Women and Society in the Romanian Principalities
1750-1850

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation into the history of women in the Romanian Principalities (today Romania) in the period 1750 to 1850, a crucial time of political and social transformation which was to turn Romania into a modern society. The two introductory chapters aim to outline the international, political and social dimensions of these processes of change, by highlighting the situation of the Principalities as provinces dominated by a weakening Ottoman Empire, in the context of Russian and Austrian expansionism. Under such geopolitical pressures, social issues such as the rights of women, the emancipation of serfs and Gypsy slaves, agrarian reform and the improvement of education were placed low on the agenda for social reform until the 1848 revolutions. Nevertheless, there were social changes before this period in which women's contribution proved significant.

Part One focuses upon legal issues such as dowry provisions and the marriage market, access to divorce and re-marriage, as well as upon the ways in which property rights affected families. These chapters show women using and challenging legal practices in order to protect themselves and their children, thereby triggering a gradual process of legal change reflected in the period's law codes.

Part Two explores the roles of women in processes of cultural change, showing, for example, how women's freedom of choice in matters of fashion and consumption affected the ways in which the Romanians re-defined themselves as 'Europeans' in the face of Ottoman occupation and Orthodox conservatism. Also discussed are the tentative steps women took, beginning with their earliest appearance as midwives and actresses, towards better educational and professional opportunities.

The final chapter offers a view of women in the period's Greek-language literature and in the earliest known memoir by a Romanian woman, and provides a summary of the factors affecting the lives of Romanian women in the period 1750 - 1850 as they moved towards a more European identity. Finally, I offer a few signposts for future research, in a field which is still largely experimental in terms of methodology and conceptual frameworks.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Explanatory Notes

This thesis is focused on the geographic space of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia as they existed prior to their union of 1859 (see Map). Transylvania, although comprising a large proportion of ethnic Romanian population, was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918 and is not included.

The name 'Romania', designating the territories and population of the two Principalities, is used anachronistically for ease of reference, as the name was not used before 1862. The names used in the period studied (1750-1850) were 'Valahia' and 'Muntenia' for Wallachia and 'Moldova' for Moldavia. The term 'Moldo-Wallachia' was used as well, especially by French speakers. I have used 'Romanian Principalities' and 'Danubian Principalities' interchangeably.

Place names and names of persons follow in general the Romanian spelling. Thus, I am using 'Mavrocordat' rather than the transliterated Greek 'Maurokordhátos' and 'Caragea' rather than 'Karátzas'. But I have used, for instance, 'Bucharest', 'Wallachia' and 'Moldavia', as they have been traditionally used by English-language speakers. The capital of Moldavia is designated by its name 'Iaşi' rather than by the Frenchified version 'Jassy'.

This is not a study based on quantitative analysis. Statistical information on population, economic growth, currency and rates of exchange is often difficult to obtain and unreliable and, once gathered, difficult to unify, centralise and interpret in a satisfactory way. Although I am dealing with consumption, imports, incomes and dowries, the currencies used in the two Principalities were too varied to allow me to establish clear-cut correspondences. I have, therefore, used the designations 'lei', 'thaler' or 'piastres', and have given comparative values of items wherever possible.

Lastly, the titles of secondary literature in Romanian are also given in English translation, wherever the meaning is not obvious. Only the place of publication is mentioned as a rule, with the exception of recent publications in Romanian published by small or obscure publishers. Boyar titles and foreign words are listed in two separate appendices.

