “Should there be any deviations from the general scheme in accordance with local conditions, they result from the care and foresight of central government and not from the activities of the local administration.” Local authorities would struggle to promote their particularistic interests and thereby multiply the conflicting demands on the center. Referring to the successful administrative experience of Britain and France and the problems facing contemporary Austrian Empire and Spain, Guriev asked whether it is convenient “to plant the seeds of diverging interests and introduce federal principles” in a country that, according to him, had always been unitary.⁴⁵⁰

Yet, the actual difference between the two approaches was deeper than the opposition of “functional” and “territorial” principles. A closer examination of the arguments of the two sides reveals that the problem of the viceroys or ministries was in a sense “secondary”, whereas the crucial difference existed in their understanding of the role of *gubernia* administration, and ultimately of the function of provincial nobility in it. While Gur’ev presented the ministries and the viceroyalties as two conflicting institutions of *administration* (*upravlenia*), in Speranskii’s scheme they were in fact two cooperating institutions performing central and local *supervision* (*nadzor*) over the *gubernia* administration. The two

⁴⁴⁷ Gur’ev, “Ob Ustroistve verkhovnykh pravitel’stv Rossii,” 63.

⁴⁴⁸ Balugianskii, “Rassuzhdenie o sredstvakh ispravleniia uchrezhdenii i zakonodatel’stva v Rossii,” 34.

⁴⁴⁹ Both Gur’ev and Speranskii realized that responsible decisions which at the same time would not be arbitrary can only be taken by collegial bodies consisting of competent members. That Gur’ev advocated the transformation of ministerial councils into such bodies, while Speranskii tried to create at the head of *gubernia*

visions resulted not only from diverging understandings of the role of ministries, but quite different vision of the role of *gubernia* administration, which ultimately revealed different assumptions of the administrative skills of the provincial nobility. Put simply, whereas Gur'ev argued for the monopoly of the ministries over both the directional impulses and the day-to-day operation of the system, Speranskii saw them as one of the supervising institutions along with viceroys and the Senate. While Gur'ev sought to dissolve the *gubernia* administration into the lower bodies of the central ministries, Speranskii tried to introduce greater unity at *gubernia* level and thereby enhance the independence and responsibility of provincial nobility involved in administration.

By the third decade of the 19th century none of the reformers harbored any illusions about the administrative capacities and the general level of enlightenment of the provincial nobility. That Speranskii was not an exception is clear from the fact that he insisted on appointing the members of the newly created *gubernia* councils rather than electing them.⁴⁵¹ Yet, for all extents and purposes, Gur'ev's vision of ministerial government presupposed a much more passive role for the provincial nobility, than was accorded to it by Speranskii. Although the growing ministerial bureaucracy, whose viewpoint was articulated by Gur'ev, was predominantly of noble origin, their career patterns brought about a "capital city" approach in the formulation of problems and solutions, and ultimately defined the general characteristics of reforms later in the century. Conversely, insofar as the majority of the *gubernia* council members, even if appointed, were necessarily from the local nobility, *gubernia* councils were in the line of development started by the 1775 *Gubernia* Statute. Whatever his reservations concerning the abilities of the provincial nobles, Speranskii's

administration, demonstrates well the difference between them as to where the principle decision-making should take place.

⁴⁵⁰ Gur'ev, "Mnenie", *Materialy*, 50.

⁴⁵¹ Raeff, *Michael Speransky, Statesman of Imperial Russia, 1772-1839* (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, 1990), 262.

measures had in view gradual extension of local participation in *gubernia* government together with the progress of nobility's enlightenment.⁴⁵²

Although Speranskii's *gubernia* councils introduced in Siberia and the Bessarabian Statute of 1818 were not immediately related, both were based on the principle of collegial decision-making in local administration. By specifying election as the principle of formation of Bessarabian Supreme Council, the authors of the 1818 Statute turned out to be even more optimistic than Speranskii of the potential of local nobility. Significantly, Alexander I demonstrated confidence in the general enlightenment and administrative expertise of Bessarabian nobles, at the time of increasing doubts of the virtues standard Russian *gubernia* administration of 1775 based on wide participation of Russian provincial nobility. While this contrast was not enough to make Bessarabia a model for the development of other parts of empire in the manner of the Great Duchy of Finland or the Kingdom of Poland, it was sufficient to make the emperor turn a deaf ear to the "assimilationist" arguments for subordinating local administration to central bodies expressed by Kalageorgii. Under the influence of the reports of Chichagov, Svin'in and Capodistria, Alexander I decided to give the Bessarabian nobles a chance of running the provincial government. What he saw personally in Chisianu in April 1818 might have dissuaded him a bit, but as is clear from his rescript to Bakhmet'ev accompanying the Statute, he preferred to hope for the best.

The Critics of Bessarabian Autonomy

The introduction of the 1818 Statute for the Formation of Bessarabian Province that reaffirmed privileged political status of Bessarabia ultimately provoked great resentment on the part of the Russian officials, which in a way resembled their reaction to Polish autonomy. To be sure, neither the Bessarabian boyars, nor the 1818 Statute were supposed to serve as models for the rest of the Empire. One can also doubt whether Russian noblemen, little

⁴⁵² Ibid., 295.

interested as they were by the provincial affairs, would have been content once the Bessarabian autonomy were paralleled by the introduction of similar liberties in Penza or Tver'. Their interest in the whole question of regional autonomies was negative: their indignation was provoked by the fact that Bessarabian boyars, whom they clearly considered culturally inferior, obtained the rights and privileges unparalleled in the "inner *gubernias*." In a way, the 1818 Statute facilitated the cause of the potential adversaries of Bessarabian autonomy. In the eyes of Russian officials, the 1818 Statute placed the government of the province to a large extent into the hands of the officials elected from local nobility and limited the viceroy's ability to interfere into concrete decisions taken by the Supreme Council or its subdivisions. If earlier instances of disorder, abuses and mismanagement could be attributed to incomplete definition of various aspects of province government, henceforth Bessarabian nobility would be held exclusively to blame for any instance of disorder or mismanagement. This was exactly what happened.

Capodistria's departure from Russia in 1822 left Bessarabian "experiment" without an influential advocate. The general supervision over the Bessarabian affairs in the capital was transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Interior, which until 1824 was headed by V. P. Kochubei. The latter did not represent a direct threat to Bessarabian autonomy since, as has been mentioned, he was not an advocate of the "functional" government and in fact supported the introduction of the governors-general. Yet, Kochubei was either indifferent or lacked time to intervene directly into Bessarabian affairs. As a result, the immediate supervision of Bessarabia was entrusted to Kochubei's deputy D. M. Bludov, who adopted an assimilationist position.⁴⁵³ Meanwhile, Bakhmet'ev, who by the end of his tenure in Bessarabia found himself increasingly at odds with Bessarabian nobility, was temporarily replaced by I. M. Inzov. The latter combined the post of Bessarabian Viceroy

⁴⁵³ More on D. M. Bludov see Richard S. Wortman, *The Development of Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), chapter VI.

with the position of the Chief Custodian of the Foreign Colonies of the Southern Russia and also clashed with Bessarabian nobles over the question of their privileges. Effective as he was in the defense of the cause of his co-nationalist Bulgarian settlers in the 1810s, Inzov, according to the testimonies of the contemporaries, failed to provide an energetic and effective guidance for the newly founded institution and was soon replaced by M. S. Vorontsov.

The appointment of M. S. Vorontsov as the Governor-General of New Russia and Viceroy of Bessarabia on July 28, 1823 was the main factor of reevaluation of the relative degree of enlightenment of Bessarabian nobility and of the region as a whole that ultimately entailed an overall change of policy towards assimilation.⁴⁵⁴ The son of Russian ambassador to London and one of the most famous Russian anglophiles of the 18th century, M. S. Vorontsov was brought up in the spirit of respect for traditional British constitutional liberties. However, his previous administrative experience took place in France in 1815-1818 as the commander of Russian occupation corps. The obvious contrast between the situation of Bessarabia that he toured in August 1823 with the administration of the Europe's most developed nation of the time ultimately explains why Vorontsov treated Bessarabian administrative experiment not as the quasi-constitutional institution based on traditional noble liberties, but as the worst kind of disorder.

Vorontsov's first inspection of Bessarabia revealed things "which would make one's hair stand on end." According to the description of N. M. Longinov, whose brother was one of Vorontsov's aides-du-champ, "the prisons were full of people placed there without any investigation, in order to prevent them report how they severely they were oppressed and robbed. Many of them died in the meantime. All this was taking place on Inzov's eyes."⁴⁵⁵ In

⁴⁵⁴ The most authoritative description of Vorontsov's role in the abolition of the Bessarabian autonomy is provided by Anthony Rhineland, *Prince Michael Vorontsov. Vice-Roy to the Tsar* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1990), 67-93.

⁴⁵⁵ N. M. Longinov to S. R. Vorontsov, June 7, 1823, *Russkii Arkhiv*, no. 7, (1912): 408.

Longinov's account Polish involvement in the account acquired sinister overtones. He found Bessarabia "an unfortunate province abandoned to the pillages of the horrible clique brought here by Bakhmetiev and consisting of the Podolian riff-raffs."⁴⁵⁶ Bakhmet'ev's Polish wife, born Countess Pototskaia, totally dominated her husband and was selling the public offices to her clients, and together with them plundered the province and its inhabitants.⁴⁵⁷ While Vorontsov's associates tended to portray the situation in particularly grim light in order to stress the merits of their patron, their alarming reports were largely justified. Very soon Russian officials identified the 1818 Statute as the main cause of all these disorders. In Bludov's evaluation these individual faults of the officials had "little to do with disorders that take place in Bessarabia." Instead, Bludov's sarcastic description, the real cause of the troubles were "the beautiful habits, the noble usages of this dear country. It was a great mistake to treat them as the fundamental laws."⁴⁵⁸

Revealing similar attitudes, the newly appointed civil governor of Bessarabia and a permanent member of the Bessarabian Supreme Court F. F. Vigel offered the most comprehensive critique of 1818 Statute and advocated the curtailment of local autonomy. His "Remarks on the Present State of Bessarabia" questioned the rationality of giving Bessarabia a "special political existence" in the manner of the Kingdom of Poland and the Great Duchy of Finland.⁴⁵⁹ In the eyes of Vigel Bessarabian nobility simply did not merit such liberties. He went as far as to question the noble origin of Moldavian boyars pointing that in Moldavia as in all other parts of the Ottoman Empire there were no hereditary distinctions, but only individual ranks and offices.⁴⁶⁰ Moreover, with exception of several families, the bulk of the present Bessarabian nobility consisted of the former servants of the Moldavian boyars, who

⁴⁵⁶ Longinov to Vorontsov June 7, 1823, *Arkhiv Vorontsovykh*, vol. 18, 497.

⁴⁵⁷ Longinov to Vorontsovu, 408.

⁴⁵⁸ Bludov to Vorontov, December 1823, *Arkhiv Vorontsovykh*, vol 18, 295.

⁴⁵⁹ Vigel was quite aware of Polish influence on the Bessarabian affairs indicating that the project of the 1818 Statute was composed by Bakhmet'ev's secretary of Polish origin G. Krinitskii. Vigel, "Zamechania na nyneshnee sostoianie Bessarabskoi provincei," 4.

after Bucharest treaty crossed the Pruth and used the havoc of the first years in order to by property and acquire a noble status. Vigel found it impossible to expect “noble feelings, the knowledge of laws and diligent performance of duties” from the people, who recently occupied “the last stage of a slave hierarchy” being the “slaves of the Moldovans, who were the subjects of the Greeks, while the latter in their turn were the slaves of the Turks.”⁴⁶¹ According to Vigel, the moral profile of Bessarabian nobles could be of two kinds. On the one hand, there were rather kind members of the Supreme Council from the boyar families, who were “emulating each other in idiocy and ignorance.”⁴⁶² On the other hand, there were the enterprising individuals of obscure origin, who, taking advantage of the liberal approach of Russian authorities in respect of the recognition of the noble titles in order to fill the numerous elected positions introduced by the 1818 Statute, got ennobled, created a party of supporters and defeated the representatives of the old families on the very first noble elections by intimidating the latter with force. While Inzov managed to make the second elections of 1821 more orderly, Vigel still found the most treacherous and vile of the parvenus still in place.⁴⁶³

In Vigel’s opinion, Bessarabian Supreme Council, created due to the intrigues of the “cunning Moldavians,” who managed to fool “the willful, but trusting Bakhmet’ev,” offered the most conspicuous proof of failure of Bessarabia’s nobility to perform the administrative functions. In his nearly caricature description:

“The members of the Council would usually gather by 10 AM with the look of dissatisfaction and listen to a case with an appearance of boredom and indifference. Each of them would yawn no less than six times per hour. At noon each would fix his eyes on the clock. At half past twelve there are unmistakable signs of impatience and appetite. Every now and then, one or another would rise and sit down again. Others would demonstrate by their looks and bodily movements that they can hardly stand it.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 31.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 8.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 11-14.

At One PM all of them would jump from their seats and hurry for the lunch even if there was only one page left until the end of the case.”⁴⁶⁴

The reluctance of Bessarabian nobles to serve at the governmental bodies was coupled by the local nobility’s lack of distinction between public and private spheres. Having no idea of public office, Bessarabian nobles treated chancellery clerks as personal servants, which explained the scarcity of staff and its poor skills.⁴⁶⁵ This “filth that covered the heights of Bessarabia,” was complemented by the abuses of district administration. According to Vigel’ an *ispravink*, who failed to make 100 thousand *lei* per year was considered a fool.⁴⁶⁶

Like Baikov and Garting before him, Vigel held a very low opinion about Moldavian legal tradition. He dismissed outright the idea that Roman-Byzantine law, mentioned in the 1818 Statute, was one of the components of Bessarabian civil law, since “no one ever looked into the Justinian Code.” As to the “customs of the land,” Vigel found it nothing else, but a devise used by the hospodars to justify their arbitrary decisions, which ultimately produced a collection of “incoherencies and injustices.” It was easy for him to convince Vorontsov that it was a great mistake on the part of Capodistria to preserve “these monuments of barbarity”⁴⁶⁷ forever as “fundamental laws of the country.”⁴⁶⁸ Vigel was also skeptical about the effort undertaken by Petr Manega and Baron E. P. von Brunnow to draft a project of the Bessarabian code.⁴⁶⁹ In Vigel’s opinion, even if they manage to produce such a code, it will

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁶⁸ Vorontsov to Bludov, October 4, Odessa, Arkhiv Vorontsovykh vol 18, 291.

⁴⁶⁹ On the circumstances of drafting the Bessarabian Code of laws see L. A. Kasso, *Petr Manega, zabyti reformator Bessarabskogo prava* (Spb: Senatskaia tip, 1914). Manega was the first Bessarabian who studied law in Paris. On finishing his studies in 1820 he presented himself to Capodistria, who appointed him to the task together with Baron E. P. von Brunnow. The latter, however, lacked time, which made the progress very slow. Besides, Manega failed to find common language with Vorontsov and continued the work on the code out of pure enthusiasm. By 1825 part of the Code written in French and bearing the influence of the Code Napoleon was sent to the ministry of interior. It took five more years to translate the Code into Russian. By that time, it was already overtaken by the events, since the Bessarabian autonomy was severely limited by the 1828 Statute. The code was nevertheless published in the early 20th century. See *Projet de Code Civile pour la Bessarabie 1824-1825* (St. Petersburg, 1913).

be hardly useful for Russian government, for its introduction would further weaken the ties between Beessarabia and the rest of the empire.

The introduction of Russian *gubernia* model, Russian language in the administration and Russian laws in the courts was, according to Vigel, a remedy for the current problems of the province. He found the ideas inspired by “German education” (a reference to the historical school of law – V. T.) futile, since in practice they covered disorder and mess (*sumbur*). In order to attract officials to this land, whose “only name inspires fear” because of plague and obscurity, Vigel suggested offering them the advantages of faster promotion in rank like in Georgia or Siberia. This would also attract the currently idle Moldavians in Russian service.⁴⁷⁰ Advising Vorontsov to abolish the Supreme Council, Vigel, at the same time, recognized the potential dangers inherent in greater administrative subordination: “God save us from a wish to give the governors an unlimited power! Today we are happy if we have a governor who is clever, just, enlightened and selfless; but who can guarantee that tomorrow he will not be replaced by an invalid general who will make our life bitter...” Yet, all things compared, the latter was a lesser evil than the chaos and self-rule of Bessarabian nobility. Vigel was convinced that order, enlightenment and justice could only be established “in this barbarous land... with an iron stick.”⁴⁷¹

This was exactly the style adopted by Vorontsov in the government of Bessarabia after his inspection of the province in August 1823. For a start, the viceroy fired the whole police department, ordered investigation of abuses that it committed and appointed completely different people in their place.⁴⁷² His next measure was to make the position of *ispravniks* and the presidents of the district courts to be filled by appointment rather than by

⁴⁷⁰ Vigel', 34-35.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁷² Longinov to Vorontsovu, June 7, 1823, *Russkii Arkhiv* 1912, no. 7:408.

election.⁴⁷³ In concert with central government, he took care to gradually subordinate Bessarabian civil and criminal court to the Second Department of the Senate by making the latter the courts of appeal for the former.⁴⁷⁴ Next, he revived the works on the elaboration of the statute regulating the relationships between peasants and landlords. Finally, Vorontsov undertook energetic measures for further colonization of southern part of the province obtaining special decrees from the Committee of Ministers on the settlement of Serbs, Cossacks and state peasants.⁴⁷⁵ On balance of these measures, one can see that the colonization goals in Bessarabia were for Vorontsov a greater priority than cooperation with the local nobility. The picture of disorders reported by Vorontsov quickly convinced St Petersburg officials that 1818 Statute was an ill-conceived document. Before discussing their concerted actions towards the abolition of the Bessarabian autonomy, it is necessary to take account of the changing attitude of the imperial elite towards the role of the nobility in the local administration in general. This would enable one to understand not only the general shift from territorial to functional government, but also the abandonment of the collegial principle in local administration in favor “personalism” and hierarchical command structure. This change of attitude is particularly important for it explains the changing attitude of imperial authorities to Bessarabian nobility.

⁴⁷³ “Vysochaishe utverzhdennoie polozhenie Komiteta Ministrov. Ob opredelenii v Bessarabskoi Provintsii Zemskikh ispravnikov i zasedatelei ot Korony.” September 2, 1824, PSZ, ser 1, vol. 39, no. 30048.

⁴⁷⁴ “Vysochaishe utverzhdennoie polozhenie Komiteta Ministrov. O vnzose vsekhn prigovorov o Dvoriankh i Chinovnikaakh Bessarabskoi provincei, po ugovornym delam na razsmotrenie v Pravitel'stvuiushchii Senat.” April 15, 1825, PSZ, ser. 1, vol. 39, no. 29869; Also, “O perenosе del na appeliatsiiu iz Bessarabskogo Provincenogo Grazhdanskogo suda vo 2oi Departament Senata i o reshenii onykh po mestnym uzakoneniiam i obychaiam Bessarabskoi provincei.” August 3, 1825, PSZ, ser. 1, Vol. 40, no. 30439.

⁴⁷⁵ “O vodvorenii v Bessarabii Serbov”, February 9, 1826, PSZ Ser 2, vol 1, no. 132, 194-196; “O vodvorenii Zaporozhsskikh Kazakov i drugikh zagranichnykh vykhodtsev v Bessarabskoi provincei;” February 19, 1827, PSZ, ser 2, vol 2, no. 913, “O pereselinii krestian iz vnutrennikh Gubernii v Bessarabsuiu provincei”. September 21, 1826, PSZ ser 2, vol 1, no. 592, 998-1000.

Committee of December 26, 1826 and its Role in Russian Institutional and Political History

After the turbulent events targeted by the sudden death of Alexander I, Nicholas I ordered the formation of special committee that had to discuss the projects of reform found in the chancellery of the late emperor and advise him, which of them are worthy of putting into practice.⁴⁷⁶ The newly formed body, which for lack of a better name was called “Committee of December 6, 1826”, included some of the leading statesmen of the previous reign like V. P. Kochubei and M. M. Speranskii and constituted a new forum for the discussion of the reform of provincial administration. The struggle between the advocates of “functional” and “territorial” forms of administration continued albeit between a slightly different set of participants. On the one hand, there was M. M. Speranskii, who developed his ideas on the appointment of district governors and creation of *gubernia* councils into a “Project for the Creation of *Gubernia* Administration.”⁴⁷⁷ Opposed to this plan was Egor Kankrin, Gur’ev’s successor at the Ministry of Finance and a staunch advocate of the “ministerial” government. Characteristically, he criticized *gubernia* and district councils proposed by Speranskii as compromising the logic of the ministerial “branch” administration and turning the empire “into 50 *gubernia* states and 500 district *gubernias*.” The minister also criticized the collegial principle of the *gubernia* councils, which would slow their operation, and advocated “personalism” allowing for prompt dispatch of the affairs crucial in such a huge empire.⁴⁷⁸

As has been mentioned, by the third decade of the 19th century neither Kankrin nor Speranskii harbored any illusions about the administrative capacities and the general level of enlightenment of the provincial nobility. Yet, the new minister of finance just like his

⁴⁷⁶ For a review of committee’s work see Lincoln, Bruce W. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All The Russians* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

⁴⁷⁷ See Speranskii, “Projekt uchrezhdenia dlia upravleniia gubernii,” *Materialy, Administrativnyi Otdel*, part 1, 15-53.

⁴⁷⁸ E. Kankrin, “Zamechaniia Ministra Finansov po proektu sostavlennomu Komitetom 6 dekabria 1826 g. uchrezhdeniia,” in *Materialy... Administrativnyi Otdel*, part 1, 59-62. On the latter point Kankrin disagreed

predecessor, took a much more pessimistic view of the administrative potential of the provincial nobility, than Speranskii and sought to promote the role of the central ministries instead. Although the ministerial officialdom advocated by the ministers of finance derived from essentially the same noble class, their career patterns brought about a “capital city” approach in the formulation of problems and solutions, and ultimately defined the general characteristics of the Great Reforms of the 1860s. Conversely, insofar as the majority of the *gubernia* councils’ members, even if appointed, were necessarily from the local nobility, the latter were in the line of development started by the 1775 *Gubernia* Statute. Whatever his reservations concerning the abilities of the provincial nobility, Speranskii’s measures had in view gradual extension of local participation in gubernia government together with the progress of nobility’s enlightenment.⁴⁷⁹

Another project considered by the Committee was titled “Considerations on the Establishment of Administration in *Gubernias*” written by the already-mentioned M. A. Balugianskii. From the perspective of the opposite views on the form of local administration formulated by Speranskii and Balashev on the one hand and Gur’ev and Kankrin on the other, Balugianskii’s project offered a compromise solution. Like virtually all other authors, Balugianskii identified the unlimited personal power of the governor coupled with inoperation of the collegial *gubernia* boards as the main problem. Although the 1775 *Gubernia* Statute specified the division of the *gubernia* administration into nominally independent police, fiscal and judicial parts, in practice the governor arbitrarily controlled all the three.⁴⁸⁰ The main factor, which brought about such state of things was the mixture of the “territorial” (*gubernias*, viceroys) and “branch” (ministries) principles of the administration. Assuming that Russian government would eventually develop along the latter model,

with his predecessor Gur’ev, who, it will be remembered, recognized the importance of collegial principle as a means to make decisions responsible at the level of the central ministries.

⁴⁷⁹ Raeff, *Speranskii*, 295.

Balugianskii suggested abolishing viceroalties in the internal regions of the empire leaving them only in the capitals and in the borderland territories. He also suggested dividing the presently existing *gubernia* administration once again into police, fiscal and judicial part subordinating each of them to the respective ministry and specifying the prerogatives of each element in the ministerial chain of command.⁴⁸⁰

As long as *gubernia* administration was established along the principles that he proposed, Balugianskii argued that all intermediary instances between *gubernia* and central bodies are redundant. Similarly, although Balugianskii offered to retain collegial principle in some parts of *gubernia* administration, he was against uniting all aspects of local government in *gubernia* councils operating on collegial principles advocated by Speranskii. According to Balugianskii, they would compromise the principle of division of powers and subordination to the central ministries. At the same time, insofar as collegial principle was important in cases requiring local information, he recognized the necessity of deviations from his scheme in borderland territories. The latter had to be governed by governors-general with the help of collegial Supreme Councils established “for the supreme government of all subordinated *gubernias*” (*dlia glavnogo upravleniia vsekh podchinennykh gubernii*) and *gubernia* councils in each borderland *gubernia* placed under the supervision of a governor-general. In other words, the structure of Riazan’ and Siberian governor-generalship that Speranskii and Balashev offered as a model for the whole Empire, in Balugianskii’s scheme were viewed as exclusive administrative form for the administration of borderland territories (such as Siberia and the Caucasus).

Whereas, Speranskii sought to accommodate viceroalties and ministries by defining both institutions as the forms of supervision over *gubernia* administration, Balugianskii’s

⁴⁸⁰ Balugianskii, “Rassuzhdenie ob ucherezhdanii upravleniia v guberniakh,” in *Materialy... Administrativnyi Otdel*, part 1, 7.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 10.

“compromise” consisted in assigning the two forms to different kinds of territories.⁴⁸² While the administration in the center of the empire in Balugianskii’s scheme was to be established in accordance with “ministerial” model and on the principles of personalism advocated by Kankrin, the borderland territories were to be governed by governors-general with the help of collegial supreme and *gubernia* councils. This solution seems all too natural from retrospect. Yet, for it to materialize several things had to be made obvious: 1) that the *gubernia* government is not a “self-sufficient” territorial unit encompassing all aspects of administration as it was under 1775 Statute, but includes several “branch” sections directly subordinated central ministries; 2) that a ministry is not a form of central control over the functioning of autonomous “territorial units” (as it was defined by Speranskii in 1821), but a body monopolizing all effective policy-making in respective domain and turning some parts of *gubernia* administration into its lower agencies; 3) that a viceroyalty is not a form of permanent local *supervision* over the functioning of the self-sufficient *gubernia* administration (as in 1816 project for the introduction for viceroyalties or in Speranskii’s project), but a “territorial” form of *government* that is potentially contradicting to the ministries.

As is clear from the minutes of the proceedings of the Committee of December 26, other participants and the emperor accepted the solutions offered in Balugianskii’s memoir. Reviewing the mixed success of Balashev’s experiment in the five central *gubernias*, the Committee concluded that the governors-general are redundant in all but the borderland *gubernias* and the capitals.⁴⁸³ Whereas 1775 *Gubernia* Statute, the 1815 Constitutional Charter of the Kingdom of Poland or the 1818 Statute for the Formation of Bessarabian

⁴⁸² It is noteworthy, that unlike Balashev and Speranskii who modeled their general-governorships as institutions of supervision Balugianskii classified both Riazan’ and Siberia as the “governing” (*upravliaiuschie*) governor-generalships and proposed to retain them. Balugianskii, “*Rassuzhdenie ob ucherezhdanii upravleniia v guberniakh*,” 11.

⁴⁸³ See minutes of the proceedings for May 4, 1827 in RIO, vol. 16 (1891): 144-147, and February 19, 1828, in *Materialy*, 59.

Province all attributed to the viceroys the function of supervision over local administration, in the post 1825 period governors-general were turned into high placed officials compensating the inability of central ministries to *govern* the borderland *gubernias*. The definition of the governor in the central regions as the “master of the *gubernia*” proposed by the Committee reveals that there was still a long way before the local institutions were fully subordinated to the ministries. Yet, it also marked a decisive step away from the spirit of 1775 *Gubernia* Statute towards greater bureaucratization at the expense of the collegial principles of Catherinian legislation. This transformation resulted from the monarchy’s general turn away from cooperation with local nobility (including the regional elites) towards a more “bureaucratic” model. The government of various territories was effected by appointed officials that tended to develop “professional” bureaucratic consciousness, and, despite their noble origin, increasingly differed in their outlook from provincial nobility.

The deliberations of the Committee of December 6, 1826 were paralleled by actual consolidation of the authority of the central ministries over the *gubernia* administration. Already the re-organization of the ministries in 1810-1811 called the governors and local colleges to carry out directives from the ministries as well as from the Senate. Thus, the councilors in the *gubernia* boards started taking orders from Ministry of Interior, while the assessors in the *gubernia* fiscal chambers became responsible to the Ministry of Finance. In the course of the following decades, the Ministry of Finance consolidated control over customs collection, mining, salt and the forests, which were earlier in competence of the *gubernia* fiscal chamber.⁴⁸⁴ On its part, the Ministry of Interior strengthened its control over the governors, who were required to submit yearly reports on the state of their *gubernias* since April 1828.⁴⁸⁵ Acquisition of the right to appoint local officials was another aspect of consolidation of central ministries. In the second and third decade of the 19th century the tsar

⁴⁸⁴ The latter became subordinated to the MF in 1837. Yaney, *Systematization of Russian Government*, 219.

and the Senate continued to make formal appointments, but these increasingly followed the suggestions of the ministries.⁴⁸⁶ In 1831 the ministries acquired the rights to appoint many local officials directly. The most important step in this process was 1837 instruction to the governors explicitly subordinating them to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, while turning the collegial governing boards into executive institutions subordinated to the governor.⁴⁸⁷ The practice of regular financial revisions of *gubernia* offices was established. Finally, local police was reorganized at the district level through the creation of police offices (*stany*) and the post of police master (*stanovoi pristav*). While the law mentioned that it is preferable to appoint the later from local nobility, it also enabled the governors to reject nominations made by local nobility and required that retired military officers be given preference. This substantially detached local police from the control of provincial nobility.⁴⁸⁸

The decline of the provincial nobility's role in internal administration, signified the disintegration of the hierarchy of delegated authority and "policing by proxy", which was characteristic of late 18th century Russian version of well-ordered police state. At the same time, consolidation of central ministries and bureaucratization of local government for several decades was paralleled by preservation of the paternalistic authority of the landlords and consolidation of peasant commune and its social disciplining functions. However, the preservation of the seigniorial authority of the landed nobility coupled with the diminution of their participation in imperial administration *as landed nobility* produced a legitimization crisis, which is conventionally known as the problem of serfdom and its abolition.⁴⁸⁹ Indeed,

⁴⁸⁵ Daniel T. Orlovskii, *The Limits of Reform: the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Imperial Russia, 1802-1881* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 31.

⁴⁸⁶ Yaney, *Systematization of Russian Government*, 206.

⁴⁸⁷ It also made official the de facto elimination of the post of governor-general in central gubernias.

⁴⁸⁸ Yaney, *Systematization of Russian Government*, 217-219; Walter M. Pintner, "The Social Characteristics of the Early Nineteenth-Century Russian Bureaucracy," *Russian Review* 29, no. 3 (1970): 429-443, points out diminution of the percentage of nobles in provincial service (p. 439, note 18) and speaks of consolidation of a body of "professional" bureaucracy over the first half of the 19th century, consisting of nobles, but having little or no serfs and therefore detached from "landed interest."

⁴⁸⁹ In the words of V. Kliuchevskii, *Sobranie soviennii v vos'mi tomakh*. vol. 5 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1958), 141, the nobility "lost its main political justification" already with the

since the noble in his local capacity of a serf master was no longer deemed enlightened enough to perform important administrative functions in local administration, the legitimacy of his authority over the serfs immediately became questionable, posing the problem of peasant emancipation.

The consolidation of ministries and formation of central bureaucracy during the reign of Nicholas I was inextricably connected with crystallization of such an attitude to the peasant question paving the way for emancipation.⁴⁹⁰ Putting an end to the paternalistic authority of the landlords, the peasant reform of 1861 removed another link in the chain of delegated control and policing that allowed for some residual contacts between the noble “society” and the traditional world of the peasants. A privileged landowner, who did not perform any service and at the same time alienated a substantial part of what they consider “their” land, manifestly lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the peasants. Significantly limiting its scope of responsibility, post-1861 government failed to adequately respond to this legitimization crisis. In comparison with the 18th century concept of government, which presupposed rational regulation of the whole society, the architects of the “Great Reforms” defined their responsibility in much narrower terms. As a result, the reforms of the 1860s stopped at the boundaries of peasant commune: new institutions of local self-government (the *zemstvos*) were not involved in the social regulation of the peasantry, while the legal reform of 1860s left the peasant society regulated by common law.⁴⁹¹ In stark contrast to the main task of enlightened government, which Speranskii defined as “bringing closer of the ages of

Manifesto of 1762, which relieved it from compulsory service requirement. However, in so far as the masses of the nobility continued to serve and played an important role in the army and the administration, the legitimacy crisis remained latent. Its aggravation coincided with the the formation of bureaucratic ministerial government in the first half of the 19th century paralleled by the decline of the role of the provincial nobility in local administration.

⁴⁹⁰ Lincoln, Bruce, W. *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats, 1825-1861* (DeKalb : Northern Illinois University Press, 1981).

⁴⁹¹ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia. People and Empire, 1552-1997* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1997), 321-322.

the parts of the society”⁴⁹² the Great Reforms of the 1860s and 1870s in fact widened the gap between the “modernizing” Russia on the one hand, and peasant society on the other, aggravating the already existing desynchronization of the social development that bore its tragic fruits in the early 20th century.

Administrative Assimilation of Bessarabia

The curtailment of the Bessarabian autonomy in the late 1820s provides an interesting illustration of reduction of local nobility’s role in provincial administration, which took place all over the empire. The peculiarity of Bessarabian case consisted in the fact that here the cause of administrative assimilation found its main champion in Bessarbian Viceroy M. S. Vorontsov. Vorontsov’s active cooperation with the Ministry of Interior in the curtailment of Bessarabian autonomy was rather untypical for in most other cases the viceroys (governors-general) found themselves at loggerheads with the Ministry of Interior over the issue of peculiar local institutions, and were eventually accused by later publicists of hampering the integration of borderlands into the empire. Like his contemporary Governor-General of Finland A. A. Zakrevskii, Vorontsov not only actively promoted administrative assimilation, but in fact was the initiator of this policy. At the same time, Vorontsov’s example offers an interesting illustration of the incomplete transformation of governors-general (viceroys) from an important symbolic link connecting the monarchy and provincial nobility in the time of Catherine the Great into a semi-military office devised for the administration of troublesome borderland territories. The role played by a concrete governor-general was conditioned not so much by his personal qualities and inclinations as by local conditions and peculiarities. In this respect, Vorontsov’s policy in Bessarabia was a successful implementation of what Zakrevskii failed to do in Finland, but was quite different from Vorontsov’s own policies as

⁴⁹² Speranskii, “Filosofskie razmyshlnia o prave i gosudarstve” in *Rukovodstvo k poznaniuu zakonov* (SPb.: Nauka, 2002), 194.

the Caucasian Viceroy in 1844-1854, which focused on cooperation with Georgian nobility.⁴⁹³

The Deputy of the Minister of Interior Bludov, who was working with Vorontsov on the reform of Bessarabian administration became convinced of the necessity to bring Bessarabian administration “closer to the institutions that operate in the interior of Russia in order to gradually efface all dissimilarities between various provinces and embed this unity into a system of laws that would eventually bring about the unity of mores, which is desirable everywhere, and especially in Russia given its immense territories.”⁴⁹⁴ Agreeing with Vorontsov on the necessity of assimilationist policies, Bludov identified those aspects of the 1818 Statute that in the eyes of a capital-city bureaucrat were incompatible with orderly administration. First, it was necessary to bring the fiscal system in accordance with general imperial practice, by abolishing indigenous types of taxes and dues and replace the Turkish money still circulating in Bessarabia, by Russian banknotes. Secondly, Bludov found the requirements for the confirmation of noble status too mild and recommended to put the claims to noble status to a more rigorous examination than their simple recognition by the rest of the noble community. Accordingly, on Vorontsov’s order a new commission for the examination of noble titles dominated by Russian officials reviewed them once again and reduced the total number of the enfranchised nobility: only 125 Bessarabian nobles participated in the 1824-1825 noble elections.⁴⁹⁵ However, Bludov’s biggest dissatisfaction was provoked by Supreme Council, which contrary to the principle of division of executive and judicial power professed by Russian reformers of the period, represented a “veritable accumulation of all powers and all branches of administration.” Being an unnecessary

⁴⁹³ Vorontsov is not the only case of a governor-general pursuing quite different, nay opposite policies in two different regions. One can also think of K. P. Von Kaufman, who promoted centralization and russification as a governor-general of Northwestern region in 1865-1866. After his appointment as governor-general of Tashkent, von Kaufman changed his approach advocating indirect rule and reliance on local legal tradition and becoming the main architect of Russia’s rule in Central Asia.

⁴⁹⁴ Bludov to Vorontsov, September 29, 1823, *Arkhir Vorontsovykh*, vol. 18, 289.

executive and judicial instance placed between province's executive and judicial bodies and central institutions, the Supreme Council was easily turned by intriguants into a means to stop the operation of all affairs.⁴⁹⁶ Fortunately, remarked Bludov, the 1818 Statute was introduced provisionally and Russian officials ceased this opportunity to get rid of the document that they blamed for the disorders in Bessarabian administration.

Reassured by ministerial support, Vorontsov set up a commission charged to draft a new statute that would correct the mistakes of its 1818 predecessor and provide the basis of the permanent administration of the region. In November 1824 his plan was in principle approved by the Committee of Ministers and in 1826 the draft of the new Statute was submitted to the Consideration of the State Council.⁴⁹⁷ During his prolonged stay in St Petersburg from November 1826 to March 1828 Vorontsov spared no effort to convince the emperor and the members of the State Council of the necessity to replace the 1818 institutions by the new statute drafted in 1825 in his chancellery and already discussed by the Committee of Ministers. In February 1828 Vorontsov finally obtained the desired confirmation for his project, which put an end to the decade and a half period of administrative experimentation in Bessarabia.

According to the new Statute,⁴⁹⁸ the province's government consisted of the civil governor, four councilors and an assessor, all of whom were to be appointed by the Senate on representation of the governor-general through the mediation of Ministry of Interior (art. 16). Along with it, a number of the institutions were created or reformed in line with the standard Russian *gubernia* administrations: the board of public welfare, the noble assembly, the medical board, the architectural department, and the province procuracy. All of them were to be formed on the basis of the general regulations operating at that time in the Russian Empire

⁴⁹⁵ Nakko, "Ocherk grazhdanskogo ustroistva Bessarabskoi Provinciei s 1812 po 1828 gg," 206.

⁴⁹⁶ Bludov to Vorontsov, September 29, 1823, Arkhiv Vorontsova, vol. 18, 288-289.

⁴⁹⁷ Rhineland, *Prince Michael Vorontsov*, 70, Kasso, *Rossia na Dunae*, 223.

