The 'Conquering' Soldier-Merchants of the Balkans: Colonization, State Interventionism and Separatist Claims in the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (18th-19th Centuries)*

Aysel Yıldız

Abstact: This article studies the questions of self-rule and state intervention in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, and the socio-economic life of a late frontier society against the backdrop of the eighteenth-century wave of internal colonization by Ottoman Muslims, mostly of Janissary background. It aims at revealing complex relations between agents on three levels: local (*voivodes*, *boyars*, commoners), the regional (Janissaries and other soldiery) and the imperial; while also examining the influx of Muslims into the Principalities and its consequences as an interplay between various claims of trading rights, provisionist policies implemented by the imperial centre and the autonomous desires of the native nobility. The paper contends that the tributary status of the Principalities provided a major advantage in protecting the local population against Muslim penetration, as manifested in the ensuing direct intervention of the Porte and consequent trade restrictions. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, the policy of keeping the Muslim-Ottoman presence and activities in the region at a minimum and obtaining full liberty of trade became an important component in the struggle for economic detachment from the Ottoman orbit, which in the long run contributed to the nation-state formation in Romania.

Keywords: Danube, Wallachia and Moldavia, Ottoman, colonization, governmental intervention

* This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (Grant Agreement No 849911).



Yıldız, A. (2025), The 'Conquering' Soldier-Merchants of the Balkans: Colonization, State Interventionism and Separatist Claims in the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (18th-19th Centuries), *Journal of Balkan Studies,* 5(1), 7-37.

Assoc. Prof. Dr., Foundation for Research and Technology, Heraklion-Greece, yildiz.aysel@gmail.com

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0196-6064

https://ror.org/052rphn09

Balkan Studies Foundation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.51331/A050
Journal of Balkan Studies, 5(1), 2025
balkanjournal.org

Received:20.08.2024
Revision: 28.10.2024
Accepted:14.11.2024

Introduction

In his famous Plane's-Eye-View of the Mosaic metaphor for integrative histories of the early modern era, Joseph Fletcher detects a world-wide population recovery after the seventeenth-century setback, a quickening of global tempo, the growth of regional cities and the rise of commercial classes. More noise, more motion, more commerce and more travel were noticeable on a global scale from this metaphoric distance. Long-distance trade and traditional cities continued, but this was a period of inland commerce, giving rise to regional-type cities that served as centers of economic activity for the surrounding regions. In conjunction with the new urban centres and classes, the period also witnessed the deepening of socio-economic inequalities (Fletcher, 1985:37–58).

Although the eighteenth-century Danube bears almost all the characteristics of Fletcher's panoramic view of integrative history, it was generally warfare that caused the most noise and motion in this part of the early modern world. Military mobilizations, huge armies moving back and forth, and violent clashes certainly quickened the tempo, disrupted rural production, harmed economic transactions, and caused population flight. The emergence of new garrison cities serving as the centres of regional trade but also accommodating thousands of soldiers changed regional dynamics and further deepened social inequalities. During the same period, Wallachia and Moldavia turned into "*buffer provinces*", to borrow a term from Viorel Panaite (Panaite, 2000: 235), in the long conflicts between the Ottoman, Habsburg and Russian Empires. Invasions, armed clashes, and consequent social disturbances became an endemic problem in this frontier region surrounded by the grand fortresses of Bender (mod. Bender), Hotin (mod. Khotyn), Akkerman (mod. Belgorod-Dnestrovsk), İbrail (mod. Braila), Vidin (mod. Vidin), İsmail (mod. İzmail), Kili (mod. Kilia) and Yergöğü (mod. Giurgiu). A desperate peasantry tried to survive under the oppression of local nobles (*boyar*s and other landed gentry), Phanariot rulers (voivode), imperial masters (Ottoman authorities), as well as the ever-increasing assaults by soldiers serving in these garrison cities.

This paper studies the eighteenth-century wave of internal colonization by Muslim soldiers and the ensuing state response, set against the backdrop of the privileged (tributary-protected)[1] status of Wallachia and Moldavia, and the question of state interventionism. Rather than imprisoning the history of the entire region in the dualistic approaches of Ottoman exploitation and Romanian subordination,[2] or running the risk of reducing the importance of the entire region to provisioning the capital and its role in diplomatic relations,[3] this study attempts to gain some insights into the interplay of local and imperial dynamics in shaping the imperial policies that concerned these provinces. I argue that the tributary status and territorial integrity of the Danubian Principalities acted as leverage against Muslim expansion, while the strategy of keeping the Muslim-Turkish presence and its economic activities at a minimum became an important motivation for the local elite and authorities, which in the long run contributed to nation-state formation in Romania.

The 'Conquering' Soldiers and Internal Colonization

Internal colonization can best be described as various claims being laid new or unoccupied territories, especially within a country or around the borderlands. This concept is sometimes used interchangeably with internal colonialism, as both imply coercion, an asymmetric relationship to land and labour as well as an internal rather than external process of domination. The latter, however, is more often employed in describing in-country patterns of regional and racial inequalities that include economic exploitation, cultural hegemony, and the political subordination of ethnically different regions by the superior groups. Internal colonization, on the other hand, mostly refers to "physical conquest" of a certain region not through invasion or conquest, but by the creation of a market or settlement in a semi- or unoccupied periphery.[4] The best-known example is the Prussian state's sponsored program of colonization of the Baltic and Polish lands (Jones, 2014: 457–92; Etkind, 2011: 6–7, 21: Etkind, 2015: 159–60). As far as the Ottoman Empire is concerned,

Trian Stoianovich notes that a para-military and pastoral-agrarian wave of internal colonization was observed in the eighteenth century, best exemplified by Albanian penetration into the Balkans and the Mediterranean and by the rise of the "*typically colonial institution*" of large landed estates (*çiftlik*) (Stoainovich, 1953: 401–402). The expansion of the Muslim Ottoman soldiery and commoners into the Danubian Principalities and the establishment of pasto-agrarian estates (animal enclosures*: kışlaks* or *çiftlik*s) within these provinces should be added to the same picture.

Here, I consider the relationship between the Ottoman soldiery and locals in Wallachia and Moldavia as a form of asymmetric relation and define their spatial expansion into these provinces as a wave of internal colonization. It can be defined as the physical penetration of "superior" (Muslim/ Turkish and soldier) elements into a periphery with an "inferior" status (*reaya*) and identity (Christian) for settlement, production, and trade. These provinces were neither empty nor unoccupied, but still were "perceived empty".[5] They were considered almost a "foreign country" by the soldiers serving in the garrison cities, who mostly came from Anatolia. As a part of their tributary status, cadastral surveys (*tapu tahrir*) were never conducted in either province, tax collection was entrusted to the voivodes and there was a special police force (*beşlüyan*), meaning that other military units had no authority in the region. Both provinces also preserved their territorial integrity and enjoyed jurisdictional autonomy; cases of the Muslims and non-Muslims were treated differently, as if they were subjects of different states. Indeed, according to the secretary of Prince Brâncoveanu, Muslim Ottoman subjects resembled "*foreigners rather than the masters of the country*" (Georgescu, 1971:156).

Frontier ideology accompanied Muslim (mostly military) penetration into the region and further sharpened the perceived emptiness and otherness of the Principalities. It was the country of "others" and "infidels" for an average Muslim, with its limited Islamic presence, different ethnic composition and dominant Christian culture.[6] Foreign invasions, especially the Austrian occupation of 1718-1739, and internal reforms

of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries created further alienation, accompanied by the increasing *sunni*fication of the Empire and the rise of anti-Christian sentiment among the Muslim populations in garrisons cities (Taki, 2007: 50–51; Gradeva, 2009: 342–46). Even in official correspondence, fortresses around the Danube such as Vidin are frequently referred as the "Abode of holy war and warriors of faith" (*darü'l-cihad ve'l-mücahidin*) and the surrounding region as the "Islamic side" (***İslam yakası***).[7] For the Muslims and soldiers on the Islamic side, the Danubian Principalities appeared as "*a near yet strange country where they could act undisturbedly and without the risk of punishment*" (Kovács, 2014: 15). It was an alien and virgin land waiting to be explored and exploited.