Abbreviations

Analele Academiei Române = AAR

Documente privind istoria României = DIR

Documenta Romaniae Historica = DRH

Revue des études sud est-européennes = RESEE

Revue des études roumaines = RER

Revista de istorie socială = RIS
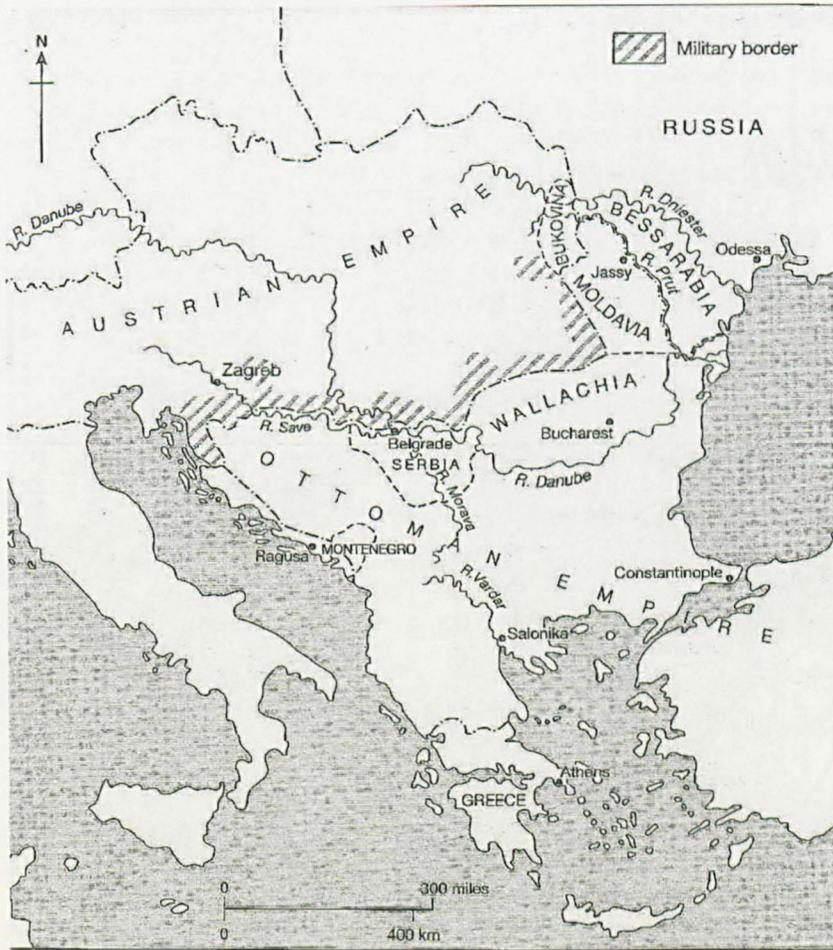
The Balkans in 1833
(from Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans*, Longman, 1999, p. 352)

Chapter One: Introduction

Preliminary Observations

Gender studies, the history of women, of men, and that of the family are now established disciplines in the West, with enviable bodies of scholarly literature, which have helped redefine issues, boundaries, and agendas in historiography. It is not my aim - nor is this the appropriate place - to attempt a survey of breakthroughs and achievements in West European gender and women's history. A few highly selective examples will have to suffice to illustrate the important insights which these areas have contributed to social history over the last decades. A recognition that 'gender' refers to both women and men, explorations into hegemonic as well as subaltern or alternative femininities and masculinities, the debates around the private and public spheres and around women and the Enlightenment, and the tensions uncovered between prescriptive norm and social practice, have all shown that one cannot take social issues and developments for granted, that nothing in history is monolithic, linear or 'progressive' in an uncomplicated way. Such speculations and debates have gradually fed into mainstream, 'traditional' historiography, radically altering the ways in which historians practise today.[1]

Women's History: East and West

However, even a casual browse through specialist databases and journal indexes reveals that gender studies and women's history in Eastern Europe are still struggling to redefine and rebuild themselves after decades of Communist diktats which consistently relegated such areas to the margins of history-making. I do not wish to suggest that one

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[1] From a vast literature, I shall cite a few recent contributions. The separate sphere paradigm has already been challenged, notably by Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter* (Yale University Press, 1998); Elizabeth Foyster, 'Recovering Lives from Behind the Gloss of Ideology: Recent Histories of Elite and Middle-Class Women in England and America', *Gender & History*, 12 (2000), pp. 237-41, and by Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (Longman, Themes in British Social History, 1998), as reviewed by Kolleen McGuy and Michele Plott in H-Women, H-Net Reviews, December 1998 at URL: http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews). Vickery has proposed that the role of prescription in everyday life has perhaps been overstated. *The Gentleman's Daughter* shows that women's lives were perhaps richer than prescriptive literature and a strict public/private sphere divide would have led one to expect. For a similar approach to men's history, see Shawn Johansen, *Family Men: Middle-Class Fatherhood and Industrialising America* (Routledge, 2001), as reviewed by Konstantin

might easily equate the current struggles of social history in Romania with what is happening elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, but it is not difficult to imagine that at the root of this backwardness there are similar stories of ideological, financial and cultural pressures. In addition, and in spite of programmes of foreign-language publications in many East European countries, the linguistic barrier continues to slow down the penetration into the Western arena of East-Central European contributions to the discipline.