(art. 18). The Fiscal Chamber (consisting out of vice-governor, provincial treasurer, province controller, an assessor and three councilors) likewise was an entirely appointed body (art. 20). Noble and merchant representation was preserved in the criminal and civil courts of the province as well as the newly created “conscience court” (“sovestnoi sud” consisting of two members in each court were to be elected by the nobility and two by the merchants). The central government reserved the prerogative to appoint the presidents and two councilors in criminal and civil courts (arts. 23-26). The head of the conscience court was to be appointed by the governor-general out of five candidates elected by the nobles. The new statute replaced the former Supreme Council by the Council of the Province that included the highest appointed officials of the province (governor-general, civil governor, vice-governor, the presidents of the provincial civil and criminal courts). The two councilors added to them were also to be appointed on the recommendation of the governor-general. The only member of the council to be elected by Bessarabia nobility was the province marshal (art. 14). Unlike the former Supreme Council, the Council of the Province had no judicial functions whatsoever and instead dealt with the outstanding questions of executive and financial character: the distribution of the land taxes and the allocation of various sums from the 10% fund created for the development of the province infrastructure (arts. 65-66). In other words, it was in charge of functions later to be performed by the *zemstvo* organizations. At the same time, the Council did not have executive power: it communicated with other elements of the province government by means of presentations (*predlozhenia*) and not orders. (art. 89)

The two main elements of the district administration were the all-estates District Court and Lower Land Court performing police functions. The former consisted of a judge and a councilor appointed by the government, two councilors elected from district nobility and two others from *mazili*, *ruptași* and settlers (arts.33-34). Confirming the modification

⁴⁹⁸ “Vysochaiishe utverzhdennoie uchrezhdeniie dlia upravlenia Bessarabskoi provincei.” February 29, 1828, PSZ, ser. 2, vol. 3, no. 1863.

made by Vorontsov immediately after his appointment, the new Statute presupposed that *ispravniks* and four members of the Lower Land Courts were to be appointed by governor-general himself (art. 38.) The rest of the district institutions were not unlike those in the inner *gubernias* and consisted of district fiscal chamber, noble custodian office (*dvorianskaia opeka*) district procurator and two physicians all of whom were to be appointed by the governor-general (arts. 39-43).

The most important feature of the new Statute was increasing bureaucratization of the province government. Compared to the “Temporary Rules” of 1813 and the “Statute for the Formation of Bessarabian Province” of 1818 the new Statute created a more complex structure of institutions with an increasingly specified division of functions. A separate division of the Statute described the formal relationship between various parts of Bessarabian government, which in its turn was subordinated to the Senate, the ministries and the governor-general in executive, fiscal and judicial matters (art. 58). A special “opinion” of the State Council was issued to regulate the division of functions between the executive province board and the fiscal chamber, outlined their subdivision into departments and subdivision (*stoly*) with specific functions assigned to each.⁴⁹⁹

The radical curtailing of Bessarabian autonomy is demonstrated by the relegation of the Supreme Council from the role of the highest court of appeal to the secondary functions of welfare and its formation *ex officio* or by appointment as opposed to election. The role of Bessarabian nobles was also dramatically reduced, which can be illustrated not only by general reduction of the number of the province officials to be elected by the nobles – 26 (8 in the province government and 18 in the district administration) as opposed to 62 under 1818 Statute – but also from the general redistribution of the elected and appointed officials. Except for the provincial and the district marshals of the nobility all elected noble officials

⁴⁹⁹ “Vysochaishe utverzhennoie mnenie Gosudarstvennogo Soveta”, March 11, 1828, PSZ, ser 2, vol. 3, no. 1864.

were members of the province and district courts, none of which they controlled exclusively. All “executive” parts of the administration were now formed only by appointment. Perhaps the most indicative of the Bessarabia’s loss of autonomy was the appointment of the *ispravniks* and the members of the lower district courts rather than their election. In this respect the tendencies towards centralization and bureaucratization became even more apparent in Bessarabia after 1828 than in the inner *gubernias*, whose lower executive bodies continued to be elected by the provincial nobility.

However paradoxical that may sound, these measures contributed to the integration of Bessarabian boyars into the imperial nobility. The abolition of a semi-independent supreme body that could act as the sole arbiter of the local legal tradition coupled with subsequent replacement of local laws with Russian imperial legislation, eliminated the space where the oppositional attitudes of local nobility could be articulated. After 1828 the latter increasingly chose administrative carriers in local and central government and forms of socialization characteristic of the imperial nobility. As the same time, the integration into imperial nobility did not mean a complete russification and was paralleled by the preservation of distinct cultural identity. Characteristic in this respect is the testimony of Alexandru Hâjdeu, who professed love for Russia and the tsar without forgetting his native roots: “In political sense my soul is Russian, true Russian from head to toe; in historical sense I am Romanian of pure blood.”⁵⁰⁰ The political identity of Russian nobleman was for Hâjdeu fully compatible with Romanian cultural and linguistic identity. In this respect, the Bessarabian case was a repetition on a smaller scale of the pattern of integration of the Ukrainian nobility (*starshina*) of the former Hetmanate, which in the second part of the 18th – early 19th century combined successful and even brilliant political carriers with strong Little Russian cultural identity.⁵⁰¹

⁵⁰⁰ Leontie Ivanov, *Imaginea rușilor și a Rusiei în literatura Română*. 252, citing Liviu Marian, *B. P. Hâjdeu și Rusia*. Chișinău, 1925, 30.

⁵⁰¹ David Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture* (Edmonton: Canadian institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1985), 65.

This co-existence of different political and cultural identities suggests acculturation rather than cultural assimilation and russification of Bessarabian nobility in the period after 1828.

This discussion of administrative changes in Bessarabia in the 1810s and 1820s demonstrates a lack of a pre-existing assimilative design or mobilized struggle between the champions of Bessarabian autonomy and the advocates of centralization. The rhetoric of reform often covered a banal personal struggle between different imperial officials or between the latter and the local nobles. At the same time, the imperial policies of the region had certain logic, which, however, should not be taken for a “clever” assimilationist strategy pursued by St Petersburg policy-makers ever since 1812. This logic becomes clear when one distinguishes between two questions, which found different solutions during the first decades following the annexation of Bessarabia: a) whether Bessarabian administration should be brought closer to the Russian institutions, i. e. administratively assimilated, or, conversely, the province should retain its “national composition”; b) what should be the role of the local nobility in local administration in Bessarabia and across the Empire.

The former was actually the question of the region’s “degree of enlightenment” in comparison with other territories of the empire. The solution of this question witnessed tensions between the official rhetoric, which emphasized the preservation of local political institutions and legal traditions, and the jealous reaction of the Russian officials, who resented special privileges granted to the local nobles, whom they considered to be culturally inferior. Seeking to fill the voids opened in the traditional legitimization myths by the imperial overexpansion, St Petersburg’s rhetoric played with the language of “local laws and customs,” whereas the Russian officials on the ground stressed the absence of anything amounting to the local legal tradition and found Russian institutions infinitely superior.

The latter question was about the “degree of enlightenment” of the provincial nobility in general (whether in Central Russia, Polish Partition or Bessarabia) and its ability to run

local administration. On the all-imperial level this question was discussed in the debates on the administrative reforms of the 1810s and 1820s, which produced two different solutions. The first solution, formulated in the 1816 viceroyalties project, developed in the memoirs of Speranskii and tested during Balashov's tenure as the governor-general of Riazan', presupposed the preservation of the provincial nobility's central role in *gubernia* administration. In order to make it more effective, these projects presupposed introducing the institute of supervision in the form of viceroys and/or resuscitating the collegial principles of government in the form of Speranskii's *gubernia* councils. The second solution consisted in transforming central and provincial administration along the logic of "branch administration" based on linear chain of command and composed of increasingly professionalized bureaucrats, ousting provincial nobility out of local administration. Whereas the first solution was tantamount to the restoration of the "empire of the nobility" or a peculiar version of well-ordered police state defined by delegation of authority and "policing by proxy", the latter was in line with the prevailing tendency in the evolution of well-ordered state in Central Europe since the 18th century, characterized by bureaucratization and curtailment of the administrative functions of estate institutions.⁵⁰²

The victory of the second viewpoint by the late 1820s meant the curtailing of the role of the local nobility in provincial administration in both central and borderland territories. This explains the difference between assimilationist measures proposed by Baikov and

⁵⁰² The attempt of Peter the Great to construct a well-ordered police state in Russia took place towards the end of the first stage of development of the well-ordered police state in Central Europe, characterized by reliance on existing corporate bodies. The realization of Peter's program in most cases proceeded against resistance and through suppression of the existing corporate bodies. In the period following Peter the Great, German territorial rulers started building up bureaucratic cadre increasing their independence from traditional estates and inaugurating a second stage in the development of well-ordered police state. Conversely, the evolution of the well-ordered police state in Russia consisted in the development of estate structure (culminating in Catherine's Charter for the Nobility) as the substitution for the cameralist trained bureaucracy. Finally, this asynchrony continued in the post 1815 period during which central European rulers reverted to cooperation with traditional estates as an anti-revolutionary strategy (Matthew Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism. The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture, 1086-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 167-172, whereas in Russia the government of Nicholas I, as has been demonstrated, turned towards bureaucratic version of well-ordered police state. The history of well-ordered police state in Central Europe and Russia consisted of several stages, on a superficial look, Russian institutional development always lagged one stage behind its prototype.

Garting in the 1810s and the eventual form that assimilationst policies took in the mid 1820s under Vorontsov. In the mid 1810s administrative assimilation of Bessrabia implied the introduction of the standard *gubernia* administration in accordance with the 1775 Gubernia Statute, which presupposed a uniform administration for the whole empire, but nevertheless allowed for wide participation of provincial nobility in local administration. By the late 1820s assimilation meant a decisive curtailing of the number of the elected noble officials in local government, which anticipated a general tendency for the whole empire. The reassessment of the “degree of enlightenment” of Bessarabian boyars by Vorontsov, Vigel and company was paralleled by the reassessment of the “degree of enlightenment” of the provincial nobility on an all-imperial scale.

In a sense, the malfunctioning of the Bessarabian Supreme Council illustrated the general crisis of the 18th century collegial noble government. The business of local administration tended to become increasingly complex demanding from the administrators promptness in decisions and expertise. Lack of the latter plagued Russian administration in the 18th century and was demonstrated in the ridiculously slow operation of the Bessarabian Supreme Council in 1818-1828. It turned out that Bessarabian boyars were no greater experts in local administration than their counterparts, the Russian *dvoriane*, of Tver’ or Kaluga. Therefore, in an all-imperial context, the abolition of Bessarabian Supreme Council in 1828 was yet another episode in the replacement of collegial administration by ministerial government as well as an illustration of diminishing role of provincial nobility in imperial administration. Stimulated by the discourse of cultural inferiority of Bessarbian boyars, such transformations in Bessarabian administration simply predated similar changes on an all-imperial scale. This provides Bessarabian case with a heuristic potential to elucidate conflicting tendencies in Russian institutional development of the first half of the 19th century.

At the same time, although the history of administrative assimilation of Bessarabia in the 1810s and 1820 contains a number of changes in policy, in one aspect this administrative assimilation proceeded in a rather linear manner. The legal-administrative framework embodied in the Statutes became increasingly elaborate. While the 1818 Statute broadened the autonomy of Bessarabia in comparison with the 1813 “Temporary rules”, it also contained increasingly elaborate definitions of the functions of each administrative office, its procedures as well as its relationships with other official bodies. However important was the formal role of Bessarabian boyars under the 1818 Statute, they ceased to be the exclusive interpreters of local legal tradition that provided the best basis for their self-rule. Instead, the unwritten local custom was replaced by a written statute accompanied by a great number of lesser regulations. The 1828 Statute represented another step in this direction. Therefore, regardless of their role in the expansion or curtailment of Bessarabian autonomy, the statutes of 1813, 1818 and 1828 consolidated imperial rule through the introduction of modern administrative practices.

Chapter IV Russian Empire, Romanian Boyars and the Elaboration of Organic Statutes for Moldavia and Wallachia

The period between 1821 and 1831 was perhaps the most turbulent in modern Romanian history. It started with the precipitous fall of a century-old Phanariote dominance and ended by the adoption of the Organic Statutes of Moldavia and Wallachia, which are sometimes called the first Romanian constitution. Bracketed by these momentous historical events was a decade of intense political conflict within the ruling elites of the principalities. For one thing, in the early 1820s, the autochthonous boyars scored a decisive victory over the Phanariotes and their associates and consolidated their position in the political structure. In this respect, 1821 marked an important stage in the process of territorialization of the Greek and Romanian ethnicities eliminating the ambiguities, which had earlier been exploited by various versions of the Greek “*megali idea*.” On the one hand, the defeat of *Etaireia* in Moldavia and Wallachia was followed by a long anti-Ottoman struggle in Morea, which ultimately led to the emergence of the independent Greek territorial state. On the other hand, the appointment of the autochthonous hospodars signified the end of attempts to consolidate Greek political hegemony in the principalities by partial reforms of local institutions along the lines suggested by Capodistria in his early memoirs. Anxious to distance themselves *Etaireia* and the Phanariotes, the political elites of the principalities increasingly abandoned neo-Byzantine identity in favor of French language and culture. Shedding the oriental vestments and adopting French dressing habits, the boyars also increasingly employed the language of patriotism and historical rights, foreshadowing the emergence of modern Romanian nationalism. At the same time, the political consciousness of the boyars still lacked the idea of equality, which, alongside with the memory of common origin and unified cultural and linguistic space, has been identified as one of the constitutive elements of modern

nation.⁵⁰³ Even the most radical projects of the 1820s limited political nation to the noble class, however broadly defined. As the following discussion demonstrates, the political struggle of the 1820s took place around the distribution of power within the boyar class and hardly questioned the social privileges of the boyars vis-à-vis other social groups.

Having eliminated one of the alternatives for the political development of Moldavia and Wallachia, the events of 1821 opened another space of uncertainty. The political reform of the principalities made imminent by the collapse of the Phanariote regime triggered the conflict within the local elite. Whereas earlier the political struggle took the form of confrontation of great boyar families and their clienteles, after 1821 the rivaling factions increasingly coincided with social divisions within the boyar class. The oligarchic aspirations of the great boyars were challenged by the boyars of the second and the third rank, who sought to acquire equal political privileges. The situation was further complicated by centralizing ambitions of the newly appointed autochthonous hospodars, whose policies of promotion redistributed social privilege in favor of the small boyars, but, at the same time, opposed their “republican” designs. This transformation in the character of political struggle in turn changed the forms of involvement of the “big actors” into local affairs. If earlier Russian consuls saw their task in building a pro-Russian party, which usually included both the great boyars and their clients, now they faced the necessity to take sides in a political conflict between various strata of local elite. The transformations in ideology and internal structure of the Russian Empire discussed in the previous chapter limited its ability to stay above the conflict and exert a homogenizing influence on the boyar estate. The replacement of late 18th century “empire of the nobles” by bureaucratic absolutism of Nicholas I meant the reduction of political role of the provincial nobility (including the elites of the borderlands) but, at the same time, a rigorous preservation of the social status quo. Unwilling to revise the

⁵⁰³ Miroslav Hroch, “Ot natsional’nykh dvizhenii k polnostiu sformirovavssheisia natsii,” in Benedict Anderson (ed.) *Natsii i natsionalizm* (Moscow: Perspektiva, 2002), 165.

results of the redistribution of social privilege in favor of the lesser boyars in the 1820s, Russian policy-makers nevertheless rejected their radical demands for equalization of political privileges. Playing the great and small boyar factions off each and using the boyar assemblies as a check on the hospodars Russian policy tended to perpetuate local tensions rather than solve them. Leaving all conflicting sides dissatisfied, the Organic Statutes, failed to homogenize the boyar class and make it dependent on the preservation of the new settlement complement.

Romanian Boyars and Russian Monarchy After the Greek Rebellion

The Greek rebellion in the principalities, which started on February 22, 1821, was preceded by the outbreak of uprising of Tudor Vladimirescu. During Russian-Ottoman war of 1806-1812 Vladimirescu commanded a detachment of local auxiliaries (*panduri*) obtaining a cross of St. Vladimir in recognition for his services. After 1812 he occupied the post of petty administrator in Oltenia, the westernmost autonomous part of Wallachia, and was in touch with his former comrade-in-arms Iordache Olimpiot and the commander of hospodar's guards (*arnauți*), who was a leading member of *Etaireia* in Wallachia. Through Olimpiot, Vladimirescu knew about the secret society and shared its goal, which was the abolition of the Ottoman rule. Taking advantage of his influence among the *arnauți* and the *panduri* of mountainous Oltenia, Vladimirescu in agreement with *Etaireia* undertook to start an uprising in Oltenia with the goal of creating disorder and internal complications for the Ottomans, which would necessitate Russian intervention under the pretext of re-establishing order.

When on January 18, 1821 Wallachian Hospodar Alexandru Suțu died, the provisional government of the leading Wallachian boyars secretly authorized Vladimirescu to start an uprising. Originally, the uprising was limited to the territory of Oltenia, professed its loyalty to the Sultan and called only for a struggle with abuses in administration, convocation of the Assembly of the land and government in accordance with laws. This was a tactical ruse

devised in cooperation with the interim boyar government in Bucharest, which took every opportunity to win time and present it as an unimportant local disorder that can be suppressed by Wallachian forces. However, by mid February, Vladimirescu rhetoric acquired an explicitly anti-Phanariote dimension, as he demanded to replace the latter with Romanians, abolish the venality of secular and ecclesiastic offices and create a national army. The situation changed further after February 22, 1821, when Alexander Ypsilanti's forces crossed the Pruth and joined with the detachments clandestinely formed by the *Etaireia* leaders in Moldavia. From Jassy Ypsilanti addressed local population with a manifesto promising the security of persons and property and declaring the intension to pass through Moldavia on the way to Greece. The manifesto also admonished local population not to fear the Ottomans and spoke of the forthcoming Russian support. Soon after the beginning of Vladimirescu's uprising and immediately after Ypsilanti's forces occupied Jassy, the Moldavian boyars addressed Alexander I asking him to introduce his troops promising all the necessary support and invoking the rhetoric of Russian protection of the orthodoxy.⁵⁰⁴

Meanwhile, Tudor and his *arnauți* crossed the Olt, invaded Greater Wallachia and eventually occupied Bucharest. Sharing the *Etaireia*'s goal of overthrowing the Ottoman rule, Vladimirescu had to play with the peasant grievances in order to mobilize the necessary support. The nature of his uprising started to change as it increasingly acquired the character of a peasant war. The situation was further aggravated by Alexander I official denunciation of the two movements and the approaching Ottoman retaliation army. After Russian military intervention failed to materialize, the leading Wallachian and Moldavian boyars fled to Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia, escaping from both the excesses committed by Vladimirescu's and Ypsilanti's forces and the revenge of the Ottomans. Meanwhile, the social composition and the proclaimed goals of Vladimirescu's and *Etaireia* movements

⁵⁰⁴ "Supplique adressee a Alexandre Ier par les boyars de Moldavie," Jassy, 24 February, 1821, in Vlad Georgescu (ed.) *Memoires et projets de reforme*, 101-102.

increasingly diverged and eventually it undermined the cooperation between their leaders. Vladimirescu's appeal to the principles of social justice against the abuses of the boyar government went together with tactical manifestation of the loyalty to the Sultan, which contradicted to the explicitly anti-Ottoman struggle unleashed by Ypsilanti. Suspecting Vladimirescu of a secrete alliance with the Ottomans, Ypsilanti had him arrested and killed on May 28, 1821. Shortly after that, his own troops were routed by the Ottomans at Transylvanian border forcing him to fly to Austria where he was put to prison and released just before his death in 1828.⁵⁰⁵

The uprisings of Ypsilanti and Tudor Vladimirescu as well as the social and political turmoil that followed revealed the two fundamental conflicts that were hidden in the social structure of the principalities. On the one hand, there was traditional conflict between peasantry and boyar landlords. Concessions that the latter were forced to make to the former in the middle of the 18th century under the pressure of the Phanariote hospodars (the abolition of personal serfdom and the specification of the number of the labor days that the peasants had to perform for the landlords in return for the right to use their land), were followed by seigniorial reaction in the late 18th - early 19th centuries. Peasants' actual labor dues gradually increased while their right to use various kinds of agricultural land was increasingly limited.⁵⁰⁶ However, as Vladimirescu's movement demonstrated, the gains made in the course of seigniorial reaction could not be consolidated in the absence of a solid repressive apparatus. On the other hand, the aftermath of the Greek rebellion activated a dormant conflict within the noble class. Taking advantage of the flight of the greater boyars implicated in the *Etaireia*, numerous boyars of the second and third rank stayed in the principalities, stressed their loyalty to the Ottomans and attempted to redefine the political system in their

⁵⁰⁵ Customarily taken as the starting point of modern Romanian history, the events of 1821 have naturally become subject of numerous studies. This brief account is based on Andrei Otetea, *Tudor Vladimirescu si revolutia din anul 1821*.

favor. In doing so they used the rhetoric of restoration of original privileges granted to the Principalities by the Ottoman *hatt-i sheriffs* of the 17th century, which were corrupted by the Phanariote rulers and their associates. For their part, having compromised themselves in the eyes of the Ottomans by their involvement in Etaireia and their unsanctioned emigration, the great boyars had no other choice but to stake on Russia in a hope to return to pre-1821 political status quo.

This precipitated a long series of memoirs, addresses and political projects whereby various groups within Moldavian and Wallachian nobility tried to denounce their rivals in the eyes of the imperial rulers, propose certain political restructuring of the country and thereby secure the establishment of a political order, which would consolidate their predominance. These memoirs can be roughly divided into two groups of which the former included those written and/or signed by the great boyar émigrés and addressed in most cases to the Russian emperor, while the latter represented the middle and lesser nobility, seeking to use the Ottoman occupation for the realization of their goals. Very soon this opposition was complicated by the appointment of the *caimacams* (lieutenants of the new hospodars) and later the first autochthonous hospodars, who sought to win the support of middle and lesser nobility by the distribution of noble titles, but at the same time tried to get the greater boyars back into the country. Despite a wide variety of opinions, political goals and philosophies of government, there were a number of common features shared by all these projects. For one thing, all of them uniformly blamed the Greeks for all current troubles of the principalities, conveniently ignoring the difference between Phanariote aristocracy and the *Etaireist* radicals. This xenophobic scapegoating was paralleled by wide employment of the patriotic rhetoric used to portray one's position as truly corresponding to the general interest in opposition to selfish and unpatriotic pursuit of private interest by the members of a rival faction. Another

⁵⁰⁶ Already in the late 1770s it took a peasant 27-28 days to perform the work requirements of the "official" twelve working days. Andrei Otetia, *Tudor Vladimirescu si revolutia din anul 1821*, 47.

common denominator consisted in a wide recourse to historical arguments, whereby the proposed political settlement was presented as corresponding to the original political constitution of the country. Finally, all of the proposed projects included “progressive” political demands used in order to legitimize the consolidation or perpetuation of dominance of a smaller or wider, but in any case closed social group over the rest of the society.

One of the first such memoirs, written by the leader of the Moldavian boyars in Chişinău Iordache Rossetti-Rosnovanu and addressed to Russian Vice-Chancellor K. V. Nesselrode, spoke of the misfortunes of the land, with the churches and monasteries profaned and pillaged by the Ottomans, the boyar lands devastated and the population taking to flight. The author accused the boyars of the second class, who, taking advantage of this anarchy, were about to send a deputation to Constantinople in order to secure a complete change of the form of government and instantly acquire an influence, which must only be achieved with time and service.⁵⁰⁷ Like another such address signed by major Moldavian boyars,⁵⁰⁸ Rosnovanu’s memoir placed hopes in the reaffirmation of Russian protection over the country. The conservative attitude of the great Moldavian boyars towards the political perturbations that were taking place was replicated by their Wallachian counterparts who fled to Brasov in Tansilvania. Taking account of Alexander I’s condemnation of *Etaireia*, the Alexandru and Iordache Filippescu, Iordache and Constantine Golescu, Alexandru Villara and others directed their criticism against both the leaders of the uprising and the Phanariote hospodars, attributing all misfortunes of their country to the Greek dominance. The positive part of their memoir represented in fact of a comprehensive program of political reorganization conceived to reassert the political hegemony of the greater boyars. The realization of such demands as the consolidation of all political and economic privileges by autochthonous boyars, or the acquisition of noble titles and ranks only through service would

⁵⁰⁷ July 24, 1821, in *Memoires et projets de reforme*, 102-103.

mean the return the *status quo ante* the establishment of the Phanariote regime for it meant both the exclusion of the Greeks from the political elite and the prohibition to the hospodars to confer ranks to their favorites. Alongside with the demands motivated by the narrow class interest, the memoir included such propositions as the establishment of the Wallachian border along the Danube (which meant the reincorporation of the Ottoman *reyas* of Brăila, Turnu and Giurgiu into the principality), the reaffirmation of the freedom of commerce, the abolition of the outdated system of tax collection based on fictional taxation categories (*ludori* and *cisla*). These allowed the Braşov émigrés to portray themselves as the champions of the common good and anticipated many of the points that were later brought into life by the Organic Statutes.⁵⁰⁹

The rupture of the diplomatic relationships between St. Petersburg and Stambul in summer 1821 without the declaration of war by Russia destroyed the hopes for quick return to the status quo. Russia refused to restore diplomatic relationships before the Ottomans evacuated the principalities and confirmed previously concluded treaties. For their part, the Ottomans demanded the extradition of those *Etaireists*, who took refuge in Russia including the former Moldavian hospodar Mihai Suţu.⁵¹⁰ Things quickly came to a deadlock since Russia refused to extradite the *Etaireists*, while Austria and Great Britain, acting on behalf of Russia, applied only a token pressure on the Ottoman Empire to evacuate the principalities. On balance, the Ottomans demonstrated a greater ability for maneuver ordering their occupation authorities to distinguish between the boyars, who were involved in *Etaireia* and those who were not. This veiled invitation for political dialogue produced some result already in November 1821, when a number of important Wallachian boyars headed by Gregore Ghica

⁵⁰⁸ “Memoir adresse a Alexandre Ier par les boyars emigree concernant les eveniments en Moldavie,” Kishinev, 1821, Ibid., 106-107.

⁵⁰⁹ “Memoiriu Boerilor din Brasov pentru reorganizarea Tarii Romineasca,” in Emil Virtosu, *1821. Date si fapte noi*. Bucuresti, 1932, 117-126.

⁵¹⁰ Vlad Georgescu, *Din Correspondenţa diplomatică a Ţării Româneşti* (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R. S. R., 1962), 13.

and Barbu Văcărescu returned to the principality and came forward with a petition to the Porte. The latter asked for a lifetime non-hereditary tenure for the hospodars, who would lose the power to confer noble titles and ranks and would have to cooperate with the boyars in the matters of taxation in their relations with the Porte. Taking advantage of the fact that *Etairieia* compromised Phanariotes as a group in the eyes of the Sultan, the boyar delegates demanded the replacement of the Greeks by Romanians in all key public and clerical offices.⁵¹¹ One can see that the program that the Wallachian delegates presented to the Porte at the beginning of 1822 differed little from the one that the Brasov émigrés sent to the tsar in 1821. Both shared an anti-Phanariote thrust and sought to consolidate the political hegemony of the autochthonous boyars against both foreigners and arbitrary power of the princes. Yet, it demonstrates how the passive stance adopted by Russia started becoming detrimental to its position in the principalities. Unable to secure their interests with the Russian help, part of the Wallachian greater boyars reoriented towards the Ottoman Empire.

For his part, Moldavian *caimacam* Ștefan Vogoridi likewise tried to attract the refugee boyars back. Responding to his overture made in September 1821, the Cernowitz émigrés wrote an address (*arz-magar*) to the Porte accusing the Greeks and Phanariotes of all troubles and asking for the appointment of autochthonous hospodars or a boyar council to rule the country coupled with the replacement of foreigners with Romanians in militia and key offices. Together with the petition produced by the Wallachian boyars, the address of the Moldavian boyars was received favorably by the *pasha* of Silistria and resulted in an invitation of the Moldavian and Wallachian boyar delegations to Constantinople. Russian consul Pini residing in Sibiu (Transylvania) could do little besides expressing St Petersburg's dissatisfaction with the initiative of Cernowitz boyars.⁵¹² Meanwhile, the Moldavian and

⁵¹¹ "Cererile boerilor munteni dusi la Tsarigrad," in E. Virtosu, 155-158.

⁵¹² Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă*. Vol. I. *Domniile pământene și ocupația rusească*, 70-72.

Wallachian delegations headed by Ion Sandu Sturdza and Grigore Dim. Ghica respectively reached Constantinople in April 1822 and by June 1 achieved the desired nomination of the autochthonous hospodars. What started out of desire to limit the arbitrary and despotic government represented by Phanariotes, produced the last epoch of absolutist rule in the Romanian principalities. Squeezed between the diminished taxation base and the necessity to pay large contributions to the Ottomans, the new hospodars (Grigore Ghica in Wallachia and Ion Sandu Sturdza in Moldavia) pursued policies, which did not square with the aspirations of the great boyars. While such measures as the imposition of contributions on the monasteries dedicated to the “saint places” and controlled by Greek clergy were quite in line with the predominate anti-Greek attitude, the tax on the boyar estates produced great discontent. In order to secure support, the hospodars curried the sympathies of middle and lesser boyars through liberal distribution of high ranks. This in turn provoked criticism of the greater boyars including those, who already returned from emigration.

Within this general context there existed some differences in the political situation of the two principalities, which explain why the conflict in Moldavia was ultimately more acute than in Wallachia. Whereas the uprising and Ottoman occupation caused the already customary flight of the peasantry in both principalities, the sheer size of the latter left its ruler with greater resources and space for maneuver than were available in Moldavia, truncated as it was by the Bucharest treaty. The numerous Moldavian middle and lesser nobles after 1812 had fewer opportunities for enrichment and social promotion than their relatively less numerous Wallachian counterparts. This had an immediate impact on the character of post 1821 radicalism in both principalities. While the Wallachian radicalism affected mostly non-noble elements, in Moldavia the radicalization of political attitudes took place within the noble class par excellence making the middle and lesser nobility more vocal and its conflict

with greater boyars more acute.⁵¹³ These differences were exacerbated by the social origin and personal qualities of the two hospodars. Whereas, Gregore Ghica represented one of the most important Wallachian boyar families, his Moldavian counterpart came from the lowliest branch of the Sturdza family. As a result, the political struggle in Wallachia took a more traditional form of the opposition between the boyar clans. This time, Ghica and his relatives, the Văcărescus, were opposed by another great boyar Constantine Bălăceanu and his network. Sharing the worldview of his correspondent Friedrich von Gentz, Ghica was against any radical social transformations and therefore his absolutist policies were not accompanied by such blatant dissemination of high noble titles as was practiced by Ion Sandu Sturdza.⁵¹⁴ Between November 1822 and February 1828 the latter granted boyar status to 354 individuals making the total number of boyars double in comparison with 1810 (from 460 to 902).⁵¹⁵ Eventually, the great Moldavian boyars both within and outside the country put up a much more formidable opposition to the hospodar and this together with the radicalism of lesser Moldavian boyars contributed to greater political polarization.

After 1821, petty Moldavian boyar formed a radical grouping, which their political enemies from the right labeled “the *carbonari* society” (*societatea cărvunarilor*) obviously exaggerating its radical character. Including among its members Andronache Donici, Petrache Sturdza and Gheorghe Sturdza this political group had its intellectual leader in Ionica Tautul, a young third-rank boyar, who authored the most provocative political document of the decade. Written in April 1822 and presented to the new hospodar in September 1822 the “constitution of the *carbonari*” as it was called, represented the most coherent embodiment of the political aspirations of the wider strata of Moldavian nobility. Along with the already achieved demand to appoint a hospodar from the autochthonous boyars for life, the document asserted the absolute supremacy of the local laws as the basis of

⁵¹³ Idem, *Originile conservatismului românesc, 1821-1882* (București: Editura politică, 1987), 54.

⁵¹⁴ Idem, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă...*, 176-177. 101-102.

the inviolability of personal and property rights and the autonomy of the principality under the Ottoman suzerainty. The political constitution of the country presupposed the division of administrative and legislative powers, which were to be the prerogative of, respectively, the hospodar and the General Assembly. The latter consisted of the higher clergy, members of the divans and departments as well as the representatives of each district. The political predominance of the middle and lesser boyars was assured by their majority in the Assembly as well as superiority of the Assembly in case of the conflict between it and the hospodar. The document also suggested the formation a Senate with members appointed for life as yet another constitutional check on the power of the hospodar. Finally, the hospodar was supposed to share his prerogatives on appointments with the Assembly and nominate the public officials from the number of candidates proposed by the Assembly on the basis of individual merits. Alongside such innovation as fixed salaries for the officials, the document insisted on their yearly reappointment in accordance with traditional practice. This implied a rapid turnover of officials making the revenues of public office potentially available for a larger number of boyars. The Assembly was also supposed to control the elevation to the higher ranks of nobility, which was to be done as a reward for diligent service. Once accorded, the noble rank did not have to be confirmed at the beginning of each new reign and presupposed full enjoyment of great boyar privileges such as the rights to have *scutelnici*. In order to alleviate the situation of the peasantry Tautul presupposed a land survey and a more precise definition of taxes, which were to be collected by commissions consisting of the two boyars from a given district and one outsider. Once again the General Assembly was to be in control of the taxation process.

Although the constitution of *cărvunarii* was never adopted by hospodar Sturdza for understandable reasons, it represented the most remarkable political project written after

⁵¹⁵ Gheorghe Platon, Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea*, 92-93.

1821, whose influence on the contemporary political scene and later day historiography cannot be overestimated. Romanian historians starting with A. D. Xenopol, who discovered the document, hailed it as the best embodiment of the national and patriotic ideas, which resurged after 1821.⁵¹⁶ Indeed, the Constitution presupposed such nationalization measures as the creation of the national army of some 4000-5000, the replacement of the Greeks by the Romanians within the church hierarchy, the prohibition to the foreigners to buy land in the principality as well as promotion of education in Romanian language. At the same time, the Romanian historians did not leave unnoticed the fact that the democratizing tendencies of the constitution were limited to the demand of equality of rights within the boyar class and were paralleled by the reassertion of its privileged status vis-à-vis the rest of the society. This circumstance caused varying evaluations of the political influences on Ionica Tautul and the whole political language of boyar radicalism within Romanian historiography. The famous account of the political and cultural development of the early 19th century produced by Pompiliu Eliade attributed the constitution to the influence of the liberal ideals of the French revolution.⁵¹⁷ However, the fact that the majority of petty Romanian boyars did not know French and therefore did not have a direct access to French political literature of the period makes this interpretation problematic and necessitates a more detailed explanation for the egalitarian tendencies of this project other than “general modernizing tendencies of the epoch.”⁵¹⁸

A more interesting interpretation was offered in the interwar period by I. C. Filitti, who suggested to the influence of late 18th century Polish revolutionary émigrés on the ideas of Moldavian radicals. According to Filitti, both small Moldavian boyars and Polish revolutionary *szlachta* played with the slogans of the French revolutions in pursuit of

⁵¹⁶ A. D. Xenopol, *Primul proiect de constituție a Moldovei, cel din 1822* (București : Institutul de arte Grafice Carl Cobl, 1898).

⁵¹⁷ Pompiliu Eliade, *Histoire de L'esprit public*, 66.

⁵¹⁸ Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă* 97.

traditionalist political ideals.⁵¹⁹ Therefore, “the constitution of *carbonari*” was hardly a modernizing document and in fact represented an attempt to return to the past. Filitti also pointed to the 1818 “Statute for the Formation of Bessarabian Province” as one of the sources of reference for the lesser Moldavian nobility. As evidence, Filitti offered the letter of Vornic Șerban Negel to his brother, Metropolitan Veniamin Costache, which described the aspirations of the small Moldavian boyars to elect officials and participate in the political affairs on an equal footing with great boyars as was done in Bessarabia.⁵²⁰ The idea of Russian influence on “the constitution of *carbonari*” was expressed already in the 19th century by one of the most prominent Romanian conservative politicians P. P. Carp, whose father was one of the leaders of the small boyars.⁵²¹ As will be demonstrated later, in their petitions to Russian authorities, Moldavian boyars of the second and third rank indeed referred to the Bessarabian autonomous administration in order to combat the great boyar oligarchy and assert their right to take part in the political process. To be sure, the contrast between the ideology of legitimism adopted by Alexander I and the intense patriotic rhetoric of the Moldavian radicals was too strong to suggest any immediate Russian influence upon them. Yet, it might be profitable to look beyond conflicting political languages and assess the demands of the lesser boyars in terms of the late 18th century Russian models of nobility and provincial administration, with which the Bessarabian Statute had much in common. The meritocratic and egalitarian concept of nobility embedded in the 1785 Charter for the Nobility of Catherine the Great as well as late 18th century model of provincial government based on wide participation of the provincial nobility in local government would have satisfied many of the demands contained in “the constitution of *carbonari*”. At the same time, in the third decade of the nineteenth century the administrative system of the Russian Empire increasingly departed from the principles of 1775 *Gubernia* Statute in the direction of

⁵¹⁹ I. C. Filitti, *Frământările politice în Principatele Române*, 103

⁵²⁰ Ibid., 96.

bureaucratic absolutism, which left little hope that the Russian authorities would sponsor a political settlement which would be favorable to the lesser boyars. For their part, the émigré boyars in Chişinau and Cernowitz took every opportunity to denounce the demands of the petty boyars and the policies of the new hospodar as undermining the foundations of social order, to the preservation of which Alexander I had committed himself.

A memoir written by Iordache Rossetti-Rosnovanu in this period contained a point-by-point refutation of “the constitution of *carbonari*”. In the absence of the effective border with the Ottoman Empire, which would be incompatible with the present effective Ottoman sovereignty, Rosnovanu viewed Tautu’s demand for the creation of the military force of four to five thousand as a means of internal oppression and dominance of the social parvenus that presently acquired power. Likewise, in the conditions of the effective Ottoman dominance, the demand to subject foreign subjects to the Moldavian laws would place a sacrifice upon them without offering a compensation of security, which only an independent government can provide. Tautu’s demand to form a senate with hereditary membership, according to Roznovanu, was a means to secure the current domination of the boyars of the second class. The immunity of the Senate members coupled with their projected prerogatives to dispose of public funds offer exclusive opportunity for self-enrichment of social parvenus. Less convincingly, Roznovanu argued that making the hospodar office hereditary would nullify all effects of the Russian protection when it is reestablished and would only strengthen the Ottoman dominance. Taken together all the measures proposed by Tautu’s constitution amounted to “annihilation” of the first class, which has the greatest interest in the good order and prosperity of the country. Roznovanu argued for the reestablishment of the pre-1821 situation and the return to the level of taxation defined by the Bucharest treaty.⁵²² The same was the general tenor of the address to the tsar signed by the Moldavian boyars residing in

⁵²¹ Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă*, 118, citing Pompiliu Eliade, 71-75.

Cernowitz and Chişinău at the time of Alexander I's visit there for a meeting with Franz I of Austria.⁵²³

A more fundamental criticism of the constitution of *cărvunarii* came in response to the attempt of the newly appointed Russian consul M. L. Minciaky to convince the émigré boyars to return to the country. Unlike Rossetti-Rosnovanu's piece, the memoir written by Mihai Sturdza, a young Moldavian boyar who emerged as the informal leader of the Cernowitz émigrés, couched this criticism specifically in terms legitimist ideology. It represents an interesting example of how the leaders of the regional elite manipulated the language of Russian foreign policy in order to secure its support and achieve their goals in a local conflict. Perceptively capturing the mood of Alexander I's declining years, Sturdza defined the innovation advocated by the supporters of the constitution as "subversive of the institutions consecrated by legitimacy" and contradictory to the mandate given to the hospodar by the Ottomans to rule in accordance with the usages and customs of this country. As if recognizing Alexander I's own apprehensions about the very term "constitution", Sturdza called it "an act compromising authority." Implicitly invoking Alexander I's own complications with the Polish Seim, the author colorfully portrayed the disorders, which the desire for equality animating the lower classes usually produced in an assembly proposed by the constitution. The fear of the émigré boyars to get implicated into the conflagration produced by the innovators explained the refusal of Moldavian boyars to follow the advise of the tsar and return to the country. Only the abolition of the recent promotions to the higher noble ranks could, according to Sturdza, eliminate the cause of current troubles.⁵²⁴

The policies of Moldavian hospodar provided another target of criticism of the great boyars alongside the political aspirations of Moldavian radicals. In order to pay tribute and

⁵²² "Memoire contenant de la «constitution des carbonari» Kishinev, 1823, in *Memoires et projets de reforme*, 120-124.