The root of internal colonization lies in the increased strategic importance of the region and the emergence of the Danube as a frontier zone in the eighteenth century. Long years of warfare with Austria (1716-1718; 1736-1739) and Russia (1710-1711-1736-1739, 1768-1774, 1787-1792) cost the Empire the Crimea and Bessarabia, among other losses. During these wars, the Principalities were repeatedly crossed by Ottoman soldiers and invaded by the Austrian or Russian armies several times, which meant hard times for the local population.[8] In addition to wars and invasions, the massive presence of soldiers, demobilizations and war fugitives created great pressure in this frontier region. Though there were no Ottoman fortresses or garrisons within the Principalities themselves, they were surrounded by the forts of Vidin, Akkerman, Kilia, Hotin, Bender, İsmail and İbrail. Particularly during the Austrian occupation of 1689, the loss of Banat (mod. Banat) and Temeşvar (mod. Timişoara) as well as pressure on the northern border led to a steady increase in the number of soldiers and the militarization of society.[9] The case of Vidin fortress is highly illuminating in this regard: while there were 60 Janissaries serving at the fortress in 1699, their number rose to 5,440 in 1750, then to 6,163 in the next decade, steadily increasing to 7,863 in 1771 and to 9,476 only 5 years later. The total number of soldiers at the fortress of İbrail soared from 106 to 4,800 in the period 1699-1776

(Engin, 2013: 66–66). In 1763-64, while a total of 15,819 soldiers were serving at the fortresses of Vidin, Hotin, İbrail and Bender.[10]

A rapid increase in the number of soldiers in any locality inevitably has deep socio-economic impacts. In the Morea, for instance, commoners, especially residents of Mezistre (mod. Mystras) and Manya (mod. Mani), suffered from violations at the hands of the Janissaries and tımariots (cavalry troops), who became local power holders from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries (Zarinebaf, 2005: 9–47). The same pressure was also felt in Egypt from the seventeenth century onwards, with the influx of young Anatolian boys and the stationing of the Janissaries in the region. Consequently, the *azeban* troops and Janissaries acquired unprecedented weight in Egyptian society (Hathaway, 1997: 13–15). Similar developments were also observed on both sides of the Danube. The overwhelming majority of soldiers gradually began to be localized by intermarrying with local women and settling in villages or urban centers. Several of them constructed houses, and engaged in agricultural production or commerce, while some formed gangs to pillage the countryside.[11] As also witnessed in Istanbul, some Janissaries – especially the members of the 64th *cemaat* serving at Ismail fortress- tried to make easy money by demanding "protection fees" from the town's artisans by placing their regimental insignia on shop doors.[12]

The localization of fortress soldiers and their involvement in non-military activities created new pressure in the Balkans, too, initially on life in the towns and later in the countryside, putting local artisans and merchants against the newcomers for control over limited local resources. Speaking of late eighteenth-century Salonika, for instance, Stoianovich notes that almost half the town's population was composed of Janissaries, a situation that placed the Eastern Orthodox population in unanticipated competition against Janissary craftsmen (Stoainovich, 1953: 400). A similar situation was observed in most towns around the Danube, including Bucharest and Iassi. The Janissaries and auxiliary Janissary troops called *yamak*s[13] opened shops and small businesses

(grocery stores, butterworks, honeyworks, fish stores, cobbler's workshops and coffeehouses) in numerous towns and quickly penetrated almost all sectors of urban life. While most of butchers in Vidin were of Janissary background, there were a considerable number of Janissary artisans and merchants in Bucharest, and six inns were run by them.[14] As irregular residents, it seems that they did not usually assimilate into guild structure (Iordachi, 2013: 84–85); and according to one document they cheated local craftsmen and created disorder in the towns.[15] Due to complaints from local artisans, the imperial government decided to keep 20-25 outstanding Janissary craftsmen and to oust the rest from Bucharest. A similar decision was made for all but some Muslim honey dealers in Iassi.[16]

In response to fierce competition, rising tensions and limited demand by urban consumers as well as the aforementioned governmental measures, Janissaries serving in the fortresses of the Danube turned their eyes to land in the Danubian towns and the Principalities as a new field for investment.[17] The tremendous and continual demand for diary and agricultural products from the early modern metropolis of Istanbul encouraged some of them to go into agricultural production and animal husbandry as being the main items of the imperial trade. Butter (especially tallow), *pastırma*, cheese (*kaşkaval*), honey, cereal (wheat and barley) and sheep consumed in the capital were imported from these provinces, in addition to salt and timber.[18] For the soldiers of an under-financed empire, this meant extra revenue when struggling to survive in the face of constant arrears and insufficient salaries. An anonymous but pro-Janissary author of the period underlines exactly this point, and notes that the Janissaries serving at the Danubian fortresses lost their previous comforts of regular payments, high salaries, and the prestige of being holy warriors. Most returned home, while those who preferred to stay lived in miserable conditions, and thus lost their zeal to confront the enemy. In order to earn extra income, he continued, they eventually began to loan tools and means of production (carts, seed, beasts of burden) or credit to locals, on the condition that they would be

repaid during harvest time. With this money they purchased merchandise (wheat, barley, honey, butter etc.) and sold it in Istanbul (Orhonlu, 1967: 43–44). A lively commercial network, the prospect of larger profit margins and easy trade with the locals thus caused a rush into the Principalities and triggered a wave of internal colonization.

Border violations of all kinds were always an endemic problem in the Principalities, but those in the eighteenth century were more collective, more frequent and had deeper socio-economic impacts (deprivation, subordination, disruption of trade), as they included settlement, localization, indebtedness, land seizure and enserfment. The first wave began in the early decades of the century in Moldavia when the Laz *yamak*s of Trebizond who were active in provisioning the capital, crossed the province and oppressed the local people, forcing them to sell their merchandise below its market value.[19] More importantly, together with soldiers serving at the fortresses of Bender and İbrail, some of them began to settle in the region, and marry local women, forcing the peasantry into debt and seizing their landed estates. Having penetrated 55 km into the interior of the province, soldiers from Bender took control of 12 villages, while *yamak*s from Hotin continued to penetrate into the northern parts of the province, including the towns of Dorohoi, Botoşani and Hirlau. Within a short period of time, 1,600 winter pastures (*kışlak*) were established in Moldavia.[20] In response, the *yamak*s were prohibited from passing through the region, those settled were ousted following break-up of their properties, and by an imperial decree of 1731 only 20-25 Muslims merchants were allowed to conduct business in the region.[21]

Towards the mid-eighteenth century, Muslims also began to penetrate into Wallachia. Some soldiers from Bender, Silistre, Vidin, İbrail, Yergöğü, Kule and Hotin established landed estates and winter pastures/animal enclosures, and mostly forced the locals to work on their estates. Despite strict and repeated orders, new estates were created around Zimnic, opposite Ziştovi (mod. Sviştov); the *boyar*s, priests and commoners then appealed to the imperial authorities, complaining of assaults by Muslims,

and their habit of establishing new winter pastures wherever they desired, which left almost no meadows for use by the locals.[22] The report of a commission delegated by the Sultan to investigate the case reveals the extent of penetration into Wallachia in the mid-eighteenth century: there were at least 1,313 landed estates or animal enclosures, five shops, 25 rooms, 146 mills and three storehouses just around Oltenia (Kara Eflak) attached to Wallachia.[23] The Sultan ordered the immediate break-up of these estates and the deportation of their owners from the region. As a result, in the town of Karayova (mod. Craiova) alone, 131 houses, 112 mills, seven shops, two inns, three slaughterhouses, three honeyworks, three bakeries as well as a total of 702/708 landed estates and animal enclosures were demolished. (Table I)

Estates	C. HR. 16/870	TSMK. H. 445
Kışlak/çiftliks	702	708
Houses	131	131
Shop	7	7
Inn	2	2
Slaughterhouse	3	3
Honeyworks	3	3
Bakery	3	3
Mill	112	112
Total	963	969

Table I. Total number of buildings/landed estates demolished in Karayova in 1760, according to two different reports (sources: BOA, C. HR. 16/780 (4 R 1174/13 November 1760); TSMK, H. 445, fls. 40-41).

As may be observed in the Table, following the governmental decision more than 900 buildings owned by the Muslims in five districts of Karayova were demolished, their owners were banished, and all animals or

agricultural products were transferred to the other side of the Danube. Of 450 landed estates (*moşiye*) under the control of the ousted Muslims, 393 were seized and returned to their former owners (TSMK.H. 445, fls. 40-41). As centers of animal breeding, winter pastures were particularly widespread in Wallachia. In 1753, a total of 15,370 cattle and pack animals raised in 201 animal enclosures held by 233 soldiers from Vidin were transferred to the other side of the Danube.[24] These high numbers strongly suggest that the penetration of soldiers into different parts of Wallachia and Moldavia was a far from temporary phenomenon and provide a good idea of their infiltration into the sectors of the economy as producers and traders.