In the West itself, the global history of women has only recently started to encompass the women of Eastern Europe, largely owing to the fall of Communism around 1989 and to the consequent opening of cultural borders. Yet, the presence of studies on East European women remains marginal in English-language (and by extension in West European) publications, a sign of the aforementioned linguistic barriers, no doubt, but also of the undeveloped state of women's history and gender studies in the former Communist countries, briefly referred to above. Such contributions continue to remain isolated and rather insubstantial as in the articles by Iris Parush and Krassimira Daskalova.[2] In 1996, *The Women's History Review* devoted a whole issue (Vol. 5, No.4) to 'Women in Central and Eastern Europe'. The studies included, all by native East-Central European historians, cover a range of issues which highlight the fact that, due to specific historical and geopolitical circumstances (foreign domination and incorporation in the Eastern empires), the ways in which East-Central European women defined

Dierks, 'Men's History, Gender History or Cultural History?' in *Gender & History,* vol.14, No.1 (April 2002), pp. 147-51.

[2] Iris Parush, 'Women Readers as Agents of Social Change among Eastern European Jews in the Late Nineteenth Century, in *Gender & History,* Vol. 9, No.1 (April 1997), pp. 60-82; Krassimira Daskalova, 'Establishing a Women's History Course on Women in Bulgarian Society, 1840-1940, at Sofia University', in *Women's History Review,* Vol. 9, No.1, 2000, pp. 149-154. See also the review in *Gender & History* Vol.12, no.1 (April 2000), of Krassmira Daskalova (ed.), *From the Shadow of History: Women in Bulgarian Society and Culture* (Sofia, 1998) (published in Bulgarian). See also Andrea Petö and Mark Pittaway (eds.), *Women in History - Women's History: Central and Eastern European Perspectives* (Central European University, Budapest, 1994); Wilma A. Iggers, *Women in Prague: ethnic diversity and social change from the eighteenth century to the present* (Berghahn Books, 1995). One important recent addition in English covering South-East European and Balkan areas which have been less accessible (e.g. Serbia, Macedonia, Albania) is Miroslav Jovanović, Slobodan Naumović (eds), *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe: Historical Perspectives on Womanhood and Manhood in 19th and 20th Century* (Belgrade, Graz, 2001). Work on Russian women, by comparison, has already produced a larger body of publications. See, for instance, a collection of recent studies in Peter I. Barta (ed.), *Gender and Sexuality in Russian Civlization* (Routledge, 2001), with very rich and up-to-date bibliographies, as well as a recent issue of *Russian Studies in History* (Winter 2001-2002) on the theme 'Gender as a Category of Analysis'.

themselves in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were closely embedded within - and in most cases were overshadowed by - their countries' efforts in the areas of nation-building and national independence. As I shall try to show in chapter two, the primacy of foreign policy goals such as obtaining autonomy and independence in the Romanian Principalities placed social issues such as women's rights, Gypsy slavery or suffrage and civil liberties at the very bottom of political agendas. In addition, the time scope of all of these studies (most refer to the post-1870s) also highlights the methodological difficulties East-European historians have to face when dealing with earlier periods and the consequent 'easier' option for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history. Many of these difficulties must have a great deal to do - as they certainly do in Romania - with the state of the archives, the absence or inchoate state of electronic systems of information storage and retrieval, the dispersion of archival material across locations, as well as, presumably, with scarce financial resources. In the case of Romania, problems are compounded by the numerous blanks and silences in the archives for earlier periods, silences which have led Romanian historians to wonder whether they are not in fact dealing with a culture of 'orality', the unlocking of which will require very ingenious interdisciplinary stratagems.[3]

In the light of the above considerations, my project has its roots in an initially rather vague wish to explore what could realistically be done today in the almost uncharted territory of Romanian women's history. My previous forays into late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Romanian society had persuaded me that this was a crucial period of intellectual searching, project-building, political struggle and change which laid the foundations of modern Romania - a view that no historian of Romania would want to dispute today.[4] But there is an equally widespread recognition among

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[3] The 'silence of the archives' is a topic that has cropped up repeatedly in meetings I attended of the Historical Anthropology Seminar initiated a few years ago by Dr. Violeta Barbu at the 'Nicolae Iorga' Institute of Historical Research, Bucharest. On the absence of written sources, see also Bogdan Murgescu, *Istorie românească - istorie universală* (Romanian History - World History) (Teora, Bucharest), 1999, pp. 16-18. For the avatars of births, marriages and death records in the period 1832-1864, see, for instance, Gh. Ungureanu, 'Actele de stare civilă în Moldova sub regimul Regulamentului Organic (1832-1864)' (Births, marriages and deaths records in Moldavia under the Organic Regulations, 1832-1864), *Revista Arhivelor*, 2, An II (1959), pp. 58-76.