⁵²³ "Memoire adresse au tsar de Russie par des boyars emigres," Kishinev, Cernowitz, 1824, *Ibid.*, 131-132.

⁵²⁴ February 1, 1823, Hurmuzaki, *Suppliment I/4*, 7-8.

provide for the maintenance of the Ottoman occupation troops in the principalities the hospodar Ion Sturdza directed to the state treasury a significant part of the revenue of the monasteries, hospitals, *caisses publiques* and imposed extraordinary taxes on all social categories, which thereto enjoyed exemptions from taxation. Among other things, this meant that the boyar properties were subjected to taxation and the estates of the émigrés were predictably worst hit in the absence of any effective political lobby within the country. Unable to secure the return to the pre-1821 situation with the Russian support and annul the effects of the hospodar's policies of promotion, some of greater boyars adopted a more pragmatic attitude and looked for ways of accommodating themselves in the new situation. A number of great boyars including Theodore Bals, Iordache Catargiu and Costache Conache, all of whom will be prominent in the elaboration of the Organic Statutes, cooperated with hospodar Sturdza from the very start. The management of the debts, which they contracted to the state treasury on the eve of the immigration, became one of the bargaining chips in relationships between great boyars and the hospodar. In April 1823 they were joined by Metropolitan Veniamin Costache, who put his signature alongside 42 others under an address to the hospodar thanking him for good administration.⁵²⁵ However, the reasons of the political conflict were too deep to allow for a quick reconciliation. Therefore, the émigré boyars spared no effort to denounce his activities before Russian authorities,⁵²⁶ while those who returned to the country together with the Metropolitan, soon formed an opposition to the hospodar engaging in a game of mutual denunciations before the Ottoman authorities. Metropolitan and a number of great boyars signed an address in which they decried the suffering of the country under arbitrary government of the hospodar and dispatched a delegation to the sultan. In a response to the remonstrance of the Metropolitan on behalf of a number of great boyars, Ion Sturdza addressed a petition to the Ottoman Empire accusing the

⁵²⁵ Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă*, 116.

great boyar opposition inside the country of subversion. The Ottomans found the hospodar's arguments more convincing arrested the great boyar delegation and authorized Sturdza to arrest the oppositional boyars within the country.⁵²⁷

In the course of this political struggle, the boyars of different factions widely employed patriotic rhetoric portraying themselves as true champions of national interest and their rivals as traitors of the fatherland. Thus, Tăutul and other boyar radicals supporting the hospodar attacked the great boyar opposition as unpatriotic - an accusation, which was reproduced by some later-day Romanian historians.⁵²⁸ According to Tăutul, the tax on great boyar properties was imposed in the interest of the fatherland, whereas the great boyars minding their particularistic interest wanted to place the entire burden on the peasantry.⁵²⁹ On their part great boyar émigrés resented the attempt of the boyar radicals to portray them as unpatriotic and selfish. Very characteristic in this respect is Mihai Sturdza's memoir "Considerations of Moldavia and Wallachia at the beginning of 1825" addressed to Alexander I, which demonstrates that the author was equally conversant in the language of patriotism and allegiance to common good. Recognizing that "everyone in a civilized society is tied by a civil contract to this society, which is first of all his fatherland" Sturdza pathetically confessed that all his thoughts are directed to his "wounded and fragile" fatherland. Taking a bird's eye view of the glorious and tragic history of Moldavia and Wallachia and bemoaning their present misfortunes, Sturdza pleaded the tsar for a benevolent intervention. Decrying the deterioration of local aristocracy through numerous promotions to boyar rank made by Phanariote princes and the current hospodar, Mihai Sturdza (pursuing his own ambition) advocated the establishment of a firm monarchical power under Russian

⁵²⁶ See Mihai Sturdza to Minciaky, 1823, Hurmuzaki, Suppl. I/4, 27-28, as well as Iordache Rossetti-Rosnovanu's Memoir addressed to Vorontsov, Kishinev, September 9, 1821, in Vlad Georgescu., 115-120.

⁵²⁷ Anastasie Iordache, *Originile conservatismului românesc*, 66-69.

⁵²⁸ For example Emil Vîrtosu, in *1821. Date și fapte noi* (București: Cartea Romaneasca, 1932), XXIV, characterizes the position of great Wallachian boyars as "everything for Russia, nothing for the fatherland."

⁵²⁹ Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă*, 131-132.

protection as best corresponding to the historical experience of the principalities, their present state and their prospective development.⁵³⁰

At the same time, the political conflict remained a clash of personalities as much as it was a confrontation of different social groups within the boyar class. The cooperation of a number of great boyars with the hospodar from the very start as well as hospodar's overtures to the émigrés blurred the social divisions. The dividing lines between the two political camps sometimes separated the representatives of one family. Particularly characteristic in this case is the example of the leader of Chișinău's émigrés Iordache Rossetti-Rosnovanu and his son Nicholae, who not only embraced the egalitarian rhetoric of the Moldavian radicals early on, but also sought to justify it before the Russian authorities.⁵³¹ Agreeing with his father on the negative effects of the confusion of social ranks in the early 1820s, he nevertheless argued that now it would be too late to change the situation. After "five years have consecrated [the new promotions] in the eyes of public opinion it would be dangerous to attempt to restrict social classes. The reactions to such measures would be disadvantageous both to the influence of the protecting power and to the country itself, since the newly promoted individuals now know better the interests of the people and are better suited to govern them."⁵³² However, by 1826, when this piece was written, the memoirs of Nicolae's father and Mihai Sturdza as well as the collective addresses of Chișinău and Cernowitz émigrés prepared the ground for the realization of their goals leaving little chance for their political opponents. In the light of the re-activization of Russian foreign policy in the wake of Alexander I's death this represented an important intermediate victory of the great boyars.

⁵³⁰ Hurmuzaki, Suppl. I vol. IV, 63-69.

⁵³¹ Anastasie Iordache, *Originile conservatismului românesc*, 55.

⁵³² "Memoire adresse a la Russie," June 19, 1826, St Petersburg, in *Memoires et projets de reforme*, 133-135.

The Problem of Political reform between the Convention of Akkerman and the Peace of Adrianople

From the very start of the Greek crisis the British and Austrian aims were not to allow Russia's unilateral military or political involvement in the relationships between the Sultan and the rebels. Their concerted actions as well as the failure of the strategy of monarchical constitutionalism pursued by Alexander I after the Vienna Congress explain their successful sabotage of the St. Petersburg's proposals for collective intervention. However, not before the Greek resistance was almost crushed, St. Petersburg's potential for scarification of its *realpolitik* interests to the spirit of Saint Alliance was exhausted. There are signs of Alexander I's change of mood on the "Eastern Question" already in summer and fall of 1825.⁵³³ Nicholas I's troubled assent to the throne in December 1825 and his problematic legitimacy made him entirely abandon for a period the unpopular policy of his brother in Greek question. In order to divert the attention from Decembrist revolt the tsar was ready to risk a war with the Ottomans even under unfavorable diplomatic conditions in order to capitalize on the victorious outcome that was little doubted: "My brother bequeathed me extremely important issues, the most important of which is the Eastern question."⁵³⁴ Concerned about the damages to the commerce of the Southern Russia, Nicholas I had no illusions about the potential of collective action and was ready to act unilaterally.

The determination of the new emperor might have been strengthened by Ioan Capodistria, who, after several years of forced inactivity in Switzerland, sought to use this opportune moment for the realization of his visions of political reorganization of the Balkan region. In early 1826 he submitted to the Russian government an overview of his public carrier in Russia, in which he advocated an active policy towards the Ottoman Empire in order to replace the inefficient Bucharest treaty by an agreement that would reflect the

⁵³³ Bruce W. Lincoln, *Nicholas I, Emperor and Autocrat of All Russians*, 19.

⁵³⁴ A. V. Fadeev, *Rossia i vostochnyi krizis 20-kh gg. XIX v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1958), 136.

interests of both the Russian Empire and the Balkan Christians. Although Capodistria pretended to simply describe his position on Russia's Eastern Policy at the time when he was appointed State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in reality the views that he articulated in that piece were influenced by later developments (first of all the Greek crisis and the end of the Phanariote regime) and therefore contained elements, which were unthinkable in the 1810s.

Reflecting on the contemporary diplomatic situation of the Romanian principalities, which had ceased to be the subject of Russian-Ottoman bilateral relations and turned into an issue of European diplomacy, Capodistria suggested a formula of split sovereignty over the Romanian principalities and Serbia: "In order to leave the Ottoman Empire the enjoyment of its rights, one could accord it the right to secure provision for Constantinople by imposing a modest tax on cattle in kind. On the other hand, in order to secure a European existence for [Moldavia, Wallachia and Serbia] one could place them under the collective guarantee not only of Russia and Austria, but, if it is necessary, of Great Britain and France as well."⁵³⁵ In order to strengthen the autonomy of the three principalities within the Ottoman Empire and commit the European powers to the defense of their interests Capodistria put forward two ideas that had a long carrier in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. According to him, "Moldavia, Wallachia and Serbia could form three confederated principalities governed by three dynasties chosen from the princely families of Germany in order to conciliate all the interests and eliminate all reasons for jealousy." The theme of Balkan federation first suggested by Adam Czartoryski in 1804 – 1806 in the context of struggle against Napoleon was rearticulated in the 1830s and 1840s by the leaders of the Romanian national movement and then resurfaced again in the complicated diplomatic context of the interwar period. The idea of placing the Balkan principalities under the rule of German princes found its soonest fulfillment with the appointment of Otto von Wittelsbach the king of Greece. By the grim

⁵³⁵ Capodistria, "Apercu de ma carier publique," *RIO*, vol. 3, 1868, 210-211.

irony of fate, Capodistria who served the president of Greece in 1827-1831 had to be killed before his vision was realized.

The activization of Russian foreign policy brought disorder into the so far concerted actions of Metternich and his British colleagues. Whereas the Austrian minister continued to insist on non-involvement and status quo, British Foreign Secretary George Canning decided to check Russian expansionist designs through the schemes of collective involvement. In order to tie St. Petersburg's hands he sent Duke Wellington to the Russian court with the purpose of signing an agreement that would exclude the possibility of Russia's unilateral military intervention on behalf of the Greeks.⁵³⁶ Nicholas I's strategy during St Petersburg negotiations with Wellington was to split the eastern question by isolating the Greek problem from other disputed issues. While the emperor admitted for British mediation in the Greek question, he secured for himself the latitude to act unilaterally in other issues, first of all on the problem of principalities. Parallel to the negotiations with Wellington, the tsar demanded from the Ottomans the fulfillment of the treaties' conditions on the Danubian principalities and Serbia. By the time Ottoman Reis-Effendi received the tsar's ultimatum to send the agents to Russian-Ottoman border for negotiations on the disputed questions (March 24, 1826), St Petersburg protocol was already signed by Wellington (March 23, 1826) specifying the autonomous status of Greece within the Ottoman Empire and presupposing Britain and Russian collective or individual participation in the realization of these conditions without any territorial annexations. Canning immediately understood that Wellington was fooled by the tsar, but it was too late.⁵³⁷ In order to inhibit the realization of the Russian aims in Russian-Ottoman prospective negotiations on the principalities, Canning sought to encourage Ottoman intransigence by instigating the British client Feht-Ali-Shakh for a war with the Russian Empire. A. S. Menishikov's mission to Iran that aimed at preventing such an

⁵³⁶ Fadeev, *Rossia i vostochnyi krizis*, 137.

⁵³⁷ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 65.

outcome ended in a failure.⁵³⁸ The Shah declared a war and invaded Azerbaijan. As a result the Akkerman negotiations between the Ottomans and the Russians that opened on August 1, 1826 were predictably slow and only decisive Russian military successes and occupation of Erevan and Azerbaijan brought them to the conclusion of convention of September 25, 1826.

According to the articles 3 and 5 of the Convention of Akkerman, the Ottomans obligated to reestablish all the privileges of the Principalities stipulated in the previous Russian-Ottoman treaties and accord similar liberties to Serbia. A separate act of the convention specified the election of hospodars from autochthonous boyars for a period of seven years. After expiration of this term they could be reelected provided that no legitimate complaint had been submitted against them. The convention terminated the Ottoman commercial monopoly in the principalities declaring the freedom of commerce. Granting a two-year exemption from tribute in compensation for extraordinary taxes collected by the Ottoman occupation authorities and the hospodars in the early 1820s, the convention presupposed the subsequent return to the taxation levels specified in the 1802 *hatt-i sheriff*. The financial activities of the hospodars and Divans had to take into account the opinions of Russian minister to Constantinople and Russian consuls in the principalities. This *de facto* restored the prerogatives of the Russian Empire as a protector of the principalities. The convention also provided the ground for the return of the refugee boyars by guaranteeing their personal security and the restoration of their property and privileges. Finally, it presupposed the formation of the committee out of local officials and Russian consuls that was to draw the statutes for the principalities.⁵³⁹

The signing of Akkerman convention opened the new period of political activities of the Romanian boyars, who predictably sought to define the content of the future statute in accordance with their interests. This reproduced the familiar patterns of conflict within the

⁵³⁸ Fadeev, *Rossia i vostochnyi krizis*, 141-144.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., 165-166,

boyar class whereby the advocates of a wider format of political participation faced the champions of pre-1821 status quo. The great boyars of Moldavia scored a relative victory in April 1827 making the hospodar Sturdza sign a “Decree on the Moldavian privileges”, which, among other things, abolished the taxes imposed on great boyar estates in the early 1820s and officially proclaimed the great boyars exempt from all state taxation.⁵⁴⁰ Having secured their privileges, the great boyars could now safely return to the country. The conflict did not cease thereby since both Grigore Ghica and Ion Sandu Sturdza approached the end of the seven year tenure stipulated by the convention and this provoked the struggle of individual claimants to the hospodar’s office. Once again the political struggle in Moldavia was more acute witnessing the emergence of Nicolae Rossetti-Rosnovanu and Mihai Sturdza as the leaders of the opposing factions and personal rivals, each of whom sought to become a hospodar by influencing the elaboration of the new Statutes. Representing the interests of the wider nobility, the memoir written soon after the conclusion of the convention by Nicholas Rossetti-Rosnovanu advocated the election of the hospodar by the General Assembly of all boyars. According to him, although in recent times the general Divan included only the most important boyars, this was a result of the Princes’ desire to avoid the opposition and represented a violation of historical principle whereby measures of public interest were adopted by consent of both greater and lesser boyars. Rosnovanu argued that only a wide assembly including the lesser boyars residing in the provinces would be able to represent the will of the country. Conversely, the assembly consisting only of greater boyars, who for a long time lived in emigration become susceptible to foreign influences, was certain to fall prey to divisions into factions. The same necessity to avoid intrigues, according to Rosnovanu, suggested direct access of all boyars to the assembly.⁵⁴¹ In order to prevent this

⁵⁴⁰ “Anafora pentru pronomiile Moldovei” was signed by I. S. Sturdza on April 10, 1827. Iordache, *Originile conservatismului românesc*, 77.

⁵⁴¹ “Consideration adresse a la Russie sur le droit d’etre élu prince et sur le mode d’organisation de l’élection,” October 14, Odessa, *Memoires et projets de reforme*, 135-139.

outcome, Mihai Sturdza addressed a series of letters to Nesselrode and the new Russian envoy to Constantineople A. I. Ribeaupierre demonstrating the inconveniences, of election of the hospodar by a wide assembly. Appealing to the historical tradition, Sturdza insisted that election by a wide assembly did not correspond to local custom whereby the hospodars used to be elected only by greater boyars who at a given moment occupied official positions.⁵⁴²

Alongside the struggle between prospective candidates of the hospodar office, the period between the conclusion of the Convention of Akkerman and the outbreak of the new Russian-Ottoman war was characterized by the activity of reform committees convoked in Bucharest and Jassy in May 1827 under the presidency of the Russian consuls Minciaky and Lelley with the task to elaborate the new Statutes for the principalities. The agenda of the committees defined by Minciaky included such issues as the abolition of *scutelnici*, reform the civil list of the hospodars, general land survey and a general census of the population in order to elaborate a more adequate taxation scheme. This was to be accompanied by the reorganization of the public offices, an increase of the officials' salaries and abolition of their right to exert additional dues from the population (*havaeturi*). The committees were also supposed to consider the reform of the police agencies of *Hetmania* and *Agia* the abolition of internal customs and the establishment of the new ones in order to secure the abolition of the Ottoman commercial monopoly in accordance with the Akkerman convention. Finally, the committee had to address the reform of the philanthropic institutions, the establishment of new schools and reorganization of post.⁵⁴³ All these transformations and improvements in the internal administration of the principalities were to be combined with consolidation of

⁵⁴² Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă*, 190.

⁵⁴³ V. Ia. Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh 1820-h – 1830-h gg. i Rossia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 145-147. Iuliu C. Ciubotaru, "Lucrari si proiecte in vederea elaborarii regulamentului obtestesc al Moldovei din anul 1827," in Dumitru Vitcu and Gabriel Badarau (eds.) *Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei* (Iasi: Junimea, 2004), 77-78.

Russian political predominance in the principalities by obliging the hospodars and the Divans to secure the consent of Russian consulate for any major undertaking.⁵⁴⁴

In the realization of this agenda a lot depended on the personality Russian consul, who determined the composition of the committees and presided over their work. The influence of M. L. Minciaky on the eventual form of compact between Russian Empire and the local elite as well as distribution of political roles within the latter should not be ignored. Being of Greek origin he could not remain unmoved by the sort of his compatriots in the principalities after 1821. While all strata of the Romanian nobility sought to distance themselves from *Etaireia* and put all blame on the Phanariotes, the anti-Greek rhetoric of the boyar radicals was particularly strong, coupled as it was with concrete anti-Greek measures of the Moldavian Divan, which they dominated. Together with the general legitimist approach of Russian foreign policy after 1821, this must have been another reason, which determined Minciaky to follow Mihai Sturdza's counseling and exclude the middle and petty boyars from participation in the work of the committees.⁵⁴⁵ Composed of Alexandru and Gheorghe Filippescu, Ștephan Bălăcianu, Alexadru Villara, Iordache Catargi, Mihai Sturdza and Gheorghe Asachi, most of whom eventually would play an important role of the elaboration of the Organic Statutes two years later, the committees were highly exclusive bodies, whose very mode of functioning was very much in accordance with contemporary Russian practice.⁵⁴⁶

Responding to the reform agenda set by the Russian consulate a number of boyars came out with projects of reform. One of them written by Wallachian boyar Barbu Știrbei, who would later actively collaborate with Russian authorities, addressed the issues of administrative reorganization. In order to provide for the security of persons and properties,

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 75.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 77.

Știrbei suggested the reform of the police agency in the countryside (*spatharia*) and reorganization of the district administration. In both cases the author considered the abolition of the practice of “feeding” from local population (*havaeturi*) coupled with increase in formal salaries crucial for elimination of abuses. These measures were to be paralleled by monetarization of all taxes and abolition of the system of *ludori*, depriving the ispraniks of the opportunity to manipulate with the distribution of taxes within the district.⁵⁴⁷ Similar problems were addressed in a memoir of Iordache Dragici, a confidant of Moldavian hospodar Sturdza, who suggested reorganization of the taxation system, reglamentation of the salaries of the officials and functional division of government, as well as separation of administrative and judicial functions at the level of district administration by assigning these functions to two different *ispravniks*. Besides, his project proposed a general census of all categories of population starting from the boyars and higher clergy down to peasantry, the verification of the validity of the noble titles accorded after 1814, the diminution of the number of *scutelnici* possessed by individual boyars and fixation of their total number for the whole principality.⁵⁴⁸ In relation to the idea of census, Iordache Rossetti-Rosnovanu and Iordache Catargi suggested legal prohibition of the right of the peasant to move from one estate to another, which would amount to the re-imposition of serfdom.⁵⁴⁹ This proposition was countered by a suggestion to abolish peasant collective responsibility in taxation matters and oblige the landowners to provide peasants with legally fixed minimum of land. Articulated in an anonymous memoir submitted for Committee’s consideration, these measures were to be paralleled by the abolition of individual privileges granted by hospodars’ decrees (*chrysobule*, *hrisovuls*), the appointment of officials in accordance with their merit

⁵⁴⁶ This provoked discontent of the boyars of the second and third ranks, who addressed a letter to Russian envoy in Constantineople A. I. Ribeaupierre insisting on the participation of every boyar in the elaboration of the Statutes. However, the address did not produce any result. See Ciubotaru, 88.

⁵⁴⁷ “Aperçu sur la mode d’administration du Valachie,” in *Memoires et projets de reforme*, 153-161.

⁵⁴⁸ “Programme de reforme adresse a la Russie comprenant les principales ameliorations a apporter a l’administration de la Moldavie,” apres mai 1827, Ibid., 139-150.

and personal qualities as well as the abolition of practice whereby individuals who once occupied an office retained titles associated with it to the end of their life. In the domain of justice the anonymous author proposed to subject the peasant to the jurisdiction of the landowners and the establishment of three stage system of courts in which the decisions of the lower courts could be appealed at the courts of higher instance.⁵⁵⁰

The energy, with which Russian Consul General in Bucharest, Minciaky pursued the reform agenda, was soon frustrated by the slowness and foot-dragging of the boyars as well as by the activities of the hospodars Ghica and Sturdza. The former complained of some of Minciaky's proposals to the Porte, while the latter continued to distribute noble titles indiscriminately despite all the admonitions of the Russian consul.⁵⁵¹ Russian efforts to secure the abolition of the Ottoman commercial monopoly were foiled by late 1827, when the new war between the two empires became increasingly inevitable and the Ottomans hurried to provide their Danubian fortresses with the necessary supplies. To make matters worse, in October 1827 the Sultan's *firman* empowered Wallachian Hospodar Ghica to dissolve the committee on the ground that its members were intending to turn the country "into a European province" and explicitly denied the right of the Russian consulate to interfere into the affair.⁵⁵² Yet, the establishment of the committees was not entirely useless for the Russians, for it provided them with a better knowledge of many aspects of local administration, which would eventually inform the elaboration of the Organic Statutes. On the basis of this experience, Minciaky was able to provide Russian foreign Ministry with a detailed survey of Wallachian institutions, accompanied by the personal characteristics of the Wallachian and Moldavian boyars, including those who participated in the work of the Committee. Taking a special interest in the financial system of the principalities, Minciaky

⁵⁴⁹ Ciubotaru, "Lucrari si proiecte," 80.

⁵⁵⁰ According to Ciubotaru, "Lucrari si proiecte," 89-90, the project could be attributed to Nicolae Rosetti-Rosnovanu.

⁵⁵¹ Lelly to Minciaky January 31, 1828, AVPRI, F. 133 op. 469, d. 859, l. 65.

suggested abolishing the system of *ludori* (a fictional taxation unit usually containing several peasant families the actual number of which was defined by the district *ispravnik*) as the main reason of inequalities in the existing taxation system. He also insisted on abolishing internal customs that formed the private revenue of the hospodar and the great boyars and suggested the allocation of the civil list from the state budget.⁵⁵³ Minciaky's suggestions as well as many of the ideas enunciated in the project of reform submitted by the boyars to the attention of the committee were incorporated into the ministerial instructions, which guided the elaboration of the Organic Statutes in 1829-1830.

The destruction of the Ottoman-Egyptian fleet at Navarino by combined British, French and Russian naval squadrons precipitated the Ottoman resolution to declare war against Russia. Realizing the inevitability of war, the British nevertheless pressed Nicholas I to take a formal pledge that he would not annex any new territories, which Russian ambassador in London Lieven did without resistance, considering that the actual results of war will make these conditions inconsequential.⁵⁵⁴ On December 18, 1827 the Mahmud II signed an address to his subjects accusing Russia of the present complications, declaring the unilateral prorogation of the conditions of the Akkerman convention and all earlier treaties and calling the Muslim subjects to prepare for the wholly war.⁵⁵⁵ Although the enemy was not specified, the proclamation gave Nicholas I a pretext for war other than the support of the Greek rebels.⁵⁵⁶ This was very important from the point of view of legitimization of the war. Nicholas I never failed to make it clear that he fought not for the cause of the Greek "rebels" against their lawful sovereign, but for the implementation of the conditions of the treaties violated by the Porte. Yet, the ideological aspects of the war were not altogether under

⁵⁵² Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 148-149.

⁵⁵³ "Podrobnoie obozrenie kniazhestv Moldavii i Valakhiiv nachale 1828 g." RGVIA, fond. 438, op. 1, no. 111, ff. 8-9.

⁵⁵⁴ Fadeev, *Rossia i vostochnyi krizis*, 173.

⁵⁵⁵ V. I. Sheremet, *Turtsia i Adrianopol'skii mir 1829 goda* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), 22.

⁵⁵⁶ Fadeev, *Rossia i vostochnyi krizis*, 175.

control of the tsar, which is clear with the incident with certain Krause, a teacher from the Russian town of Pernov. In the end of 1827 the latter published an article that argued that Russia, Britain and France “were mobilizing for the support of the righteous cause of the Greeks and the redemption of their liberty.” This smallish incident characteristically provoked Vice-Chancellor Nesselrode’s letter to the Minister of Education A. S. Shishkov attributing the conclusion of the London protocol of 1827 (which presupposed the creation of the independent Greece – V. T.) not to the desire to help the unlawful Greek rebellion, but to the determination to end 7 years of struggle that devastates the region and save the Christian people from annihilation.⁵⁵⁷

As a result of a carefully planned operation Russian troops occupied Moldavia and Wallachia in a matter of days in April 1828 without encountering any resistance. The manifesto to the local population, signed by the Commander of the Army Field Marshal P. Ch. Witgenstein, called the local population to cooperate with the Russian troops and offer “renewed proofs of commitment to the power that had perpetually taken care of your rights.” In return the manifesto promised the protection and respect for the ancient laws and customs of the country and religion.⁵⁵⁸ This promise was made in response to the anxiety of the boyars to secure their rights in the face of forthcoming transformations in local administration. However, Russian authorities did not consider themselves bound by any pledges. Minciaky ridiculed the official publication of the “Degree on the Moldavian Privileges” of April 1828, on the eve of the occupation, as an attempt to “perpetuate abuses in favor of a class of demoralized people.”⁵⁵⁹

A Russian President–Plenipotentiary of the Moldavian and Wallachian Divans replaced the deposited hospodars Ghica and Sturdza. Residing in Bucharest, he was

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 176-177.

⁵⁵⁸ Hurmuzaki, Vol. XVII, Bucuresci: Institutul de Arte Grafice "Carol Göbl", 1913, 57-58.

represented in Jassy by Vice-President of the Moldavian Divan (first M. L. Minciaky later F. Ia. Mirkovich).⁵⁶⁰ Reproducing the measures undertaken by Russian commanders in 1769-1774 and 1808-1812, Russian occupation authorities in 1828-1834 sought to introduce the principles of functional division of powers. Administrative Councils were created alongside the judicial sections within the princely Divans. They were further divided into three sections dealing with finances, industry and well fare of the principalities and supply of the army respectively.⁵⁶¹ Along with these reformed local political institutions, the president-plenipotentiary relied upon civil and military chancelleries consisting of Russian officials. The Civil Chancellery consisted of four departments dealing with supply of the army, internal affairs, civil and criminal jurisdiction and foreign correspondence respectively. The Military Chancellery divided in three departments dealt with appointments and dismissals from the army, military police and the accommodation of the army.⁵⁶²

The ministerial instructions addressed to the first President-Plenipotentiary of the Divans Privy Councilor F. P. Pahlen mentioned the political reform of the principalities only tentatively, written as they were at the very beginning of the war, when it was not yet known, how successful it would be. The main goal of the provisional administration was to secure supply for the army.⁵⁶³ Taking into consideration the experience of previous war, the instructions recognized the necessity of a better and more stable government to secure supplies in case the war lasts longer than expected. To that end instruction envisioned the formation of a General Assembly from the deputies of the districts elected by boyars and land proprietors, which was supposed to address the problems of *scutelnici*, reorganization of the

⁵⁵⁹ Minciaky to Nesselrode, April 7, 1828, Bucharest, AVPRI, F 133, op. 469, no. 59, Ff. 271rev-272.

⁵⁶⁰ Valentin Georgescu, *Judecata domniasca*, 201.

⁵⁶¹ Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 165-166

⁵⁶² Ibid., 204-205.

⁵⁶³ A special commission headed first by P. Pisani and later by Mirkovich was created for this task. Three entrepreneurs were found who undertook to buy food for the army. The collection of bir abandoned on the suggestion of Russian diplomats immediately after Akkerman convention was resumed. Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 163.

tax system and better payment for the government officials as a means to prevent bribery.⁵⁶⁴

While the first President-Plenipotentiary F. P. Pahlen lacked the qualities necessary for an administrator, his successor in 1829, former governor-general of Kiev S. S. Zheltuhin demonstrated a greater (frequently excessive) firmness fulfilling his immediate task of supplying the army. At the same time, the relatively rapid termination of the war allowed to go beyond this narrow objective and address the broader problem of reform of the local political institutions. The conclusion of peace and withdrawal of the bulk of the troops to Russia allowed concentrating all civil and military command (over the remaining occupation corps) in the hands of a single individual representing the authority of the emperor. This deprived the Romanian boyars of the possibility to play on the contradictions between Russian civil and military authorities, which was detrimental to the prospects of reform in 1808-1812.

The man who insisted on this arrangement was General-Lieutenant Pavel Dmitrievich Kiselev. Great personal influence of the last President-Plenipotentiary on the shape of imperial policy in Moldavia and Wallachia in the first half of the 19th century justifies a brief overview of his background.⁵⁶⁵ Kiselev descended from the ancient noble family of Tula gubernia and was related to the Russian aristocracy (his mother was princess Urusova). Adding remarkable education to the advantage of good origin, Kiselev made a successful carrier in the Russian army, participating in 1812 war with Napoleon and the European campaigns of 1813-1814. Becoming a general-major and Alexander I aide-du-champ at twenty-eight, in 1816 Kiselev was appointed to the General Staff of the Second Army quartered in the right-bank Ukraine and Bessarabia. In this period he performed an inspection of the situation in Bessarabia reporting Alexander I about the abuses in local administration headed by I. M. Garting, which was one of the factors of the latter's replacement and the

⁵⁶⁴ Nesselrode to Pahlen April 3, 1828 cited in Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 155-56.

appointment of A. N. Bakhmetiev as the Bessarabian Viceroy. In 1821 Kiselev married the sister of Bakhmetiev's wife, a Potockaia, which further enhanced his standing among the landlords of right-bank Ukraine and Bessarabia. At the time of the Greek uprising Kiselev dispatched future Decembrist leader Pavel Pestel to Bessarabia to review the situation in the province and in the neighboring principality. Taking an interest in Moldavia and Wallachia he collected all kinds of information about the principalities and at some point even intended to write their history. While this idea was never realized, Kiselev encouraged several officers of the Second Army to write the History of the Russian-Ottoman wars, which were published later in the century.⁵⁶⁶

Kiselev's association with the Decembrist leaders in Bessarabia and Ukraine and his probable knowledge about the conspiracy did not affect directly his career, yet the 1828-1829 Russian-Ottoman war, during which he commanded a reserve corps, did not offer him the opportunity to reveal his talents. His was about to reject Nicholas I's offer to head Russian occupation authorities and accepted the position of President-Plenipotentiary only upon the insistence of Commander-in-Chief I. I. Diebitch. However, Kiselev conditioned his acceptance upon the concentration all supreme civil and military authorities in the principalities. The day of his arrival to Bucharest (November 12, 1829) was characteristically marked by an earthquake, which foreshadowed the dramatic transformations in the political life of the principalities. Despite his exclusively military background, the forty one year-old general revealed remarkable administrative talents combining the military firmness with the enlightenment and charm. In the period of his four and a half year tenure in the principalities Kiselev represented a very characteristic combination of military, administrative and diplomatic prowess, which was often required from Nicholas I's emissaries (e. g. A. F. Orlov, A. S. Menshikov, A. O. Dugamel), whose role in imperial government was particularly

⁵⁶⁵ The most important biographical study on Kiselev is S. S. Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf P. D. Kiselev i ego vremia*, 4 vols. (SPb.: Tipografia Stasiulevicha, 1882)

remarkable during the first half of the reign. The administrative and diplomatic experience, which he obtained as President-Plenipotentiary of the Divans contributed to the spectacular development of his career first as Nicholas I's "chief of staff on peasant affairs" and Minister of State Domains in late 1830s and 1840s and later as Russian ambassador to Paris in 1856-1862. The same qualities, which placed Kiselev alongside other "enlightened bureaucrats" of Nicholas I's reign (M. M. Speranskii, D. M. Bludov and S. S. Uvarov), earned him respect among the Romanian boyars and were an important factor of the relative effectiveness of the policies carried out by the provisional authorities. At the same time, Kiselev did not entertain any illusions concerning the popularity of Russian occupation regime. According to him, "with exception of the military occupation of part of France, everywhere else Russian administration is arranged in a way, which makes it hateful."⁵⁶⁷ Addressed to the former head of Russian occupation corps in France in 1815-1818, M. S. Vorontsov, this comment was as much a compliment as it was a piece of self-criticism. Nevertheless Kiselev managed to outperform his correspondent, which is testified by one of Bucharest's streets, which still bares his name.⁵⁶⁸

Kiselev was appointed President-Plenipotentiary after S. S. Zheltukhin's retirement on September 14, 1829, twelve days after the war ended. The Ottomans were brought to the negotiation table by the advances of Russian troops commanded by I. I. Dibich, which invaded Bulgaria and occupied Adrianople, the old capital of the Ottoman Empire. As in the case of the 1768-1774 and 1806-1812 wars, the peace came after a hard bargaining accompanied by periodic resummptions of hostilities. However, this time Russian troops came closer to Constantinople than ever before and this explains the relatively rapid conclusion of the treaty. The fact that Russian army nearly reached the Ottoman capital, but failed to

⁵⁶⁶ I. S. Dostian, *Peredovaia obschestvennaia mysl' i Balkanskii narody* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981).

⁵⁶⁷ Kiselev to M. S. Vorontsov, April 6, 1831, Bucharest, in *Arkhiiv Vorontsovykh*, vol. 38, 195.

capture it provoked disappointment of Russian educated public. The feeling of regret at what was considered a lost opportunity to solve “Eastern Question” was famously captured in Pushkin’s ironic verse “the Shield of Oleg” invoking ancient Russian/Varangian prince who captured Constantinople and had his shield attached above the gates of the city – an achievement that Russian armies failed to repeat.⁵⁶⁹ However, the capture of the Ottoman capital and the partition of the empire was precluded not only by the scarcity of the troops that reached Adrianople (Dibich saw the impossibility of occupying a city with 600.000 Muslim population by an army of barely 20.000),⁵⁷⁰ but also by the whole policy adopted by Russian Empire in respect of its vanquished neighbor. Defined at the session of a “Special Committee on Eastern Affairs” convoked on August 23, this policy was based on the assumption that the “advantages of the preservation of the Ottoman Empire in Europe are greater than the inconveniences, which it presents.”⁵⁷¹ Adrianople treaty signed on September 2 reflected this assumption: with exception of the Danubian estuary, Russian Empire did not make any territorial acquisitions at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, obliging the latter to pay a sizable contribution and accord new privileges to Serbia, Moldavia and Wallachia. “Separate Act concerning Moldavia and Wallachia” signed together with the main treaty specified the return to Wallachia of the cities and *reaya* territories on the left bank of the Danube, the establishment of the quarantine along the river, the formation of national militias alongside with the commutation of all deliveries in kind into a monetary tribute and the prohibition for the Muslims to settle in the principalities. Besides, the Ottoman government agreed to the election of the hospodars for life (and not for a seven-year term established by

⁵⁶⁸ Kiselev’s role in the reordering of the diverse aspects of public life of Moldavia and Wallachia will be considered in the next chapter. Here I will concentrate on his role in the elaboration and adoption of the Organic Statutes.

⁵⁶⁹ Alexander Pushkin, *Sobranie sochineniiv trekh tomakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1971), 276.

⁵⁷⁰ Sheremet, *Turtsia i Adrianopol’skii mir*, 115.

⁵⁷¹ “Protokol 1-go zasedania Osobogo komiteta po vostochnym delam,” VPR, ser. 2, vol. 8, 278. This formulation was made two days after Dibich signed the Adrianople treaty, but before the news of it reached St Petersburg.

the Akkerman convention) and obliged to confirm administrative statutes elaborated during occupation of the principalities by the imperial armies “in accordance with wishes expressed by the assemblies of notables.”⁵⁷²

One can see that Russian diplomacy rejected Capodistria’s idea of placing Moldavia and Wallachia under the rule of German princes, for it suggested the degree of autonomy for the principalities, which was incompatible with the new policy of preservation of and cooperation with the Ottoman Empire. Besides, Capodistria’s formula reflected the internationalization of the problem of the principalities characteristic of the 1820s, whereas the objective of the Russian diplomacy was to return to pre-1821 situation and make Moldavia and Wallachia the object of strictly bilateral relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, post-1829 diplomatic regime, placing Romanian principalities under sovereignty of the latter and the protection of the former, postponed the realization of Capodistria’s vision of political settlement of the principalities articulated in 1826. Russia’s exclusive protectorate over the principalities established in 1829 had to be replaced by collective guarantee of Austria, Great Britain, France, Prussia and Russia in 1856 before the principalities could be united under the scepter of an indigenous prince and later under the rule of a German dynast. However, in other respects the treaty of Adrianople opened a period of political reforms, which assured to the principalities a semblance of “European existence” and formatted the relationship between the empire and Romanian elites for the rest of the century.

The Committee of Reforms and the Boyar Opposition to the Organic Statutes

On June 19, 1829, still before the conclusion of Adrianople treaty, but after the outcome of the war became clear, Russian provisional authorities established “Special Committee for Reform for Wallachia and Moldova.” It had to continue the work of the

⁵⁷² Ibid., 271-272.

committee convoked under the direction of Minciaky in 1827 in accordance with the stipulations of the Akkerman convention. This time, however, the Russian authorities were determined to carry out the difficult enterprise of elaborating the Organic Statutes for the principalities without abandoning it to the mercy of the Ottomans or the future hospodars. In order not to fall prey to the boyar foot-dragging and secure a rapid elaboration of the Statutes, Russian Foreign Ministry provided the Committee with the instructions outlining the basic dimensions of the future Statutes. The analysis of this document is essential for reconstruction of the initial assumptions of the Russian policymakers about local situation and the reforms which had to correct it. Interestingly enough, the instructions were written by State Councilor D. V. Dashkov, a collaborator of M. M. Speranskii in codification of Russian law and a Minister of Justice in the 1830s, who visited the principalities in spring 1829, reviewing the situation in local administration and consulting the materials of the 1827 Committee.