Much like the local peasantry, *boyar*s or monasteries had little chance of resisting these armed soldier entrepreneurs; and thus, land seizure, peasant indebtedness, dispossession and forced labour were the predictable consequences of this asymmetric relationship. Indeed, more than 2,995 Wallachian peasant houses were located in 187 winter pastures owned by 188 Muslims in the regions of Aslanata (mod. Slatina) and Telliorman (mod. Teleorman). If we take the average size of each household to be four, it means that at least 11,976 people were open to exploitation in these animal breeding centers.[25] Moreover, more than 3,000 locals in Kara Eflak were patronized by the Muslim estate owners from Vidin and Niğbolu (mod. Nikopol) and were used as cheap labour, being forced to live under servile conditions.[26]

It was not just sheer force that caused dispossession of the peasantry or local gentry. Numerous peasants and even monasteries lost their lands due to unpaid debts. In case of need, the soldiers made advance payments (*selem akçesi*) with daily interest to be paid at harvest time. By then, however, debts had grown so high that the debtor could not clear them in due time, and thus their lands, animals and other properties were seized by the creditors.[27] Following the governmental decision to deport of Muslim estate owners in the region, they were allowed to return to collect the immense amount of around 880 *kese akçe*s owed to them by indebted locals, worth the equivalent of 733,333 horses, or 100,000 sheep

or 1,241.5 houses in the Danube in the mid-eighteenth century.[28] If we take into consideration that 170 *kese akçe*s in unpaid credits claimed by the soldiers still remained (TSMK.H. 445, fl. 48), the degree of peasant indebtedness and consequent dispossession becomes even more evident. Prior to the government's intervention, most debtors thus not only lost their source of livelihood, but also became labourers under Muslim soldiers who treated them almost like their slaves (*abd-i memluk*).[29]

Whatever the causes and consequences of eighteenth-century internal colonization were, it was not part of a state program and remained an independent attempt by Ottoman soldiery serving in the garrison cities around the Danube. Moreover, it did not lead to mass migration or settlements capable of changing the region's demography mainly due to the rapid response by the imperial government and local administration. Strict measures were imposed by a strong imperial government (the Porte) and local authorities (the voivodes) over a region where there were three tiers of lively trade networks with constant supply and demand. The initial stage of deporting of the soldiers, disbanding their estates and returning them to the original owners was thus followed by a more radical and long-lasting imperial strategy of trade restrictions that virtually turned the Principalities a forbidden trade zone for Muslims of any background.

State Intervention and the New Order in the Danube

In his dissertation on nation-state formation in Wallachia, Olaru Vasile detects an increased princely concern over monitoring human mobility and trading activities through the end of the eighteenth century. The physical movements and transactions of peasants, craftsmen and merchants or travellers were strictly scrutinized by means of certificates of license to conduct business and travel permits that were to be renewed annually. Especially in Bucharest, these certificates were frequently checked, and unauthorized individuals were imprisoned (Olaru, 2013:

215–31, 242–48). Though correct, Olaru's argument does not take imperial dynamics and the eighteenth-century wave of internal colonization into consideration and does not account for the similar story that played out in Moldavia. The systematic of issue of authorization certificates for foreign merchants had been practiced in Wallachia since at least the mid-fourteenth century (Chirot, 1976: 30–31), but became more pronounced during the mid-eighteenth century under the threat of internal colonization, the rise of a Muslim landed gentry and the increasing claims by the local elite for autonomous rule and detachment from the Ottoman economic system.

The new order (*nizam-ı cedid*) prepared and imposed through the collaboration of the imperial authorities and the local elite (*boyar*s and voivodes) was designed precisely so as to control human mobility and economic transactions in both provinces, especially with regard to Muslims. As the initial Muslim penetration was first observed in Moldavia, it was first applied there, to be followed later by Wallachia. Under the title deed of 28 June 1754, the total number of non-local merchants authorized to carry out trade in Moldavia was restricted to 100 Muslims (50 active merchants and their business partners) chosen from trustworthy and outstanding merchants in the Danubian towns.[30] As these stipulations formed the basis of subsequent regulations,[31] they deserve closer attention.

Under the title deed of 1754, the Muslim merchants authorized to conduct business in Moldavia promised: a) not to keep purchased grain in stores, but to transfer it to the capital without any delay; b) not to demand free food and fodder from the locals in the places they passed through; c) to trade on equal terms, not to force the locals to sell merchandise below market value; d) to pay the required fees to the local authorities and not to demand any discount. There were also two provisions restricting their mobility and residence in Moldavia: e.) they were not to reside in any other place but Iassi; f) they were never to purchase houses and hold them as freehold property. Two further items in the same deed were designed to prevent Muslim involvement in non-trading

activities: g) they were not to cultivate any land [in Moldavia]; h.) they were never to build rooms, establish winter pastures or raise any animals that need winter pastures. Under the final item in the deed, the merchants also promised not to help miscreants but to report them to the local authorities for punishment.[32] In associated imperial decrees over subsequent years, authorized merchants were also warned not to demand extra interest on their loans to the native people.[33]

The new regulation not only granted exclusive trading rights to authorized/licensed (*serhadlü/tezkireli/mezun/defterli*) Muslim merchants in this frontier region, but also monitored any movement, transaction or action by those authorized during their business travels to the province. The permits were non-residential (*bila-tavattun*) and personal – not even allowing merchant's servants - with very strict spatial restrictions. Only the active merchant was allowed to cross the border, and he had done so, he was expected to stay in the places he was permitted to visit for a short duration and to purchase merchandise from some local bazaars and ports (especially Kalas) rather than visiting villages and having direct contact with native producers.[34]

After its more or less successful application in Moldavia, the same system was implemented in Wallachia in the face of crisis caused by Muslim penetration. Here, 100 merchants were initially allowed to trade under very similar conditions that limited their mobility and interaction with the locals. Due to objections by the Muslim merchants, however, the limit was later raised to 200.[35] They were to be accompanied by local guards during their visits. As noted by a contemporary observer, these regulations were devised exclusively for Muslims as "*nobody would question anyone entering Wallachia the reason for his visit unless he is a Muslim ...*" (Hâşim, 2022: 204–205). Among the Muslims, of course, the main target were soldiers, especially the Janissaries.[36]

The success of the new system was related to the territorial integrity of Wallachia and Moldavia, as it set the rules for crossing the borders, which was only possible with official permission for a defined period

of time. As Olaru rightly asserts, the system of monitoring "*reiterated the autonomy of Wallachia and, what is more important, marked out its boundaries and territory, where a new set of authorization letters was necessary*" (Olaru, 2013: 216–217).

Territoriality, Local Dynamics, and Separatist Aspirations

The basic motive behind state intervention in collaboration with the local authorities (voivodes and local gentry) was the welfare of commoners. It would be misleading, however, to present it as state's sole concern. Ottoman ministers tried to ensure the continuous supply of butter, meat, honey, cereals, and beeswax to the capital. As confessed by the Sultan, the new system was mutually beneficial for both parties in terms of keeping the provisioning of the capital smoothly running and thus preventing unrest and disorder both in the capital and the Principalities.[37] The motives of the voivodes and the local gentry in supporting mid-eighteenth-century trade restrictions are much more complicated. As we shall see below, the legislation provided a good pretext for reducing the Muslim presence and preventing the rise of a Muslim landed gentry in the region. It also became an important component of their struggle for detachment from the Ottoman economic orbit.

The new regulation not only enforced strict control over commercial transactions and human mobility but was also devised to minimize tax evasion. Muslim soldiers were given to squeezing surplus from agricultural production and trade not only by evading their own fees, but also by encouraging the locals under their protection not to pay the required taxes.[38] It was therefore very reasonable for the voivodes to be deeply concerned with the disorder, unequal deals and tax evasion caused by the Ottoman soldiery, as they reduced revenues from what was a lively trade network. According to a contemporary Muslim observer, it was for that very reason that the voivodes convinced and even bribed some local and imperial authorities to clear the provinces of soldiers and impose harsher trading restrictions, so as to eventually expel Muslim

soldiers – especially Janissaries – from the region. Due to their intrigues, the author laments, Muslim soldiers lost their main source of revenue, and dispersed to find an alternative livelihood, which in the long run became detrimental for the defense of the frontiers against the enemies. For him, the voivodes' main aim was not to bring order to the region, but to keep the profit from imperial trade for themselves by eliminating their rivals (Orhonlu, 1967: 44). In the 1820s, Mehmed Selim Paşa, then governor of Silistre, also had deep concerns about the secret intentions of the voivode of Moldavia. He informed the Sultan that he was trying to oust the Muslims from the province to promote not only his own interests but also those of the Russians.[39]

Covert or not, similar concerns were shared by the anti-Ottoman and anti-Phanariot local elite who were not only fed by Enlightenment ideas, but also faced practical setbacks (loss of revenue and weakening of control over the peasantry, the rise of Muslim landowners and increased Muslim commercial transactions) due to internal colonization. Therefore, the necessity of the issuing fiscal certificates, authorization letters and restrictions on commercial rights for the Muslims was increasingly stressed by the local intelligentsia and gentry under the influence of growing separationist aspirations and Enlightenment ideas that emphasized the role of trade and economy in the evolution of a society (Georgescu, 1971: 109, 130–133; Murgescu, 1990: 819–22; Ioardachi, 2013: 117–24). Thus, they began to struggle for the restoration of traditional rights over their country, which they called capitulations. The theory of old capitulations emphasized the contractual nature of the relationship between the Danubian Principalities and the Porte, meaning that they had conditionally submitted to the Ottomans in return for military protection; in other respects, they had always remained autonomous and independent (Georgescu, 1971: 149, 153–154; Ioardachi, 2013: 118–19).