[4] See, for example, Alexander Drace-Francis, *Literature, Modernity, Nation - The Case of Romania, 1829-1890*, unpublished doctoral thesis, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, (University College, London, 2001), introductory chapter, especially p. 19.

practitioners that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century studies in Romania need new methodological and analytical tools as well as a new vision of the role of historiography in order to uncover the potential richness of the period and to produce new insights.

My own focus on the presence/absence of women in the period conventionally bracketed between 1750 and 1850 (and I shall come back in due course to the issue of periodisation) derives from an awareness that Romanian historians were, and still are, somewhat reluctant to include women's history within mainstream historical research, with the result that women's lives and their contribution to this period of socio-political ferment go almost completely unrecorded. This reluctance is, I think, due partly to what I now know to be the scarcity of texts produced by or referring to women in this period, but also to the conventional view, entrenched among both male and female historians, that the proper subject of history is the public action of men and its visible, quantifiable outcomes, rather than the largely obscure, domestic lives of women. This view is just starting to be challenged after decades of neglect by a class-biased and ideologically narrow Marxist historiography, which hardly could have countenanced the suggestion that the dominant role in shaping liberal politics in modern Romania belonged to the aristocratic (boyar) class rather than to the 'people'.

One way of redefining the aims of Romanian social history today is by looking back at the very few precursors of Romanian women's history and incorporating their findings and insights into a new approach based on the analytic tools that the discipline has been fashioning for itself, at least in the West, over the last ten or fifteen years. The following section is a brief survey of these historians' work.

Early Romanian Historians of Women

Dora D'Istria (pen name of Elena Ghica, b. Bucharest 1828- d. Florence, 1888) belongs to two worlds, as both producer of a historiographic narrative on women and as an active figure in the story of women's accession to the world of learning.[5] To a feminist,

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[5] For a brief dictionary entry see Anne Commire (ed.), *Women in World History - A Biographical Encyclopedia* (Yorkin Publications, Gale Group), 1999. Magda Ioan Nicolaescu, *Dora D'Istria* (Cartea Românească, Bucharest, n.d.) is a brief study of D'Istria's life and work in Romanian. An enthusiastic

she provides an almost textbook example of how a gifted and highly educated aristocratic woman in nineteenth-century Europe could only free and cultivate her intellect by terminating an unhappy marriage (to the Russian prince Koltzof-Massalsky) and by fleeing the politically and intellectually uncongenial realms of Tzar Nicholas I for more sympathetic Western zones.

Closely connected to the ruling Prince of Wallachia, Alexandru Ghica, and daughter of a learned mother, Catinca Faca (translator in 1839 of Jeanne Louise Campan's 1824 work on education, see my chapter on women's education, p. 160) she received a polymath's education alongside her brothers and was able, at fifteen, to translate the Iliad into German hexameters. Separated from her husband at the age of thirty, she embarked on a life of travel and solitary scholarly pursuits, and became a prolific historian, essayist and writer. Her multiple ethnic and kinship connections, Albanian, Greek, Romanian and Russian, enabled her to overcome a single national allegiance and embrace the cause of Hellenic and South-East European emancipation with a truly European breadth of imagination. Her main works devoted to the history of women, *Les femmes en Orient* (2 volumes, Zürich, 1859, translated into Greek in 1861 and into Russian in 1865), and *Des femmes par une femme* (2 volumes, Paris-Brussels, 1865, second edition 1869)[6] are encyclopaedic in scope and quietly polemical in nature. In her survey of the history of women from the Balkans, Russia, Greece, the Levant and the Ottoman Empire, she attempts not only a highly ambitious exercise in historical anthropology based on the scholarship available at the time, but also one in political and moral rehabilitation. Not only did these women deserve their place, however humble, in history, she contended, but South-East Europe and the areas of European Turkey deserved to be taken seriously as areas perfectly capable of overcoming the economic and political gap that temporarily separated them from mainstream European civilisation. More specifically, in her chapter on Romanian women in *Les femmes en Orient*, her polemic is directed against Catholic- and Jesuit-inspired Western attacks demonising the alleged corrupting impact of Orthodoxy on morals and family ties in

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contemporary appraisal can be found in Grace Atkinson Oliver's sketch on Dora D'Istria in *Scribners*, Volume 17, Issue 2 (December 1878), available on-line at http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi.