In accordance with the instructions, President-Plenipotentiary and Russian Consul General had to coordinate the work of the Committee divided into Moldavian and Wallachian sections, each of which was to consist of four to six members of whom half were to be elected by the assembly of the Divans of each principality and the other half appointed by Zheltukhin on recommendation of Minciaky himself. The instructions stressed the necessity to appoint able and worthy boyars and suggested some of the pro-Russian boyars (Alexandru Villara, Iordache Rosetti-Roznovanu and Michel Sturdza) who commended themselves in their petition activities off the 1810s and 1820s. In its work the committee had to take into account different projects of reform elaborated in the Principalities in the wake of the Akkerman convention. The drafts of the Statutes elaborated in this way were to be submitted to the Extraordinary General Assembly of each principality consisting of the boyars of the first class and deputies elected by the notables of each district. According to the instructions,

the Assembly composed in this way was the best means of “stating (*constater*) the authenticity of the national will (*le voeux national*) for the adoption of the new Statutes.” However, President-Plenipotentiary was supposed to sanction such an election only being fully certain that in this way he would obtain “well-intentioned deputies determined to assist to the generous ways of the Russian government.” The instruction also suggested excluding from the number of voters and candidates the parvenus, who obtained their ranks under the last two hospodars.⁵⁷³ Russian authorities were to agree to all modifications proposed by the General Assemblies, which did not contradict to principles stated in the instructions.

The Statutes had to embrace the most important branches of the administration including finances, commercial statute, quarantines, militia and judiciary institutions. Before anything else, however, the Committee had to elaborate the mode of the election of the hospodars and Ordinary General Assemblies. Uncertain about the duration of the Russian occupation of the principalities, the ministry sought to create the basic institutional mechanism, which could secure the implementation of other reforms in case Russians would have to evacuate Moldavia and Wallachia before the completion of the Statutes. The instructions deemed it impossible to leave the prerogative of the election of the hospodars to the currently existing General Assembly of the Divans, which proved to be too docile an instrument of princely authority and whose composition was deemed too oligarchic to express “the national will.” Instead, the instructions proposed creating Extraordinary General Assembly uniting the boyars of the first class, certain number of the boyars of the second class, the representatives of the landed proprietors of the districts (two from each) as well as deputies of the towns and corporations totaling 180-200 members of Wallachia and 120-150 for Moldavia. The instruction left it to the Committee’s discretion to decide the proportion of various members specifying only that deputies of the districts, towns and corporation form no

⁵⁷³ “Instructions adresse par le Vice Chancelier (Nesselrode) au Conseiller d’Etat actuel Minciaky,” *Analele Parlamentare ale Romaniei*, vol. 1, (1890) : 18-45, further cited as *Ministerial instructions*.

less than one quarter of the members. Likewise, the Committee had to decide choose between direct or indirect voting procedure in the election of the hospodars.⁵⁷⁴

Conditioning the implementation of the Russian-Ottoman treaties concerning the principalities on the existence of an effective check on the power of the hospodars, the instructions specified the formation of General Ordinary Assembly, which was to be convoked yearly in order to vote for the budget and revise all aspects of the internal administration. While the hospodar could reject its dispositions and even dissolve an uncooperative assembly, he could not issue any decrees without first submitting them to the consideration of the latter. Thus, while the assembly was supposed to have no effective check over the princely decision, the whole decision-making process had to become more consultative and institutionalized. This had important implications for the financial accountability of the treasury, making its activities more transparent. The assembly was empowered to discuss and approve the tax farms, projects for the development of agriculture and industry, salaries and pensions for the officials, as well as regulations for the internal and external commerce. Financing of security measures, philanthropic organizations, quarantines, church properties and national militia was likewise placed within the deliberative competence of the assembly. However, neither the prince, nor the assembly were to have any power to introduce any modifications in the taxation without prior approval of the Sovereign and Protective powers. Besides this pale realization of “no taxation without representation” principle, the instructions also pursued the principle of division of powers by stripping the assembly of its former judicial functions.

In the domain of finances the instructions insisted on the abolition of indirect taxes (*roussoumates*) collected into private treasury of the hospodars. Instead, the expenses of the hospodar were to be covered by a civil list allocated from the state budget. In order to

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 20.

eliminate the abuses that hitherto accompanied the distribution and collection of taxes, the instruction prescribed a new census of the taxpayers coupled with better definition of the privileges of boyars, *masili*, *ruptași* and *streini*.⁵⁷⁵ The latter would serve the basis for future verification of all individual claims by a special commission appointed by the General Assembly. The *scutelnici*, *poslușnici* and *breslași*, accorded arbitrarily by hospodars to individual officials in “violation of the sacred principle of private property,” were to be abolished. By way of compensation the boyars were to be offered an increase in salaries proportioned to the number of *scutelnici* they had, an increase of peasant labor days from twelve to twenty or twenty-four or pensions (to those of the boyars who obtained *scutelnici* for real services and not through arbitrary concession of the hospodars).⁵⁷⁶ The instruction also suggested making the boyar liable to indirect taxation and land tax.⁵⁷⁷ In respect of the peasants the general strategy adopted by the instruction was the replacement of multitude of indirect dues by fewer direct taxes as well as commutation of rents. The lot of the peasants was to be improved by abolition of the fictional taxation units (the *ludori* and *cisle*) assigning equal amounts of taxes to unequal associations of taxpayers. Finally, public works (such as transportation duty) and peasant labor dues were to be assigned on the basis of officially published quotes.⁵⁷⁸

The general tenor of the instruction can hardly be called radical, especially in respect of the lord-peasant relationships. Here Russian authorities from the very beginning limited their agenda to simple reorganization of the peasant dues aiming to achieve a more equal distribution of the burden and eliminate the most obvious areas of potential arbitrariness such as *scutelnici* and the deliveries in kind. The general formula presupposed a more precise definition of peasant dues to the landlords coupled with their increase (e. g. the amount of the

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 28-30.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 33-34.

labor days). The same spirit of compromise informed the position taken by the author of the instruction on the question of the noble ranks. Whereas the great boyars demanded to nullify all promotions made by the hospodars after 1814, the instruction conditioned revision of noble ranks by the General Assembly on prior consent of the Ottoman Empire. Given the support, which the middle and small boyars received from the Ottomans in their struggle against the great boyars in the 1820s, such a provision testified the unwillingness of the Russian authorities to revise the effects of the hospodars' promotions even if their harmfulness was beyond question. Since the hospodars were given the right to replace and appoint state officials at will, the instructions suggested that the rights and titles accorded by the office were not made hereditary. In conformity with the Russian model, the instructions conditioned ennoblement on real service that was to be granted by a special patent of the prince confirmed by the General Assembly. Thus, instead of taking sides in the issue of boyar ranks, the instructions sought to increase the control of the state apparatus over the distribution of social privilege.

The choice of the boyar members of the committee revealed the characteristic predicament of the Russian authorities, which consisted in the lack of a sufficient pool of reliable pro-Russian boyars, who would qualify for the task. In this situation pro-Russian orientation was not the only and even not the most important criteria of appointment to the Committee. While the Committee included the Wallachian *Hetman* Alexandru Villara, who in the wake of 1821 continuously provided the Russian government with information and services of all kinds,⁵⁷⁹ Minciaky did not invite such ostensibly pro-Russian Moldavian boyar as Iordache Rossetti-Rosnovanu. Despite the rank of Actual State Councilor, which Iordache Rossetti-Rosnovanu had received for his cooperation with Russian authorities in 1808-1812, and his experience in the matters of government acquired at the post of *Vestiar*

⁵⁷⁹ RGVIA, fond 438, op. 1, no. 111, Ff. 40-40rev

(treasurer) in the 1810s, Minciaky doubted both his loyalty to Russia and his administrative talents emphasizing his “inclination for intrigues, slyness and treachery.”⁵⁸⁰ On the other hand, the Moldavian section of the Committee included Constantine Cantacuzene-Paşcanu, whose abilities and education recommended him even despite his sympathies for the Austrian government. In most cases, the Russian authorities simply employed the most capable and educated boyars even if they were animated by excessive personal ambition or greed. To this category belonged the Moldavians Mihai Sturdza, Iordache Catargi and Costache Conache or the Wallachians Alexandru Filippescu and Barbu Ştirbei. It is noteworthy that Minciaky, upon whose recommendation President-Plenipotentiary appointed half of the committee members, did not include into it a single representative of the middle or small boyars. Motivated by Miciacky’s dislike the fervently anti-Greek rhetoric of boyar radicals of the 1820s, this choice had important consequences for the eventual shape of the Organic Statutes and the attitude of the small and middle boyars towards it. The Wallachian section of the reform committee included Manuil Bălianu, Ştefan (Etienne) Bălăcianu, Alexandru Villara and Iordache Fillipescu with Barbu Ştirbei as a secretary. Moldavian section was composed of Iordache Catargi, Costache Conache, Costache Cantacuzene-Paşcanu and Mihai Sturdza. Gheorghe Asachi performed the functions of the secretary.⁵⁸¹

It was not long before the boyar members of the committee put up a staunch opposition to the intention of the provisional authorities to introduce a land tax and subject the boyars to indirect taxation (stamp duties). Unable or unwilling to fight with this opposition, Minciaky advised Kiselev to concede this point on the ground that the boyars already agreed with the abolition of *scutelnici* and exemptions from customs dues, which in fact implied an indirect taxation. Besides, the Committee members insisted that the presently existing peasant labor days corresponded to the amount of work prescribed by the ancient

⁵⁸⁰ “Svedenia o dostoinstvakh nekotorykh pervoklassnykh boyar kniazhestva Moldavii,” RGVIA, fond 438, op. 1, no. 79, F. 2.

legislation and reflected what a peasant could actually perform in the given number of days.⁵⁸² Being aware of the discrepancy which existed between the official legislation and the actual amount of work performed by the peasants, Kiselev insisted on the necessity to provide the clearest possible definition of a labor day. He even admitted the possibility of doubling the number of the labor days provided that this reflected the actual time necessary to perform the work and was compensated by the abolition of other *corvees* that hitherto were exacted from the peasants. In Kiselev's opinion the abolition of the *scutelnici* did not have to lead to the increase in the personal obligations of the peasants. Accepting the boyar request for a compensation for the abolished *scutelnici*, Kiselev suggested a reasonable increase of the salaries for the boyars occupying official posts and life-time indemnities for those who were not in service. Payable to boyar widows, but not hereditary, the number of these pensions would diminish with time, leaving the legislation concerning landlords and peasants "based on rights and mutual obligations, i. e. on the principles of justice conditioning the stability of laws and the new Statute."⁵⁸³

The Committee of Reform finished its work on March 30, 1830. In the mid May 1830 Mihai Sturdza, Alexandru Villara and Gheorghe Asachi went to St Petersburg with the draft of the Organic Statutes where they were reviewed by a special Ministerial Commission consisting of D. V. Dashkov, M. L. Minciaky, G. A. Katakazi, Mihai Sturdza and Alexandru Villara under control of Nesselrode and K. Ch. Lieven. The general impact of the amendments introduced by the Ministerial Commission consisted in stressing the oligarchic character of the future General Assemblies and at the same time, minimizing the possibility of the formation of oppositional parties within them. Thus, the Commission introduced a high property census for the deputies from the towns, in order to exclude from the Assembly the "individuals belonging to the class of shop owners." The Commission also prescribed cutting

⁵⁸¹ Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 193.

⁵⁸² Minciaky to Kiselev, January 21, 1830, Bucharest, AVPRI, fond. 331, op. 716/1, no. 3, Ff. 67-68.

down the number of the boyars of the first rank making part of the Ordinary Assembly as well as reducing the number of the deputies from the districts by half. The reduction was not proportionate however and in fact augmented the weight of the great boyars, who became more numerous than the boyars of the second rank representing the districts (34 to 20 against 37 to 19). Both amendments were probably motivated by the assumption that a smaller assembly would be easier to control than a larger one. Similarly, in anticipation of possible opposition within the assembly, the Ministerial commission prohibited the members of the assembly who disagreed with adopted legislation to fix their disagreement in a separate act and stipulated expulsion from the assembly in case of non-compliance to this rule. The hospodars were given the right to convoke the assembly not only during December and January, but also whenever they found necessary. Pursuing the principle of the separation of powers, the Ministerial Commission prohibited the ministers to be elected into the assembly. Finally, the most important change introduced in the chapter about finances presupposed the increase of the capitation tax (*bir*) from 24 to 30 piastres. In order to soften the negative impression of raised capitation, Ministerial Commission reduced the number of labor days from 24 to 12 and ordered to include into the Statutes the confirmation of the 1746 law of Constantine Mavrocordat, which officially abolished serfdom.⁵⁸⁴ After the Ministerial Commission finished its work by late November 1830,⁵⁸⁵ its suggestions were formally incorporated into the drafts of the Statutes by special Committees in Bucharest and Jassy composed of the same individuals who produced the first draft. Only after that they were to be submitted to the examination and approval of the Extraordinary Assemblies for revision of the Statutes.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸³ Kiselev to Minciaky, February 2, 1830, Ibid., Ff. 100-101.

⁵⁸⁴ "Remarques sur le projet de Reglement pour la Valachie presente au Ministere Imperiale par la Comite du Bucharest," RGIA, F.958, op 1, no. 623, Ff. 27-60.

⁵⁸⁵ Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 244-246.

⁵⁸⁶ Gheorghe Ungureanu, "Elaborarea Regulamentului Organic" in Dumitru Vitcu and Gabriel Badarau (eds.) *Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei*. Iasi, Junimea, 2004, 221.

The Boyar Opposition to the Organic Statutes

Just as in 1808-1812 the opposition to Russian policies in one of the principalities proved to be more serious than in the other. This time, however, Moldova presented greater difficulties than Wallachia. Quick fall of the Danubian fortresses to the Russians and transfer of the military actions to the south of the river made it safe for President-Plenipotentiaries and Special Committee for Reform to reside in Bucharest. President-Plenipotentiary promptly nipped in the bud the opposition that started forming around Wallachian Metropolitan Gregoire, who, unlike his predecessors in 1808-1812, refused to support the sanitary measures of Russian authorities and opposed their attempt to claim a part of the church revenues in favor of the public treasury. Gregoire was immediately replaced by a more cooperative bishop Neophite of Râmnic and exiled to one of the monasteries.⁵⁸⁷ When at the early sessions of Wallachian Extraordinary Assembly for the Revision of the Statute convoked in March 1831, Ioan Văcărescu demanded that Gregoire presided over the Wallachian Extraordinary Assembly in accordance with the custom, he likewise was promptly arrested. The attempt of a number of the leading boyars including Barbu Văcărescu, Constantine Bălăceanu, and Constantine Crețulescu to boycott the assembly by proclaiming themselves ill was likewise promptly thwarted.⁵⁸⁸ In Moldova repressions against the leading boyars were limited to the exile of Nicolae Rossetti-Roznovanu, whom Mihai Sturdza accused of disloyalty to Russia.

At the same time, due to the political developments after 1821, the nature of the opposition to Russian policies changed. If in 1808-1812 the main problem facing Russian authorities was the opposition of the greater boyars like the Philipescus with their client networks, in 1828-1834 the greater boyars with several exceptions proved to be rather

⁵⁸⁷ See the letters of Kiselev to Nesselrode from May 20 (Jassy) and December 14 (Bucharest) 1831, March 8, 1832 (Bucharest) in AVPRI, Fond 133, op. 469, no. 138 (1831), Ff.121-122; no. 115 (1832), F. 4, and Ff. 26-27 respectively.

⁵⁸⁸ Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă*, 228.

cooperative, frightened as they were by the radical developments of the preceding decade and viewing the political reform initiated by Russians as a means to consolidate their threatened political and social dominance. The failure of Bessarabian “experiment” based on an attempt to recast hierarchical structure of the local boyar class into an “egalitarian” Russian nobility increased the great boyars’ chances to win support of the Russian authorities. Conversely, the lesser boyars appealed to Bessarabian model in their attempt secure equality of political rights with great boyars, but in doing so they failed to sense an important change of attitude of the Russian authorities in the wake of Decembrist rebellion, July Revolution and Polish November 1830 uprising. Increasingly apprehensive of wider political participation as they were, Russian policy-makers encountered greater troubles in Moldavia, with its numerous boyar class and radical political tendencies.

The appointment of Special Committee for Reform opened a new round in the struggle within the Moldavian nobility. The agitation of lesser Moldavian boyars was provoked by the absence of any official publications on the work of the Moldavian section of the committee residing in Bucharest. Since the Committee included only the boyars of the first rank, numerous middle and petty Moldavian boyars soon started viewing its activities as aristocratic plotting aimed at excluding them from effective participation in the political life. Their apprehensions came true after the members of the Moldavian section of the Committee leaked the content of the projected Statute. Knowing full well that the stipulations of the Statutes that they were elaborating would frustrate the aspirations of the lesser boyars, Michel Sturdza, Iordache Catargi and Costache Conache at the same time were anxious to receive their votes at the future hospodar elections. That is why they made the content of the Statutes known before any official publications at the end of 1830 portraying it as the work of the Russian consul and claiming that their participation was reduced to simple editing of the

text.⁵⁸⁹ The lesser boyars' dissatisfaction with the stipulation of the Statute was expressed in a number of petitions addressed to President-Plenipotentiary. The analysis of the political language of these petitions sheds some light on the character of the boyar opposition in 1828-1834.

The author of one such petition complained that several prominent families usurped the privileges, which originally belonged to the whole noble estate. According to the principles established by the Phanariote hospodars in the 18th century, the noble rank depended upon the governmental office occupied by the individual and was not inheritable. The nobles occupying the offices from the Great *Logothete* to the Great *Shatrari* were considered boyars of the first rank, while those in the positions of Second and Third *Logothete*, *Vestiar*, *Vornik*, etc. were considered the boyars of the second and third rank respectively. Failure of a great boyar's son to occupy an office comparable to the one held by his father meant the loss of the grand boyar title. According to the authors of the petition, frequent appointment of commoners or Greeks to the high office proved that merit and not lineage was the decisive criterion. While the Phanariote princes can be blamed for the abusive appointment of their Greek relatives and clients to the prominent positions, the same cannot be said about the last hospodar, who made his appointments almost exclusively from the natives. Even if undeserving individuals acquired noble titles in this way, this problem, the petition argued, should be solved on an individual basis and not by depriving the mass of the boyars of their effective political rights in the interest of several families. According to the authors of the petition, the individuals currently occupying first rank positions were using their membership in the Special Committee in order to make the privileges, which they enjoyed *ex officio*, into permanent and hereditary ones, while retaining the principle of dependence of the noble rank upon service in respect of the rest of the boyar

⁵⁸⁹ "O poslednikh proisshestviakh v Moldavii," RGIA, fond 673, op. 1, no. 402, Ff. 1-8.

estate. In other words, the double standard in the application of Phanariote principle became a means of consolidating their monopoly on power.⁵⁹⁰

Another petition, signed in the same period by 38 middle and lesser boyars including Kogîlniceanu, Carp, Hurmeziu, Burilă, Dano, Radovici mostly in the ranks of *aga* and *spathar*, took a different line of argument and insisted that the boyar ranks once conferred upon their ancestors be recognized as hereditary. According the authors, the fact that in recent time the Princely Divan included only a selected number of the boyars of the first rank resulted from the intention to of individual hospodars to turn the Divan into an obedient instrument of their abuses rather and was a violation of the local tradition. The same referred to the General Assembly, which originally included all the nobles of the country. Only when the interests of the hospodars diverged from the interests of the country, did the former start to appoint selected individuals into the General Assembly. Even so, the hospodar had to convoke a wide assembly whenever there was an important issue at stake and in which they needed the sanction of the Ottoman Empire. Expressing their apprehension in respect of the clandestine intrigues of the members of the committee elaborating the statute and those of the Divans, the authors implored Kiselev to watch closely the activities of these bodies as well as inform them concerning the mode of the formation of the General Assembly.⁵⁹¹ Secrecy and lack of publicity also became the target of criticism of the boyars of the district Putna, who pointed out that the members of the committee failed to present the product of their efforts for general consideration before it was sent to St Petersburg.⁵⁹²

Along with the demands that reflected the actual interests of the middle and lesser boyars, the petitions contained arguments that served to score extra points in the eyes of the Russian provisional authorities. It is interesting that both petitions considered above referred

⁵⁹⁰ Comisse B. Pogor to Kiselev, July 20, 1830, Jassy, in "Requetes des mecontents moldaves," AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 10, Ff. 4-10.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., Ff. 11-17rev.

⁵⁹² Ibid., Ff. 18-19.

to the Bessarabian Statutes of 1818 and 1828, which recognized uniform rights and privileged after all the nobles of the region. As in 1821-1822, Bessarabian institutions quite unintendedly for their creators provided a point of reference of boyar “radicals” in the neighboring principality. Reflecting the official rhetoric of Russian manifestos, the petitioners demonstrated their concern with the well-fare of all classes, criticizing the doubling of the labor days that the peasants were to perform for their landlords. While the predominant strategy of the small and middle boyars was to emphasize the ancient laws and customs of the country, the authors of the first petition also demonstrated readiness to embrace completely new settlement devised along the lines of a social contract. If the choice is made in favor of a completely new form of government, independent of the ancient customs of the country says the document, “a compact of this kind devised to win the agreement of all the classes should be based on a serious consideration of their respective interests so that the latter are not compromised by the interests of several individuals.”

While these petitions produced no immediate result, at the end of 1830 the oppositional boyars learned that the draft of the Statute was approved by the Ministry almost without modifications and this spurred another round of their activities. According to Liprandi, the lesser boyars tried to turn to the Ottomans for help and even dispatched certain monk Isaphite with an address to the Ottoman government. Some pro-Ottoman Wallachian boyars also tried to provoke the Porte to make a demarche against the innovations, yet this produced no result.⁵⁹³ The oppositional activities culminated in May 1831 with the appearance of political leaflets on the streets of Jassy and the so-called affair of Sion, taking place against the background of peasant mutinies in the districts of Roman and Neamț.⁵⁹⁴ The investigations led to the arrest of the *spathar* Antioch Sion, a second rank boyar, in

⁵⁹³ “O poslednikh proissheshestviakh v Moldavii,” RGIA, fond 673, op. 1, no. 402, Ff. 1-8.

⁵⁹⁴ The description of the May 1831 events in *Fedor Iakovlevich Mirkovich. Ego zhizneopisanie sostavlennoie po ostavennym ego zapiskam, vospominaniam blizkikh liudei i podlinnym dokumentam* vol. 2 (SPb.: Voennaia tip, 1889), 220-221.

whose house a number of such petitions and proclamations were found. According to Liprandi, spathar Sion was a subordinate of the Moldavian *Vestiar* Alexandru Sturdza, who sought to exploit the mounting political crisis for his own advantages. The having implicated himself in the illegal machinations with the tax farms, the *Vestiar* tried to win the gratitude of the Russian authorities by giving away Sion as the main leader of the small boyar opposition.⁵⁹⁵ The commission, appointed by Kiselev to investigate the affair, discovered that the only document, which was truly “incendiary,” dated from 1821.⁵⁹⁶ However, Sion’s papers contained the text of another petition in Romanian, the analysis of which reveals changes in the political language of the opposition.

While the above considered petitions had the greater boyars as the main target of their discontent, the petition ceased among Sion’s papers represented a hidden protest against the policies of Russian authorities as such. The authors started by reminding of self-denying services of their ancestors to Russian troops during the Russian-Ottoman wars in the times of Catherine the Great and Alexander I, which were rewarded by confirmations of “all ancient liberties and immunities.”⁵⁹⁷ With the beginning of the present war the authors responded to similar promises “to consolidate or even augment their ancient privileges by contributing with all their means and efforts.” Much to their disappointment, the authors of the petition saw *scutelnici*, *sludjeri* and *breslași* abolished, which would force them in short time to sell their landed properties and leave them at the mercy of the great boyars.⁵⁹⁸ Likewise, the peasants faced increasing labor days as well as the necessity to provide recruits to the militia, despite the fact that military virtues had long been lost in this country.⁵⁹⁹ Protesting about a

⁵⁹⁵ “O poslednikh proissheshviakh v Moldavii,” RGIA, Fond 673, op. 1, no. 402, Ff. 1-8.

⁵⁹⁶ Traduction literale d’un project de proclamation saisi dans les papiers du boyar de Moldavie Sion (AVPRI, f. 133, “Kantseliaria”, op. 469, no. 138, (1831), Ff. 5-6; Kiselev to Nesselrode, February 16, 1831, Ibid., l. 42 rev.

⁵⁹⁷ “Projet d’adresse (en traduction litterale) saisi dans les papiers du spathar Sion,” AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1 no. 10, Ff.53-53 rev.

⁵⁹⁸ Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 251.

⁵⁹⁹ “Projet d’adresse (en traduction litterale) saisi dans les papiers du spathar Sion,” AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 10, l. 55rev.

priori accusations of corruption, the petition demanded that all such cases be investigated by General Assembly convoked in accordance with the ancient customs of the country and uniting “the greatest and the smallest.” The rhetoric of legal rights and privileges employed by the petition presupposed a contractual relationship between themselves and the Russian emperor. While the authors were convinced that such policies could not emanate from the emperor himself, theirs was a demand for justice rather than a cry for mercy.⁶⁰⁰

The Adoption of the Organic Statutes by the Assemblies of Revision

Presented to Kiselev during his stay in Jassy in August 1830, the petitions of the second rank boyars found their way to St. Petersburg. Failing to produce the desired result, they made Russian authorities apprehensive of the subversive activities of the “ill-intended individuals, which were only confirmed by the affair of Sion. In practical terms this resulted in a reduction of the number of boyar participating in the revision of the projected statutes, as well as decision to appoint the first hospodars instead of allowing the General Assembly as was originally suggested by ministerial instructions. Minciaky alerted Kiselev to dangers of convoking a large Assembly of Revision as early as April 1830. The obstacles created by some boyar members of the Committee to the introduction of some of the points in the draft, such as a tax on the landed property, was according to him a sign of more troubles to come. Therefore, he suggested that the Statutes, after their confirmation in St Petersburg, be adopted by the boyars delegated by the Divans. Likewise, he advised to appoint the first hospodars instead of convoking General Assembly for their election.⁶⁰¹ Kiselev partially shared Minchacki’s apprehension and suggested that the projects of the Statutes be adopted by the Assembly of the currently existing Judicial and Executive Divans, to which one could several

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., Ff. 56-57rev

⁶⁰¹ Minchaki to Kiselev, April 3, 1830, AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 3, Ff. 131-133rev. Several months later Mihai Sturdza likewise advocated the appointment of the hospodars pointing out the danger of unrest that may accompany elections as well as arguing that it would place the hospodar under pressure to fulfill the wishes of their voters. July 27, 1830, Hurmuzaki, Supplement I, Vol. 5, 34-36.

members of the higher clergy and several loyal boyars currently not in service.⁶⁰² Such signals must have convinced imperial government, which in the person of Dashkov, agreed to abandon the “constitutional” procedure given the likeliness that the boyars defending their abusive privileges would demand the abolition of the most important reforms. In his memorandum, Dashkov suggested the adoption of the Wallachian Statute by the Assembly of the Divans together with the Metropolitan interim, two bishops and four boyars of ancient descent having the rank of *Bano*, three largest landed proprietors of Craiova and two from Tîrgovishte and Cîmpu-lung totaling 27 members. A similar formula was offered in respect of Moldova. Should President-Plenipotentiary deem it expedient, he was also empowered to appoint representatives from the urban corporations.⁶⁰³ Kiselev was also authorized to expel from the Divans the boyars whose allegiance he found questionable and reward the loyal ones by decorations and gifts.⁶⁰⁴

Given the latitude to determine the eventual composition of the Assembly Kiselev drafted a project, which attempted to strike the right balance between an assembly, which would be too large and unruly and the one, which would be little more than a united session of the two Divans. Undertaking a historical overview of the evolution of the assembly, Kiselev demonstrated its gradual transformation from an institution uniting all the boyars towards the one including only the boyars of the first rank under the last hospodars.⁶⁰⁵ Since the adoption of the Statutes by a narrow circle of the boyars could provoke a violent opposition, Kiselev sought to give the Assembly a semblance of universal representation and conformity to the local traditions: “[It] is essentially necessary to give to the Assembly as much legality as it is possible by making it represent so to say the general will in accordance

⁶⁰² Kiselev to Nesselrode, April 14, 1830, AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 7, l. 19.

⁶⁰³ See Memorandum attached to the letter of Lieven to Kiselev of August 30, 1830, AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 7, Ff. 38-44.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., l. 44 rev.

⁶⁰⁵ “Projet de formation d'une assemblée general extraordinaire en Valachie” attached to the letter of Kiselev to Nesselrode of August 13, 1830, AVPRI, fond 133, op. 469, (1830), no. 114, Ff. 11-13 rev.

with the ancient usages and customs of the country and at the same time hamper the ill-intended opposition under the cover of justice.”⁶⁰⁶ The projected assembly was to consist of the four members of the Administrative Council, twenty-eight members of the Princely (Judicial) Divan, four boyars of ancient descent in the rank of *Bano* (the first rank in the boyar hierarchy – V. T.), interim metropolitan, three abbeyes, governor (*caimacam*) of the Little Wallachia and the representatives of the districts (one elected from each two districts). Totalling 47 members, the Assembly would contain half of the total number of the greater boyars, against only ten representatives of the much more numerous boyars of the second and the third rank.⁶⁰⁷ Kiselev’s project thus represented a fine example of using the rhetoric of historical tradition against the possible opposition, offering an assembly which was apparently wide, but at the same time, easy to control.

Wallachian Assembly for Revision of the Organic Statute was convoked on March 10, 1831 consisting of 56 members, including 6 members of clergy, 38 boyars of the first rank and 10 boyars from the districts that were all the large land owners elected by their likes. The composition of the elective body was defined with reference not only to title, but also to the amount of land in possession.⁶⁰⁸ The opening of the Assembly was preceded by the formation of special committees with the task of producing recommendations and bills on a number of sensitive issues: the amount of compensation for the abolished *scutelnici*, contribution of the monasteries and church lands to the treasury, classification of all the inhabitants of the principality, the mode of formation of the militia, the principles of accountability in the management of the public funds and the statute on the municipal dues and obligations.⁶⁰⁹ In his address to the Assembly Kiselev restated the official interpretation of the reforms undertaken by the Russian authorities:

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., 15-15 rev.

⁶⁰⁸ Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 261.

⁶⁰⁹ Kiselev to Nesselrode, February 9, 1831, AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 7, F. 109rev.

“Descendants of a valiant people, your ancestors enjoyed a national government, which gave way to a foreign, feeble and precarious administration. In the midst of the improvements experienced by the great European family, the inhabitants of these two provinces remained immobile. Now, reclaimed by the civilization, this people could no longer remain foreign to their destiny.”⁶¹⁰

Kiselev further mentioned that starting with Peter the Great Russian court maximally contributed to this process and, if the violation of the Russian treaties with the Ottoman Empire resulted in hard time for the principalities, this must be attributed to “secondary causes and to the developments that were independent of the will of the Protecting power.” The lapse of the salutary influence of Russian protection was attributed to the “terrible commotions that affected Europe,” which resulted “great calamities” in the principalities. President-Plenipotentiary underlined that the ministerial instructions that provided the basis for the project of the Statute were themselves based on the boyar petitions of the 1810s and early 1820s containing suggestions for the elimination of the abuses.⁶¹¹ Recounting with pride the achievements of the provisional authorities, Kiselev concluded by asserting that the proposed Statute “affirms the principles, which reflect as close as possible you present situation.” According to him the project of the Statute contained just as much of enlightened improvement as was realistic in the present condition of the country: “It does not represent any of the theories, which, if considered abstractly, do not fail to profess the goal of certain utility, but which, when applied, very often reveal shortcomings by aspiring beyond the limits set by the present state of civilization of the nations.”⁶¹²

While Wallachian Assembly proceeded to revise the Statute in the spirit of cooperation and concluded its work by early May, Moldavian Assembly proved to be much more troublesome. Opened on May 8 under the supervision of Minciaky, it started its work at the time of the already mentioned “affair of Sion” and peasant mutinies in the districts of

⁶¹⁰ “Discourse pronounce a l’occasion de l’ouverture de l’Assemblee generale” Hurmuzaki, Supliment I, Vol. IV, 359.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 360.

⁶¹² Ibid., 366.

Neamț and Roman provoked by the rumors of the impending increase of the labor days.⁶¹³ Although the peasants were promptly pacified by the Cossacks, the mutinies predictably added to the nervousness of the Russian authorities, who suspected them to be the result of the “perfidious insinuations” spread by the oppositional boyars about forthcoming Ottoman invasion, which would liberate the peasants. The conclusion of Mincaky was rather pessimistic: “The only fact which is beyond doubt is that of the universal agitation in this country and that the most malicious rumors are being spread about our affairs in Poland and the projects of the Ottomans. It becomes therefore essential to quell (*comprimer*) this spirit of perturbation in the country, which by its geographical position and the absence of any police as well as any other repressive force can become a scene (*foyer*) of troubles and disorder the consequences of which will affect the neighboring provinces of Russia and Austria.”⁶¹⁴ These circumstances accounted for the stark differences in the tenor of Kiselev’s speeches before the two assemblies. Addressing the Moldavian Assembly Kiselev did not make any historical references and did not use any flattering expressions like “descendants of a valiant people.” Instead, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the failure of the Moldavian boyars to cooperate in the manner of their Wallachian counterparts: “I am sorry to see that in the midst of the useful work characterizing all parts of the provisional administration, one encounters some individuals, who are hostile enough to their country to pursue their private interest by hampering the introduction of the projected improvements.”⁶¹⁵

Interrupted by the outbreak of the epidemics of cholera in early June, the sessions of the Moldavian Assembly resumed in mid August characterized by the “spirit of agitation (*inquietude*) and subversion manifested among its members.” According to Kiselev’s reports,

⁶¹³ Kiselev to Nesselrode, April 30, Jassy, RGIA, fond. 958, no. 625, F. 34.

⁶¹⁴ Kiselev (or Minchacky) to Nesselrode Jassy April 30, 1831, RGIA, fond. 958, op. 1, no. 625, “Donesenia Russkikh konsulov iz Bucharesta i Jass Vitse kantsleru K. V. Nesselrode ob ustroistve kniazhestv Vlakhiï i Moldavii,” Ff. 90-93.

⁶¹⁵ “Discour de President-Pleinipotentiaire ver L’Assemblée Extraordinaire de Revision de Moldavie,” Ibid., F. 111rev.

“the party which has emerged in the Assembly has taken as its task to criticize and amend all elements of the Statute, which secure real influence to the new government.” President-Plenipotentiary was also worried by the delay of the confirmation of the Statutes by the Ottoman government, nourishing secret hopes of the Moldavian opposition. While Kiselev did not doubt that the Statute would essentially be adopted, he foresaw the necessity to act more severely and exercise a closer supervision over its introduction than in Wallachia.⁶¹⁶

The election of hospodars was another issue, which demonstrated a change of the attitude of the Russian authorities. Initially Nesselrode favored the election of hospodars as being in accordance with the ancient privileges and customs of the provinces.⁶¹⁷ Such advocacy of respect for local legal traditions from a declared opponent of representative government, however surprising, had certain logic. Possibly taking example from the contemporary policies of the Austrian Empire governed by Metternich, Nesselrode sought to oppose particularistic local institutions and traditions to the universalistic character of “subversive” revolutionary ideas. However, unlike in Austria, Russian tampering with “local traditions” never became a persistent principle of policy. Already by autumn 1830 Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs changed its opinion in view of the “spirit of ill-founded opposition” against the reforms introduced by Russian authorities. Instead of the originally intended election of the hospodars by the General Assembly consisting of all the boyars of the first class and the deputies of the districts, the ministry now ordered that the hospodars be elected by much more narrow bodies of the currently existing Divans, whose members were appointed by Kiselev.⁶¹⁸ Eventually it was agreed that the hospodars will be elected by the currently existing Divans, to which Kiselev would add some boyars of the first and second

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., Ff. 258-258 rev.

⁶¹⁷ Nesselrode to Kiselev, March 24, 1830, RGIA, Fond 958, op. 1, no. 623, F. 10.

⁶¹⁸ Lieven to Kiselev, September 12, 1830, RGIA, Fond 958, op. 1, no. 623, Ff. 1-2 together with the attached Memoir of Dashkov (s. no.) which develops arguments in favor of this measure. Ibid., Ff. 3-7.

class “in order to render them the character of Assemblies convoked in accordance with the ancient customs.”⁶¹⁹

The Polish uprising of November 1830 placed Russian authorities on the lookout for any signs of inquietude in the principalities.⁶²⁰ According to Kiselev, “the most malicious rumors about our situation in Poland, which are proliferated and augmented in the coffee-houses and cities of the right bank of the Danube inflame the imagination of the Turks so much that the idea of a general campaign against Russia became very popular.”⁶²¹ Soon, President-Plenipotentiary was authorized to dispatch military force in case this “deplorable contagion manifests itself” in the principalities.⁶²² Whereas Kiselev was certain that Russian Empire would eventually emerge from all complications even stronger than before,⁶²³ the tsar and Nesselrode apparently did not share his optimism. In April 1831 Kiselev still advocated the election of the hospodars by the Extraordinary Assembly stipulated in the draft of the Statutes. In case the ministry insisted upon the election by the currently existing Divans, Kiselev advised to add to it some boyars of the second and the third rank and some representatives of the corporations as a way to render the election “more national.”⁶²⁴ However, Nesselrode replied that now “there could be no question of the election of the hospodars by any assembly whatsoever.”⁶²⁵ Given the agitated political situation in the principalities and in Europe in general, it was decided that hospodars had to be appointed by Russian emperor and confirmed by the Sultan.⁶²⁶

In order to solve the problem of the opposition of the Moldavian boyars Russian authorities used the example of their more compliant Wallachian counterparts. Their address

⁶¹⁹ Nesselrode to Kiselev, November 27, 1830, RGIA, Fond 958, no. 623, F. 16.

⁶²⁰ Minchaky wrote “En fin un fait seul qui est hors de doute c’est que l’inquietude est general en Moldavie et que les bruits les plus malveillantes se perproduiront tant sur nos affaires de la Pologne que sur la pojects de la Porte” Minchacky to Nesselrode April 30, Jassy, RGIA, fond 958, op. 1, no. 625, F. 93.

⁶²¹ Kiselev to Nesselrode May 20, Jassy, AVPRI, Fond 133, op. 469 (1831) no. 138, F. 118 rev.

⁶²² Nesselrode to Kiselev, May 15, 1831, RGIA, Fond 958, op. 1, no. 623, F. 94.

⁶²³ Kiselev to Vorontsov, March 2, 1831, Bucharest, Arkhiv Vorontsovykh, vol. 38, 191-192.

⁶²⁴ Kiselev to Nesselrode April 15, 1831, Jassy, RGIA, Fond 958, op. 1, no. 625, F. 85.

⁶²⁵ Nesselrode to Kiselev, May 15, RGIA, Fond 958, no. 623, F. 95.

to the Ottoman Sultan was meant to dispel all the rumors about complications that Russian authorities encountered, which Porte could use as a pretext for postponing the confirmation of the Statutes.⁶²⁷ At the same time, Russians sought to “paralyze the intrigues” of the Moldavian boyars by pressing the Sultan to issue a single *hatt-i sheriff* confirming the Organic Statutes of both principalities. If earlier Nesselrode advocated greater closeness between the two principalities as a means to minimize the Ottoman interference, now this was seen as a way to counteract the oppositional movement.⁶²⁸ The project of this *hatt-i sheriff* drawn by Russians already in June 1831 asserted the immutability of the fundamental laws of the principalities, which remained beyond the jurisdiction of the hospodars and could only be changed with agreement of the Ottoman and the Russian Empires.⁶²⁹ Anticipating the manifestations of opposition in the Assemblies, the *hatt-i sheriff* specified that the latter do not have the right to hamper the activities of the “administrative powers preserving public order.” In cases of disorders or seditions, the hospodars were given the right to prorogue the Assemblies.⁶³⁰ The project of the *hatt-i sheriff* thus contained the basic elements of the notorious “article additionele,” the story of which was told by several Romanian historians.