Inspired by the writings of Dimitri Cantemir and first appearing in its modern form in 1772, the theory of capitulations became popular after the 1750s (Georgescu, 1971: 153–154). It provided a historical background

for the requests and claims of the local elite with the specific purpose of convincing the reigning Sultan to restore the old privileges they had enjoyed during the reign of Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687). To that end, beginning in the year 1769, they presented more than 200 petitions (*memoranda*) on various occasions to various authorities or governments in which they made assorted claims and requests. In these petitions, the suspension of economic monopolies (the *kapan* system) was a favorite topic, especially in the those written following the war of 1768-1774, while denying Muslim access to the Principalities was discussed in six petitions in the period 1769-1800.[40] For our concerns, the memorandum presented to Russian delegates at the Congress of Focşani (1772) is of particular importance, as it is directly related to our topic. In this specific memorandum, it is noted that in the old days,

> The Turkish merchants would not make business trips to Wallachia or leave the country on their own. They could only conduct trade in bazaars. They could not hold ***çiftlik***s, cultivate lands or raise cattle, sheep and goats. They could not engage in bee keeping in the plains... If they did not obey these rules, they would be sentenced to death (Georgescu, 1970: 93).

In another petition, submitted to Russian Marshal Rumiantzev on 22 July 1774, Wallachian *boyar*s and metropolids urged that no Muslim Ottoman subjects – of any rank or occupation – should be allowed to cross into the Principalities or dwell freely there. As the Russian general had previously "verbally" promised that the country would be returned to the conditions applying in the late seventeenth century, they drew up the petition to explain the old privileges they had enjoyed during the reign of Mehmed IV (Cantacuzino 1902: 537–40; Georgescu 1971: 157). Apart from their primary concern over the appointment of the voivodes from among the local aristocracy, and non-interference of the Ottoman government in local affairs as long as they paid the tribute, the same petition included some items regarding Turkish/Ottoman Muslim subjects living in or conducting business in Wallachia. During the reign of Mehmed IV, they claimed, the voivodes enjoyed full judicial autonomy

in criminal cases involving the Muslims and Christians, and no blood money was demanded for the Muslims/Turks murdered within the borders of the province. During this "golden age", the Porte respected the province's territorial rights, and Muslim merchants were denied residential rights and unauthorized passage into their country. As soon as they crossed the borders, they were subject to the rules of local jurisdiction. Moreover, it continued, trading rights (residential and free), economic activities (involvement in agricultural production and husbandry), as well as rights of worship (building mosques) or civil rights (employing local merchants or intermarriages) were denied to Muslim Ottoman subjects (Cantacuzino 1902: 537–38; Georgescu 1971: 157), obviously to prevent their naturalization in the Principalities.[41]

Georgescu thinks that such claims in these memoranda had a preventive character.[42] Yet, the new regulation was already in force when these petitions were presented. Therefore, the real motivation seems to have been to make the new regulations permanent with Russian support or to end some violations that continued even after the new system was implemented.[43] It was evidently written in response to the threat of internal colonization, the rise of a Muslim landed gentry in the Principalities, as well as increased competition over commerce that was detrimental to the vested interests of the local gentry.

It is no coincidence that, under the Russian pressure, the restoration of privileges enjoyed by the Principalities by the time of Mehmed IV were incorporated into the articles of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (article 16, item 8);[44] and the Sultan issued an imperial decree reminding everyone of the previous restrictions imposed by the new regulation and promising to respect the privileges granted by Mehmed IV just a month after the treaty.[45] Alexandrescu-Dersca rightly underlines the significant role of this imperial decree in defining the privileges of the Principalities (Alexandrescu-Dersca, 1958: 103–19). Contrary to that author's assumption, however, sultanic decree of 1774 did not inaugurate a new of set of privileges limiting Ottoman sovereignty in the region, as

most of the provisions had already been in force since mid-eighteenth century for the reasons discussed above. Almost all of these items are repeated in the convention signed at Aynalıkavak in 1779 between the Russian and Ottoman authorities, except the specific reference to the privileges granted by Mehmed IV.

The protection of local people, the granting of exclusive trading rights to the licensed merchants, the breakup of landed estates, as well as the deportation and punishment of the miscreants are also discussed and repeated in detail in the agreement signed between the Russians and the Ottomans in 1784.[46] When the Russian delegates proposed the grants of Mehmed IV as the agenda during the negotiations, the Ottoman party declared that *"[The Porte] has no record of any privileges granted to Moldavia in the time of Mehemet IV in her archives. It demands that if any do exist, they be shown to it, or that Russia withdraw in this respect*." The reply of the Russians makes it quite evident that the pressure came from the local people:

> There is no question of investigating whether the privileges of Mohammed IV are to be found in the archives of the Porte. But the point is to treat the inhabitants of Moldavia and Wallachia in accordance with that time, with regard to the payment of tribute and freedoms, *since they regard the reign of this Sultan as the happiest time for them*; for these reasons it will suffice, if we wish to renew and sanctify the Katicherifs [Imperial Rescript] of the reigning Sultan, which were first given to these two Principalities after the restoration of peace in the last place.[47]

Even though the privileges enjoyed during the time of Mehmed IV are usually taken as a reference point in the aforementioned petitions, some of them made references to earlier treaties (1393, 1460, 1462, 1512, 1529) with the Ottoman authorities. These agreements were initially accepted as original treaties by many historians but later came under increasing criticism from revisionist historians in the absence of any reliable clues proving their authenticity.[48] Invention or not, the intention and timing of the emphasis on traditional rights and earlier treaties are

more important for our concerns. The clauses of the ninth article in the so-called 1460 treaty, for instance, stipulated that all Muslim merchants "*had to inform the local authorities of duration of their stay and ought to depart when the period shall expire*." (Testa, 1862: 285–86; Wilkinson, 1820: 20–22; Hurmuzaki, 1897: 15) According to the alleged treaty of 1529, on the other hand, Muslims could not hold any property in the new vassal state and would only be permitted to make visits for commercial purposes with the special permission of the voivode. In the same treaty, it is also noted that Turkish merchants would not be treated differently from those of other nationalities and would conduct their commercial transactions in the ports of Galatz, Ismail and Kilia "*without being allowed to penetrate into the interior of the country, except by the authority of the Prince*." In a similar vein, the Ottoman governmental agents were not to be allowed to cross the Principalities while on mission around the region.[49]

In a letter presented to the grand vizier, too, spatial and time restrictions as well as the exclusion of unauthorized traders, and the non-establishment of landed estates and animal enclosures are explained as part of the established tradition of Wallachia.[50]

The references to old customs and usages[51] or treaties were formulated in response to internal colonization and dislike of the Ottoman rule; but were also related to the crystallization of the idea of citizenship more along ethnic lines and; a common Romanian identity for the native inhabitants of *tara* (patrie) from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, especially in terms of denial of property rights to all aliens including Muslim Ottoman subjects. Beginning in the 1820s, what made the creation of modern Romania easier was accelerated territorialization – including the prohibition on the sale of lands to foreigners- and the unification process in the Principalities symbolized by the establishment of the Organic Status, plus the victory over the Phanariot regime. The Akkerman Convention (1826) abolished the Ottoman commercial monopoly in the Principalities, while the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829 prohibited the settlement of Muslims in the Principalities, though it was not

implemented immediately. The denial of trading and property rights to the Muslim Ottoman/Turkish population can thus be seen as part of the struggle for the economic and political autonomy promoted and discussed by Enlightenment-era politicians and intellectuals, who found their justification in the theory of capitulations, but it was also related to the internal wave colonization wave by the Muslim soldier merchants.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to go beyond dualistic and reductionist narratives of Ottoman exploitation and Romanian suffrage and attempted to study the eighteenth-century Muslim penetration into the Danubian Principalities, its causes and consequences from a historical perspective, particularly concentrating on imperial and internal dynamics. During the eighteenth century, three things happened at the same time: the influx and establishment of Ottoman soldiery in the Principalities; the disruption of trade circuits; and the consequent deterioration of conditions for the locals. Even in its heyday and harshest period, however, the mid-eighteenth-century wave of internal colonization never morphed into a settler colonial movement, a land-centred project, or a state-sanctioned program. Instead, it remained mainly at a private or group level, due to the tributary status of the Principalities and prompt state intervention.