[6] There may exist an as yet unidentified English-language translation under the title *Womanhood of all Nations*.

Eastern Europe.[7] The anti-Catholic stance is sustained throughout this vast work as, for instance, when D'Istria - perhaps idealistically - singles out Orthodox Romania as the tolerant nation *par excellence* where Jews, Armenians and Gypsies, persecuted elsewhere in Catholic areas, could find a safe haven and opportunities for at least relative social integration.[8] Drawing on secondary literature but also largely on oral information from personal contacts and from the natives she met during extensive travels, *Les femmes en Orient* and *Des femmes par une femme* abound in highly readable accounts of myths, costume, customs, ceremonies and ritual, and are written with an ease which disguises their rich scholarly background. D'Istria, a cultural historian rather than a feminist writer, is, however, sensitive to minute nuances and degrees of subjection and emancipation among the women she considers and she confidently makes sweeping cross-country and cross-cultural comparisons which would probably deserve a second look and a more critical analysis today.

A celebrity in her own age, Dora D'Istria is largely unknown today, apart from Albania and Romania, where she is revered without, however, being actually read.[9] In her very comprehensive survey of the women's movement, *European Feminisms 1700-1950* (2000), Karen Offen fails to pick up on either of these studies, only catching up with D'Istria in 1884, when she contributed a survey of Italian women to the seminal, massive multi-national volume *The Woman Question in Europe*, edited by Theodore Stanton.[10] Although by no means militant, the merits the two earlier works had in highlighting the condition and the contribution of women in world history can be better judged in the context of the 1850s and 1860s, when they were written and published, a

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[7] More on D'Istria's views on Orthodoxy's acceptance of divorce in my chapter, 'Divorce and the Crisis of the Family', p. 76.

[8] *Les femmes en Orient*, 1859, Livre Premier, Lettre V, 'Les Asiatiques en Roumanie', pp. 82-3, p. 105 and passim.

[9] Most of her works were translated into Romanian by Grigore P. Peretz and were published as *Operile principesei Dora D'Istria* (Bucharest, 1876-77). They have not been republished so far.

[10] Karen Offen, *European Feminisms 1700-1950* (Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 151-54. The volume has an extensive bibliography and pushes the customary boundaries of scholarship to include references to women in Central and Eastern Europe, while acknowledging the gaps in the source base for such areas. For more information on the activities of the Stanton family see the entry on Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) on the feminist website 'Sunshine for Women' at: http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/main.html.

repressive period in which, as Offen has shown, following the revolutions of 1848, most European governments enacted legislation that curtailed women's associative initiatives. In the same period, theorists and writers such as Arthur Schopenhauer (*On Women*, 1851), Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (*The Family*, 1855), Jules Michelet (*L'Amour*, 1859, *La Femme*, 1860), Coventry Patmore (*The Angel in the House*, 1854-63) and others, re-connected to earlier conservative and patriarchal positions on the status of women by redefining the 'separate spheres' theory for men and women, which implicitly denied legitimacy to public female figures such as D'Istria.[11]

One of the earliest attempts to analyse the legal status of Romanian women is the very brief and now outdated *La femme en Roumanie - sa condition juridique et sociale dans le passé et le présent* (Paris, 1911) by Alexandru A.C. Stourdza, who, in the introduction, stated his belief that the impulse to domination, inherent to man-woman relations, can and should be tempered by the values of Christianity and by the spirit of justice. He was confidently hopeful that, after having granted women full equality in education and in access to most professions, apart from the bar, Romania, 'un pays de progrès', would be able to solve the most ardent issue of equal suffrage. Based on a wide selection of the West-European feminist literature of the time, this is a work which looks to the future rather than the past and as such does not address the period from 1750 to 1850 except to summarise it briefly as a 'dark age' when women, prisoners of their domestic sphere, hardly knew anything beyond 'l'éducation des enfants, une soumission aveugle au mari' and 'aucune vie intellectuelle' (p.65). This is the work of a Christian and feminist militant: Stourdza also included practical sections listing the legal rights won by French women up to 1911, as well as addresses and references of use to their Romanian counter-parts.