In order to get the Statutes adopted by the Assemblies of Revision, Russian occupation authorities not only applied pressure, but were also ready to make concessions. Already Dashkov’s instructions admitted the possibility of doubling labor days that the peasants were obliged to perform for their landlords. While this idea was eventually abandoned out of fear to provoke peasant rebellion, the amendments introduced by the Assemblies for Revision into the drafts of the Statutes and accepted by Russian authorities signified further gains for the landlords. Thus, the Wallachian Assembly reduced the amount

⁶²⁶ Ibid., F. 96.

⁶²⁷ Nesselrode to Kiselev, Tsarskoie Selo, August 10, 1831, RGIA, Fond 958, op.1, no. 623, F. 99rev.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., F. 99.

⁶²⁹ The Project of this Hatt-i sheriff was attached to Kiselev’s letter to Nesselrode, June 17, 1831, Jassy, AVPRI, Fond 133, op 469, no. 138, Ff. 152-159rev.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., F. 154rev.

of land that had to be accorded to peasant for the maintenance of cattle, as well as restricted their right to use forests.⁶³¹ In compensation for the abolished *scutelnici*, the boyars were to receive pensions, for which purpose the treasury allocated one million piastres. The interests of landless boyars were taken into consideration: instead of 24 piastres, which the landed boyars were to receive annually for every *scutelnici* they used to have, the landless boyars received 60 piastres.⁶³² The abolition of *scutelnici* was compensated by a special law obliging the peasants to provide the landlord each year with four servants from each hundred families. The Wallachian Assembly motivated it by the fact that the peasants occupying the land of the landlord gain the opportunity to engage in commerce in addition to basic nourishment. In the opinion of the legislators, the peasant services offered to the landlords were to provide the latter with equal possibility to exploit the resources of the land.⁶³³ A similar amendment was made by the Moldavian Assembly, which provided the landlords with servitors (*volnoslujbași*) “in the interests of the rural economy.”⁶³⁴ Conceding to the pressure of the numerous lesser boyars, the Assembly stipulated that petty landowners were to obtain one servitor from each five peasants populating his land. Russian President-Plenipotentiary and Russian occupation authorities in general were powerless before the Moldavian boyars as far as the intricacies of local agrarian legislation was concerned. Thus, in defining the amount of land that the landlord was supposed to give to the peasant in return for work on seigniorial field with a specified amount of cattle, the members of the Moldavian Assembly of Revision concealed from Kiselev the existence of the 1805 decree of hospodar Alexander Mouruzi,

⁶³¹ Regulamentul Organic al Valahiei, art. 140, §§ 3, 5, in *Regulamentele organice ale Valahiei și Moldovei*. București: 1944, 38. Henceforth all references to the Wallachian statute are made on the basis of this edition.

⁶³² Amendements adopted par L’Assemblée General de revision en Valachie, AVPRI, F. 331, op 716/1, no. 12, Ff. 11-12 rev.

⁶³³ Ibid., Ff. 15, 21-22 rev.

⁶³⁴ Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei, arts. 71, 72 and 132 in Gabriel Badarau and Dumitru Vitcu (eds.) *Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei*. Iasi: Junimea, 2004), 181-182 and 203 respectively. Henceforth all references to the Moldavian statute are made on the basis of this edition.

which was more favorable to the peasantry.⁶³⁵ Despite formal confirmation of 1746 and 1766 laws of hospodars Constantine Mavrocordat and Grigore Chica proclaiming the abolition of personal serfdom and establishing twelve work days, the Organic Statutes *de facto* increased the amount of work that the peasants were supposed to carry out for the landlords and gradually reduced the amount of land that the latter was supposed to offer them. Thus, the stipulations of the Organic Statutes marked an important stage in the process of seigniorial advance on the peasants that was taking place in the principalities since the second half of the eighteenth century.⁶³⁶

The Organic Statutes were adopted by the Wallachian and Moldavian Assemblies on May 20 and November 19, 1831 and were put in force on July 1, 1831 and January 1, 1832 respectively. Often referred to as the first Romanian constitution, the Statutes in fact represented a comprehensive set of regulations of all aspects of public life of the principalities, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Here I will consider their purely “constitutional” aspects along with the question of boyar ranks inasmuch as they formed the concluding episode in the process of negotiation between the imperial authorities and various strata of the peripheral elite as well as within the peripheral elite itself. In accordance with Statutes, the hospodars were to be elected among the representatives of the great boyar families of no less than 40 years, indigenized in the principalities at least in the second generation. The General Extraordinary Assemblies convoked for the election of the hospodar included the representatives of the higher clergy (4 in Wallachia and 3 in Moldavia), the boyars of the first rank (50 and 45), the boyars of the second rank (73 and 30), the deputies of the district (37 and 32) and towns (27 and 21).⁶³⁷ As the head of the executive the hospodar appointed the ministers and commanded the army. The legislative power was divided

⁶³⁵ Marcel Emerit, *Les Paysans Roumains depuis le traite d'Adrianople jusqu'au la liberation des terres (1829-1864)* (Paris: Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1937), 76-77.

⁶³⁶ Grosul, *Reformy v Dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 287, 294.

between the hospodar and the General Ordinary Assembly. The latter consisted of 43 members in Wallachia and 34 in Moldavia and included the representatives of the higher clergy, boyars of the first rank (20 in Wallachia, and 16 in Moldavia), as well as boyar deputies of the districts (19 and 16 respectively).⁶³⁸ The disproportions in the political representation would become clear when projected against the absolute numbers of the boyars of the first the second and the third ranks. Thus in Moldavia in 1830 there were 92 boyars of the first rank, 346 boyars of the second rank and 446 boyars of the third rank.⁶³⁹ In other words, whereas there was one deputy for every six great boyars, every second or third rank boyar deputy represented 49 voters.⁶⁴⁰

The Assemblies were to be convoked by the hospodars in December of each year in order to revise the revenues and expenses of the principality and approve the new budget. This, however, was a less than perfect embodiment of the principle of “no taxation without representation” since, unlike the Extraordinary Assemblies, the Ordinary Assemblies did not include the representatives of the towns, who bore the bulk of the taxation burden along with the peasants. Besides, the Ordinary Assemblies were to consider measures for the development of the commerce, industry, agriculture and education. Aided by the specially created financial, administrative, judicial and ecclesiastical commissions, the Assemblies were supposed to finish their yearly work within two months from the moment of their convocation. The hospodars had the exclusive right to initiate new legislation and could prorogue the Assemblies in case of the opposition and convoke the new ones upon the notification of the Sovereign and Protective Powers. However, the hospodars could not impose new taxes or change their civil lists without the consent of the Assembly, which could

⁶³⁷ See Regulamentul Organic al Valahiei, art 2, § 1, and Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei, Art 2, Iași: Junimea, 2004, 161.

⁶³⁸ See Regulamentul Organic al Valahiei, art 45, § 9 and Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei, Art 48, Iași: Junimea, 2004, 173

⁶³⁹ Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Boierimea în Moldova din secolul al XIX-lea*, 97.

appeal their actions to the two powers and even obtain their deposition in case of the infringement on the law on his part.

Hardly solving the old conflict between the hospodars and the boyars Organic Statutes enveloped it into “constitutional” forms. The distribution of functions and constitutional prerogatives between the hospodars and the Assemblies reflected the desire of the Russian authorities to create institutional leverages for an effective Russian dominance in the principalities. Russian consuls became the arbiters of the activities of the hospodars and the Assemblies and could exploit the potential conflicts between them in order to prevent the formation of consolidated anti-Russian opposition. At the same time, the subordination of the Assemblies and the hospodars to the joint arbitrage of the Sovereign and Protective powers frustrated the centralizing ambitions of future hospodars, the oligarchic interests of the great boyars and the “egalitarian” aspirations of petty boyars. Russia’s political dominance in the principalities was thus achieved through keeping all sides in the conflict targeted by 1821 uprisings in a state of perpetual discontent. The institutionalization of political struggle was paralleled by the preservation of important tensions within the noble class.

Although the Statutes recognized promotions made by the hospodars in the 1820s, they failed to satisfy their political ambitions of the second and third rank boyars and hardly contributed to consolidation of the boyar estate. The General Dispositions of the Moldavian and Wallachian Statutes conditioned the noble ranks on service in the corresponding office. Later a special law was passed establishing correlation between ranks and official positions in administration, judiciary and gendarmerie providing a local analogue to the Russian Table of Ranks.⁶⁴¹ Alongside the boyar ranks that were to become purely personal non-hereditary distinctions, the Statutes for the first time in Romanian history introduced the notion of

⁶⁴⁰ The whole *pays legal* (i. e. those who had the basic right to elect the members of the Great Extraordinary Assembly) amounted only to 3000 individuals out of population of some four million. Iordache, *Originile conservatismului românesc*, 87.

⁶⁴¹ The law of March 10, 1835, Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei, 103 and Attachment # IX, 166-170.

hereditary nobility and presupposed the formation of the registers listing all hereditary nobles. In particular, Moldavian Statute recognized the hereditary nobility of all individuals, whose families possessed honorary titles (*titres*) for eighty years consecutively, as well as individuals, whose fathers possessed one of the first six ranks (from the Great *Bano* to the Great *Shatrari* inclusively). Those individuals of non-noble origin to whom the last hospodars granted one of the first six ranks were introduced into the registers of nobility as well. However, the families of such individuals obtained hereditary nobility only if their sons or grandsons acquired an honorary title similar to the one possessed by their fathers or grandfathers.⁶⁴² In future, the hospodars were given the right to confer nobility only in recognition of outstanding services and only in cooperation with the General Assembly.⁶⁴³

Introducing the notion of hereditary nobility alongside non-hereditary boyar titles as well as a clause about correspondence between the rank of an individual and the office that he occupied, the reformers clearly took for guidance corresponding Russian institutions. At the same time, the General Dispositions of the Statutes concerning the noble titles fell short of *Gubernia* Statute of 1775 or Charter for the Nobility of 1785 in the sense that they failed to homogenize Romanian boyar estate to any significant degree. Characteristically, the Statutes did not presuppose the formation of the assemblies of the nobility and “estate” institutions with numerous elective positions, which were created in Russia by Catherine the Great and (with all necessary qualifications) produced greater unity in the noble class. The reforms not only failed to create a homogeneous noble class committed to the preservation of the new political settlement, but in fact foreshadowed greater diversification of the boyar estate, whereby it soon lost its *raison d’etre*. Insofar as the noble status granted certain social and economic privileges, it became the object of individuals desiring social advancement or economic freedom. For their part, the hospodars did not fail to exploit the economic

⁶⁴² Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei, art. 402, 330.

advantages of ennoblement doubling and tripling the number of privileged elements in course of 1830s and 1840s to the dissatisfaction of the great boyars.⁶⁴⁴ Needless to say, the newcomers hardly shared any common estate consciousness or *esprit du corps* with either landed aristocracy or state officials. As a result, the boyar “estate” became increasingly heterogeneous embracing diverse elements, none of which was fully satisfied with the current state of affairs. In the absence of a homogenized noble estate committed to state service, the whole political structure introduced by the Organic Statutes remained fragile and proved incapable of withstanding the oppositional movements of the 1830s and 1840s.

⁶⁴³ Regulamentul Organic al Valahiei, arts. 350-351, 251, and Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei, art 399, Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei, 329.

⁶⁴⁴ Between 1828 and 1849 the number of Moldavian boyar families increased from 902 in to 3325. Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova in secolul al XIX-lea*, 100.

Chapter V Between *Polizeistaat* and *Cordon Sanitaire*: Russian Provisional Administration in Moldavia and Wallachia in 1829-1834

Despite the adoption of the Statutes by the Wallachian and Moldavian Assemblies of Revision in summer and autumn 1831, the regime of Russian occupation under the presidency of Kiselev continued for another two and a half years. During this period Russian President-Plenipotentiary supervised over the implementation of various aspects of the Statutes, which were significantly amended by the Assemblies and complemented by a number of particular legislative acts. This activity took place in a complicated international context, characterized by severe internal crisis in the Ottoman Empire, in the course of which Russian diplomacy sought to make the sultan confirm the new political regime of Moldavia and Wallachia and more largely accept the results of the war contested by the maritime powers. The correspondence between Russian Foreign Ministry, its envoy in Constantinople and President-Plenipotentiary revealed significant divergence of opinion within the imperial elite on Russia's eastern policy in general and its policy in the principalities in particular. These differences have to be addressed in order to make sense of the measures taken by Russian occupation authorities in the principalities at the time of Kiselev's presidency.

Russian President-Plenipotentiary of the Divans was convinced that ultimately only the annexation of the principalities to Russia would secure the stability of the new institutions. For one thing, the annexation was in line with early Pan-Slavic ideas, which were popular among the Russian military and educated public. In his letter to Russian envoy to Constantinople A. P. Butenev, Kiselev revealed that this prospect outlined by Dibich was the main motive behind his acceptance of the position of the President-Plenipotentiary. He viewed his activities as the head of the Russian provisional administration in the principalities as a step towards the "reunion of the great family of Slav peoples."⁶⁴⁵ Apart from Pan-Slavic

⁶⁴⁵ Kiselev to Butenev, Bucharest, June 19, 1833, AVPRI, Fond, 133, op. 469, no. 141, F. 207.

visions, continued Russian presence in the principalities was, according to Kiselev, an important leverage on the Ottoman Empire in order to make it oblige by the conditions of the Adrianople treaty and confirm the Organic Statutes and the institutions which they introduced. Already in autumn 1830 President-Plenipotentiary advised Russian Foreign Ministry against the election/appointment of the hospodars before all the clauses of the Statutes are introduced and ratified by the Ottomans.⁶⁴⁶ In view of the Ottoman tergiversations with the execution of the clauses of the Peace of Adrianople in spring and summer 1831, Kiselev considered a prolonged occupation a means of “forcing the Ottoman Divan to carry out the conditions of the last treaty.” Acting from the position of force Russia could make the Porte issue a *hatti-i serif* confirming the Statutes and later appointing the hospodars.⁶⁴⁷

For its part, Russian Foreign Ministry shared neither Kiselev’s pan-Slavic visions nor his *realpolitik* approach and wanted to “see the principalities organized, the hospodars on their thrones and Russian armies ready to withdraw.”⁶⁴⁸ Nicholas I and his Vice-Chancellor Nesselrode were not ready to compromise the monarchical cooperation within the format of renewed Saint Alliance by breaking the promise not to annex any territories that was made by the tsar on the eve of the war. Besides, annexation or prolonged occupation squared poorly with the policy of preservation of the Ottoman Empire adopted by Nicholas I and Nesselrode after the Adrianople treaty. Frustrating Russian military and the educated public in their dreams about the realization of the “Greek project,” the Adrianople treaty was quite in accordance with the official ideology of the war, which stressed the fulfillment of the obligations that the Ottomans undertook under past treaties and sought to reaffirm Russian

⁶⁴⁶ Kiselev to Nesselrode, Bucharest, October 13, 1830, AVPRI, Fond 133, op 469 no. 114, F. 24.

⁶⁴⁷ Kiselev to Nesselrode, September 3, 1831, Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 60-62; Hurmuzaki, Supliment I/4, 379.

⁶⁴⁸ Nesselrode to Kiselev, September, 29, 1831, cited in A. Papadopol-Callichi, “General Pavel Kiselev in Moldavia si Țara Românească,” *Analele Academiei Române. Seria II, Vol IX, Secț. II. Memoriile Secț- Istorie*. 1887, 101.

emperor's rights as the protector of the Orthodox peoples rather than to help the latter achieve real independence from the Sultan. The decision to preserve the Ottoman Empire after it made concessions to Serbia and the Romanian Principalities and recognized the independence of Greece, was based on the assumption that such demonstration of the Russian power and readiness for cooperation would give Russia a predominate influence over a weakened neighbor. Never feeling at ease with the ideological implications of creation of the independent Balkan states, Nicholas I and Nesselrode staked on status quo, convinced as they were that the sort of the Ottoman Empire would perpetually remain at the mercy of the Russian emperor as it used to be in September 1829.

While this illusion was bound to cost dearly in 1853-1856, the immediate developments after the conclusion of the Adrianople treaty suggested that the choice of the conservative policy in 1829 was correct. The July revolution in France and Polish uprising of November 1830 confirmed Nicholas I apprehensions against playing with rhetoric of popular independence and determined him to adopt a strictly legitimist approach advocated by Metternich. In the interest of the renewed Saint Alliance Nesselrode pressed Kiselev in 1831 for as quick adoption of the Statutes and evacuation of Moldavia and Wallachia as possible, in order to dispel the Austrian apprehensions about the annexation of the principalities by Russia. However, the customary Ottoman foot-dragging with respect to the ratification of the treaty, the confirmation of the Statutes and payment of contribution strengthened the position of Kiselev, who argued for the preservation of the military position on the Danube, which would give us a preponderant influence over the Porte in the circumstances when "the events in Poland and European affairs can force us to move all our forces to our western frontiers."⁶⁴⁹ In a memoir addressed to Nesselrode in February 1832, Kiselev again insisted on continued occupation as a sole sure means of making the Ottomans fulfil the conditions of

⁶⁴⁹ Kiselev to Nesselrode, October, 29, 1831, Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 62; Hurmuzaki, Supplement I/4, 380.

the Adrianople treaty evoking Dibich's idea to extend the occupation for ten years. In case that would fail to make the Ottomans oblige, Kiselev considered "the possession of these provinces a good compensation, which after ten years of occupation may not be contested by Europe, which would have become used to see Russia established in these countries."⁶⁵⁰

Kiselev's memoir to Nesselrode of March 8, 1832 contains perhaps the most systematic exposition of his views on the Organic Statutes as well as the goals of Russian policy in the principalities and the Balkans in general. In the opinion of President-Plenipotentiary, the motives of the present involvement into the affairs of the principalities resulted, on the one hand, from the continuation of the tradition of protection of the Balkan co-religionists established by Kuchuk-Kainardji treaty and the necessity to secure the interests of the southern provinces of the Russian Empire on the other. Since traditional system of consular representations to the Sultans on behalf of his Christian subjects proved an ineffective means of curbing the abuses of the hospodars or making the Ottomans observe the concluded treaties, the rhetoric of protection of Orthodoxy was bound to loose effectiveness with time. In this context, Kiselev viewed the new institutions as a means "to demonstrate the Christian population of the East a new proof of the benefits of the Russian protection and thus preserve Russian influence over them." The latter goal meant "guarding the southern provinces from the pernicious influence of disorder and anarchy that were the product of a vicious political regime of the Ottoman-Phanariote rule." Peace and order meant not only "comprehensive reorganization of all the elements of local administration," but also "specifying the rights and duties of all social classes, imposing penalties for the abuses while respecting the newly accorded rights, abolishing *corvee* and taxes in kind, simplifying the organization of the judiciary system and separating it from the administration, the

⁶⁵⁰ Kiselev to Nesselrode, February 19, 1832, Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 65; Hurmuzaki, Supliment I/4, 388.

establishing gendarmerie and according the liberty of commerce.”⁶⁵¹ If the previous occupation of the principalities demonstrated that a rational streamlining of local administration was a precondition of the Russian military success, this time even more comprehensive reform measures were deemed necessary to secure the realization of the Russia’s goals.

Kiselev identified the discontent of the upper class as the principle cause of political instability in Moldavia and Wallachia. Revolutionary proclamations of Vladimirescu and the hardships of immigration made the boyars play with reform. However, the boyars failed to realize that reform “would denigrate them to the position of simple aristocracy well endowed for a well-ordered state (*assez largement partagee pour une etat bien regulier*), but powerless to continue exclusive exploitation of the system of abuses.”⁶⁵² Other categories of the population also had reasons for discontent. The clergy lost its former influence in lay affairs together with a part of its property and was made responsible for adequate maintenance of the remaining part. The merchants found their activity increasingly regularized. Officials from the ospodar to *ispravniks* were made more responsible. The first mentioning of the doubling of the labor days made peasantry anxious and unable to calculate the advantages of the new system.⁶⁵³ Yet, the mass of inhabitants in Kiselev’s evaluation acquired important rights and ultimately welcomed the Statute. Although the peasantry continues to bear the burden of seigniorial and state taxation in favor of the boyars, its obligations henceforth were more precisely defined, which curtailed the possibility for arbitrary exertions. Kiselev hoped that this privilege would tie the mass of the people to the new institutions and consecutively to Russian protectorate. The danger consisted in boyar refusal to respect these rights for that would cause a mass rebellion. Unlike Vladimirescu’s insurgents that demanded rights they

⁶⁵¹ Kiselev to Nesselrode, “Notice sur la necessite et l’utilite de la nouvelle organization des Principautes, ” Bucharest, March 8, 1832. Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 69.

⁶⁵² Ibid., 70.

⁶⁵³ Kiselev to Nesselrode, October 13, 1830, Bucharest, AVPRI, fond 133, op 469, no. 114, Ff. 22-23 rev.

never had, the rebellion in question would rise to vindicate the already acquired rights and would be more powerful and more legitimate.

Finally, Kiselev was concerned by the lack of international support for the new regime. Austria hardly welcomed the Statutes that eliminated the reasons for the Wallachian peasants' flight to Transylvania and in fact reversed the situation. New political and commercial liberties of the principalities opened the perspective of the reverse flow of population from Transylvania and Bukovina. Likewise, the Ottomans were predictably not happy with the Statutes, which deprived them of the possibility to interfere into the internal affairs of the principalities. Therefore, they tried to delay the confirmation of the Statutes until the payment of contribution that would force Russians withdraw the occupation troops. Should this happen before the Statutes were inaugurated, disorders in the principalities pernicious to the interests of Russia and its entire eastern policy were almost inevitable.⁶⁵⁴ According to Kiselev, in the absence of the Ottoman confirmation of the Statutes, those discontent with the new institutions (including the old privileged and the foreign consuls) had a means of influencing the public opinion and intimidating those, who chose to attach themselves to the views of Russian cabinet. On the other hand, "the administrative reform carried out in the interests of the masses hitherto oppressed by the abuses and vexations of all kinds, has made too great a progress in people's mind, to make it look indifferent upon the restoration of the ancient regime."⁶⁵⁵

In the course of 1832 the conflict between the spirit of legitimist monarchical solidarity championed by Nesselrode and the *realpolitik* approach advocated by Kiselev was progressively overtaken by the developments in the Middle East, where the very existence of the Ottoman Empire was put into question by the rapid advances of the Muhammed-Ali's Egyptian army commanded by his son Ibragim. In this crucial moment Nicholas I displayed

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 71.

remarkable diplomatic ability promptly offering Mehmet II necessary military support against his rebellious vassal. In early 1833 Russian troops in the principalities under Kiselev's command were empowered to march to Constantinople upon sultan's request. Russian naval squadron entered the Bosphor straits and this was one of the factors halting Ibragim-Pasha advance towards Constantinople. Having to rely on a former enemy, the Ottomans were forced to conclude with Russia the Treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi in 1833, whereby Russian emperor guaranteed the military aid to the Sultan against the latter's obligation to close the straits for the vessels of any power at war with Russia.

Kiselev took advantage of the political predicament of the first half of 1833 in order to advocate his policy to Nesselrode. Once Russian foreign ministry conceded the necessity of maintaining a military position on the Danube for the time being, Kiselev pointed out that the continued control over civil administration was no less essential. The appointment of the hospodars in conditions of continued Russian occupation was bound to produce tensions between the military and civil authorities at the time when the unconditional support of the latter was absolutely essential.⁶⁵⁶ Exposing his larger view of Russia's eastern policy in a private letter to his personal friend and Russian negotiator at Unkiar Iskelessi, A. F. Orlov, Kiselev suggested adopting purely observing attitude in respect of the Ottoman Empire, being convinced that it would collapse imminently. In the meantime, Kiselev suggested secretly encouraging the Ottoman non-observance of the Adrianople treaty "in order to leave Russia a legitimate pretext for constant intervention into their affairs" and, one could add, continued occupation of the principalities.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁵ Kiselev to Nesselrode, September, 26, 1832, Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 83; Hurmuzaki, Suppliment, I/4, 405.

⁶⁵⁶ "Project sur la question dans l'état actuel des choses qu'il faut prendre à l'égard des Principautés.", Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 96-97. If the proposed variant could not be realized, Kiselev suggested the appointment of the Hospodars and the evacuation of the bulk of the troops but preservation of Silistria and the military road connecting it with Russia as a security of the Ottoman fulfillment of their obligations. His suggestion was eventually adopted by the Ministry.

⁶⁵⁷ Kiselev to Orlov, Jassy, April 2, 1833, Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 99.

Being the high point of Russian policy in the East, the treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi was greatly aided by the Austrian cooperation. Faithful to the maxims of political legitimism, Metternich supported Russia in so far as it acted in the interest of the preservation of the status quo in the Balkans and the Middle East threatened by Muhammed-Ali with the aid of France and Great Britain. The political combination, which existed at the beginning of the Russian-Ottoman war was thus reversed: if in 1827-1828 Russia was acting in concert with Great Britain and France against the Ottoman Empire, and was opposed by Austria, which was trying to preserve the status quo, in 1832-1833 Russia cooperated with Austria in order to preserve the Ottoman Empire against the Anglo-French coalition. The price of Metternich's support was the treaty of Munnichgratz concluded in September 1833 between Russia and Austria, whereby the two powers obliged to respect the status quo in the Balkans and preserve the Ottoman Empire. In other words, the treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi, which marked Russia's fatherest geopolitical advance in the history of the Eastern Question, was inscribed in the system of mutual guarantees of the status quo accorded by the Northern Courts to each other in the spirit of the Saint Alliance. The advantages, which Russia acquired by this treaty were *de facto* conditioned on Austrian cooperation and could not be transformed in any real political benefits. Among other things, this excluded any formal annexation of the principalities, advocated by Kiselev.

Unable to change the basic direction of Russian foreign policy and secure the annexation of the principalities or at least extend Russian occupation regime, Kiselev during his four and a half year tenure took every effort to transform them into a buffer zone between the three empires, in which Russia's influence would be preponderant. However, like the previous period demonstrated, narrow political control exercised by Russian Consul General remained precarious insofar as the principalities essentially remained part of the Islamic frontier. Although Moldavia and Wallachia were never Islamicized and the frontier itself by

the early 19th century had long ceased to expand, the principalities retained a characteristic permeability and extremely heterogeneous social and ethnic composition that characterized them in earlier centuries. If anything, the radical national and social rhetoric finding its way to the Balkan peninsula in the wake of the French revolution and exploited by Ypsilanti and Vladimirescu only aggravated the fundamental instability of the region. Despite the failure of both uprisings, the social landscape of the principalities continued to be defined by borderland elites, whose traditional maneuvering between imperial centers was complicated by inter-estate conflict, ethnically heterogeneous and politically volatile commercial elements of the towns, paramilitary formations alternating the functions of auxiliaries with robbery (panduri, arнауți) and a “semi-nomadic” peasantry. In order to avoid implication in local predicaments that intervened with Russia’s general policy of restoration in Europe, Russian occupation authorities headed by Kiselev attempted to eliminate those aspects of the principalities that bore resemblance of an Islamic frontier. Defined by this goal, their activities embraced all possible domains trying to subject virtually every aspect of Moldavian and Wallachian societies to the most meticulous regulation.

Scholars writing on Organic Statutes often expressed bafflement at these early Romanian “constitutions” written in a cumbersome language and confusing purely “constitutional” subjects with a minute descriptions of militia uniform or width of the streets.⁶⁵⁸ From the point of view of modern constitutional theory such details were not only redundant, but also revealed an essentially self-defeating attempt to prescribe once and for all activities of the individuals and social groups the excluding any area of future indeterminacy that is in-built in the modern notion of social progress. However, taking the latter as the evaluation criteria in the discussion of the Organic Statutes is tantamount to adopting an unduly anachronistic approach. Despite his personal enlightenment and open-mindedness,

Kiselev was never a liberal constitutionalist in the Millian sense. His political ideal was 18th century enlightened absolutism committed to the propagation of general well-being. His activities in the principalities had little in common with the political aspirations of the Romanian revolutionary generation of 1848, but rather represented a belated compensation for the lack of the definitive impact of enlightened absolutism in the Romanian principalities in the 18th century. Above all however, he remained a faithful subject of his monarch and pursued the interests of the Russian Empire by a range of instruments that were made available by the attempts of Russia's 18th century rulers to imitate the Central European ideal of well-ordered police state. A holistic and all-embracing character of the Organic Statutes and the policy of Russian authorities in 1829-1834 makes perfect sense as soon as it is related to the ideal of comprehensive regulation characterizing the 18th century police. In fact they represent an attempt to put the institutions and practices of early modern police to the needs of a continental empire, which sought to transform a heterogeneous borderland into a controllable buffer zone.

Discussions of the early modern phenomenon of police reveal its multiple dimensions. For one thing, police is seen as an important part of "political arithmetic" or "population politics" consisting of the disciplining of individual bodies in order to optimize their capabilities, usefulness and docility,⁶⁵⁹ while also intervening in biological processes through the regulation of procreation, births and mortality, healthcare and life expectancy."⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁸ P. Emerit, *Les Paysans Roumains depuis la paix d'Adrianople jusqu'à la liberation des terres*, 87; Radu F. Florescu, *The Struggle Against Russia in the Romanian Principalities. A Problem of Anglo-Turkish Diplomacy, 1821-1854*.

⁶⁵⁹ Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 136.

⁶⁶⁰ Foucault call this sphere called sometimes the "biopolitics of population. See Idem., "Right of Death and Power over Life," Paul Rabinow (ed.) *Foucault Reader* (Pantheon Books: New York, 1984), 261-262. Andrea A. Rusnock, "Biopolitics: Political arithmetic in the Enlightenment," in William Clark, Jan Golinski and Simon Schaffer (eds.), *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 49-69. For the 18th century concept of medical police covering much of what Foucault calls "biopolitics of population" see: George Rosen, "Cameralism and the concept of Medical Police," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 27, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1953), 21-41; and Idem, "The Fate of Concept of Medical Police 1780-1890". In *From Medical Police to Social Medicine: Essays on the History of Health Care* (New York: Science History Publications, 1974).

Another aspect of police refers to the emergence of the “institutional framework” securing the effective disciplining of the population, i. e. the consolidation of the state apparatus. In fact the first and foremost object of the *Polizeistaat* was the disciplining of its own officials. By means of complex and meticulous regulation of office work and procedures, the activities performed by officials became increasingly routinized and detached from their personal relationships with the population. This produced the notion of the state as a separate entity detached from the person of both the official and the ruler – an idea, which was also propagated by neostoic authors, natural law theorists and cameralist writers.⁶⁶¹ The emergence of the concept of state treason was a crucial element in this institutionalization process, which constituted a third important object of police activities that will be considered here - the security of the ruler and/or the state.⁶⁶² While the absolutist regimes in practice failed to differentiate between the interests of the ruler and those of the state, the emergence of the ideal of the monarch as the first servant of the state exemplified by the personal style of rule of Peter the Great, Frederick the Great, Joseph II or Nicholas I served to legitimize political persecution. This made it possible to conceptualize a new political role for the police alongside with population politics and administrative discipline as an important aspect of public welfare.⁶⁶³

The Organic Statutes of Wallachia and Moldavia of 1831-32 produced by the interaction between the Russian Empire and the political elites of the principalities contained

⁶⁶¹ For neostoic concept of monarchical service to the state see Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1982). For cameralist views on bureaucracy see Hubert C. Johnson, “The Concept of Bureaucracy in Cameralism,” in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No.3 (Sep., 1964), 378-402

⁶⁶² On the development of the concept in 18th century Russia see Evgenii Anysimov, *Dyba i knut. politicheskii sysk i russkoe obshchestvo v XVIII veke*. (Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1999)

⁶⁶³ The late 18th century Austrian debates on the prerogatives and functions of the political police are of special interest in this respect. Paul Bernard, *From Enlightenment to Police State: the Public Life of Johann Anton Pergen*. (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 1991), 168-170; The changing relationships between welfare and persecutive functions of police are also addressed in Ernst Wangermann, *From Joseph II to the Jacobin Trials : Government Policy and Public Opinion in the Habsburg Dominions in the Period of the French Revolution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

the elements of population politics, administrative disciplining and political police.⁶⁶⁴ The epidemic situation being the most pressing, they presupposed the creation of the quarantine line along the Danube and introduced the medical and sanitary regulations building upon the notions and practices of contemporary medical police. Other elements of social disciplining were introduced through the creation of gendarme corps, new regulations for the town police and comprehensive population census. Another manifestation of *Polizeistaat* was a comprehensive reordering of the public administration accompanied by the meticulous regulation of office work and procedures aimed at combating bribery and corruption. Finally, although the Organic Statutes did not presuppose the creation of political police *per se*, such institutions as gendarme corps, quarantine, passport registration, and book censorship served as elements of *cordon sanitaire* protecting the empire against the penetration of the revolutionary ideas. This chapter examines the relationships between the above-mentioned aspects of police embodied in the Organic Statutes and the policies of the Russian occupation authorities in 1828-1834, both of which constitute an interesting stage of the evolution of the well-ordered police state in Eastern Europe.

Fighting Disease

The sanitary policies of the Russian occupation authorities in 1828-1834 represented the most immediate instance of the application of contemporary European police institutions. Facing major epidemic challenges, Russian authorities sought to protect Russian troops, the local population and the demographic security of the Russian Empire itself through the application of principles of medical police.⁶⁶⁵ Dealing with hygiene, procreation, nutrition, food sanitation, housing accident prevention, prevention of epidemics as well as the

⁶⁶⁴ An attempt to approach Organic Statutes as a form of political modernization was also made by Anastasie Iordache, "Dominarea politic sub imperativul modernizarii Principatelor Romane. Caraterul si scopul Regulamentelor organice," in *Revista istorica* 8, no. 9-10 (1996): 665-684.

⁶⁶⁵ George Rosen, "Cameralism and the concept of Medical Police," 21-41; and Idem, "The Fate of Concept of Medical Police 1780-1890". In *From Medical Police to Social Medicine: Essays on the History of Health Care*, New York : Science History Publications, 1974.

organization of medical profession, medical police was part of the “intervention of power in the biological processes of life,” which Michael Foucault called “biopolitics of population.”⁶⁶⁶ According to Foucault, “biopolitics (nosopolitics) of population” regulating procreation, births and mortality, health and life expectancy, emerged on the wave of the 18th century demographical growth and represented both an attempt to make it sustainable as well as a means of dealing with the dangers it presented. The former was achieved through the reformulation of the family as unit of procreation as opposed to its earlier function as a kinship system or a mechanism for the transmission of property. The latter was effected through medical control of the increasingly crowded urban space by means of a program of hygiene and an institution of medical police based on close cooperation between physicians and city authorities.⁶⁶⁷ While in France this cooperation took place relatively independently from central government, the corresponding Central European practices and institutions systematized at the end of the 18th century by Johann Peter Frank and Franz Anton Mai presupposed the central role of princely authority. Given the prevalence of Germans among local medical personnel and Russian military physicians it is only natural that the anti-epidemic measures of Russian occupation authorities were informed by the principles of German medical police. However, since Kiselev was not a German prince pursuing a program of constructing a strong territorial state, it is likewise natural that most of the adopted measures reflected the “negative” aspect of medical police and concentrated on preventing disease and contained far less in the way of actually fostering population growth, which constituted its positive aspect.

Attempts to combat plague and maintain public health and hygiene in the principalities were made long before the arrival of Russian occupation authorities in 1828. A special organization of caretakers (*brelsa ciocliilor*) in Moldova existed already in the late

⁶⁶⁶ Foucault, “Right of Death and Power over Life,” 261-262.

⁶⁶⁷ Idem, “The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century,” 171-176.

17th century. In 1735 Phanariote hospodar Grigorie Ghica I reorganized it to perform burial of those killed by plague and created a similar service in Bucharest after he was transferred to rule there (in 1752). He also founded the hospitals at the monasteries of St. Pantelemon and St. Vissarion, which were specially destined for those afflicted by plague, while Moldavian hospodar Grigore Callimah founded a similar one (St. Spiridon) in Jassy. At the news of the plague outbreak in Silistria in 1784, Wallachian hospodar Mihai Suțu ordered to create quarantine and appointed a special official (*epistat de ciumă*) commanding detachments of auxiliaries (*seimeni*) and caretakers. In 1786 Vienna-trained Bucharest physician Dumitru Caracaș on the order of the hospodar Nicolae Mavrogheni and the Divan elaborated special instruction informing the authorities and local population how to fight plague. In 1813 hospodar Ion Caragea tried to save the principalities from the advancing plague epidemics by establishing a quarantine near the Ottoman *reaya* Giurgiu and appointed a special official (*epistat al lazaretelor*) while a boyar commission produced a “Statute for combating plague.”⁶⁶⁸

However, the measures taken by the hospodars of the 18th -early 19th century to prevent the spread of epidemics proved largely ineffective. On the one hand, they remained partial and usually consted of creating an improvised quarantine around specific places where the cases of plague were reported, such as the Ottoman fortresses along the Danube. The personel that was supposed to run such stations was poorely qualified and largely unpaid. To make matters worse, corrupt local authorities soon turned epidemic-prevention measures soon became a sources of abuses and extortions. The caretakers (*cioclii*) plundered the houses of plagued, placed the dead and the ill in the same cart, left them in the open field outside the city. Population was terrorized by the officials charged with comabting plague.⁶⁶⁹ The latter

⁶⁶⁸ Ion Nistor, *Ravagiile epidemiilor de ciumă și holerăși instituirea cordonului carantinal la Dunăre*. București: Imprimeria Națională, 1940, 12-13.

⁶⁶⁹ Felix Iacob, “Istoria igienii în România în secolul al XIX lea și starea ei la începutul secolului al XX lea.” *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Științifice*, Seria 2, vol. 23, 24, Part. 1-2, 292-293.

not only were interested in the prolongation of the epidemics in order to continue receiving their salaries but also extorted money by threatening to proclaim the house contaminated and take its inhabitants to the plague hospital, where death was almost sure. The abuses of authorities during plague epidemics forced the Austrian subjects to create their own caretaker service and a hospital. Observing the crimes committed by the officials as the plague was ravaging around, the Prussian consul Ludwig von Kreuchely related it to the “moral and political plague” afflicting the principalities.⁶⁷⁰ Finally, the population frequently resisted anti-epidemic measures informed by the notions of contemporary medical police and clung to religious rituals. Thus, the resistance of the Bucharest inhabitants forced Ion Caragea revoke the “Statute for combating plague” less than a month after it was put in use in January 1814. The quarantine measures taken by Jassy authorities during 1819 epidemics provoked an outright revolt forcing the hospodar to revoke them.⁶⁷¹ The deplorable epidemic situation of the principalities in the early 19th century made the establishment of regular quarantine service one of the items on the agenda of the reform-minded boyars and quickly became a priority for Presidents-Plenipotentiaries after 1828.