State intervention and the creation of a trading zone exclusive to licensed local merchants was a governmental policy shaped on the initiative of the local actors (peasants, landed gentry, metropolids and the voivodes) in response to the internal colonization of Wallachia and Moldavia by the Muslims. While the centralization of the trading activities and monopolistic restrictions created a zone exclusive to Muslim and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, the internal colonization provided a pretext for the local gentry and intelligentsia to reduce the Muslim presence and the trading activities to a minimum, in their struggle for socio-economic detachment from Ottoman domination.

Endnotes

1 Regarding this concept and its applications in Ottoman context, see V. Panaite, *Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and its Tribute-Payers from the North of the Danube*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2019), 251-375.

2 This approach is particularly evident in European travellers' accounts and Romanian historiography: While contemporary authors define it as arbitrary rule of by a despotic Oriental regime, many later historians focus on legal, diplomatic and political relations, making a special effort to understand the status and degree of subordination of the Principalities, and occasionally to uncover the roots of Romanian backwardness. Regarding the eighteenth-century observers' evaluation of the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Principalities, see B. Murgescu, "Avatarurile Unui Concept: Monopolul Comercial Otoman Asupra Tarilor Române", *Revista Istorica*, 1/9-10 (1990), 819-47; B. Rodica, "The Effects of Ottoman Suzerainty in XVIIIth Century Wallachia and Moldavia: A Case of Mental Geography of Enlightenment Epoch", eds. F. Nitu, C. Ionita, M. Ünver, Ö. Kolçak and H. Topaktaş, *Turkey & Romania, A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans* (İstanbul: TDBB, 2016), 215-25; and for the disjuncture between Turkish and Romanian historians and the marginalized perception of the Principalities among Ottomanists, see M. Wasiucionek, "Placing the Danubian Principalities within the Composite Ottoman Empire", eds. F. Nitu, C. Ionita, M. Ünver, Ö. Kolçak and H. Topaktaş, *Turkey & Romania, A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans*, (İstanbul: TDBB, 2016), 167-80. For some selected examples of modern Romanian historiography, see D. Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society: The Creation of a Balkan Colony*, (New York: San Francisco: London: Academic Press, 1976); V. Panaite, "Power Relationships in the Ottoman Empire: Sultans and the Tribute Paying Princes of Wallachia and Moldavia (16th-18th Centuries)", *Reveu Etudes Sud-Est Europe*, 37/1-4 (1999-2000), 47-78; V. Panaite, "The Legal and Political Status of Wallachia and Moldavia in Relation to the Ottoman Porte", in ed. G. Kármán and L. Kunčević, *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2013), 9-43; N. E. Kovács, "The Legal Status of the Danubian Principalities in the 17th Century as Reflected in the Şikayet Defteris", *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 25 (2014), 1-23.

3 Apart from chronological accounts of political relations between the Ottoman Porte and the Principalities, the most recurring themes are the role of these provinces in provisioning the Ottoman capital and the army, and the importance of the Phanariot princes as a source of information on European affairs. For some selected examples, see M. Demirtaş, "İstanbul'un Kileri Eflak-Boğdan'ın Başkentin Beslenmesindeki Yeri ve Önemi", eds. S. Nurdan and M. Özler, *XVIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi 1-5 Ekim 2018/Ankara, Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler, vol. III* (Ankara: TTK, 2022), 909-932; M. A. Yalçınkaya, "The Role of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia on Ottoman Foreign Policy at the Time of Selim III (1789-1807)", *Codrul Cosminului* 24/1 (2018), 179-204; H.

Topaktaş, "What Happened Beyond the Border: Some Reports of Moldavian and Wallachian Voivods Related to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1764-1795)", eds. F. Nitu, C. Ionita, M. Ünver, Ö. Kolçak and H. Topaktaş, *Turkey & Romania, A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans*, (İstanbul: TDBB, 2016), 271-87.

4 P. Calvert, "Internal Colonisation, Development and Environment", *Third World Quarterly*, 22/1 (2001), 51-63. See also L. van de Grift, "Introduction: Theories and Practices of Internal Colonization: The Cultivation of Lands and People in the Age of Modern Territoriality", *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity*, 3/2 (2015), 139-58; M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 32, ft. 2.

5 I have borrowed the idea of "perceived emptiness" from van de Grift, "Introduction", 143.

6 Check, for instance, the religious vocabulary used by Janissary officers who criticized their soldiers for insisting on staying or spending time in "lands of the infidels" (*kefere memleketinde*) instead of serving at their fortress, TSMK. [Topkapı Palace Museum Library] H. 445, fls. 37-8.

7 For some selected examples, see BOA [Ottoman Archive of Istanbul/ Cumhurbaşkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi], A.DVN.SAHK.ÖZSİ.d. [Özi ve Silistre Ahkam Defteri] 11: fl. 168 (evail-i M 1174/13-22 August 1760); E. Tüncer, *42 Numaralı Vidin Şer'iye Sicil Defterinin Transkripsiyonu ve Değerlendirilmesi*, MA thesis (Bitlis Eren/Mardin Artuklu University: 2015), 41, 47, 57, 61-62, 70-72, 74, 78, 80-81.

8 William Eton, for instance, notes that the passage of soldiers and wartime excesses were one of the basic sources of complaint for the local population. In 1778, he himself observed that even rumours of an Ottoman army approaching would alarm the people. Every family in Moldavia had a wagon and horses ready to flee in case of need. W. Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (London: 1801), 288-89. On confrontation, invasion and mobilization in the region during the course of eighteenth century, see V. H. Aksan, "Whose Territory and Whose Peasants?: Ottoman Boundaries on the Danube in the 1760s", ed. F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830* (Princeton: NJ: Marcus Weiner, 2006), 64-69.

9 For the historical dynamics of the region's transformation into a frontier see, R. Gradeva, "War and Peace along the Danube: Vidin at the End of the Seventeenth Century", *Oriente Moderno* 20/1 (2001), 149-75; Gradeva, "Between Hinterland and Frontier", 331-51.

10 BOA, MAD.d. [Maliyeden Müdevver Defterler] 6536: fls. 1212-13; Gradeva, "War and Peace", 155-56; Gradeva, "Between Hinterland and Frontier", 337-40; Aksan, "Whose Peasants", 68. See also https://janet.ims.forth.gr/site/1762.

11 BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. [Düvel-i Ecnebiye Defterleri] 77, fls. 132-33, order no. 307 (evasıt-ı L 1170/29 June-8 July 1757); A.DVN.SAHK.ÖZSİ.d. 8, fl. 51 (evahir-i Z 1167/9-17 October 1754).

12 BOA, Kamil Kepeci Defterleri 5, fls. 146-47 (17 M 1205/26 September 1790), fls. 157-58 (6 S 1205/15 October 1790).

13 *Yamak*s were imperial Janissaries permanently appointed to specific fortresses regardless of their regiment's location.

14 Vidin Şeriyye Sicilleri 8, fl. 18 (1133/1721); BOA, Mühimme Defterleri 138, fls. 157-158, order no. 533 (evahir-i Ca 1144/21-31 November 1731); TSMK. H. 445, fl. 58. See also, Gradeva, "War and Peace", 157-58; İ. Kokdaş, "Habsburglar Kara Eflak'a Gelirse: Vidin'de Hayvancılık Sektörünün Dönüşümü, 1695-1740", *Cihannüma Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5/2 (2019), 83-85.

15 BOA, Mühimme Defterleri 138, fls. 157-58, order no. 533 (evahir-i Ca 1144/21-31 November 1731).

16 BOA, Mühimme Defterleri 138, fls. 157-58, order no. 533 (evahir-i Ca 1144/21-31 November 1731), fls. 176-77, order no. 593 (evasıt-ı Ca 1144/21-31 November 1731); TSMK. H. 445, fl. 58.

17 Concerning pressure on the land and the dynamics of Janissary penetration in the Vidineese countryside in the eighteenth century, see for instance İ. Kokdaş, "Janissaries and Conflicts over Rural Lands in the Vidin Region, 1730-1810", *Cihannüma Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi* 8/1 (2022): 101-27; Kokdaş, "Habsburglar Kara Eflak'a Gelirse", 92-5.

18 BOA, A.DVN.SAHK.ÖZSİ.d.10, fl. 254 (evahir-i L 1172/17 June 1759); BOA, C. ML. [Cevdet Maliye] 576/23638 (13 R 1196/28 March 1782); BOA, C. MTZ. [Cevdet Eyalet-i Mümtaze] 2/74 (evail-i S 1206/30 September-9 October 1791); TSMK. H. 445, fls. 22-23.