Nicolae Iorga was one of the first historians to devote specific studies to the history of women, although they are mainly short surveys accompanying selections of archival sources. *Femeile în viața neamului nostru* (Women in our History, 1911), *Scrisori de femei* (Letters from women, 1932), and *Portretele doamnelor române/Portraits des princesses roumaines* (1937) are a few examples from a major body of work which placed social history firmly at the centre of scholarly concerns in Romanian pre-

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[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 130-33.

Communist historiography. However, his suggestion that women's contribution to the building of the Romanian nation was worth serious investigation is only now being seriously considered by Romanian historians.

Women's history took a clear narrative turn in the 1940s and 50s with Constantin Gane and Vasile Panopol. Gane's *Trecute vieți de doamne și domnițe* (Past lives of princesses and noble ladies, 3 volumes, 1932-1939), *Amărâte și vesele vieți de jupânese și cucoane* (Sad and merry lives of ladies and gentlewomen) (1943) and Panopol's *Românce văzute de străini* (Romanian women in foreign travellers' accounts, 1943) and *Moldovence eroine pușkiniene* (Moldavian women Pushkin met, 1952, still in manuscript), are examples of how archival sources, scrupulously explored and cited, could be placed in the service of a Romantic, anecdotal historiography meant to appeal to a non-specialised public. Both Gane and Panopol show literary flair in their choice of narrative focus, the first, for instance, when he links generations of women from a particular family through the device of a star-shaped brooch bequeathed through the ages from mothers-in-law to daughters-in-law, the second using the decadently Romantic figure of Pushkin to connect tales of gambling, romance and adultery in Odessa, in which Moldavian women figured prominently.

The foregoing publications formed an admittedly very slight basis for building a school of thought in women's history and such attempts remained isolated and subsequently largely ignored by Communist historiography. Gane's three-volume book ran through no less than seven editions between 1932, the year of its first publication, and 2000, but this is due to its best-selling, crowd-pleasing qualities rather than to its valuable and solid archival background. Women's history in Romania has yet to define and re-define itself.

Sources, Aims, Objectives: 'Looking for the Romanian Woman'

Marcia Pointon has argued recently that over the last decades the 'notion of a constituency that is "hidden from history", to use Sheila Rowbotham's trend-setting term

of 1973, has been replaced by the conviction that 'nothing is hidden'[12], provided one knows how to approach the available source material. This view is especially valuable for a space like Romania, where historians of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are deprived of many of the narrative and textual sources which Western historians have been exploring with enormous success in recent decades: journals and newspapers, diaries and letters, prescriptive literature, conduct books and fiction. To give just two examples of this lack, the first Romanian-language newspapers were published in 1829 (*Curierul românesc* [The Romanian Courier], in Wallachia, and *Albina* [The Bee], in Moldavia), while the earliest known diary by a woman is that of Elena Hartulari (née Plitos), written in Cyrillic script in the 1820s and 1830s, and serialised in the Romanian literary monthly *Convorbiri literare* (Literary Conversations) between 1926 and 1928 (this text will be analysed in greater detail in my last chapter).[13] The absence of periodicals, the comparative scarcity of secular as opposed to religious and liturgical literature, the late emergence of the professional writer and journalist, all raise questions about the possibility and limits of imaginatively reconstructing the public arenas of the main urban centres of old Romania, the capital cities of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, for the late eighteenth century up to at least the 1820s-1830s. The world of salons and coffee houses, the various forms of associative activities, the public spaces devoted to the debate of ideas and of current affairs which have been so fruitfully explored for Western Europe, and especially for Britain and France, are still largely irretrievable for the Romanian late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[14] This opacity of social spaces and social intercourse renders - as will be emphasised repeatedly in this thesis - any discussion of private and public spheres as organising socio-cultural principles of the Romanian ancien régime very

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[12] Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: Three Hundred Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight against it* (London, 1973), in Marcia Pointon, *Strategies for Showing - Women, Possession and Representation in English Visual Culture 1665-1800* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 8.

[13] I am grateful to Dr. Violeta Barbu from the 'N. Iorga' Historical Research Institute in Bucharest for pointing this obscure source out to me.