In their quarantine policies Russian authorities were following the Austrian example. Already in 1728 Transylvanian authorities created hospitals functioning as quarantines at the Wallachian border. In 1754 on pretext of new epidemics of plague in the principalities the Austrian border was closed altogether and in 1760 a special quarantine guard was created alongside the borderguard proper. After the Austrian annexation of Bukovina in 1775 the quarantine service was extended there as well. Russian authorities first encountered the problem of epidemics during the occupation of the principalities in 1769-1774. At that time, the destructions of war precipitated a plague, which eventually found its way to Moscow where it took a staggering death-toll and provoked a riot, shaking the political stability of the

⁶⁷⁰ Pompei Gheorghe Samarian, *Din epidemiologia trecutului românesc* (Bucuresti : Institut de Arte Grafice E. Marvan, 1932), 394.

empire.⁶⁷² The dangers resulting from the lack of the quarantine institutions in the principalities, made Russian authorities order the construction of several protective barriers along the southern frontiers of the Empire. The experience of 1770-1771 contributed to the perception of Moldavia and Wallachia as unwholesome places, which by that period became a *locus classicus* of Austrian testimonies. Even when there was no plague, the epidemic situation in the principalities remained the cause of concern for both Russian physicians and civil or military authorities.

At the same time, Russians' role in the issue of epidemics remained ambiguous. The devastations and famines caused by Russian-Ottoman wars constituted the conditions that made epidemics likely. Thus, the evacuation of the Russian troops from the principalities in 1812 was followed by the most devastating plague that ever before afflicted the principalities taking ca 40 000 casualties. Since then the disease lingered in the principalities acquiring a mass scale in the course of the next Russian-Ottoman war. The epidemics recurred in 1819 and 1824-1825 taking some victims in the Ottoman fortress of Brăila and the nearby Bessarabia. The vulnerability of the Russian borders to the epidemic challenges is testified by the preservation of the quarantine along the Dniester for eighteen years after the annexation of Bessarabia and the establishment of a new quarantine along the Pruth. In 1826 cases of deadly contagious disease were reported in Bucharest and the environs. This targeted a discussion between local physicians on the nature of the disease. On the one hand, there were the so-called "contagionists" who believed that the disease in question was plague (*Pestis Orientalis Bubonica*) brought by the Ottomans from Egypt and advocated strict observance of quarantine measures. Opposed to them were those who believed that the disease was endemic

⁶⁷¹ Ion Nistor, *Ravagiile epidemiilor de ciumă și holeră*, 19.

⁶⁷² John T. Alexander, *Bubonic Plague in Early Modern Russia : Public Health and Urban Disaster* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2003).

to the territory and represented a variation of *Typhus Australis*, produced by “epidemic constitution of the air”.⁶⁷³

With the beginning of new war in 1828 Russian military physicians joined the debate, which quickly became more than a matter of professional medical concern. Already in the 18th century Russian commanders preferred not to speak about plague as long as the situation was not pressing out of fear that the news of the epidemics would produce panic among soldiers and local population.⁶⁷⁴ In 1828 Russian command faced the same dilemma: admit the existence of plague and adopt wholesale plague prevention measures that might demoralize the soldiers and definitely hamper the military operations or deny the existence of epidemics in the hope of sustaining the morale and high mobility of the troops but at the same time expose the soldiers to the ravages of the disease. Different prevention measures advocated by in 1828-1829 by “contaigionists” and “anticontagionists” had implications for the ultimate outcome of the war. Thus, in the course of 1828 the campaign of Russian troops were seriously constrained by the necessity to observe the quarantine regulations imposed by “Bucharest Plague Commission” created on the order of Field Marshal P. Kh. Witgenstein. This, as well as a relatively small number of victims (1608), made new Russian Commander-in-Chief I. I. Diebitch heed the advice of “anti-contagionists”, who argued that quarantines only stimulated the development of what essentially was a local fever by keeping soldiers for days in the unhealthy marshy lands along the Danube. As a result at the beginning of the new campaign an “anti-contaigionist” physician Chistian Witt succeeded the advocate of the quarantines Khanaev as the Chief Medic of the General Staff, while in January 1829 the “Bucharest Plague Commission” was replaced by “Main Commission for Elimination of

⁶⁷³ Karl Zeidlitz, *O chume svirepstvovavshei vo vtoroi russkoi armii vo vremia poslednei voiny v 1828-1829-m gg.* (SPb.: Tipografia Grecha, 1844), 19; S. Dobronravov, *Mediko-topograficheskoe opisanie kniazhestv Valakhii Moldavii v 1831-m godu* (Moscow: Tipografia Lazareva, 1835), 70.

⁶⁷⁴ Samarian, *Din epidemiologia trecutului nostru*, 137.

Pestilence.”⁶⁷⁵ The eventual victory of the Russian army due to greater mobility of troops was purchased at a great price. The abolition of the quarantines increased the total number of victims of the disease to 24560 in 1829, out of which Russian military amounted to one third.⁶⁷⁶

Even after experience proved him wrong, Witt remained unconvinced and in defense of his position expressed a number of assumptions, which stood behind the medical police measures adopted by Russian authorities. Eager to free himself from implicit accusations of mismanagement in the course of epidemics, Witt blamed unhealthy local climate, whose pernicious influence was aggravated by social habits of local population. According to him, “Wallachian pestilence” (*iazva*) that took many victims among both the military and civilians was produced by general epidemic constitution of the air, resulting from evaporations of numerous marshes, uncultivated fields and graves. The real cause of the disease was local population itself, which was “steeped in ignorance and wallowed in vice”:

Humiliating laziness deprives them of the basic advantages of life. [Moldavians and Wallachian] want neither to eat good bread nor drink sane water nor breathe fresh air or have comfortable dwellings. In Moldavia and Wallachia hardly one six of the best land is cultivated. Above that, most of the land has grown wild, covered by wild grass and poisonous plants; the rivers are covered by reed, the marshes by bulrush, the ponds by silt. The cities and villages are heaped by manure and decaying bodies of various animals. Living on a great cemetery, this people is drowned in dirt, dung and marshes... Hence their bodies are so weak and so predisposed for any malevolent disease, which spreads easily amongst them.”⁶⁷⁷

According to Witt, the failure of Kushnikov and Krasno-Miloshevich to establish medical police in the principalities twenty years ago demonstrated how difficult it was to correct the habits of the people, which “got accustomed to laziness and disorder.” In his account the medical problem was eventually transformed into a moral one. Reproducing an essentially medieval understanding of disease as the manifestation of sinfulness, Witt

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., 79.

⁶⁷⁶ “Otchet general-ad’iutanta Kiseleva po upravleniu Moldaviei i Valakhiei s 15-go noiabria 1829 po 1 ianvaria 1830,” *Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 119.

completed the description of immorality of local inhabitants by referring to their drunkenness and sexual promiscuity, which made them sickly and prone for various illnesses. Successful elimination of disease both physical and moral could be achieved only through enlightenment and re-education of the people. According to Witt, Russians were best suited for the role of enlightened physicians. Adopting a figurative language, he argued that “no other people seem to need so much our Russian well-leavened and well-baked rye bread, good kvass, fresh pickled cabbage and other greens.”⁶⁷⁸ At the same time, like other Russian officials, Witt was first of all concerned with the well-being of Russian provinces. Moldavia and Wallachia served as a negative example of what Bessarabia, Crimea and New Russia had to avoid through colonization and diligent cultivation of land. Admitting the necessity of quarantines for the security of southern provinces of Russia, Witt at the same time argued they should be coupled with elimination of the climatic conditions, which make disease endemic to those regions. Writing a decade after Russian troops withdrew from the principalities, he concluded optimistically that the disease is gradually weakened by “yearly progress in enlightenment and correction of mores, the establishment of greater order and advantages for the life of the people, fertilization or cultivation of land, etc.”⁶⁷⁹

Yet, whatever Witt could say in his defence about the moral corruption of the population as the cause of the disease, Russian President-Plenipotentiary had to adopt a more programmatic approach in order to solve the problem. In order to combat the pestilence, Kiselev divided the principalities into special districts, in which *ispravniks* and village heads were charged with reporting all cases of contagion. Special medical administrations created in Bucharest and Jassy examined the credentials of the physicians in order to assure a reliable medical service. In doing this, they had to strike a delicate balance between the scarcity of the

⁶⁷⁷ Christian Witt, *O svoistvakh klimata Wallachii i Moldavii, i o tak nazyvaemoi Valashskoi iazve* (SPb.: Tipografia Grecha, 1842), 313.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., 314.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid., 320.

personnel and the necessity to maintain minimal standards of professionalism. A physician was appointed to each district of the capitals with a duty to provide a medical service to everyone free of charge twice a week at the premises specially lent for that purpose. Along the inoculation of the population, their functions included the inspection of market places (once a week), hospitals (once a month) and pharmacies (twice a year). On the basis of their data the medial councils of the capitals were supposed to file biweekly reports to the government. The Statute allocated 150.000 lei for the maintenance of the three out of six hospitals that existed at that time (founded by Hospodars or prominent boyar families). The foundation of new pharmacies required government's permission and the owners had to follow the pricelists that operated in Vienna.⁶⁸⁰ On Kiselev's order, the military physicians conducted investigations of the kinds of contagious disease found in the principalities and instructed the population about basic prevention measures.⁶⁸¹

These measures were paralleled by the construction of quarantine line along the Danube. Made possible by the reincorporation of the former Ottoman fortresses on the left bank of the Danube, the establishment of the quarantine was defined as one of the priorities in the ministerial instructions that informed the policies of Russian authorities.⁶⁸² The main checkpoints were created in the four major entreports of commerce with the Ottoman Empire: Galați, Brăila, Giurgiu and Kalafat. Secondary quarantine stations were created in towns, which conducted local trade with the adjacent Ottoman provinces on the right bank of the Danube (Calaraș, Zimnița, Turnovo, Izvornik, Cerenet). In order to prevent clandestine barter trade that the locals conducted with the right bank, three additional entreports were established in Ploiești, Oltenița and Bichet. They were subordinated to the inspector residing at Bucharest and vice-inspector at Galați. With 1500 infantry and cavalry militia distributed

⁶⁸⁰ Filitti, *Principatele Romane in 1828-1834. Ocupația Ruseasca si Regulamentele Organice*. Bucuresti: Institutul de Arte Grafice "Bucovina", [1934], 207-208.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 121.

⁶⁸² Ministerial Instructions, 37-38. These conditions were introduced into the Adrianople treaty.

between 15 piquet aided by water patrols there was a hope of substantially reducing if not excluding altogether unwarranted communication between the two banks. The threat of harsh penalty (hard labor at the mines for those entering the country in avoidance of quarantines and capital punishment for the guards, who took bribes) had to make up the deficiencies of supervision.⁶⁸³ Operating from March 1830, the new quarantine line was decisive to the disappearance of the plague epidemics and the number of victims fell to 133 in that year.⁶⁸⁴ However, the efficiency of the institution raised doubts both among Russians and foreigners. Thus, Kiselev remained skeptical about the ability of the local quarantine service to inspire respect in the Turks after the evacuation of the Russian troops, whereas the Austrians preferred to preserve their quarantine installations on the border with Wallachia long after the Danubian quarantine was put in operation. According to Moltke's testimony from 1835 "the character of quarantine installations was such that any wise traveler would avoid them."⁶⁸⁵

Along with the reordering of the hospitals and the vaccination of the population, the establishment of the quarantines was part of the "disciplinary legislation", which, according to Kiselev, had to become an essential part of the Organic Statutes in order to stop the progress of the plague and other epidemics that destroyed the population of the country.⁶⁸⁶ However, the importance of the quarantine service went beyond purely sanitary considerations. According to ministerial instructions that provided the basis of the Organic Statute, the quarantine would serve to facilitate Russian communications with the principalities by diminishing the quarantine periods at the Pruth line and, at the same time, deprive the Ottomans of the possibility to penetrate the Wallachian and Moldavian territories at will. "Such practices are so contrary to their habits and religious prejudices that one only has to introduce in the southern parts of the principalities a strict observation of the sanitary

⁶⁸³ Filitti, *Occupația Rusească și Regulamentele Organice*, 210-212.

⁶⁸⁴ "Otchet general-ad'iutanta Kiseleva," 122.

⁶⁸⁵ *Letters du Marechal de Moltke sur l'Oreint*, 8.

regulations in order to quell their desire to penetrate here.”⁶⁸⁷ Thus, the quarantine line became a means to detach the principalities from the rest of the Ottoman Empire and provide Russian with a well-controlled buffer zone.⁶⁸⁸ An attempt to make political use of the quarantine was not a Russian invention: long before them, during the Seven years war of 1757-1763 the Austrians used their Transylvanian quarantines in order to hamper their adversaries, the Prussians from purchasing wool and cattle in the principalities in order to supply their army.⁶⁸⁹

Ironically, as civilization and enlightenment were celebrating the victory over plague and oriental mores through barring the disease both physical and moral behind the Danubian quarantine, the principalities fell prey to *cholera morbius*. Unlike plague, which periodically appeared in Egypt and Constantinople, *cholera morbius* was first registered in India in 1817, from where it traveled through Central Asian trade routes hitting Russia in 1830 and descending upon Europe next year.⁶⁹⁰ Thus, very soon after he managed to beat the plague back beyond the Danube, Kiselev found it necessary to strengthen the Pruth quarantines this time barring the principalities from Russian provinces and not vice versa. Although the disease affected some 33 000 people and carried away the lives of 2218 of them, Kiselev was proud to report that only one out of 45 people fell ill in the principalities and only one out of every 142 died, which in his opinion was not a bad result, compared to the neighboring Hungary’s one out of 17 ill and one out of 42 dead.⁶⁹¹ However, Kiselev’s private correspondence compromises the picture of the successful struggle against cholera, which President-Plenipotentiary drew in his final report to the emperor. At the high point of cholera

⁶⁸⁶ “Observations sur le project d’un Conceil Administratif pour la Moldavie” in AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 3, F. 125rev.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid, 38.

⁶⁸⁸ The new quarantine line along the Danube coupled with the existing line along the Pruth made the earlier quarantine service on the Dniester unnecessary and its abolition in the 1830 was yet another factor contributing to the economic and administrative assimilation of Bessarabia.

⁶⁸⁹ Samarian, *Din epidemiologia trecutului românesc*, 97

⁶⁹⁰ Roderick E. McGrew, *Russia and the cholera, 1823-1832* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1965).

⁶⁹¹ “Otchet general-ad’iutanta Kiseleva,” 123.

epidemics the newly created medical service failed and only one physician out of five continued to render services to the population. Civilians were the worst hit. As disease was carrying away 150-180 people per day in Jassy alone, it inspired all “from the most opulent boyar to the neediest artisan with such a terror that neither persuasion, nor force could make them perform their duties.”⁶⁹² The courts and administrative bodies stopped functioning, officials fled and Kiselev had to prorogue the Moldavian General Assembly of Revision of the Statutes.⁶⁹³ “All the natural relationships dissolve and as honor no longer exists and egoism appears here in all its horror” reported Kiselev to his correspondent.⁶⁹⁴ Only after the cholera epidemic abated in early August 1830 was it possible to resume the operation of the official bodies.

In order to man the quarantine service the ministerial instructions presupposed the creation of the national militia (*gendarmérie*), which was also charged with maintenance of good order in towns and countryside, collection of taxes and the execution of justice. The policies of the Russian authorities in this domain not only reflected the general development of modern police institutions in Europe, but also built upon local initiative. The necessity to reform different police agencies (*agia* and *spatharia* or *hatmania* in Moldova) was indicated already in 1821 in a memoir signed by the Wallachian boyar émigrés in Braşov. Adopting a characteristic attitude of the aftermath of the Greek rebellion, the authors tended to attribute the abuses of police authorities to the pernicious influence of the Phanarioters, whose Greek relatives monopolized the office of *Aga* (head of Bucharest city police) and used it to perpetuate the injustices and extortions against the population. Likewise, the countryside police headed by *Spathar* was corrupted by the exclusive employment of foreigners acquiring their positions for money and using every opportunity to compensate it with vengeance. The

⁶⁹² Kiselev to Nesselrode, Jassy, 10 June, 1831 in Zabolotskii-Desiatovskii, vol. 4, 60.

⁶⁹³ Minchaky to Nesselrode, Jassy, June 3, 1831, RGIA, fond 958, op. 1, no. 625, Ff. 106-107.

⁶⁹⁴ Kiselev to Vorontsov, Bucharest, July 18, 1831, in *Arkhiv Vorontsovykh*, vol. 38, 224.

boyars proposed to replace *agia* and *spataria* by, respectively, Bucharest police headed by an autochthonous boyar and the land militia to perform border and garrison service.⁶⁹⁵

In a more systematic way the idea of reform of police agencies was articulated by Barbu Știrbei, who in the given period performed the functions of *Vornik de Poliție*. Characterized by Russian Consul Minciaky as one of the most promising young boyars, Știrbei closely collaborated with Russian authorities throughout the occupation period and was involved in the reform of police institutions. Back in 1827, he submitted to the attention of Committee for reform established in accordance with the Convention of Akkerman, a memoir on the Wallchian administrative system. In it, he attributed the failure of the currently existing main police institution (*spatharia*) to provide for the “security of persons” to underpayment of its employees, the sale of offices and the use of auxiliaries recruited from peasants (*catanes*) instead of professional rank-and-file policemen. The underplayed police captains and colonels would charge money from the peasants designated to perform police services instead of the actual service. The resulting inability of the *spatharia* to fight with brigandage effectively was exacerbated by instances of cooperation between individual police officials and the robbers. In order to change the situation, Știrbei proposed augmenting the salaries of police officials and creating a smaller permanent corps of gendarmes, relegating police auxiliaries (*catanes*) to the category of taxpayers and thereby increasing the number of tax-payers and state revenue.⁶⁹⁶

The Știrbei’s suggestions were incorporated in the ministerial instructions written by D. V. Dashkov, which envisioned the formation of the new militia as a major law enforcing unit consisting of professional soldiers and officers. Increased expenditure on salaries was to be compensated by increase in revenues made possible by elimination of tax exemptions and

⁶⁹⁵ Virtosu, 1821. *Date si Fapte noi*, 139.

⁶⁹⁶ “Aperçu sur le mode d’administration de la Valachie adresse au Colnsulat General de la Russie en decembre 1827,” in Vlad Georgescu, *Projets de reform*, 151-152. In 1832 Știrbei attached his 1827 memoir to his report

abuses associated with the sale of offices.⁶⁹⁷ Like the quarantine service, the militia served the double goal of securing general well-being of Moldavia and Wallachia, and providing an additional tie between the principalities and the protecting power. In a situation when a new war with the Ottomans could never be excluded, Kiselev argued for the necessity to render the new militia “a solid and, so to say, Russian, character.” In order to achieve this goal, he suggested admitting a hundred of young Romanians to the Russian military schools, adding to that number fifty new candidates every year. In Kiselev’s opinion, Russian military schools would function as a breeding ground for good Romanian officers, secure “the formation of troops on the principles of Russian discipline” and contribute to the general consolidation of new institutions. Stressing the importance of militia as an institution connecting the principalities to Russia, Kiselev at the same time, remained skeptical about its ability to inspire respect in the Turkish from the right bank of the Danube. According to him, in order not to become illusive, for the time being the quarantine service had to be performed by the Russian troops.⁶⁹⁸

While the appropriate chapter of the Organic Statutes was adopted by the Committee of Reform and the Assembly of Revision without much confrontation, the provisional authorities faced some difficulties in the practical implementation of the legislation about militia. Following the emperor’s order of May 1830, Kiselev appointed Major General Starov and Colonel Markov to form Wallachian and Moldavian troops.⁶⁹⁹ The new units amounted to 4500 in Wallachia and 1500 in Moldova and were headed respectively by *Spathar* and *Hatman*. Soon it became clear that a small and unbalanced Moldavian budget was incapable of supporting even one third of a Wallachian force, which prompted further reduction of the

on the state of Wallachia. See “Raportul lui Barbu Știrbei către Kiseleff asupra stării Valachiei în anul 1832,” in *Convorbiri Literare*, anii XXII și XXIII, 1888, 1889.

⁶⁹⁷ Ministerial Instructions, 39-40.

⁶⁹⁸ Kiselev to Nesselrode, April 14, Bucharest, AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 7, Ff. 14 -15rev.

⁶⁹⁹ Anghel Popa, *Renașterea armatei pămîtene în Moldova, 1829-1859*. Câmpulung-Moldavenesc: Fundatia Culturala "Alexandru Bogza", 1995; Ion Nistor, “Orgnizarea armatei naționale a Moldovei,” în *Analele*

size of Moldavian militia to 1000. Since the military service in the principalities was traditionally performed by the Serbian, Bulgarian and Albanian mercenaries (*arnauți*), the imposition of the military duty on the population provoked discontent leading to the peasant mutinies in the Moldavian districts of Roman and Neamț. Attempts to pacify peasants by means of a delegation from the Divan failed and the movement increasingly acquired the character of social revolt. Apprehending a negative impact that the movement could have on Bessarabian peasants, Kislev dispatched two Cossack regiments headed by General Begidov to disperse some eight to nine thousand peasants who assembled in the vicinity of Roman.⁷⁰⁰

It proved to be equally difficult to disarm the unemployed mercenaries, who continuously created troubles for the local authorities in the cities and villages. Although the order to surrender arms was one of the first measures of Russian administration in 1828, Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii passing through the principalities in April 1829 still found many people armed with daggers and pistols. According to Mikhailovskii, this “testified how little people are protected by law, having to think of their own defense.”⁷⁰¹ In March 1830 Kiselev ordered the *arnauți* no longer employed in government service to surrender arms and either enter one of the civil estates of the principalities or leave them altogether.⁷⁰² The order had to be repeated early in 1831, this time explicitly prohibiting “shooting in the cities between different houses.” The latter clause demonstrates the determination of the authorities to secure the monopoly over physical violence by depriving various socially prominent elements of the right to exercise it at their own discretion. Unable to prohibit altogether the use of the *arnauți* in the boyar households, the occupation authorities allowed them to be armed only when accompanying their masters on the trips across the country as a protection

Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice. Seria 3, vol. 25, Mem. 22, 885-931; Apostol Stan, Renașterea armatei naționale (Craiova: Scrisul Românesc, 1979).

⁷⁰⁰ Kiselev to the War Minister Chernyshev, May 6, 1831, RGVIA, fond 438, op. 1, no. 85, Ff. 1-2.

⁷⁰¹ “Iz vospominanii Mikhailovskogo–Danilevskogo. 1829 god,” 183.

⁷⁰² “Kopia s predlozhenia Kiseleva obshchemu sobraniu Divanov kniazhesva Valakhii,” March 4, 1830, RGVIA, fond 438, op. 1, no. 74, F. 2.

against the road robbers. Otherwise, the police authorities were empowered to confiscate illegal arms “regardless of the social status of the person.”⁷⁰³ Depriving the boyars of their private detachments of *arnauți* was an important step in the differentiation between the social status and political power accompanying the emergence of modern distinction between private and public spheres.

Closely related to the creation of the militia was the reorganization of the police authorities proper. For the first two years of occupation, the most important police functions were performed by Russian military police. The end of the war and gradual withdrawal of Russian troops from the principalities was paralleled by transfer of police functions to local institutions. Along with its former duties such as internal security, public hygiene, general propriety (*blagochinie*) and supervision over the commerce in staples, police authorities in the capitals (*agia*) were given the functions of fire protection, supervision over the public health and prevention of epidemics. In order to secure cooperation between *agia* and Russian military authorities, Kiselev appointed special procurators. With the help of four adjuncts, each procurator supervised public welfare foundations, commerce, fire protection, quarantines and the commission for quartering of the Russian troops respectively.⁷⁰⁴ Next, the functions of *agia* were progressively differentiated from those of militia. It soon became clear that the new militia contingents were not numerous enough to secure the maintenance of the internal order in the cities, garrison and border guard service and maintenance of the quarantine line at the same time. Eventually, *agia* was given its own law enforcement units (*drobanți*), which promised to end the traditional rivalry between *agia* and *spataria* (*hatmania* in Moldova).⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰³ “Kopia s predlozhenia Kiseleva obshchemu sobraniu Divanov kniazhesva Valakhii,” January 3, 1831, RGIVIA, f. 438, op. 1, no. 74, l. 5.

⁷⁰⁴ Kiselev’s order to Wallachian and Moldavian governments of June 1, 1830, RGIVIA, fond 438, op. 1, no. 78, Ff. 1-4.

⁷⁰⁵ “Zapiska o formirovanii zemskoi strazhi,” December, 12, 1831 and “Dopolnenie no. 1 k zapiske o formirovanii zemskoi strazhi,” RGIVIA, fond 438, op. 1, no. 85, Ff. 4-6.

Alongside with the *agia*, important functions of general police remained in the competence of the municipal authorities of the capitals as well as Brăila and Giurgiu – two former Ottoman fortresses and *reayas* on the left bank of the Danube, returned to Wallachia in accordance with the Adrianople treaty. In March 1830 Kiselev appointed *Logothete* Alexandru Philipesco, *Aga* Cantacusene, *Vornik de Politie* Barbu Știrbei, Russian army engineer Baumern and two physicians to form a commission with the task of cleaning Bucharest of waste and garbage, repair the bridges, create street lighting, institute fire protection units, improve the provision of prisoners as well as propose means to fund these institutions and practices. The proposals of the commission for the city improvement created by Kiselev were in line with the measures taken by the Russian authorities during the 1808-1812 occupation. The commission drew Bucharest City Statute prescribing the delimitation of the boundaries of the city, draining the marshes and lakes, paving of the streets at the expense of the house owners (landlords), and charging the latter with cleaning of the streets and courtyards. The Statute also prescribed the formation of the gravediggers' service, creation of four walled cemeteries with chapels beyond the confines of the city for the orthodox population and four cemeteries for the representatives of other confessions. For a routine execution of well-fare police functions Jassy and Bucharest were divided into respectively four and five districts (*arrondissements*) headed by commissars, while each district consisted of three quarters supervised by an *epistat*. The Town Statutes for Brăila and Giurgiu elaborated by the General Assembly of the Wallachian Divans on Kiselev's order delineated the competence of police as distinguished from the judicial authorities and the city magistrate. Whereas the latter had to take care of the city revenues and expenses, food provision, protection of trade and commercial arbitration, the city police was charged with the supervision of the "internal calmness and peacefulness," prevention of crime, public health,

weights and measures, the quality of food, construction of houses according to the confirmed plan, general cleanness and fire protection.⁷⁰⁶

Fighting Corruption

Stabilization of the local administrative institutions was another important aspect of the process of transformation of the principalities into a controllable buffer zone between the two empires. The uprising of Tudor Vladimirescu demonstrated that the political instability of the principalities was rooted among other things in the inadequacy of the taxation system and the general weakness of the local administration. Therefore, administrative disciplining became one of the priorities for Russian authorities in 1828-1834 and constituted an important aspect of implementing the ideals of well-ordered police state in the principalities. In contrast to the 18th century German prototypes and similarly to the situation in Russia, attempts to increase administrative efficiency of Moldavian and Wallachian institutions took place in the absence of a professional university trained bureaucracy. At the same time, Russian occupation authorities did not try to substitute remodeled nobility for the lacking bureaucracy, which characterized the Catherine the Great's version of well-ordered police state. The abandonment of territorial nobility based administration in favor of the centralized ministerial government coupled with the failure of Bessarabian "experiment" made Russian policy-makers even more skeptical about the administrative capacities and moral qualities of the Romanian boyars. Seeking to minimize the political role of the boyar class as a whole, Russian policy failed to integrate local elites depriving the new institutions of the only social basis, upon which they could rest more or less firmly in the absence of the professional bureaucracy. Instead, Russian authorities viewed the political instability of Moldavia and Wallachia as the result of irrationality of their political institutions and sought to solve

⁷⁰⁶ "Gorodivoie polozhenie dlia upravlenia gorodov Zhurzhi i Brailova," RGVIA, fond 438, op 1, no. 74, Ff. 16rev – 20.

fundamental social-political contradictions by means of rationalization of the administrative system of the principalities.

However, already the Russian occupation of the Moldavia and Wallachia in 1806-1812 revealed the magnitude of this task and the impossibility to accomplish it within a short time and in the conditions of the continued war. Twenty years later the predicament facing Kiselev was essentially the same. Similarly to Kushnikov and Bagration, Russian occupation authorities in 1828-1834 attempted to correct, what was considered to be the unsatisfactory results of historical development and compensate for the lack of the naturally developed historical institutions by creating a comprehensive and rational mechanism that would bring order into chaos. However, unrealistic this attempt might appear from retrospect, it shared its utopian quality with all Central and Eastern European regimes of the 18th – early 19th centuries. Besides, Kiselev and his collaborators had a better sense of purpose and acted more systematically than their predecessors two decades ago. A relatively rapid conclusion of the war in 1829, allowed going beyond the narrow goal of securing supplies for the army, which took too much time and attention of Kiselev's predecessors in 1808-1812.

In his task of reordering the administration of the principalities Kiselev could rely on a number of boyars, who were aware of the necessity to stop the practices of Phanariote government and shared the notions of orderly administration. In his "Review of the Wallachian Administration" written in December 1827, the already mentioned Barbu Știrbei defined the reorganization of the finances and taxation system as the precondition for the security of property. Știrbei demonstrated that under currently existing scheme, the place of *ispravnik* in district administration equaled that of the hospodar in respect of the whole country. Controlling the local finances through *sameși*, the local justice through district judges and registrar (*condicari*), the *ispravniks* were the real masters of the district. The heads of cantons (*zapcii*) were in the same position in respect of *ispravniks* as the latter were in

respect of central administration. In the execution of orders of the central government, the *ispravniks* relied on unpaid agents (*slujitori*), who amounted to 300 per district although only one third of them were in actual service at any one time. Since the *slujitori* were not paid any salary and instead had to equip themselves with horses at their own expense and even pay to central authorities for the right to perform their “service”, the arbitrary exertions from the peasantry were inevitable. The problem of underpayment of local administration was exacerbated by the *ispravniks*’ manipulation with the distribution of taxes and duties, relieving some and assigning a disproportionate burden to others, which affected not only peasants but also those landowners, whose peasants were overburdened with state taxes. The control of the treasury over the activities of the *ispravniks* was illusory, since the Grand Treasurer like all other officials were changed yearly. As a result even a wealthy landowner could quickly be reduced to the necessity to sell his property by the activities of a hostile and rapacious *ispravnik*, whose formal salary did not exceed 200 ducats a year. In order to check such violations of property rights, Știrbei proposed to abolish all requisitions in kind, fix the amount of taxes in legislation and subject their collection to the scrutiny of the boyar Assembly.⁷⁰⁷

Special revision commissions created in December 1829 in order to combat corruption undertook the census of the population, revised indirect taxation and monitored the activities of the local authorities in supplying the army and internal government.⁷⁰⁸ The results of the investigation surpassed all expectations of the Russian officials. The census revealed circa 200 000 inhabitants, of whose existence the treasury was previously unaware, while the revision of tax collection demonstrated that 60% of the yearly Moldavian budget was embezzled by the *ispravniks*.⁷⁰⁹ The findings of the revision commissions demonstrated that any improvement in taxations was conditioned on the abolition of *ludori*. Originally

⁷⁰⁷ “Aperçu sur la mode d’administration du Valachie” in *Memoires et projets de reforme*, 153-161.

⁷⁰⁸ Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 211.

denoting a tax paid by a single individual taxpayer, a *ludor* had long become a fictional taxation unit, which usually included a number of peasant taxpayers (up to twelve). The number of peasants assigned to pay a single *ludor* was established each year by *ispravnik* and varied greatly from village to village. Officially the *ispravniks*' right to redistribute taxes in this manner served to ameliorate the negative effects of crop failure in some places by shifting taxation burden on those, where the harvest was satisfactory. However, in practice the *ispravniks* used this prerogative to exact bribes from the peasant communities and individual landowners. The imposition of a uniform capitation tax (*bir*) fixed at 30 lei promised to eliminate the space for arbitrary action of the tax collectors. Very soon Kiselev could proudly report to Russian foreign ministry about the increase of the state revenues and a budget profit. The streamlining of the fiscal system, the "discovery" of the unregistered taxpaying population, the restriction of tax exemptions through soliciting the foreign (mainly Austrian) protection and curtailing of the abuses resulted in the increase of the revenues over expenditures in Wallachia and to a lesser extent in Moldova. This allowed tripling tribute paid to the Porte in accordance with 1802 *hatt-i sheriff*, which could be used as a bargaining chip in the negotiations with the Ottoman Empire.⁷¹⁰

Alongside the rationalization of the relationship between peasants and the state, the policies of the Russian administration sought to place the relationships between peasants and the landlords on a similarly rational footing. Just as the 1818 "Statute for the Formation of Bessarabian Province," the rhetoric accompanying the elaboration of the Organic Statutes stressed the intention to take into account the interests of all classes of population, rather than

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 214, 217.

⁷¹⁰ The revenues of Walachia were greater than expenditures by 1.143.872 piastres. A smaller and more impoverished Moldova offered little possibility for the increase of revenues through mere rationalization. Kiselev ordered increase of the tax from peasants (*bir*) from 24 to 30 piastres, which increased the state revenue by some 740.000 piastres. Kiselev to Nesselrode, March 4, 1831, AVPRI Fond 133, op. 469 (1831) f. 138., Ff. 22-24 rev. Kiselev informed the Foreign Ministry that the tribute could be increased from 573.235 piastres (1801) to 1.500.000 or even 2.000.000 from Wallachia and from 133.753 to 500.000 from Moldova.

strengthen the privileges of the boyars at the expense of other classes.⁷¹¹ Among other things, Russian authorities proclaimed the principle of mutual obligations in the relationships between lords and peasants. Establishing the number of working days that the peasants had to perform for their landlords at twelve per year, the Organic Statutes represented a return to the original legislation of Constantine Mavrocordat despite the demands to double that number articulated in some of the boyar projects of reforms starting from 1821.⁷¹² Going at great length in order to define as precisely as possible the amount of work that the peasants actually had to perform for their landlords, the legislators sought to attain the same goal, which the Habsburg rulers pursued by repeated issue of *Robotpatent* in the late 17th - 18th centuries.⁷¹³ At the same time, the dispositions of the Statutes concerning the peasantry anticipated the reform of inventories and *lustratsii*, which was undertaken in the 1840s in the South-Western provinces of the Russian Empire.⁷¹⁴

Even though a working day as it was defined in the Statutes remained a fictional unit reflecting the amount of work, which could be performed in no less than three days, it brought about a uniformization of peasant obligations and diminished the space for arbitrary extortions that frequently produced flight of the peasantry and made it difficult for the exchequer to collect capitation taxes. The Statutes also tried to limit the mobility of the peasantry by allowing the peasant to move from one landlord to another only once in seven years. In order to attenuate the negative effect of the increased capitation tax and the work

⁷¹¹ Nesselrode to Kiselev, March 24, 1830, RGIA, Fond 958, op. 1, no. 623, F. 10.

⁷¹² The materials consulted by occupation authorities in the process of specification of the peasant obligations included the 1777 act of Moldavian Hospodar Gregoire Ghica. See "Pièces et documents consultés pour la rectification des mesures réglementaires sur les droits et devoirs des propriétaires et des cultivateurs," February 1833, AVPRI, Fond 133, op. 716/1, no. 42.

⁷¹³ Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 94, 171, 185. The revision of robotpatent in order to control the exploitation of the peasantry by the landlords was an important element of the general Habsburg policy of *bauernschutz* informed by cameralist doctrine.

⁷¹⁴ The reform of *lustratsii*, which sought to bring the peasant dues in accordance with the quantity and quality of lands offered to them by the landlords, targeted the Polish landlords in the Right-bank Ukraine. At the same time, the reform of *lustratsii* was related to the reform of state peasants carried under Kiselev's guidance in the late 1830s – 1840s. See A. L. Miller and M. Dolbilov (eds), *Zapadnyie okrainy Rossiskoi Imperii* (Novoie Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2006), 107. The regularization of peasant obligations to the state and the landlords was

dues on peasantry, the Ministerial Committee, which reviewed the drafts of the Statutes in St. Petersburg in autumn 1830, insisted on official confirmation of the 1746 law of Constantine Mavrocordat, which abolished serfdom. In addition, the ministerial instructions and Kiselev himself repeatedly stressed the mutuality of the obligations between lords and peasants. For the first time in Wallachian history the state obliged the landlords to provide peasants with legally specified amount of land in return for their work. However, the advantages of this settlement were more obvious for the Russian authorities than for the local population, which is clear from Kiselev's instructions to the *ispravniks* about the introduction of the dispositions of the Statutes concerning the peasantry. Fearing lest peasant discontent turn against the state, Kiselev ordered the *ispravniks* to explain to them the advantages of the new system and contribute to the voluntary agreements between peasants and landlords within the limits set by the Statutes.⁷¹⁵

Despite Kiselev's precautions, the peasants met the news of increased labor obligations and restriction of the right to move from one landlord to another with either outright revolt (like in Moldova), or with the threat to immigrate (in Wallachia). During his inspection trip around Wallachia in 1832 Kiselev realized that the Organic Statute ignored great differences in conditions of the peasants of the mountainous and the plain part of the principality and became convinced of the necessity of introducing modifications in the clauses of the Statutes concerning the peasant obligations to the landlords. Kiselev proceeded from the assumption that the peasants remained personally free and therefore free to move and that labor obligations in return of land were transitory form towards a farm rent based on mutual agreements between the landlords and peasants. He specifically emphasized the necessity to exclude arbitrary misinterpretations of the law "in anything that concerns the charges of the peasants, who are not represented in the Assembly composed exclusively of

the most important aspect of the reforms in the Romanian principalities which influenced the internal policies in the Russian Empire.

land proprietors.”⁷¹⁶ Under his pressure the Ordinary Assembly of Wallachia convoked in November 1832 specified the peasant’s right to change the landlord, brought the amount of peasant’s labor obligations in strict proportion to the amount of land he received from the landlord and calculated the monetary value of the *corvee* on the basis medium local prices.⁷¹⁷ At the same time, Kiselev discovered that during the adoption of the Statute the Moldavian Assembly of Revision concealed the existence of the 1805 decree of Alexander Moruzi and fixed the amount of land that the landlord had to give to the peasant at a significantly lower level. Unable to revise the distribution of land Kiselev pressured the Moldavian Assembly to reduce the amount of labor fixed for the labor day pointing out that in Moldova it was 1,5 – 2 greater than in Ukraine.⁷¹⁸ However, the “bearded Moldavians, the most accomplished intrigue-mongers in all the world” as he called the members of the Moldavian Assembly in his letter to A. P. Butenev,⁷¹⁹ put up a formidable resistance to the *bauernschutz* policy of President-Plenipotentiary and he had to content himself with only a slight reduction of the labor dues and a minimum increase of peasant land allotment, which remained inferior in comparison with the Muruzi decree.⁷²⁰

Along with measures aimed to rationalize taxation system and secure what they considered to be an equitable definition of the dues and obligations of peasants and landlords, Russian authorities sought to build up institutional mechanisms that would guarantee economic development. Back in 1809, the Commander of Moldavia P. I. Bagration pointed to the Wallachian Divan that a “reasonable economy constitutes one of the major factors

⁷¹⁵ AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 18, Ff. 13-18.

⁷¹⁶ Kiselev’s addresses to Wallachian Administrative Council and the Ministry of Interior cited in Emerit, *Les Paysans roumains*, 100-101.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., 103-104.

⁷¹⁸ In order to press his point Kiselev had his staff prepare a comparative survey of peasant obligations in Moldavia, Bessarabia and the Kiev gubernia. See “Sravnitel’naia zapiska o urochnykh rabotakh krest’ian v Moldavii, Bessarabii i Kievskoi gubernii,” AVPRI, fond 133, op. 716/1, no. 42, Ff. 52-55rev.

⁷¹⁹ Al. Papadopol-Callimach, “General Pavel Kiselev”, 34 (98).