19 Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitore la Istoria Românilor*, (Bucharest: 1897), vol. X, XVII-XIX. See also M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, "L'approvisionnement d'Istanbul par les Principautés roumaines au XVIIIe siècle: commerce ou requisition?", *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranéen*, 66 (1992); 73-4. See also R.P. Joseph Boscowich, *Journal d'un Voyage de Constantinople en Pologne, fait a la suite de son excellence Mr. Jaq. Porter, Ambassadeur d'Angleterre*, (Lausanne: 1772), 183-184.

20 M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Sur le regime des ressortissants ottomans en Moldavie (1711-1829)", *Studia et Acta Orientalia*, V-VII (1967), 159-60. See also TSMA.e. [Topkapı Palace Museum Archive] 588/11 (evahir-i B 1162/7-15 July 1749).

21 BOA, Kalebend Defterleri 2, fl. 29 (evahir-i R 1146/1-9 October 1733); TSMA.e. 588/11 (evahir-i B 1162/7-15 July 1749); A. DVNS.DVE.d. 78, fl. 33, order no. 94 (evasıt-ı S 1146/24 July-2 August 1733), fl. 36, order no. 102 (evahir-i R 1147/20-28 September 1734); fl. 39, order no. 119 (evail-i Za 1152/30 January-8 February 1740), fls. 57-58, order no. 175-76 (evail-i Za 1160/4-13 November 1747), fl. 70, order no. 221 (evasıt-ı M 1164/10-19 December 1750), fls. 75-76, order no. 236-38 (evail-i S 1166/8-17 December 1752). The last entry concerns the collaboration between Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa and Constantin Mavrocordato in ousting the *yamak*s. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, "L' approvisionnement

d'Istanbul": 73-4; Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Sur le regime des ressortissants"; 148-51, 153-161 and M. de Peysonnel, *Traite sur le Commerce de la Mer Noire*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1787), vol. 2, 203-4.

22 BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 77, fl. 3, order no. 1 (evasıt-ı R 1142/3-12 November 1729), fls. 4, order nos. 2- 3 (evasıt-ı M 1146/24 June-3 July 1733); A. DVNS.DVE.d. 78, fl. 30, order no. 83 (evail-i Ca 1144/1-10 November 1731).

23 BOA, C.HR. [Cevdet Hariciye] 16/780 (4 R 1174/13 November 1760); TSMK.H. 445, fl. 58. For further details on the commission and the report see Aksan, "Whose Peasants", 61-86; A. Yıldız and İ. Kokdaş, "Peasantry in a Well-protected Domain: Wallachian Peasantry and Muslim *Çiftlik/Kışlak*s under the Ottoman Rule", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 22/1 (2020), 175-90.

24 BOA, TSMA.d. 4222 (19 Z 1166/17 October 1753).

25 BOA. TSMA.d. 9182 (C 1169/February 1756); Yıldız and Kokdaş, "Peasantry in a Well-protected Domain", 182.

26 For some selected examples, see BOA, C.HR. 69/3408 (evahir-i R 1163/30 March-7 April 1750); BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 77, fl. 24, order no. 70 (evasıt-I Ra 1154/27 May-5 June 1741), fl. 50, order no. 143 (evasıt-ı Z 1158/4-12 January 1746), fls. 50-1, order no. 145 (evahir-i Ra 1159/13-21 April 1746), fls. 56-7, order no. 159 (evail-i Za 1160/4-13 November 1747), fls. 63-64, order no. 172 (evasıt-ı C 1161/8-17 June 1748), fls. 69-70, order no. 182 (evahir-i Za 1162/2-10 November 1749), fl. 102, order no. 247 (evahir-i Z 1167/9-17 October 1754). See also Yıldız and Kokdaş, "Peasantry in a Well-protected Domain", 182.

27 BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 77, fl. 20, order no. 57 (evasıt-ı L 1152/11-20 January 1740), A.DVNS.DVE.d. 79, fl. 7, order no. 3 (evasıt-ı Za 1173/25 June-4 July 1760), fl. 9, order no. 8 (evahir-i S 1174/2-10 October 1760). For more details on credit transactions and peasant indebtedness, see Yıldız and Kokdaş, "Peasantry in a Well-protected Domain", 184-85. For similar cases from Moldavia, see Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Sur le regime des ressortissants", 154-55.

28 For further details, see TSMK.H. 445, fl. 48. In the eighteenth century, 1 *kese akçes* = 50,000 *akçe*s.

29 BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 77, fl. 6, order no. 9 (evasıt-ı N 1145/25 February-6 March 1733), fl. 23, order no. 68 (evail-i Ra 1153/27 May-5 June 1740); Yıldız and Kokdaş, "Peasantry in a Well-protected Domain": 184.

30 BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 78, fl. 136, order no. 381 (7 N 1167/28 June 1754). See also Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Sur le regime des ressortissants", 159.

31 For some selected examples both from Moldavia and Wallachia, see BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 78, fls. 106-07, order no. 313 (evahir-i L 1168/31 July-8 August 1755), fl. 128, order no. 361 (evasıt-ı C 1172/9-19 February 1759); A.DVNS.DVE.d. 79, fl. 48, order no. 113 (evasıt-ı L 1180/12-21 March 1767). See also Mustafa A. Mehmed, *Documenti Turceşti Privind Istoria României*, 3 vols. (Bucharest: Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1976), vol. I, 249-303.

32 BOA, D.DVNS.DVE.d. 78, fl. 136, order no. 381 (7 N 1167/28 June 1754).

33 In these orders, the title deed of 1754 is taken as a reference point. For some selected examples, see BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 79, fl. 11, order no. 14 (evahir-i Ca 1174/29 December 1760-6 January 1761), fl. 14, order no. 24 (evahir-i Ra 1175/20-29 October 1761), fls. 14-15, order no. 25 (evahir-i L 1177/23-1 May April 1764), fls. 29-30, order no. 60 (evasıt-ı Za 1178/2-11 May 1765), fls. 31-2, order no. 66 (evail-i Za 1175/24 May-2 June 1762), fl. 35, order no. 78 (evail-i R 1177/9-18 October 1763), fls. 38-39, order no. 92 (evasıt-ı C 1179/25 November-4 December 1765), fl. 48, order no. 113 (evasıt-ı L 1180/12-21 March 1767).

34 Vidin Şeriyye Sicili 78, fls. 99-100 (15 R 1179/1 October 1765), fls. 100-101 (3 Ca 1179/18 October 1765). See also Mehmed Hâşim, İmâ-yı *Törehât-ı Büldânân: Osmanlı Beldelerinin Töreleri*, Feridun M. Emecen and İlhan Şahin (eds.), (Ankara: TTK, 2022), 204-05, 207.

35 Vidin Şeriyye Sicili 78, fls. 100-101 (3 Ca 1179/18 October 1765), fls. 110-12 (C 1179/November-December 1765).

36 Vidin Şeriyye Sicili 78, fls. 99-100 (15 R 1179/1 October 1765), fls. 100-101 (3 Ca 1179/18 October 1765).

37 BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 81, fls. 10-16, order no. 8-80 (evasıt-ı S 1206/10-19 October 1791).

38 For some selected examples, see BOA, C.HR. 69/3408 (evahir-i R 1163/30 March-7 April 1750); C.HR. 2819 (evasıt-ı R 1175/9-18 November 1761); A.DVNS.DVE.d. 77, fl. 6, order no. 11 (evasıt-ı L 1145/27 March-5 April 1733), fl. 7, order no. 14 (evahir-i Z 1146/25 May-2 June 1734), fl. 8, order no. 17 (evahir-i Z 1146/25 May-2 June 1734), fl. 9, order no. 19 (evahir-i Z 1146/25 May-2 June 1734), fl. 10, order no. 26 (evahir-i Z 1146/25 May-2 June 1734), fl. 13, order no. 35 (evail-i L 1147/24 February-5 March 1735) fl. 19, order no. 52 (evail-i L 1149/1-11 February 1737), fl. 19, order no. 55 (evasıt-ı Z 1149/11-21 April 1737); fl. 30, order no. 87 (evahir-i C 1155/23-31 August 1742), fl. 30, order no. 87 (evahir-i C 1155/23-31 August 1742).