[14] Literature on 'private/public' distinctions and on the 'separate spheres' has grown steadily over the last decade or so. Here is a small selection of recent titles: Dario Castiglione and Lesley Sharpe (eds.), *Shifting the Boundaries - Transformation of the Languages of Public and Private in the Eighteenth Century* (University of Exeter Press, 1995); Lawrence E. Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol.29, no.1 (1995), pp. 97-109; Jane Rendall, 'Women and the Public Sphere', *Gender & History*, vol.11 (November 1999), pp. 475-488.

problematic. The scarcity of relevant contemporary texts and the current difficulties in locating and describing the venues, channels and forms of public debate in pre-1840s Romania make it impossible to assess whether and to what extent theologians, moral thinkers and politicians ever addressed the 'woman question'. This means that the degree of analytic sophistication achieved today in West European women's history and gender studies will continue to elude the Romanian scholar.[15]

In addition, not only the periodisation of Romanian history, but also notions such as 'ancien régime', Enlightenment, civil society, modernity, liberalism, conservatism, and their applicability, are due for extensive re-definition and re-contextualisation, before anything approaching trans-national and trans-cultural comparison is to become possible.

My own preferred format for approaching the period would be an imaginative reconstruction of the Romanian past based on the period's own key cultural concepts, in other words a conjectural description of this culture in its own terms, extracted from its own public discourses. The aforementioned absence of written sources does not mean that such sources are not available, but they are discontinuous, of a public (i.e. political tracts, diplomatic correspondence) rather than private (i.e. journals, letters) nature, and difficult to access. In addition, for periods up to the 1840s -1850s (the Latin script became official in 1860), manuscript sources in a florid Cyrillic hand require lengthy periods of deciphering and/or translation even for historians with long palaeographic experience. As a consequence, my project has been based almost exclusively on published collections, duly acknowledged in the bibliography and in the footnotes, rather than upon archival retrieval, recognising that published sources permit speedier exploration, while admittedly suffering from the weakness of having been assembled

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[15] From a vast scholarly literature on West European women's history and gender studies, I shall quote only a few titles apt to refer readers further on to the most recent approaches to key eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts and debates. Sylvana Tomaselli's 'The Enlightenment Debate on Women', *History Workshop Journal*, issue 20 (Autumn 1985), pp. 100-124, remains a seminal, much-quoted article. A more recent contribution to discussions about the links between women's history and the Enlightenment in Barbara Taylor's 'Work in Progress - Feminism and the Enlightenment, 1650-1850', in *History Workshop Journal*, issue 47 (1999) (part of the Royal Holloway's Enlightenment Project). For more comprehensive studies, see Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism - Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860* (Macmillan, 1985), and Karen Offen, *European Feminisms* (see note 10 above).

according to someone else's not always explicit selection criteria. The discontinuous nature of my sources has imposed its limitations on my analysis, in the sense that I had to forego from the start any attempt at quantification in favour of a qualitative reading of a very eclectic body of material: travellers' accounts, dowry and divorce papers, testaments, donation acts, iconography, narrative sources. The strengths and weaknesses of all these categories of material are acknowledged and discussed in individual chapters.

As a very broad preliminary statement, I have to indicate here that, instead of opting for a source-intensive, close, small-scale study of a family, for instance, or an estate, over a shorter or longer time, I have decided - not without qualms - in favour of a series of thematic chapters forming a looser structure. Hopefully, this looseness is to a certain extent offset by the attempt to define not only the period's main cultural concerns (modernisation, transition, Europeanisation), but also, via the different themes observed (consumption and fashion, education, legal rights, family structures) the cultural/religious codes and expectations on the basis of which femininities and masculinities were socially constructed.

I have also discovered along the way that constructing continuous narratives of individual women for the pre-1850 period is an activity akin to attempting a jig-saw puzzle with numerous missing pieces. It is generally impossible to find the genealogical and biographical pieces which could eventually build into one single life-cycle or even into a coherent episode of any one woman. Reconstructing, for instance, the fate of the Phanariot Princess Ralu Argiropoulo (née Caragea, 1778 -1870)[16] beyond her father's brief reign as Hospodar of Wallachia (1813-1818) would mean looking not only into the Caragea family archives located in three venues in Bucharest and apparently containing hardly anything relevant apart from her death certificate, but also in Greek and Italian archives, the yield of which is still almost a complete unknown.[17] However, finding more information on her life could shed more light on an important episode in European

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[16] See a rather unsatisfactory entry in Anne Commire (ed.), *Women in World History - A Biographical Encyclopaedia* (Yorkin Publications, USA), vol. 8, 2000.