⁷²⁰ Emerit, *Les Paysans roumains*, 113, 119.

contributing to the well-being of the land and revealing a good government.”⁷²¹ Twenty years later Kiselev expressed essentially the same idea arguing that “economy, as the veritable source of all benefits in all aspects of human life, should be considered in the matters of administration as conserving principle of the State. In this respect it should definitely become object of all wise legislation of the government.” In Kiselev’s recommendation to the Committee of Reform written in March 1830, the economic functions were to be divided between the departments of Internal Affairs and Finances, each of which was to be divided into several sections. The former would take care of the agriculture alongside with the administration of the general police, the sanitary cordon and the supervision of the public education. The latter would be in charge of the finances and commerce. Together the two ministers and five heads of sections would compose the Administrative Council as the main executive organ of the government.⁷²² Although the final version of the Organic Statutes contained a different structure of the Administrative Council, which excluded the Heads of Sections, but included the Secretary of State (*Postelnic*), Kiselev’s proposal concerning the distribution of the economic functions between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finances and its division into sections was adopted without revisions.

Alongside with these two ministers, the reformed government also included the Great Logothete of Justice, the Logothete of the Cults and the Spathar commanding the militia, performing the functions of the Ministers of Justice, Cults and War respectively. Not making part of the Administrative Council, they formed together with the Great *Vornik* (Minister of Interior) and Great *Vestiar* (Minister of Finance), the Council of Ministers representing an embryonic form of ministerial government, which in the given period was emerging in European countries and Russia. At the same time, like in Russia, the new ministerial

⁷²¹ “Iz predlozhenia P. I. Bagrationa Divanu Valashskogo kniazhestvao podatiah i povinnostiakh zhitelei,” January 28 1810, in *Bagration v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 84.

⁷²² “Observations sur le project d’un Conceil Administrative pour la Moldavie”, AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 3, Ff. 124-124rev.

government in the principalities lacked unity. The members of the Administrative Council played a more important role than those, who made part of a wider Council of Ministers. While the former was convoked regularly twice a week and represented an actual policy forming body preparing the materials for the Assemblies, the latter assembled irregularly, when the importance of the proposed innovation required greater representativeness in decision-making. Since the possibilities for real transformation in the administrative structure were constitutionally limited, the role of the Great *Logothete* of Justice, *Logothete* of Cults and *Spathar* was purely executive.

The principle of functional division of powers that informed the reorganization of the central government was pursued in local administration as well. The existing local administration, which was previously characterized by the concentration of virtually all authority in the hands of *ispravniks* in accordance with the Organic Statutes was divided between the two main ministries: Interior and Finances. The former consolidated its control over the *ispravniks*, who lost their financial and judicial functions, while the latter subordinated the *sameși*, who previously used to levy and collect taxes arbitrarily, but now, at least in theory, became simple executors of the budget law, fully accountable to the Great *Vestiar*, who in turn reported yearly to the Ordinary Assembly. This represented a departure from the previous administrative practice, in accordance with which the most important officials at the local level, the district *ispravniks* were appointed by the hospodars on representation of the Great *Vestiar*.⁷²³ Instead, Kislev's suggestions reflected the contemporary Russian administrative practice whereby the main provincial officials and bodies (governors and *gubernia* boards) were gradually subordinated by the Ministry of Interior, while the Ministry of Finance gradually build up its own network of local officials

⁷²³ In compensation for the lost control over the *ispravniks* (later called prefects), the Great Treasurer accumulated all tax collection after the abolition of the personal treasury of the hospodar.

taking the *gubernia* treasury boards as the basis.⁷²⁴ Along with formal redistribution of prerogatives in accordance with the principles of the division of administrative functions, measures were taken to transform the character of the state service and contribute to the formation of the concept of public office. The authors of the Statute not only sought to give a clearest possible definition to the functions of each official, but prescribed the details of office work, its schedule and place where official transaction were to take place. All these measures were supposed to have a “disciplinary” effect on the officials from the lowest subordinate of the district *ispravnik* up to a Minister. The abolition of the remunerations in kind and the increase in the official salaries was deemed to be another important step in this direction.⁷²⁵

The principle of separation of administrative and judicial powers was to become a leitmotif in the reform of the judiciary. To this end, the ministerial instructions presupposed the formation of the courts of first instance in the districts with strictly prescribed judicial functions. The instructions also mentioned the possibility of establishing lesser courts in big villages consisting of the village elders and presided by village leaders (*staroste* or *vornicei*) in order to make recourse to justice easier in case of lesser delinquencies. The sale of offices and termination of the illicit profits was defined as another precondition for the improvement of judicial system. To this end, the instructions suggested making the judges of all ranks, including the Judicial Divan and the *Logothetes*, more permanently established in their positions.⁷²⁶ The same effect was to be achieved through the abolition of the notorious principle of retroactivity of sentences, whereby the process could restart at the beginning of each new reign. Commercial activities had to be secured from arbitrariness of the state

⁷²⁴ Daniel T. Orlovsky, *The Limits of Reform: the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Imperial Russia, 1802-1881* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 31-32. Yaney, *The Systematization of Russian Government*, 206, 217-219.

⁷²⁵ A specially appointed commission reduced the number of officials and used the released resources in order to increase the salary for the rest. See Grosul, *Reformy v dunaiskikh kniazhestvakh*, 171.

⁷²⁶ Ministerial instructions, 41-43.

functionaries through their subordination to the commercial tribunals which were to be created after European models. Finally, the General Assemblies had to elaborate civil and penal codes to provide the basis for the adequate operation of the reformed judiciary.⁷²⁷

Developing the ideas of the instructions, Kiselev suggested dividing the whole judicial system into three instances with district tribunals, Judicial Divans of Bucharest and Craiova and Supreme Divan serving as the courts of the first, second and third instance respectively. However, the ubiquitous venality of judges posited a problem before the Russian authorities. Unwilling to abandon the judges to the mercy of the hospodars and the executive officials in general on the one hand, and fearing lest a complete immunity provide the corrupt judges with a guarantee of security on the other, Kiselev opted for a compromise solution. Accepting the immunity of judges in principle, he nevertheless suggested leaving the hospodar the possibility to change the composition of Supreme Divan for a period of six years, expressing the hope that the improvements of mores would eventually allow avoiding the necessity to replace judges altogether.⁷²⁸ Likewise, Kiselev opposed the attempt to secure a privileged treatment for the noble delinquents subjecting them directly to the judgment of the Supreme Divan in avoidance of the courts of the first two instances. Kiselev argued against any privileges in this respect, particularly since crimes committed by the nobles appeared all the more grave, given supposedly greater enlightenment of the nobles in comparison with other individuals. Judicial torture and capital punishment that hitherto were practiced in the principalities offered yet another point of application of the enlightened discourse about justice. Taking a great pride in the fact that both torture and capital punishment were formally abolished in Russia, Kiselev argued for their abolition pointing out

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 45.

⁷²⁸ Kiselev, "Observations sur le chapitre VIII (L'ordre judiciaire)," AVPRI, fond 331, op. 716/1, no. 3, F. 115.

that, in order to be effective, the punishments should not be excessive and remain reversible.⁷²⁹

The tribunals of the first instance created in accordance with the Organic Statutes dealt with civil and commercial cases of the locality. The judicial Divans of Craiova and Bucharest were divided into civil and criminal sections, leaving the function of the commercial courts of the second instance to the specially created commercial tribunals, partly appointed by the hospodar, partly elected by the merchants. The activities of the courts of the first and second instance were monitored by the procurators appointed by the Hospodar and subordinated to the Ministry of Justice. Incorporating the principles of ministerial instructions and Kiselev's observations, the Organic Statutes, nevertheless, did not achieve the full separation of judicial and administrative powers either at the local or central level. On the one hand, the hospodar retained the ability to interfere into the judicial process either through the Minister of Justice, or through his prerogative to send the decision of the Supreme Divan for reconsideration in case of the disagreements between its members. On the other hand, the nomenclature of the types of justice suggested by Kiselev and adopted as the basis by the Organic Statutes included correctional justice alongside with the civil, criminal, and commercial ones. This empowered the *ispravniks* in Bucharest, Jassy, district capitals and countryside to punish petty crimes by imprisonment for a period of up to five days.⁷³⁰

Orchestrating a general reorganization of the administrative apparatus, Russian occupation authorities proceeded from the assumption that there were no and should not be any significant differences between the political and administrative systems of Moldavia and Wallachia. Moreover, Russian policy-makers considered it necessary to bring the interests of the inhabitants even closer together "in order to form a political community of sorts, which

⁷²⁹ Ibid., 119rev – 120rev.

⁷³⁰ Ibid., 119.

would consolidate their future and, at the same time, serve an even greater guarantee against the encroachments on the part of the Suzerain power.”⁷³¹ To this end the ministerial instructions suggested convincing the two Assemblies to adopt the principles of double citizenship (*cobourgeoisie*) and mixed citizenship so that the inhabitants of one principality could possess property and obtain governmental offices in another. Likewise, the two governments were to conclude conventions for a joint maintenance of quarantines and border service, the extradition of criminals, common custom tariff and concerted currency rates. All these measures were to eliminate current ill-faith in the relationships between the principalities and bring closer the two peoples, “whose identity in religion, origin and current situation must keep them united in all circumstances.”⁷³² The Ministerial Committee, which reviewed the drafts of the Statutes in the autumn 1830 contributed to uniformization of the political space of the principalities by curbing the traditional autonomy of Oltenia within Wallachia. Traditionally governed by a special Divan in Craiova, Oltenia was now placed under the administration of a lieutenant of the central government (*caimacam*).⁷³³ At the same time, Russian authorities did not pursue the logic uniformization and unification to the end rejecting the proposal of Iordache Catargiu who, referring to the ministerial instruction, proposed unification of the principalities under the scepter of a foreign prince.⁷³⁴ The idea of placing the principalities under the rule of German dynasties was not new, for one encounters it Capodistria’s “Overview of my political carrier” already in 1826. The innovative aspect of Catargi’s proposal was to combine it with the unification of the principalities. While this would not necessarily mean a complete emancipation from the Ottoman dominance as the constitutional status of Romania between 1866 and 1878 and of Bulgaria between 1878 and 1908 demonstrated, in the early 1830s, this would immediately bring to mind the example of

⁷³¹ Nesselrode to Kiselev, March 24, 1830, RGIA, fond 958, op. 1, no. 623, F. 9.

⁷³² Ministerial instructions, 50.

⁷³³ Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă*, 222.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, 220.

Greece, where the invitation of a German prince served a symbol indicating the newly acquired independence from the Ottoman Empire. Nicholas I refused to adopt such settlement in respect of the principalities on the ground that it would seriously compromise the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the principle of legitimism. Besides, as has already been noticed, the appointment of a hereditary ruler from a German princely family would inevitably internationalize the problem of the principalities, whereas the Russian diplomacy treated them as an issue of strictly bilateral relationships with the Ottoman Empire.

The refusal of the Russian authorities to authorize secularization of the monastic lands controlled by the Eastern patriarchs represented an even more graphic illustration of the policy of preservation of the Ottoman Empire and the concomitant refusal to support the cause of Romanian independence. The *millet* system regulating the status of the non-Muslims within the Ottoman Empire presupposed the subordination of all Eastern Orthodox Christians to the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was responsible for them before the Sultan. In practical terms, this system temporarily halted the development of the autocephalous “national churches” characteristic of Eastern Christianity and secured the dominance of the Greek clergy in the Romanian church hierarchy. The rapacious exploitation of the “dedicated monasteries”⁷³⁵ by the representatives of the Eastern Churches provoked discontent of the local hierarchs, which was second only to the discontent of the autochthonous boyars with the Phanariote hegemony in the principalities. However, conscious of the centrality of the protection of Orthodoxy in their image in the Balkans, the Russian authorities insisted on the preservation of the effective status quo in the ecclesiastical affairs. The attempt of the members of the Special Committee for the Elaboration of the Statutes to provide the legal loophole for the eventual abolition of the control of Romanian monasteries by the Eastern Orthodox Churches was foiled by Kiselev.⁷³⁶ Admitting nevertheless the existence of

⁷³⁵ Monasteries subordinated to the “sacred places,” the Mount Athos and Sinai.

⁷³⁶ Gheorghe Ungureanu, “Elaborarea Regulamentului Organic”, in *Regulamentul Organic al Moldovei*, 111

institutional corruption in this domain, Kiselev ordered the establishment of a special committee composed on boyars, the members of the native clergy and the representatives of the “Greek churches” with the task of eliminating the abuses in the administration of the “dedicated monasteries” and achieving a more equitable distribution of their revenues.⁷³⁷

The controversial nature of Russia’s policy in the principalities is well illustrated by the issue of *suditi* or “foreign subjects”, i. e. the individuals enjoying the protection of foreign consuls and exempt from local taxation and jurisdiction. The practice had its roots in the capitulation regime established between the Ottoman Empire and European powers in the 17th and 18th centuries, to which Russia joined by the treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji. After the creation of foreign consulates in the late 18th –early 19th century, the number of *suditi* in the principalities steadily grew, the better part of them enjoying Austrian protection. Although initially Russian consuls offered protection to various individuals on a par with their Western counterparts, after the Peace of Adrianople and the adoption of the Organic Statutes the approach of Russian authorities changed, and Russian government was ready to forego the right of protection, compensated as it was by the possibilities of direct influence on the hospodars and the Assemblies that the Organic Statutes accorded to the Russian Consuls. Instead, Russian officials increasingly viewed the practice of consular protection as a source of abuses that deprived the principalities of a significant part of their economically active population and substantial revenue. At the same time, they were mindful of the possibilities of local influence that this practice offered to foreign consuls. In Kiselev’s opinion, the suppression of the regime of protected individuals was an important aspect of struggle with the influence of other great powers and essential for the consolidation of Russia’s position in the principalities. Thus, in his letter to Field Marshal Dibich, Kiselev noted that Austria had

⁷³⁷ In accordance with Kiselev’s observations, the final version of the Moldavian Statute adopted by the Assembly, the monasteries had to contribute one fourth of their revenues to charity organizations. The commission had the task to ascertain the revenues of the monasteries in order to establish the precise sum of

many partisans in the principalities and that “if our government cares about the Statute and the influence that Russia must have here, it is necessary to oppose with all energy Austria’s involvement and let her know that the court of St. Petersburg does not need advice and will not permit observations. It is particularly necessary now since the involvement of Viennese cabinet can establish a precedent, which will be harmful for us in a new war on the Danube.”⁷³⁸ It could not have escaped from Kiselev that the peasants, who mutinied against the military draft in Moldavia in May 1831, claimed that they were exempt from it by virtue of being Hungarian colonists from Transylvania. In order to deprive other great powers of this important instrument of local influence, the President-Plenipotentiary started considering all foreign subjects residing in the principalities subject to local law and prohibited foreigners to buy land or enter a profession without naturalization.

Foreign consuls immediately contested the legality of measures taken by President-Plenipotentiary. On February 28, 1830 Nesselrode reported to Kiselev about the demarche of the Austrian envoy Fickelmont concerning the infringement on the rights of Austrian subjects in the principalities. Kiselev replied that the Statutes did not infringe upon rights, but only to eliminated abuses. According to him, there were as many as 6000 families, who did not pay any taxes by virtue of protection, while the Austrian consuls traded the protection rights. Kiselev also pointed that the preservation of the abuse is advantageous for the Austrian trade and that the Austrians encourage the boyars to purchase luxury items, which had a pernicious effect upon local economy.⁷³⁹ However, it was the British consul and the representative of the Ionian company E. L. Blutte, who presented the greatest problem for the President-Plenipotentiary. Measures taken by the occupation authorities to create grain deposits in the principalities in order to prevent famine and provide the Russian army with supplies in case

their contribution to the welfare institutions. “Expose des modifications adoptee aux chapitres I-V and VIII-IX du reglement par par la section Moldave du Comite” AVPRI, F. 331, op. 716/1 no. 14, l. 95.

⁷³⁸ Papadopol-Callimach, “General Pavel Kisseleff,” 23-24 (87-88).

⁷³⁹ Ibid., 25 (89).

of new war intervened with the grain export operated by the Ionian merchants. Kiselev argued that the regime of capitulations used by the Ionian Company could not include a Christian country like the principalities and that the reform of administration and judicial system in any case eliminated the rationale of the regime of consular protection.⁷⁴⁰ On the other hand, President-Plenipotentiary suspected the British agent of supporting the resistance of the Moldavian boyars to his policies. The conflict peaked in early 1832, when a number of Ionian merchants and their merchandize arrested by Russian authorities in Galati provoked Blutte's energetic protests. During a personal meeting between Kiselev and Blutte on April 8, 1832, the former accused the latter of supporting the oppositional attitudes of the boyars, after which the British consul left the country filing a complaint about the actions of President-Plenipotentiary to British Ambassadors in Vienna and St Petersburg. However, both governments adopted a reconciliatory posture, whereby Lord Ponsonby reprimanded Blutte for his unauthorized departure, while Nesselrode reminded Kiselev about the necessity to respect the rights of foreign subjects.⁷⁴¹ Despite his determination, the President-Plenipotentiary thus failed to deprive the foreign powers of an important instrument of local influence. The controversy over "protected persons" however, is highly indicative in the context of the present discussion for it demonstrates the way in which Russian authorities sought to combine the rhetoric and policy of promotion of public well-being with consolidation of Russia's hegemony in the principalities.

Fighting Subversion

The clash between Kiselev and foreign consuls over the issue of *suditi* points to another important dimension of the policies of Russian provisional authorities in the principalities, namely the measures taken to fight with political subversion. The adoption of the Organic Statutes and the attending legislation taking place in a context of change in

⁷⁴⁰ Radu F. Florescu, *Essays on Romanian History*, 201,

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 212-213.

Russian foreign policy induced the Russian officials to reevaluate their goals. This reevaluation occasioned a partial redeployment of the institutions and practices introduced by the Organic Statutes to serve new goals, which was part of a more general transformation of the well-ordered police state in Central and Eastern Europe in the first half of the 19th century. Besides the official goal of restoring Russia's position as a protective power, the reform of the political systems of Moldavia and Wallachia was initially conceived as a means of turning the principalities into controllable buffer zone with stable and fixed borders impenetrable to both contagious diseases and Ottoman influence. In this respect the Organic Statutes represented an episode in a centuries long struggle between continental empires and different notions of space, whereby the Islamic tripartite concept of *dar al Islam*, *dar al Ahd* and *dar al Harb* literally gave ground to clearly delimited homogeneous space of European state system. However, the unilateral character of this process was compromised not only by great heterogeneity of the Habsburg Monarchy and later Russian Empire, which were the prime movers of the process, but also the ideological transformations of the Central and Eastern European absolutist monarchies after 1789. A relatively straightforward 18th century symbolic opposition between enlightened despotism of Josef II and Catherine II on the one hand, and the unenlightened despotism of the Sultans on the other, became complicated by ideological confrontation of the Eastern and Central European absolutist regimes with French revolution. Central and Eastern European rulers tried to present this confrontation as a struggle between rational organization of society, which they pursued and the destructive passions exploited by the revolutionaries. Kiselev's interpretation of the role of the Organic Statutes offers an interesting combination of traditional geopolitics of imperial expansion and newer objective of anti-revolutionary struggle.

The elements of political police introduced in the wake of the adoption of the Organic Statutes had some local antecedents. Thus, the legal Code of Moldavian hospodar Scarlat

Callimachi adopted in 1818 prohibited the formation of secret societies.⁷⁴² In 1823, after a failed attempt of the former *etairists*, Serbians and the *arnauți* to start a new anti-Ottoman uprising, the Moldavian Divan addressed hodsodar Ion S. Sturdza with a request to send all the Greeks including merchants out of the country. The Divan also proposed to institute a censorship and temporarily prohibit all private correspondence with other countries.⁷⁴³ Alongside with customary persecution of oppositional boyars, the 1820s witnessed the appearance of repressive measures against the emerging “public,” which presented the rulers with completely new type of political opposition. Whereas earlier political opposition took the form of a rival boyar clan, the 1820s in Wallachia was the period of gradual emergence of public sphere. The latter included a large number of non-noble elements and took advantage of such new forms of sociability such as café-houses, in which the visitors discussed political events. Fearing possible implications, Wallachian hospodar Gregore Ghica ordered to close the coffee-house owned in Bucharest by the British subject Stefan Sagiadino. In 1824 the government also prohibited the distribution and reading of newspapers in taverns and coffee-houses.⁷⁴⁴

On the eve of Russian-Ottoman war and during Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia the functions of political police were inextricably connected to those of military intelligence. Interested in the number and disposition of the Ottoman garrisons in the Danubian fortresses as well as concentration of the Austrian troops on the Transylvanian borders, the Russian army command could not remain indifferent to the political attitudes of the Romanian boyars to these powers, which sought to limit Russian influence in the principalities. The experience of the previous wars with the Ottomans demonstrated that the Romanian boyars often performed the function of the double agents supplying both conflicting powers with the information about the military preparations and the movement of

⁷⁴² Vlad Georgescu, *Ideile politice*, 134.

⁷⁴³ Anastasie Iordache, *Principatele Române în epocă modernă*, 199.

troops. The facility with which the middle and lesser boyars used the failure of the Greek uprising and the Ottoman occupation to pursue their economic and political interests made Russian authorities suspect their loyalty. Five year absence of the Russian consuls in the principalities gave the Austrians an opportunity to increase their influence over the greater boyars some of whom transferred their fortunes to Transylvania. In this situation, detailed prosopographic information about the noble class of Moldavia and Wallachia became essential in determining reliable candidates for the key positions in the government in order to secure its cooperation in the supply of the troops and avoid the repetition of the sour experiences of the 1808-1812 war.

Upon signing of the Convention of Akkerman, Russian consuls Minciaky and Lelly were the most natural suppliers of this kind of information in accordance with the diplomatic practices of the period and place. In April 1828 immediately after the beginning of hostilities they provided Russian foreign ministry with the “Detailed Survey of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia”, which, along with the description of the governmental offices, finances, abuses and possible ways of their correction, contained short characteristics of the people currently occupying the key positions in the government as well as the list of those, whose qualities and/or loyalty to Russia recommended them for the appointment. Russian foreign ministry was also concerned by the possible counteraction of the Austrians to the realization of the Russian plans. Although Minciaky hurried to dispel its fears about the existence of the pro-Austrian party among the Wallachian ready to place the principality under the Austrian protection as soon as Russian troops cross the Pruth,⁷⁴⁵ the dispatches of his colleague from Jassy demonstrated that the Ministry’s suspicions were not altogether ungrounded. Lelly reported about the intrigues of the Austrian agent Lippa, who tried to convince the most active younger boyars Mihai Sturdza and Nicolae Rossetti-Rosnovanu that

⁷⁴⁴ Vlad Georgescu, *Din corespondenta diplomatica a tarii Rominești*, 44.

⁷⁴⁵ Minciaky to Nessel'rode, Bucharest, December 24, 1827, AVPRI, fond 133, op. 469, no. 859, Ff. 2-2rev.

the war was unlikely and encouraged them to solicit international attention for Moldavia as means to avoid Russian dominance.⁷⁴⁶

The facts provided by the diplomatic agents were supplemented by the information collected by the army intelligence. In the latter, the role of prime importance belonged to the already mentioned colonel I. P. Liprandi. In 1827 he convinced Kiselev, who at the time was the Head of Staff of the Second Army, of the necessity of a thorough intelligence operation for the successful planning of the campaign.⁷⁴⁷ Obtaining Kiselev's support, Liprandi entered the principalities and, with the help of a network of agents recruited in various social milieux, collected the information about the Ottoman fortresses on the Danube, the disposition of the Austrian troops in Transylvania and the attitudes of the Romanian boyars.⁷⁴⁸ Like the Russian consuls, Liprandi supplied Russian occupation authorities with lists of boyars classified according to their sympathies for the Ottoman Empire, Austria or Russia.⁷⁴⁹ As was usually the case, the relationship between two competing agencies performing the same functions were so hostile that Minciaky recommended Russian foreign ministry to recall Liprandi on the ground that his activities generated undesirable rumors. Liprandi reciprocated by suspecting the loyalty of Minciaky and Lelly, both of whom were of Greek Constantinople extraction and insinuated that he had been wounded in Lelly's home by a hired killer not without the cognizance of his host. In April 1828, at the head of a small detachment he arrested Moldavian Hospodar Ion Stourdza before the latter had the chance to follow suite of his Wallachian counterpart Gregoire Ghica, who escaped to Transylvania.

After hostilities began, Liprandi came forward with the idea of the volunteer troops (*panduri*) recruited from the local population to assist the Russian army. Russian high

⁷⁴⁶ Lelly to Minciaky, February 18, 1828 and February 24, 1828, AVPRI, fond 133, op. 469, no. 859, Ff. 96-101, 131-134rev.

⁷⁴⁷ At this time he also wrote an overview of the Russian occupation during 1806-1812 war, "Kratkoie obozrenia kniazhestv Moldavii i Valakhii v voennoie vremia 1807-1812," OP RSL, Belt/III 16/2, Ff. 1-8.

⁷⁴⁸ "Zapiska o sostoianii umov v Moldavii adresovannaia P. D. Kiselvu 1828." RGIA, fond 673, op. 1, no. 231.

⁷⁴⁹ "Spisok valakhskikh boiar s pokazaniem kakim gosudarstvom predany," RGIA, fond 673, op. 1, no. 329.

command in the person of the Imperial Chief of Staff (since 1829 Field Marshal and the Commander of the 2d army I. I. Dibich) treated the idea with reservation on account that it poorly corresponded to the ideology of the war stressing the violation of the treaties by the Ottomans rather than national liberation. By the end of the campaign the permission to form the detachment was finally granted. Yet, despite some results scored by the detachment, the Russian command failed to remunerate them, which provoked Liprandi's fighters to take their commander in hostage in order to obtain the promised rewards. Despite this disconsolating experience, Liprandi continued collecting information for Kiselev. Thus, in the autumn 1830, he provided President-Plenipotentiary with the memoir on the intrigues of the Moldavian members of the Special Committee. Michael Sturdza, Costache Conache and Iordache Catargi, according to Liprandi, all sought to secure votes for the future Hospodar election on the wave of the discontent of the boyars of the second and third rank with the new Statute leaking to them its content, denying any effective role of their own in its elaboration and encouraging the lesser boyars to demand the convocation of a broad assembly.⁷⁵⁰

In his next report, Liprandi alarmed the President-Plenipotentiary to the growing influence that the Austrian consuls exerted on Romanian boyars. If twenty years ago the boyars were oriented towards Russia now they were seeking personal protection with the Austrian authorities, bought estates in Transylvania and sent their children to Austria for education. A number of Moldavian boyars drew handsome revenues from their estates in Bessarabia, which they spend in the principality or placed it in Austrian banks. Liprandi complained about the difficulties, which he faced extracting information from the boyars on the eve of the war and attributed the deterioration of Russia's moral standing in Moldavia and Wallachia to the fact that after the Bucharest treaty Russia was represented in the principalities by Perote Greeks (i. e. Greeks from the district of Pera in Constantinople), who

⁷⁵⁰ "O poslednikh proissheshtiakh v Moldavii," RGIA, fond 673, op. 1, no. 402, Ff. 1-8.

were related to Phanariote families and minded their interests better than the interests of Russia.⁷⁵¹

According to Liprandi, the Organic Statutes, (incidentally, elaborated under the supervision of a Perote Greek M. L. Minciaky) hardly restored Russia's popularity. The election of the hospodars introduced by the Statutes opened the room for ambition of the first-rank boyars, which turned Jassy and Bucharest into "places of intrigue and scheming." Although the Statutes gave the great boyars certain advantages, they remained dissatisfied with the new institutions and "sincerely desired the continuation of chaos."⁷⁵² The same essentially referred to the boyars of the second rank. Although the Organic Statutes expanded their formal rights, they have closed before them the perspective of becoming the boyars of the first rank that existed during the rule of the last hospodars. According the Liprandi, "they were too convinced that the loss of the possibility for abuses would never be compensated by the direct protection of law." That is why "the introduction of the better administration, clear definition of the customs" would never accord with their "self-interest, vanity, avidity and arbitrariness."⁷⁵³ As to the boyars of the third rank, Organic Statutes encroached on their privileges to an even greater extent. According to Liprandi, this was a great mistake that threatened with complications in future. "The sheer size of this stratum (1/20 of Moldavia's population) should have made the authors of the statute attentive to their interests."⁷⁵⁴ As to the lower classes, absence of precise definition of peasant obligations to their landlords existing before the Statutes was compensated by the "wild freedom," which was in "complete

⁷⁵¹ I. P. Liprandi, "Kratkoie obozrenie kniazhestv Moldavii i Valakhii v politicheskom otnoshenii ot obrazovania onykh do poloviny 1831go goda," RGIA, Fond, 673, File, 230, F.135. Liprandi,s memoire was published in "Chtenia Imperatorskogo obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei," (Moscow: Izdanie Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1861).

⁷⁵² Ibid., 136-138.

⁷⁵³ Ibid., 139.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., 139-141. Obviously Liprandi blames the Romanian members of the Committee of reforms and not Kiselev for all the shortcomings of the Statute. They former tried to portray their role as simple translators of the text of the Statute and caused the rumor that the Statute was written in St Petersburg.

accordance with moral and intellectual faculties.”⁷⁵⁵ Conversely, Organic Statutes frightened the peasantry since they eliminated its “simple, and in their essence, quite good customs,” increased the number of days that the peasants had to work for their landlords and burdened them with new obligations, such as the military draft. Noting the discontent of all classes with the new institutions, Liprandi noted pessimistically that Russia “was losing support in this country, losing it for ever or at least for a long period of time.”⁷⁵⁶

Liprandi’s criticism of the Organic Statutes indirectly concerned Russian Consul General M. L. Minciaky, under whose supervision the documents were elaborated. The conflict that emerged between Minciaky and Liprandi back in 1827 might have contributed to the latter’s demise. All this time, Liprandi, according to his own testimony, was plagued by the intrigues of his adversaries, who denounced him to Field Marshal I. I. Diebitch. To Liprandi’s great disconsolation, Diebitch referred to him as a “person harmful for the government,” and only Liprandi’s illness and, possibly, Kiselev’s intervention saved him from exile to the Caucasus.⁷⁵⁷ At the same time, although Liprandi’s alarmist reports failed to change the course of Russian policy in the principalities, they informed Kiselev’s memoirs to Russian foreign ministry examined above. The information and observations supplied by Liprandi demonstrated to the President-Plenipotentiary how contested and uncertain Russia’s influence in Moldavia and Wallachia remained despite the reaffirmation of its formal political dominance. If anything, it determined Russian occupation authorities to turn the principalities into a protective buffer zone for the empire and use such institutions as quarantine and censorship in order to combat foreign influences.

The institutionalization of censorship was inextricably related to the foundation of the first Romanian periodicals. In 1829, recognizing the necessity for the official medium of communication of the most important governmental decrees, Kiselev’s predecessor S. S.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., 144.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., 137.

Zheltukhin accepted the requests made by Romanian intellectuals associated with the government, Ion Heliade-Radulescu and Georghe Asachi, to found the journals *Curierul Românesc* (in Wallachia) and *Albina Românească* (in Moldavia). In 1831 the Moldavian Board of Schools (*epitropia școlilor*) was charged with the functions of censorship in respect of the Moldavian periodical.⁷⁵⁸ By Kiselev's order of March 14, 1832 the Administrative Councils were charged with the functions of censorship of these two newspapers. The goal of censorship in Kiselev's definition was to avoid "mistakes and false interpretations" of the official news, which would provide a pretext for the "ill-intentioned individuals." In order to avoid that, all official publications of administrative and judicial character had to be approved by the Head of the Department of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Justice respectively. The editors of *Curierul Românesc* and *Albina Românească* were allowed to use the materials of the St. Petersburg and Odessa's newspapers along with *Oesterreichische Beobachter* and *Staatliche Gazette von Preusse* in order to provide the readers with news from abroad.

These measures were accompanied by the introduction of censorship for foreign imported books and supervision of local presses. Back in 1829, Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii could still purchase books prohibited in Russia at a Bucharest bookstore. Several years later Russian authorities could not afford such leniency, facing the appearance of the publications abroad bearing the stamp of the Moldo-Wallachian presses and "containing mistaken concepts and ideas contrary to the intentions of the government." Therefore, Kiselev authorized the Administrative Councils to prohibit the import of foreign books "professing ideas contrary to the principles of religion and morality and subversive of public order."⁷⁵⁹ It is noteworthy that Administrative Councils tried to attenuate the rigor of Kiselev's orders in respect of the foreign literature. According to the decision of the Moldavian Council from March 24, 1832, the sale of the foreign literature was to remain free, while the Administrative

⁷⁵⁷ "Obiasnenia uvolennago so sluzhby general-Maiora Liprandi", GARF, fond 109, op. 8, no. 154, F. 60.

⁷⁵⁸ Radu Rosetti, "Despre Censura in Romania," *Analele Academiei Romane*, Seria II, vol. 19, Buc., 1907, 298.

Council in the person of the Secretary of State (*Postelnic*) was empowered to censor all foreign publications in Romanian accessible to a much wider public. However, Kiselev had his way, insisting that the principles of freedom of commerce cannot be fully applied to the sale of “dangerous books.”⁷⁶⁰

In December 1832, Russian Ambassador to Vienna S. S. Tatishchev reported to Kiselev about the dispatch of the revolutionary literature from Paris to the Bucharest book dealer Thierry. Among other things, the books sent to Thierry contained the biography Antoine Ostrowski, an activist of the Polish revolutionary movement, which, according to Tatishchev suggested the involvement of Polish Revolutionary Committee in Paris.⁷⁶¹ Kiselev reacted by requesting the list of officially prohibited revolutionary publications from St. Petersburg and ordered the creation of Wallachian and Moldavian Censorship Committees headed by the State Secretaries Barbu Știrbei and Nicholas Suțu respectively. The latter were empowered to inspect the accounts of foreign book deliveries at the custom houses and demand all libraries and booksellers to submit the catalogues of foreign books received by them.⁷⁶² Special fines were introduced for the owners of the book stores selling unauthorized literature.⁷⁶³ Later the functions of the *ad hoc* Censorship Committees were transferred to the newly created office of inspector. His competence, however, did not include spiritual literature, which remained under the control of the Metropolitan’s office. Nevertheless, despite the apparent rigor of these measures, the censorship of foreign books remained relatively lenient especially in respect of the books privately imported by the great boyars.⁷⁶⁴

Postponing as long as he could the evacuation of the principalities by Russian troops, but eventually complying with directions of Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kiselev at

⁷⁵⁹ Kiselev to Administrative Councils of Moldavia and Wallachia, AVPRI, fond 331, op 716/1, no. 17, 3-3rev.

⁷⁶⁰ Rosetti, “Despre Censura in Romania,” 307.

⁷⁶¹ Tatishchev to Kiselev, December 21, 1832, 1833, Vienne, AVPRI, F. 331, op 716/1, no. 17, 8-8rev.

⁷⁶² Radu Rosetti, “Despre Censura in Romania,” 302-303, 307

⁷⁶³ Ibid., 307.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 311.

the same time sought to secure guarantees that the new institutions will be maintained after the appointment of the hospodars and thereby buttress Russia's predominant position in the principalities. To that end he considered necessary to condition the appointment of the hospodars upon their commitment to respect the dispositions of the Statutes and the attending legislation, promotion of the boyars who zealously served under provisional administration, confirmation of the military and civil promotions made during the occupation by the orders of Russian Ministry, obligation to maintain in their current positions the principal officials and reporting to the Russian consulate all replacements. Last but not least in the context of the present discussion was the obligation of the hospodars to "supervise over the public press, the import and commerce (*debit*) of foreign newspapers, which in view of the geographical situation of the principalities can become a source of disorders not only for these countries, but also for the neighboring provinces."⁷⁶⁵ Russian foreign ministry picked up Kiselev's initiative in respect of the censorship and soon after the appointment of the hospodars instructed the Russian consul,

"to call the attention of the hospodars to anything that might indicate certain tendency of the young people to become captivated by the liberal ideas, invite them to follow the progress of public spirit in the principalities, prevent any encouragement of subversive ideas, take care that the rule of censorship established by the President-Plenipotentiary be strictly observed without the least deviation, draw the attention of the hospodars above all to the necessity to keep the publication of the Bucharest and Jassy newspapers within the prescribed limits, take care to render the education of the youth in the spirit of moderation, eliminate the spirit of innovation and trouble that could manifest itself in the unripe minds, who are willing to give their country a political existence, altogether different from the one provided by present institutions, based on the treaties, and finally inculcate the hospodars to avoid receiving in the principalities worthless people, who seek to penetrate there in order to create troubles and compromise the tranquility of out neighboring provinces."⁷⁶⁶

Both this passage and Kiselev's own correspondence on the issue of censorship reveals a significant reconceptualization of the role of the Organic Statutes originally viewed as a way "to demonstrate the Christian population of the East a new proof of the benefits of

⁷⁶⁵ Kiselev to Butenev, April 2, 1832, Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 72-73; Hurmuzaki, Supplement I/4, 396-398.

the Russian protection and thus preserve Russian influence over them.” In a situation when Russia’s increased influence over the Ottoman Empire in general and in the principalities in particular was actively contested by other great powers, most notably Great Britain and France, Russian officials started viewing the Organic Statutes not only as a means of “guarding the southern provinces from the pernicious influence of disorder and anarchy that were the product of a vicious political regime of the Ottoman-Phanariote rule,”⁷⁶⁷ but also as a defense line against political subversion sponsored by agents of rival European powers. In a memoir addressed to Russian Foreign Ministry, three years after the evacuation of Moldavia and Wallachia, Kiselev formulated this new objective with particular clarity: “Our influence in the Principalities based on the legal foundations always gives us the possibility and power to combat resolutely the propagandistic activities (*l’action du propagande*).” In the absence of this influence the propagandistic spirit would flourish and “the danger of the *moral contamination* (emphasis in the original - V. T.) for the southern provinces of the empire would become still more immediate and real. This consideration makes me view the Principalities not only as our first defense line against the plague, but also as *an outpost of a sanitary cordon* (italics added – V. T.) that protects Russia’s South against the penetration of ideas subversive of the public order and peace.”⁷⁶⁸

Initially, the Organic Statutes were conceived as means to minimize the Ottoman influence in the principalities and turn them into controllable buffer states. Political stability was to be achieved by regularization of local administration and creation of borders impenetrable to epidemics and other unsavory aspects of the Ottoman influence. In this respect, the Statutes can be considered an important moment of the struggle between the two continental empires for the redefinition of the character of the frontier zone, whereby unstable

⁷⁶⁶ Minciaky to Mihai Sturdza, July 28, 1834, Hurmuzaki, Supliment I/5, 66.

⁷⁶⁷ Kiselev to Nesselrode, “Notice sur la necessite et l’utilite de la nouvelle organization des Principautes,” Bucharest, March 8, 1832, Zablotskii-Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, vol. 4, 69.

and permeable Islamic frontier was transformed into a fixed and delimited European border. However, in the early 1830s this objective was supplemented by the goal of transforming the principalities into a barrier against the revolutionary propaganda. The elements of modern political institutions and practices introduced to change the character of the frontier were now used to fight with political subversion and reflected the transformation of well-ordered police state from a means of furthering general well being into an apparatus of fighting with political subversion.