39 BOA, HAT 1141/45390 (11 L 1238/21 June 1823): "... *Boğdan kazalarında ehl-i İslam'ın moşiye iltizâmı maddelerinin men'i istidasından ibaret olub asıl maksudu ol taraflardan ehl-i İslam'ın bütün bütün ayağını kesmek ve Rusyalunun dilhâhına muvafık usule gitmek ...*"

40 For more details on these petitions, see V. Georgescu, *Memoires et Projets de Reforme dans les Principautes Roumanines, 1769-1830: Repertoire et Textes inedits* (Bucharest 1970). Iorga notes that the expulsion of the soldiers (*yamak*s) who established *çiftlik/kışlaks* was also requested by the local *boyar*s (1774). N. Iorga, *Istoria Comertului Romanesc Epoca Mai Noua* (Bucharest: 1925), 36.

41 This line of thinking seems to have followed a local custom called *obiceiul pamântului*, which meant that naturalization could only be obtained through marriage to a native woman, ennoblement, or settlement (especially for labourers, merchants or artisans). For more details, see Ioardachi, "Greek Question": 100-01, 116-17.

42 Georgescu, *Memoires,* XVIII, ft. 1: "*While analysing this category of demands, it needs to be taken into consideration that Turks, as very idiosyncratic people, have never enjoyed political, economic, or religious rights to the north of the Danube. Including these problems in the memoirs presents a preventive character, which aims to prevent any attempt to change the legal status on behalf of Turks*."

43 BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 81, fl. 168, order no. 540-42 (evahir-i Z 1229/4-13 December 1814); A.DVNS.DVE.d. 82, fl. 15, order no. 31 (evasıt-ı R 1236/16-25 January 1821), fl. 26, order no. 77 (evahir-i Ca 1237/13-21 February 1822); HAT 1141/45390 (11 L 1238/21 June 1823). All of these documents concern the passage of unauthorized merchants to the Principalities either by pretending to be a *kapan* or licensed local merchant. In the final document it is noted that some people have already started to build mansions in Moldavia, demanded free food from the local people, forced them to sell their merchandise below market value and seized the *çiftlik*s and other estates of innocent people. In response to all these violations the Sultan warned the local authorities not to allow such violations and to enforce the existing regulations.

44 This is mentioned in both Russian and Turkish copies. The Turkish copy reads as follows: *"...cedd-i emcedim Sultan Mehmed Han-ı Râbi zaman-ı saadetlerinde mütmetti oldukları imtiyazât ile kema-yâb olalar"*, BOA, TSMA.d. 9921 (evasıt-ı N 1188/15-24 November 1774). For the Russian copy, see https://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Turk/XVIII/1760-1780/Traktat_Kucuk_Karnaji_1774/text.phtm

45 A copy of the imperial decree, addressed to the voivode of Moldavia, is available in the Ottoman archives of Istanbul. It is a long and probably the most detailed decree covering almost all issues of controversy in the Principalities. It initially repeats general matters discussed during the negotiations of 1774 - and later by the Aynalıkavak Convention of 1779 - such as the declaration of a general amnesty, appointment of voivodes, tax collection and tribute, conversion and the provisioning of the capital. The rest repeats the old prohibitions introduced by new regulation (non-residential trade, non-property ownership, construction of landed estates and non-involvement in agricultural production or animal husbandry). BOA, A.DVNS.DVE.d. 80, fls. 6-8 (evasıt-ı L 1188/15-25 December 1774). See also Mustafa Mehmed, Documenti Turceşti, vol. I, 321-28; "Doneseniya Grafu Rumyantsovu Polkovnika Petersona", *Çteniya v İmperatorskom Obşetstve İstorii Arivnostiy Rossiyskih pri Moskovskom Universitete, Genvar-Mart 1866*, Knige Pervaya (Moscow: 1866), 51-61.

46 BOA, C.HR. 81/4002 (evahir-i Ra 1198/13-21February 1784); C.HR. 100/4977 (19 R 1198/12 March 1784).

47 Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitore, Supplement* I, vol. I, 975-76. See also C. Giurescu, *Capitulatiile Moldovei cu Poarta Otomana: Studiu Istoric* (Bucharest: 1908), 30-1; A. Vianu, "Aplicarea Tratatului de la Küciük Kainargi cu Privire la Moldava şi Tara Romîneasca, 1775-1783", *Studii Revistâ de Istorie*, XIII (1960), 82-87; "Doneseniya Grafu Rumyantsovu Polkovnika Petersona", 44-5. (my italics).

48 For a textual analysis of these documents and a critique of the available literature, see Giurescu, *Capitulatiile Moldovie*, 25-65; S. Papp, "Eflak ve Boğdan Voyvodalarının Ahidnâmeleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuzeybatı Hududundaki Hristiyan Vassal Ülkeleri", H. C. Güzel, K. Çiçek and S. Koca, *Türkler* (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), vol. X, 1380-98; M. A. Kılıç, *Eflak ve Boğdan'a Yönelik Osmanlı Siyaseti (17. Yüzyıl)*, (Istanbul University: 2023), 43-75, especially 52-6. See also, Ş. S. Gorovei and M. M. Székely, "Old Questions, Old Clichés. New Approaches, New Results: The Case of Moldavia", ed. O. J. Schmitt, *The Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans: Interpretations and Research Debates*, (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2016), 209-42.

49 For the copies of the treaty, see Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitore*, *Supplement* I, vol. IV, 86-89; T. Gökbilgin, "La structure des relation Turco-Roumaines et des raisons de certains Hüküms, Ferman, Berat et des ordres des Sultans Adresses aux Princes de la Moldavie et de la Valachie aux XVIe et XVIIe siecles" *Belleten*, XLII (1978), 761-65; Testa, *Recuil des Traites*, 287-88.

50 Letter from Enachita Vacarescu to Grand Vizier (July 1772) cited in Georgescu, *Memoires*, 38-40.

51 For the meaning and mutual aspects of the concepts of "usage" and "custom", see V. Panaite, "Custom in the 16th-18th Centuries Ottoman Romanian Relationship (Starting Points for a Historical Debate", *Revue des Etudes Sud-est Europeennes*, XXXI/1-2 (1993), 171-85.

References

A.DVN.SAHK.ÖZSİ.d. [Özi ve Silistre Ahkam Defterleri]

A.DVNS.DVE.d. [Düvel-i Ecnebiye Defterleri]

C.HR. [Cevdet Hariciye]

HAT. [Hatt-I Hümayun]

Kalebend Defterleri

Mühimme Defterleri

MAD.d. [Maliyeden Müdevver Defterler]

TSMA. e. [Topkapı Sarayı Evrakı].

TSMA.d. [Topkapı Sarayı Defterleri]

TSMK. [Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi] H. 445

Vidin Şeriyye Sicilleri

Aksan, V. H. (2006). Whose Territory and Whose Peasants?: Ottoman Boundaries on the Danube in the 1760s, F. Anscombe, (ed.), *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830*. Princeton: NJ: Marcus Weiner, 61-87.

Alexandrescu-Dersca, M.M. (1958). Rolul hatişerifurilor de privilegii în limitarea obligaţiilor către Poarta (1774-1802). *Studii Revistă de istorie,* XI/6, 101-121.

Alexandrescu-Dersca, M.M. (1967). Sur le regime des ressortissants ottomans en Moldavie (1711-1829). *Studia et Acta Orientalia,* V-VII, 143-182.

Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, M.M. (1992). L'approvisionnement d'Istanbul par les Principautés roumaines au XVIIIe siècle: commerce ou requisition?. *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranéen*, 66, 73-77.

"Anaforaua Mitropolitului Terii şi a Celorlalti pentru Privileghii care Contele Romantof Dupa Incheierea Pacii (22 July 1774), in Banul Mihai Cantacuzino. 1902. *Genealogia Cantacuzinilor,* N. Iorga (ed.). Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafie şi Editura Minerva, 537-540.

Boscowich, R.P. J. (1772). *Journal d'un Voyage de Constantinople en Pologne, fait a la suite de son excellence Mr. Jaq. Porter, Ambassadeur d'Angleterre*. Lausanne.

Calvert, P. (2001). Internal Colonisation, Development and Environment. *Third World Quarterly*, 22/1, 51-63.

Chirot, D. (1976). *Social Change in a Peripheral Society: The Creation of a Balkan Colony*, New York: San Francisco: London: Academic Press.

Demirtaş, M. (2022). İstanbul'un Kileri Eflak-Boğdan'ın Başkentin Beslenmesindeki Yeri ve Önemi., S. Nurdan and M. Özler, (eds.) *XVIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi 1-5 Ekim 2018/Ankara, Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler, vol. III.* Ankara: TTK, 909-932.

Doneseniya Grafu Rumyantsovu Polkovnika Petersona, *Çteniya v İmperatorskom Obşetstve İstorii Arivnostiy Rossiyskih pri Moskovskom Universitete, Genvar-Mart 1866*, Knige Pervaya Moscow, 51-61.

Engin, H. (2013). *1787-1792 Osmanlı-Rus Avusturya Harpleri Sırasında İbrail Kalesi*, (MA. thesis). Trakya University. Edirne.

Etkind, A (2011). *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Etkind, A. (2015). How Russia 'Colonized Itself': Internal Colonization in Classical Russian Historiography. *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity,* 3/2, 159-172.

Eton, W. (1801). *A Survey of the Turkish Empire*. London.

Fletcher, J.F. (1985). Integrative History: Parallels and Interconnections in the Early Modern Period, 1500-1800. *Journal of Turkish Studies/Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları* 9/1, 37-58.

Georgescu, V. (1970). *Memoires et Projets de Reforme dans les Principautes Roumanines, 1769-1830: Repertoire et Textes inedits*, Bucharest.

Georgescu, V. (1971). *Political Ideas and the Enlightenment in the Romanian Principalities, 1750-1831,* New York: Colombia University Press.

Giurescu, C. (1908). *Capitulatiile Moldovei cu Poarta Otomana: Studiu Istoric*, Bucharest.

Gorovei Ş. S. and Székely, M. M. (2016). Old Questions, Old Clichés. New Approaches, New Results: The Case of Moldavia, O. J. Schmitt (ed.), *The Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans: Interpretations and Research Debates*, Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 209-242.

Gökbilgin, M. T. (1978). La structure des relation Turco-Roumaines et des raisons de certains Hüküms, Ferman, Berat et des ordres des Sultans Adresses aux Princes de la Moldavie et de la Valachie aux XVIe et XVIIe siecles. *Belleten*, XLII, 761-773.

Gradeva, R. (2009). Between Hinterland and Frontier: Ottoman Vidin, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries. *Proceedings of the British Academy,* 156, 331-351.

Gradeva, R. (2001). War and Peace along the Danube: Vidin at the End of the Seventeenth Century", *Oriente Moderno*, 20/1, 149-175.

Grift, L.V.D. (2015). Introduction: Theories and Practices of Internal Colonization: The Cultivation of Lands and People in the Age of Modern Territoriality. *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity*, 3/2, 139-158.

Hathaway, J. (1997). *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlıs*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hechter, M. (1977). *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Hurmuzaki, Eudoxiu de (1897). *Documente privitore la Istoria Românilor*, vol. X, Bucharest.

Iordachi, C. (2013). From Imperial Entanglements to National Disentanglement: The "Greek Question" in Moldavia and Wallachia, 1611-1863. Daskalov R. and Marinov, T. (eds.), *Entangled Histories of the Balkans, vol. I: National Ideologies and Language Politics*. Leiden: Boston: Brill, 67-148.

Iorga, N. (1925). *Istoria Comertului Romanesc Epoca Mai Noua*, Bucharest.

Jones, E.B. (2014). The Rural "Social Ladder": Internal Colonization, Germanization and Civilizing Missions in the German Empire. *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 40/4, 457-492.

Kılıç, M.A. (2023). *Eflak ve Boğdan'a Yönelik Osmanlı Siyaseti (17. Yüzyıl)*, (Unpublished PhD thesis). Istanbul University, Istanbul.

Kokdaş, İ. (2019). Habsburglar Kara Eflak'a Gelirse: Vidin'de Hayvancılık Sektörünün Dönüşümü, 1695-1740. *Cihannüma Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5/2, 77-100.

Kokdaş, İ. (2022). Janissaries and Conflicts over Rural Lands in the Vidin Region, 1730-1810. *Cihannüma Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8/1: 101-127.

Kovács, N.E. (2014). The Legal Status of the Danubian Principalities in the 17th Century as Reflected in the Şikayet Defteris. *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 25, 1-24.

Le Baron I. de Testa. (1862). *Recueil des Traites de la Porte Ottomane avec les Puissances Etrangeres*, vol. V. Paris.

Mehmed Hâşim (2022). İmâ-yı *Törehât-ı Büldânân: Osmanlı Beldelerinin Töreleri*, Emecen, F.M. and Şahin, İ. (eds.), Ankara: TTK.

Murgescu, B. (1990). Avatarurile Unui Concept: Monopolul Comercial Otoman Asupra Tarilor Române, *Revista Istorica*, 1/9-10, 819-845.

Mustafa A. Mehmed (1976). *Documenti Turceşti Privind Istoria României*, 3 vols. Bucharest: Academiei Republicii Socialiste România.

Olaru, V. M. (2013). *Writs and Measures: Symbolic Power and the Growth of State Infrastructure in Wallachia*, 1740-1800, (Phd dissertation), (Central European University, Budapest.

Orhonlu, C. (1967). Osmanlı Teşkilâtına Aid Küçük Bir Risâle: "Risâle-i Terceme". *Belgeler* IV/7-8, 39-47.

Panaite, V. (1993). Custom in the 16th-18th Centuries Ottoman Romanian Relationship (Starting Points for a Historical Debate). *Revue des Etudes Sud-est Europeennes*, XXXI/1-2, 171-185.

Panaite, V. (1999-2000). Power Relationships in the Ottoman Empire: Sultans and the Tribute Paying Princes of Wallachia and Moldavia (16th-18th Centuries). *Reveu Etudes Sud-Est Europe,* 37/1-4, 47-78.

Panaite, V. (2013). The Legal and Political Status of Wallachia and Moldavia in Relation to the Ottoman Porte. Kármán, G. and Kunčević, L. (eds.). *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Leiden: Boston: Brill, 7-42.

Panaite, V. (2019). *Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and its Tribute-Payers from the North of the Danube*, 2nd ed. Leiden: Boston: Brill.

Panaite, V. (2000). "The Status of the "Kharâj-Güzarlar". A Case Study: Wallachians, Moldavians and Transylvanians in the 15th to 17th Centuries". K. Çiçek, (ed.).

The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation, vol. I: Politics, Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 227-238.

Papp, S. (2002). Eflak ve Boğdan Voyvodalarının Ahidnâmeleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuzeybatı Hududundaki Hristiyan Vassal Ülkeleri. Güzel, H. C., Çiçek, K. and Koca, S. (eds.). *Türkler*, Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, vol. X, 1380-1398.

Peysonnel, M. de (1787). *Traite sur le Commerce de la Mer Noire*, 2 vols. Paris.

Rodica, B. (2016). The Effects of Ottoman Suzerainty in XVIIIth Century Wallachia and Moldavia: A Case of Mental Geography of Enlightenment Epoch", Nitu, F., Ionita, C., Ünver,

Stoainovich, T. (1953). Land Tenure and Related Sectors of the Balkan Economy, 1600-1800. *The Journal of Economic History* 13/4, 398-411.

Taki, V (2007). *Russia on the Danube: Imperial Expansion and Political Reform in Moldavia and Wallachia, 1812-1834*. (Phd. Dissertation). Central European University, Budapest.

Topaktaş, H. (2016). What Happened Beyond the Border: Some Reports of Moldavian and Wallachian Voivods Related to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1764-1795). Nitu, F., Ionita, C., Ünver, M., Kolçak Ö. and Topaktaş, H. (eds.). *Turkey & Romania, A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans*, İstanbul: TDBB, 271-286.

Tüncer, E. (2015). *42 Numaralı Vidin Şer'iye Sicil Defterinin Transkripsiyonu ve Değerlendirilmesi*. (Unpublished MA thesis). Bitlis Eren/Mardin Artuklu University, Bitlis.

Vianu, A. (1960). Aplicarea Tratatului de la Küciük Kainargi cu Privire la Moldava şi Tara Romîneasca, 1775-1783. *Studii Revistâ de Istorie*, XIII, 71-103.

Yalçınkaya, M.A. (2018). The Role of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia on Ottoman Foreign Policy at the Time of Selim III (1789-1807). *Codrul Cosminului* 24/1, 179-204.

Yıldız, A. and Kokdaş, İ. (2020). Peasantry in a Well-protected Domain: Wallachian Peasantry and Muslim *Çiftlik/Kışlak*s under the Ottoman Rule. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 22/1, 175-190.

Wasiucionek, M. (2016). Placing the Danubian Principalities within the Composite Ottoman Empire. Nitu, F., Ionita, C., Ünver, M., Kolçak Ö. and Topaktaş, H. (eds.). *Turkey & Romania, A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans*, İstanbul: TDBB, 167-180

Wilkinson, W. (1820). *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia with Various Political Observations Relating to Them.* London.

Zarinebaf, F. (2005). Soldiers into Tax-Farmers and *Reaya* into Sharecroppers: The Ottoman Morea in the Early Modern Period. Zarinebaf, F., Bennet, F. and Davis, J. L. (eds.). *A Historical and Economic Geography of Ottoman Greece: The Southwestern Morea in the 18th Century* (Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens: 2005), 9-47.