Apart from Kiselev's great effort in the realization of both objectives, his personal involvement in the administration of the principalities and Russia's eastern policy allows two conclusions. On the one hand, his failure to convince Nicholas I to annex Moldavia and Wallachia detracts from the thesis of grand strategy of Russia's expansion⁷⁶⁹ and reveals a hierarchy of priorities, in which ideological interests were ultimately more important territorial expansion. Promoting Russia's policy in the Balkan region, Kiselev, just as Capodistria a decade before him, found an insurmountable obstacle in the policy of monarchical unity proclaimed by the Russian rulers, which subordinated the interests of imperial expansion to the preservation of political status quo. On the other hand, Russian Foreign ministry generally backed the President-Plenipotentiary in any undertaking that sought to transform a permeable and politically unstable borderland into a controllable buffer zone and thereby revealed one of the characteristic concerns of the rulers of a continental empire. Conceived as a buffer limiting the Ottoman influence and later transformed into Russia's sanitary cordon against the spread of revolution, the instructions and practices of well-ordered polices introduced by the Organic Statutes sought to solve the problem of

⁷⁶⁸ [Kiselev] "Zapiska bez nazvania o roli reglamentov," October, 16, 1837, RGIA, fond 958, op. 1, no. 624, l. 38.

⁷⁶⁹ Alfred J. Rieber, "Struggle over the Borderlands," in S. Frederik Starr, *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 61-89, 84. For the representation of the Russian history as the realization of a grand strategy See John LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire: 1650-1831* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2003).

fundamental permeability of the imperial frontiers (to the unwarranted movement of goods, population, diseases or ideas) that constituted out as one of the most important persistent factors of Russian foreign policy.

Conclusion: A Sanitary Cordon for Empire?

The end of the period of Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia was finally decided by convention of St. Petersburg concluded between the representative of the Ottoman Empire Ahmet-Pasha and the Russian government on January 17 (29), 1834. In accordance with the agreement the Ottoman government obliged to issue a *hatt-i sheriff* confirming the Statutes as well as modifications introduced into it in 1832 and 1833 within two month after the exchange of the ratified copies. It was decided that the Ottoman government would appoint the hospodars from the lists several candidates selected by Kiselev and handed to Ahmet-Pasha on during his passage through Jassy on February 25, 1834 on the way to Stambul.⁷⁷⁰ The choice of the Sultan fell on Alexandru Ghica (the brother of Grigore Ghica reigning in 1822-1828) for Wallachia and Mihai Sturdza for Moldova both of whom received investiture in Stambul on May 19, 1834. Meanwhile, Russian President-Plenipotentiary left Jassy on April 11 (23) accompanied crowds of respectful Moldavians, his functions temporarily passed to Vice-President F. Ia. Mirkovich until the arrival of the hospodars in July 1834. The bulk of the Russian occupation corps evacuated in late April leaving several small detachments in Silistra and along the road towards it until this fortress was passed back to the Ottomans after the settlement of the issue of the war contribution in 1836.

Kiselev's personal impact of on political institutions and public life of Moldavia and Wallachia turned his departure from Bucharest and Jassy into memorable event attended by masses of population. "As they approached the Pruth river, the clamorous crowd suddenly became silent and tears appeared in the eyes of everybody. Everyone wanted to bid the last farewell to Kiselev, who was filled with the same emotions: "Our kind genius is leaving us taking with him the happiness, which he gave the principalities. Kiselev's name will live forever in the hearts of the Romanians." This touching description of general regret at the

⁷⁷⁰ Papadopol-Callimach, "General Pavel Kiselev," 39 (103).

departure of the man, who coordinated the reform process in the principalities for four and a half years, could lead the contemporary readers in Russia and Europe to believe that the Organic Statutes enjoyed universal support and the Romanians were happy under the benevolent Russian protection. The opinion of his subordinate F. Ia. Mirkovich was characteristic in this respect. “The constancy of purpose and the example of strict morality” demonstrated by the provisional authorities,” in Mirkovich’s complacent evaluation, “cured the entrenched moral disease of this nation accustomed to the despotic measures of the Ottoman yoke ... as well as vanquished the passions and the spirits of resistance, inevitable wherever innovations are introduced.” According to Mirkovich, these activities started bearing fruit already by the end of the Russian occupation: “The new organization delimited the rights and obligations of each power and the people appointed to different offices gradually began to understand that there is another purpose of public service, beyond self-interest, which hitherto motivated people to obtain public office.”⁷⁷¹ However, fourteen years later the Moldavia and Wallachia were swept by a revolutionary upheaval, which destroyed all illusions that Russians might have entertained concerning their influence in the principalities. The fact that the Organic Statute – the main fruit of Kiselev’s efforts – was publicly burned by Wallachian revolutionaries in September 1848 testified the failure of Russia’s policy to create a lasting cooperation with local elites.

This study explained the controversial role of the Organic Statutes by viewing them as the application of the 18th century model of well-ordered police state to the conditions of a frontier zone. As parts of the Danubian-Pontic frontier, Moldavia and Wallachia underwent important institutional transformations in the 18th – early 19th centuries conditioned by changing balance of powers between the three continental empires. Post-1683 Habsburg advance as well as late 18th – early 19th century victories of the Russia over the Ottoman

⁷⁷¹ *Fiodr Iakovlevich Mirkovich. Ego Zhizneopisaniesostavlennoie po sobstvennym ego zapisiam, vospominaniam blizkikh liudei i podlinnym okumentam, 57.*

Empire not only led to the annexation of the territories earlier controlled by the Ottomans, but also to the transformation of the ecology of the entire frontier zone. The military supremacy of the Habsburg Monarchy and Russia over the empire of the sultans had its corollary in the elimination of conditions that facilitated the Ottoman hegemony in the Danubian and Pontic regions.

This period witnessed formal territorial demarcation and fixation of state boundaries over the terrain that for centuries was defined by never ending border warfare, trading and raiding that constituted the essential aspect of the economy of the unruly semi-nomadic frontier peoples. Eighteenth century Russian victories in the northern Black Sea region eliminated the Khanate of Crimea and a system of the Ottoman fortresses on the seashore that served the strong points of raiding. The annexation of the Budzhak steppe in southern Bessarabia in 1812 and the elimination of the Ottoman *reayas* on the left bank of the Danube by the Peace of Adrianople in 1829 represented a continuation of this process. Russian authorities sought to consolidate these transformations by population politics, which aimed at replacing the semi-nomadic peoples of Crimea, Edisan and the Budzhak by colonists and resulted in a massive emigration of the Tatars and the Nogays to the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the *Nekrasovtsy* and other Cossack elements, who in the 18th century had defected to the Ottoman side after the curtailment of Cossack liberties, were induced to return by new Russian victories on the lower Danube – a process, which completed in the 1860s with the return of the Zaparozhean Cossacks. The fixation of the border between the Ottoman Empire and the Romanian principalities along the *tahlweg* of the Danube and the creation of the Danubian quarantine greatly complicated uncontrolled circulation of population, goods and diseases between the two banks of the river, which imperial authorities viewed as a threat to security. The transformation of the frontier ecology was by no means a unilinear process and the frontier population for some time still defied the new model of state borders. Thus, in

1817 Bessarabian viceroy A. N. Bakhmet'iev complained to central authorities that the Cossacks who assumed the border guard service were blatantly inadequate for the task and asked to replace them with a regular army unit. Four years later local authorities left unnoticed the preparations of *etairists* in Bessarabia, whose subsequent rebellion in the principalities compromised security in a neighboring area, undermined Russia's influence in the principalities and produced serious complications for Russian foreign policy. Nevertheless, the time of the *haiducs* was over. Already in 1823 Bessarabian authorities acted promptly to quell another attempt of the *etairists* to stir an anti-Ottoman rebellion in the principalities, while in 1843 the reformed Wallachian government prevented similar designs of the so-called Bulgarian *Etairia*.

At the same time, the existence of Romanian political institutions constituted the peculiarity of the position of the principalities within the Danubian-Pontic frontier and distinguished the policies of Russian authorities in Moldavia and Wallachia in 1828-1834 from their essentially colonial approach in the New Russia. In contrast to situation in the Pontic steppe, Russian authorities could not pretend that Moldavia and Wallachia were simply a "wild field" or an empty space where a new society and institutional structure can be created *ex nihilo* through colonization. In comparison with the loose political formations and undifferentiated social structures of the Cossack societies, Moldavia and Wallachia represented two units, whose greater degree of political consolidation was proportionate to greater social differentiation. Whereas the emerging Cossack elite (*starshina*) in the 18th century forewent their political autonomy in order to consolidate their social dominance over rank-and-file Cossacks, Romanian boyars proved capable of claiming and obtaining both. Therefore, the reforms undertaken by Phanariote hospodars or Russian occupation authorities in the 18th – early 19th centuries in order to increase the taxable wealth, secure political stability and consolidate imperial hegemony had to take into account the existing institutions.

This explains why the emphasis of the reforms of 1828-1834 was not so much the population politics and colonization (although the elimination of raiding, regulation of the lord and peasant relationships and strengthening of the police institutions contributed to a more definitive sedentarization of the Romanian peasant) as on the transformation and systematization of local administrative institutions aiming at greater political stability of the principalities. Most importantly, by means of regularization of administrative procedures, administrative disciplining and accountability of the officials the reforms pointed towards a more precise separation between political authority and social privilege and ultimately contributed, however little, to the substantiation of the notion of public interest, which is an essential attribute of any modern polity.

The interpretation of reforms of the principalities in the 1820s and the 1830s under the species of well-ordered police state shares the weakness that has been indicated by the critics of this approach. Indeed, the study of well-ordered police state as a specific form of early modern social disciplining inevitably concentrates on the normative aspect of this phenomenon and does not sufficiently addresses its reception (interiorization or rejection) by various elements of the social fabrics. Authors dealing with confessionalization, public welfare or administrative disciplining generally interpreted the repetitive character of many police regulations as the indication of routine violations of these norms necessitating their routine enforcement. The degree of effectiveness of *Polizeistaat* institutions and practices can be indirectly assessed taking into consideration the factor of time period when they were enforced and the size or rather the density of the territory in question. Obviously, continuous pursuit of the well-ordered police state ideals by the Central European rulers in the course of many decades and even centuries had to produce more tangible results than were ever achieved by in Russia, where the attempts to follow various western models proceeded in a chaotic and mutually contradictory manner. So much less impressive was the disciplinary

effect of policies of Russian occupation authorities in the principalities, which lasted for only four and a half years. Even the entire epoch of the Organic Statutes (1834-1858) was too short a time-span and the definitive results were achieved only in those aspects of the Statute legislation, which were later confirmed by the independent Romanian government (such as public hygiene or the army, but hardly book censorship). The same refers to the factor institutional density and the size of the territory. The relatively small size of the territory and an originally dense network of what some sociologists call “infrastructural power” explain why *Polizeistaat* was more effective in the central German states in comparison with a sprawling continental empire such as Russia, let alone a peripheral territory, which was never formally incorporated.

One of the advantages of approaching the Organic Statutes as the embodiment of the well-ordered police state ideals is that provided an opportunity to analyze the transfer of the administrative technologies across imperial borders and their relationship to the reform efforts undertaken by indigenous political elites. This has important implications for the understanding of the character of political modernization in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The reforms of 18th century Moldavian and Wallachian princes, Russian occupation authorities or the first post-unification Romanian government of the early 1860s all sought to transform local institutions in accordance with some Central or Western European models. Nevertheless, it is difficult to construct a unilinear narrative of modernization on the basis of these episodes since each subsequent set of reforms was conceived in explicit opposition to the policies of previous government. Instead of being a persistent implementation of a single Western or Central European blueprint, the emergence of modern Romanian state in the 18th –19th centuries represented a number of separate reform impulses, whereby the continental empires and Romanian elites sought to consolidate their traditional social or political dominance in changing circumstances.

Another important characteristic of modernization process is elucidated by placing the Organic Statutes into West – East gradient of political development, which reveals different character of “deployment” of police institutions and practices in Western, Central and Eastern Europe. It has been noted that in comparison with the French case, the German territorial states demonstrate greater “etatization” of the police practices despite the substantial role of the local corporate bodies.⁷⁷² The latter contrasted with the Russian experience, which demonstrates first an almost exclusive monopolization of police by the state and later its attempt to (re)construct local corporate bodies able to shoulder part of the police functions.⁷⁷³ In case of the Organic Statutes, the institutions and practices of well-ordered police state were applied to the task of empire building. Originally, a resource-mobilization strategy characteristic of small territorial states of Central Europe, the *Polizeistaat* policies acquired an imperial dimension when they were used to transform the ecology of Danubian frontier. This necessarily introduced important modifications in the character of these policies that were concomitant with the transformation of the Central European well-ordered police state in the first half of the 19th century.

The Organic Statutes were produced in the epoch of change in the correlation of welfare, security and law enforcement functions of police, which accompanied the evolution of the Central and Eastern European regimes from enlightened absolutism towards modern variety of police state understood as “arbitrary and ruthless action of the governments against citizens and the dominance of security of the state over all other considerations.”⁷⁷⁴ They demonstrate the process of institutionalization of police as well as the emergence of the political police as a specific institution distinguished from the totality of other police institutions and practices. Based upon the maxims of the 18th century philosophy of

⁷⁷² Foucault, “Governmentality,” in Graham Burchell et al. (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1991), 86-105.

⁷⁷³ Mark Raeff, *Understanding Imperial Russia. State and Society in the Old Regime* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1984), 65.

enlightened absolutism and orderly government, the Organic Statutes at the same time were influenced by post 1815 struggle of the Eastern absolutisms with the revolutionary movements in Western and Southern Europe. Increasing institutionalization of the *techniques of police* (the establishment of Danubian quarantine, control over the cross-border movements, book and newspaper censorship) was paralleled by redefinition of goals, whose attainment they were supposed to serve. Remaining part of the frontier of civilization, the Romanian principalities in the age of Nicholas I acquired in the eyes of the imperial authorities the role of forward bastions that Russian *ancien regime* opposed to the European revolution.

From the point of view of struggle of the continental empires over the frontier zone, the policies of the Russian authorities were both a success and a failure. In so far as the reforms transformed the ecology of the Danubian frontier zone establishing a firmer control over the population movements and consolidating the political structures of the principalities, they generally weakened the Ottoman dominance in the lower Danube and thus can be considered a success. However, as these objectives were being achieved, the very character and goals of the struggle changed. On the one hand, there were unresolved tensions within the Romanian elite concerning the distribution of power and social privilege. On the other hand, consolidation of the formal autonomy of the principalities vis-a-vis the Ottoman Empire offered a new space for maneuver that could be used by those elements within the boyar class, whose political or economic aspirations were frustrated by internal struggles. Reducing the Ottoman interference into the internal affairs of Moldavia and Wallachia, the Adrianople treaty not only established Russian protectorate over the principalities, but also opened them to European cultural and political influences. Despite the confirmation of the Ottoman sovereignty and Russian protection, the situation in which the Romanian boyars had

⁷⁷⁴ D. E. Emerson, *Metternich and the Political Police* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1968), 32-34

to choose between these two empires was becoming a thing of the past as third powers obtained the possibility to exert a moral influence over Romanian elite. In this respect, the durability of Russia's hegemony in the principalities depended on creation of an institutional framework that in the absence of formal annexation could secure cooperation between the empire and a peripheral elite. The failure of the Russia's policy to create such a framework revealed a characteristic incapacity of the imperial regime to wield an informal empire beyond its borders.

The analysis of this failure can be facilitated through a comparison with the 18th century example of successful cooperation between central and peripheral elites. The desire of peripheral elite to consolidate its social and/ or economic positions was one of the factors facilitating its incorporation into Russian imperial nobility. Imposition or confirmation of serfdom and recognition of noble status and/or traditional privileges and institutions of local elites in the 18th century served as important leverages of imperial influence in the borderland territories. The possession of military and administrative capacities that were in demand in imperial center, could further cement the alliance between them and a westernizing empire. Baltic German barons and Ukrainian Cossack *starshina* represent two instances of such relatively successful interaction between empire and local elites in the 18th century. Although Russian institutional development in the 18th century displayed the tendency towards unification and administrative uniformity, a peculiar version of well-ordered police state created by Catherine the Great based on delegation of police functions and presupposing a wide participation of nobility in local government proved accommodative enough of the interests of the borderland elites. This combination of indirect rule, traditional for a continental empire, with greater uniformity in administration dictated by the late 18th century science of government constituted the strong point of the administrative reform of Catherine the Great. However, subsequent transformations in the internal structure of the Russian

Empire paralleled by changes in the official ideology in the post-revolutionary epoch affected the relationships between the monarchy and the nobility and reduced the empire's potential of accomodating the political interests of local elites.

Manifested, among other things, by curtailment of Bessarabia autonomy in 1828, these transformations had some implications for the process of bargaining between Russian authorities and Romanian elites in the process of elaboration of the Organic Statutes for Moldavia and Wallachia. The replacement of Catherine's "empire of the nobles" by bureaucratic absolutism of Nicholas I only strengthened skeptical attitude that Russian rulers had for the administrative capacities of Romanian boyars. Although the early 19th century witnessed various constitutional settlements between imperial center and borderland elites, the subsequent development of ministerial government in Russia tended to strengthen central bureaucratic attitudes that abhorred any delegation of authority. Increasing marginalization of provincial nobility in an increasingly bureaucratized local administration coupled with a dogged defense its social privilege constitute an important characteristic of political development of the Russian Empire during the reign of Nicholas I, influencing the policy of Russian occupation authorities in Moldavia and Wallachia in 1828-1834. By the time of the most active phase of Russia's involvement in the internal affairs of the principalities, the former already evolved too far away from the "empire of the nobility" of Catherine the Great.

Conceived in conditions of crisis of the relationships between imperial center and regional elites as well as generally diminishing importance of the nobility in empire's internal administration, the Organic Statutes offered various strata of the Romanian elite fewer possibilities for the realization of their political and social ambitions than existed in late 18th century Russian Empire. Even the 1818 "Statute for the Formation of Bessarabian Province" and what remained of it after 1828 was more accommodative of the noble interests than the Organic Statutes. The institutionalization of boyar representation by the Organic Statutes,

which was absent in the late 18th century “empire of nobles” should not mislead one. The political system created by Catherine the Great offered greater career opportunities to Eastern European nobilities than the bureaucratic absolutism of Nicholas I or the regime that he sponsored in Moldavia and Wallachia. Formal annexation of the principalities advocated by Kiselev would not have changed much. It would have come too late for the Moldavian and Wallachian boyars to repeat 18th century carriers of the Baltic Germans or the Ukrainian Cossack *starshina*. After Decembrist uprising and Polish rebellion of 1830-1831 Nicholas I pursued a policy which combined a staunch defense of the social status quo with a deep seated suspicion of the nobility’s political aspirations.

Consolidating existent social relations, Russian policy at the same time significantly reduced the political capacities of various segments of local elites by devising a system of quasi-constitutional “checks and balances” and placing the Russian consuls in the position of the arbiters of the institutionalized conflicts between the hospodars and the boyar assemblies. These persistent political conflicts were paralleled by unresolved tensions within the boyar class. The absence of noble assemblies and lack of common noble culture exacerbated the differences between the landed aristocracy and numerous landless nobles, increasingly engaged in commercial activities and increasingly weary of minute regulations introduced by the Organic Statutes. As a result, the reforms undertaken during Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1828-1834 failed to turn the boyars into a consolidated service class on the model of Russian nobility. Instead, the boyar status continued to embrace several groups with different economic functions and political outlooks, none of which provided a social and political basis for the regime. Hardly solving the problem of correlation between public authority and social privilege as well as the distribution of the latter within the boyar class, the Organic Statutes routinized the old conflicts. Allowing for easy interference of Russian consuls into local administration, it also generated an almost universal dissatisfaction

with the new regime depriving it of a public support and explaining the popularity of oppositional and even revolutionary attitudes. Appearing to increase Russia's formal dominances in the principalities, the Organic Statutes nevertheless failed to accommodate diverging political aspirations of various boyar factions and produce a homogeneous noble service class committed to the preservation of new political settlement. The institutionalization of Russian hegemony in the Romanian principalities was purchased at the price of growing discontent of various social groups, who increasingly saw the source of their troubles in Russian dominance.

A continued institutional struggle between the princely authorities and the Assemblies, in which Russian consul was supposed to play the role of the arbiter proved to be a less opportune combination for the perpetuation of the Russia's political and moral dominance in the principalities that it might appear at first glance. The outcomes of the conflicts between hospodars and the opposition ultimately depended upon the personal qualities of the princes, their abilities to control the assemblies and neutralize the figure of Russian consul. Despite the existence of similar institutional frameworks in the post-1834 period, the situations in Moldavia and Wallachia differed markedly. An outspoken adversary of the boyar radicals of the 1820s and staunch defender of social privilege, Moldavian hospodar Mihai Sturdza became a champion of absolutist rule after his appointment and modified his views accordingly. In 1830s and 1840s Mihai Sturdza actively elevated people to boyar rank for money – a policy that he vehemently criticized in the 1820s.⁷⁷⁵ On a rhetorical level, his criticism of the *cărvunarii* of the 1820s gave way to the criticism of aristocracy, “used to enjoy exclusive rights and onerous privileges,” “hostile to the Statute” and “displaying an obvious tendency for returning to the past.” Proclaiming the struggle against the abusive and retrograde aristocracy for the greater public benefit, but paying little

⁷⁷⁵ Between 1828 and 1849 the number of Moldavian boyar families increased from 902 in to 3325. Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova in secolul al XIX-lea*, 100.

attention to the constitutional limitations imposed by the Statute, the hospodar managed to overcome the boyar opposition, arrest its leaders, eliminate or neutralize Russian consuls, who supported them, frame up the elections to the Assembly to secure its obedience and emerged by the 1840s as a de facto absolute ruler of the principality.

Whereas, ruthless suppression of political enemies, skilful manipulation with the Russian consuls and unabashed violation of the Organic Statute made the figure of the Moldavian hospodar the main object of criticism of the Moldavian opposition, his Wallachian counterparts Alexander Ghica (1834-1842) and Gheorghe Bibesco (1842-1848) lacked determination in their relationship with the turbulent assemblies and greatly depended on the support of Russian Consul General. As a result Wallachian oppositionists headed by Ion Câmpineanu were discontent with the Statute itself and blamed the hospodar for an absolute dependency on Russian Consul General. The target of Wallachian opposition was the so-called “additional article” of the Organic Statute, which prohibited the Assembly to make any changes in the Statutes without the consent of the Sovereign and Protective Powers. After the Assembly voted for the abolition of the additional article on July 15, 1837, arguing that it contradicts the historical rights of the Assembly, Russian Consul General Ruckman demanded prorogation of the Assembly. Kiselev, whose opinion was solicited by Russian Foreign Ministry, insisted on the concerted action with the Ottoman Empire destined to “demonstrate both to locals and to maritime powers the determination of the Sovereign and Protecting powers to preserve their authority and rights over these provinces.”⁷⁷⁶ Following this advise, Russian representative in Stambul obtained a Sultan’s *ferman* calling the hospodar to adopt severe measures against the opposition and the next Assembly was obliged to confirm the “additional article” on May 9, 1838. Although Alexander Ghica successor

⁷⁷⁶ “Zapiska bez nazvania o roli reglamentov,” October 16, 1837, RGIA, fond, 958, op. 1, no. 624, F. 34.

Gheorghe Bibesco (1842-1848) enjoyed the legitimacy of election⁷⁷⁷ and friendly support of Kiselev, who never lost interest in the affairs of the principalities, he also encountered a staunch opposition on the part of the Assembly and had to solicit Russia's permission to prorogue it permanently.

Commenting on the constitutional conflicts between the hospodars and the Assemblies in 1830s and 1840s, Kiselev had to admit "vices inherent in the organization of the principalities."⁷⁷⁸ Kiselev argued that this shortcoming was embedded in the principle of election of the hospodars, which had to be adopted as soon as it was decided not to make the principalities fully independent from the Ottoman Empire (likewise, against his counseling). General Assemblies were supposed as a check on the despotism of the hospodars, but failed to provide both the Sovereign and Protective powers with "any repressive authority in respect of the whole of the governmental apparatus of the principalities," which was essential as long as the principalities were to serve as a "sanitary cordon" for Russia.⁷⁷⁹ Kiselev also admitted an odd role of the Assemblies in the whole system, which led them either to oppose the hospodars and thereby turn into oligarchies, or support them thereby becoming a means of oppression. To make matters worse, the hospodars lacked moral influence over their subjects. Unlike the Russian provisional administration, which Kiselev headed, the hospodars did not derive their legitimacy explicitly from Russian imperial government, and did not have at their disposal a reliable military force to quell the uprising in case of necessity.

Recognizing institutional weaknesses of the Organic Statutes, Kiselev was able to offer only to his own personal qualities and example. Commenting on the revolutionary situation in the principalities in spring 1848, Kiselev argued that a "powerful individual"

⁷⁷⁷ He was the only hospodar ever elected by the assembly under the Organic Statutes. All the rest were appointed by Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

⁷⁷⁸ "Opinion du comte Kiselev," June 5, 1848, RGVIA, fond 438, op. 1, no. 155, Ff. 11-17. The easiness with which he spoke of the institutional faults existing in the relationships between the hospodars and the Assemblies is explained by the fact that these elements of the Organic Statutes (chapters I and II) were already drafted by the boyar committee on the basis of the Ministerial instructions by the time he stepped in November 1829.

could have regained control over the situation. The problem, however, consisted in the fact that the aristocracy of the principalities, “demoralized by the Phanariote rule,” could not offer better candidates into hospodars than the present incumbents. According to Kiselev, in such situation the personality of Russian consul was more central to the preservation of the Russian influence than any “additional articles” to the Statutes, which gave Russian consulate formal power to interfere in all internal affairs of the principalities and veto any undesirable appointment or change in local government.⁷⁸⁰ Stressing this point, Kiselev inadvertently reminded Russian foreign ministry of the failure of Russian consuls after 1834 to acquire the degree of personal influence over Romanians, which he attained through right combination of firmness and enlightenment. Contrasted with the unpopularity of Russian consuls Kiselev’s undiminishing personal prestige in the principalities (in 1842 he was given the full citizenship while the leaders of Wallachian opposition continuously sought to win his support in their struggle against prince Bibescu) only illustrated the continued importance of personal factor that was yet another proof of the failure to institutionalize Russia’s moral influence in Moldavia and Wallachia.

However, the social and institutional aspects of relationship between imperial center and a peripheral elite do not exhaust all factors that account for Russia’s failure to project a sustainable influence in Moldavia and Wallachia. No less important are discursive or ideological aspects of their interaction. The position of Russia and the Romanian principalities in the symbolic geography of enlightenment explains both a strong moral influence, which empire enjoyed at some moment as well as subsequent rapid loss of this influence. The reform efforts of Peter the Great and his successors did not eliminate the distance between Russia and its Central and Western European models, but nevertheless created a new political culture uniting the monarchy and the nobility behind the agenda of

⁷⁷⁹ “Zapiska bez nazvania o roli reglamentov,” October, 16, 1837, RGIA, fond, 958, op. 1, no. 624, F. 34.

⁷⁸⁰ Opinion du comte Kiselev, June 5, 1848, RGVIA, F. 438, op. 1, no. 155, Ff. 11-17.

westernization. Although the majority of Russia's population continued to live in a traditional way, a Europeanized façade proved capable of attracting peripheral elites. By the time of the intensification of Russian-Romanian contacts in the late 18th century the empire was represented in the principalities by a francophone officer and diplomatic corps, i. e. the most westernized parts of Russian society. On the other hand, these contacts coincided with the change of identity of the Romanian elite that gradually abandoned neo-Byzantine cultural habits in favor of the western ones. This was enough to make Russia culturally attractive of the Moldavian and Wallachian boyars, at least for a period of time. Nevertheless, even at its peak, Russian influence remained largely derivative. Even though common Orthodox faith did play a part, Russia wielded influence in Moldavia and Wallachia by the mandate of Enlightenment rather than due its attractiveness as an original civilization.

Russia's self-portrayal as a mandatory of European civilization in Moldavia and Wallachia and the derivative legitimacy that it offered became a source of weakness as Russia's own symbolic relationship with Europe in the 19th century became increasingly strained. While Rousseauistic criticism of moral aspects of progress found its way into Russian literature already during the reign of Catherine the Great, French revolution ended the period, during which Russian rulers drew their political models from Western European intellectual milieu. Instead, it presented the successors of Catherine the Great with the necessity to reformulate the policy of westernization in a way that would enable the monarchy to remain in Pushkin's famous phrase "Russia's first European." At the same time, Russian rulers looked for a version of Russian identity that could serve as a test of political loyalty of the imperial elite, which, as the assassination of Paul I and the Decembrist uprising had demonstrated, was not to be taken for granted. The concept of "official nationality" proposed by Nicholas' Minister of Enlightenment Sergei Uvarov served the role of a filter in the process of adoption of Western ideas on Russian soil.

The policies of “sanitary cordon” pursued in Moldavia and Wallachia were part of Russian rulers’ struggle against revolution. Their understanding of the nature of revolution derived from the conceptual universe of well-ordered police state, which informed other aspects of their policies. Meticulous regulation of all aspects of social life characteristic of the early modern well-ordered police reflected the assumption that there is the ultimate rational organization of human community and that this organization could be arrived first through analytical effort and later implemented in practice by means of governmental policy. This in turn presupposed that the rulers pursuing this ideal are absolutely rational in their decisions and that the social organization produced by their policies could embrace all kinds of relationships between individuals. In this conceptual universe, human society became identical to the state and resembled enormous clockwork, whose smooth operation was conditioned on rational functioning of each element (an individual or a group). Once achieved, this rational organization had to remain the same and secure only mechanical growth and accumulation of resources. As long as the activities of individuals followed prescribed rational routes, the future in well-ordered police state remained eminently predictable. Conversely, any manifestations of social life that remained beyond the rational regulation by governmental policies were viewed as irrational. There could be no two legitimate ways in which a given individual could perform his or her functions since any deviation from the prescribed route producing an unpredictable outcome was potentially disruptive for the operation of the whole. From this point of view revolutionaries were criminals not only because they challenged the God-given power of the legitimate rulers, but also because they disrupted the rational social organization represented by well-ordered police state. Such an understanding of political subversion offered the possibility to justify the policy of sanitary cordon within the discourse of civilizing mission in the principalities, which Russia carried out as a mandatory of European enlightenment. Both political

despotism and semi-oriental mores produced by centuries of the Ottoman dominance and subversive attitudes generated by European revolution were equally irrational and harmful to the interests of common good, supposedly embedded in the Organic Statutes.

This kind of reasoning might have spared Russian elite from self-doubts and preserved their 18th century political identity long after the ideological unity of enlightenment was irreparably compromised by the French revolution. However, creating a sanitary cordon in order to filter the disruptive influences of European civilization, Russia could no longer claim that it represented the whole Europe for Moldavia and Wallachia or serve as the only conduit of local society's contacts with the West. Instead, Russian government used one part of the European legacy (the well-ordered police state) in order to fight with and suppress another (the revolutionary manifestations of the Atlantic political tradition). In this ideological struggle between "Europe of the two" (Great Britain and France) and "Europe of the three" (Austria, Prussia and Russia) Russia failed to win support of the elites of Moldavia and Wallachia. This failure had to do with the lack of positive absolutist experience in the 18th century Moldavia and Wallachia as well as with the civilizational preferences implicit in Romanian national project. The failure of Phanariote princes to eliminate the oppositional ideology of the boyars premised on traditional rights and privileges indirectly accounted for the unpopularity of the policies of Russian authorities informed by the ideals of the Central European well-ordered police state. On the other hand, the cultural affinity with the Western Europe and first of all with France implied in the idea Latin origin of the Romanians, made natural a pro-French orientation of the first generation of the Romanian nationalists emerging in the 1830s and 1840s. Having contributed a great deal to the popularity of French language and culture in the later 18th –early 19th centuries, Russian Empire now could hardly prevent either the intensifying contacts with the West or the progress of French political influence in Moldavia and Wallachia.

Characteristic in this respect was a trip to Paris and London undertaken by the leader of the Wallachian oppositional boyars Ion Câmpineanu undertaken with encouragement of British Consul Robert Colquhoun and a secretary of the French Consulate Felix Colson. Meeting with the leader of Polish revolutionary emigration Adam Czartoryski, French Prime Minister Thiers and the British Prime Minister Palmerstone, Câmpineanu presented the political program of Wallachian opposition (also expressed in the project of constitution and “Act of unity and independence” written in 1838), proclaiming the goal of achieving a truly autonomous state for Wallachia, minimizing foreign (i. e. first of all Russian) interference), and a possible union of Moldavia and Wallachia under the guarantee of Great Britain and France and a freely elected prince. Listened to sympathetically but obtaining no practical support Câmpineanu returned to Wallachia and was immediately arrested by the authorities.⁷⁸¹ Despite inconsequential results of his mission, the symbolic geography Câmpineanu’s journey is revealing. Making their choice between “Europe of the two” and “Europe of the three”, the younger generation of Romanian elite reinterpreted it in terms of a choice between Europe and Orient, between progressive civilization and oppressive despotism and thereby turned against Russia the semi-orientalizing discourse, which it hitherto used to justify its dominance in Moldavia and Wallachia.

The reports of Russian secrete agent Liprandi, who for some time after the evacuation of the Russian troops continued his intelligence activities in the principalities, pictured the formation of the new type of opposition to Russian dominance in the principalities. Russian agent directly related the complications of the Russian consuls to the influences of foreign diplomatic agents and writers. According to him, the principalities for some time served as a “secret club of all thee demagogues of all European countries. Nowhere, not even in London, they are so well protected from supervision as in the Principalities, which lack the kind of

⁷⁸¹ Radu Florescu, *The Struggle Against Russia in the Romanian Principalities*, 167; for the account of Campneanu’s “national party” see Ibid., 163-178.

police service that would keep an eye on them or at least dispose of a list of the dangerous persons.” According to Liprandi, such individuals enjoyed protection of foreign consuls in the major towns and in the districts they were met friendly by the *ispravniks*, educated in the West or in the school of Heliade (Ion Heliade-Rsdulescu – V. T.) and therefore “imbibed with a Western spirit.”

Even more pernicious was the moral influence of western, mainly French, writers, who opened the new era of daydreaming for the younger generation. Saint-Mark Girardin, whom Liprandi personally met in 1836 in the principalities, “enticed them into the realm of Utopia” and sowed the idea of acquiring independence by creation of Dacian Kingdom.”⁷⁸² According to Liprandi, “the younger generation of the boyars hates the present order and concentrates its hatred primarily on Russia, which had created this order and is guarding it.” Having received there education in Paris or in Bucharest under the guidance of Heliade, the younger generation of Romanian elite was influenced by “pernicious” or bizarre” ideas that the Wallachians are the true descendants of the ancient Romans, share a common origin with Western Europeans, and therefore should try to imitate them in everything from the language to the way of thinking, mores, government and even religion.” To this end, the new Wallachian writers were trying to seduce the simple people away from Russia, with which it had been related by instinct and centuries-long ties, by gradually replacing numerous Slavic words with Italian, French or Latin and gradually replacing Cyrillic alphabet with the Latin one.⁷⁸³

The events of 1848 in Jassy and Bucharest demonstrated a manifest failure of the policy of “sanitary cordon” against the revolutionary wave in Europe was a failure. Moldova demonstrated the first signs of unrest already at the end of March 1848, when a number of liberal-minded young boyars assembled in the Jassy hotel “St. Petersburg” signing the

⁷⁸² Liprandi, *Pridunaiskie kniazhestva*, 3-4.

⁷⁸³ Ibid., 6-8.

petition to the hospodar Mihai Sturdza in which they stated their grievances. Dissimulating willingness to consider the demands of the opposition, the prince quickly summoned the troops that dispelled the assembly and nipped the revolution in the bud. The complications in Moldova were soon overtaken by the events in Bucharest in June 1848 provoked by the revolutionary agitation among peasantry and town dwellers by the young Romanian students recently arrived from Paris. They led to the dethronement of hospodar Gheorghe Bibescu and the appointment of a Provisional Revolutionary government including C. A. Rossetti, Nicolae Bălcescu and Nicolae Golescu. Nearly toppled by a counter-revolutionary coup attempted by a number of pro-Russian officers of the army, plagued by the rumors of impending Russian occupation and defaulting the promises it had made to peasantry, the revolutionary government in Bucharest barely survived the summer and was put to end in September by the Ottoman troops.⁷⁸⁴

Nevertheless, the reinstallation of the regime of the Ottoman sovereignty and Russian protection over the principalities by the Convention of Balta-Liman of May 1, 1849 was purely formal. The transformation of the Romanian's attitudes towards the Russians was irreversible and logical outcome of the outlook of the younger generation of the Romanian elite. According to Petr Alabin writing at the beginning of the Crimean war in 1853, "the venerable boyars, who witnessed our deeds for their fatherland, those who remember acutely how we with our own hands broke the yoke, which weighted upon them, how we extracted them from the abyss of ignorance and semi-savagery - these venerable elders have either left the political life or have passed away altogether." This, according to Alabin, left Russians without local support. "The majority of the Moldavian and Wallachian intelligentsia are hostile towards us for it belongs to the new generation, whose liberal ideas were frustrated in 1848 because of us." As a result, "there is no one to raise a voice for us. Whatever good we

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., 189-196.

have done for Moldavia and Wallachia is forgotten, although it cost us a lot of blood. Now they remember only that we did not allow the principalities to adopt the forms, upon which in their opinion, depends the happiness of a country.” Having suppressed Wallachian revolution of 1848, Russia soon found itself at war with France, which in many respects provided a model of Romanians. As to the leaders of the Romanian national movement, they have long become convinced that Russia was a despotic power, which was the very enemy of civilization, which it had put upon its banner. “The revolutionary party of Moldavians and Wallahians, observed Alabin, consider us to be the enemies of civilization, who are not only willing to suppress the democratic elements, upon which they are going to build a new, and in their opinion great building, but also deprive them of their fatherland by annexing the Danubian principalities.” Unlike some of his comrades-in-arms in Russian occupation army, Alabin remained unconvinced by the outward expressions of sympathy, loyalty and love demonstrated by Romanians in 1853 noting that “if we happen to loose this war, they will no longer be constrained by anything and will try to pay us back for 1848...”⁷⁸⁵

Alabin’s words turned out to be doubly prophetic. After Austria demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from the principalities in June 1854, Romanians hardly regretted their departure. As soon as Russia lost Crimean war, its formal dominance in the Romanian principalities collapsed. Retaining the formal sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire over Moldavia and Wallachia, the Treaty of Paris of 1856 replaced Russia’s exclusive protectorate in the principalities by a collective guarantee of all major European powers. The treaty also presupposed convocation of *ad hoc* Assemblies of Moldavian and Wallachian Divans under the supervision of representatives of the European powers in order to elaborate the principles of the future form of government for the principalities. However, the Paris Convention of August 7, 1858, which replaced the Organic Statutes as a formal constitution

⁷⁸⁵ Petr Alabin, *Chetyre voyny*, 43.

of the principalities, did not satisfy the demand of the *ad hoc* Assemblies for outright transformation of Moldavia and Wallachia into Romania under the rule of a representative of a foreign dynasty. Nevertheless, it presupposed a minimal unification of Moldavia and Wallachia into United Principalities, which had common legislative and judicial body and did not preclude the double election of A. I. Cuza to the Moldavian and Wallachian thrones in January 1859. Although Russian foreign policy after the Crimean war demonstrated greater flexibility and in fact supported the unification of principalities in 1857-1858 as well as it Romania's independence in 1877-1878, the legacy of the past prevented Russia to regain the influence, which it had in Moldavia and Wallachia in the early 19th century. Occasionally lukewarm allies, Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Romania stayed in different diplomatic coalitions and, what is more important, had different civilizational orientations for the rest of the pre-WWI period.

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