[17] I am grateful to Dr. Lia Chisacof for having sent me her volume *Comorile unei arhive* (Treasures of an Archive), co-edited with Georgeta Penelea-Filitti (Bucharest, 1996), and for sharing my interest in Ralu Caragea.

cultural and political history, as the Carageas and the Argiropoulos were closely linked in Pisa to the Byron-Shelley circles and, as such, were deeply involved in the fund-raising and political agitation surrounding the Greek war for independence.

Even in the case of the Guernsey-born Maria Rosetti (née Grant in 1819), a major figure in the Romanian 1848 revolution and beyond (as I show in chapter seven), reconstructing her early life in England and France before her marriage to the Romanian forty-eighter C.A. Rosetti in 1847 remains problematic. In this often frustrating quest for 'clues', to use Carlo Ginzburg's term[18], the search for the 'Romanian woman' can sometimes look like a palaeontological exercise, and, while the scientist hopes one day to rebuild the whole body, he/she will have to be in the meantime content with a few pieces of skeleton.

But if constraints of time, source availability and research opportunities render major breakthroughs and grand narratives still elusive in Romanian (and East-European) social and women's history, one can hope that 'asking the appropriate questions' of the available material might at least provide a glimpse of the living body that once covered the skeleton.[19]

Periodisation, Europe, Modernity

This thesis takes as its time scale the period extending roughly from c. 1750 to c. 1850. This is a purely conventional choice, not overtly linked to events, cultural shifts or other landmarks related to the history of women. The two dates encompass the period starting roughly after the reforms of the Phanariot Prince Constantin Mavrocordat and ending with the revolution of 1848. It is a choice of dates that is unlikely to please a number of Romanian historians who insist on historically-justified, 'logical', or traditional,

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[18] Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1989) (first published in Italian as *Miti emblemi spie: morfologia e storia*, Torino, 1986), esp. chapter 'Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm', pp. 96-125. See also the suggestion of the Dutch historian Gustaf Renier (1892-1962) that historians look for 'traces' of the past in the present, rather than sources (in *History, its Purpose and Method* (London, 1950), as quoted in Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing - The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Reaktion Books, London, 2001), p.13.

[19] Pointon, *Strategies for Showing*, p. 8.

'received' time brackets. While recognising that terms such as 'pre-modern' times, 'ancien régime' and 'modernity' are still ill-defined for Romanian history, I would regard a new debate around them as a means of refreshing a stale dispute and sparking off new ideas rather than as an arena of sterile battle between the 'ancients' and the 'moderns', between established truths and iconoclast innovation, as is often the case. I shall attempt, however, to summarise the main lines of enquiry around two of the more important terms for the period 1750-1850, namely modernisation and Europeanisation. The equally contentious issue of the periodisation and nature of the 'ancien régime' in Romania will be briefly examined in chapter two in connection with the origins and structure of the boyar class and the Phanariot period.

In a study which remains, surprisingly, little-quoted in the relevant literature, the late historian Vlad Georgescu made what is probably the earliest - and so far, the only - attempt at a quantitative study of the corpus of political texts produced in the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia between 1369 and 1878.[20] While his choice of time span may appear dubious and his criteria for selecting the texts are not very clear, his study *Istoria ideilor politice românești* (A history of romanian political ideas, 1987) is a brave, and potentially controversial, attempt at exploring the past from 'inside', starting from the ideas circulated in one form or another within the relevant periods. His sample comprised 2,049 texts (Princes' decrees, memoranda, theoretical works, reforms projects) produced by 302 authors on 172 general themes subdivided into topics as varied as: the 'meanings' of history and the 'historical destiny' of the Romanians, the international status, sovereignty and autonomy of the Principalities, representations of the Ottomans and the Greeks, the merits of industrialisation, pleas for civil and human rights, and many others, minutely categorised and quantified by Georgescu. While this is not the place to assess the merits or demerits of the study or to analyse it in any detail, and while its conclusions have to be accepted with caution, it is an exercise which highlights potentially fertile lines of investigation into Romanian intellectual history, including the contentious issue of periodisation. Some of its broad suggestions are worth summarising. The 'aristocratic' character of what can be termed provisionally the Romanian 'ancien régime' is borne out by the fact that the overwhelming majority of the

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[20] Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria ideilor politice românești* (A history of Romanian political ideas) (Jon Dumitru Verlag, Munich, 1987).

texts, including the more liberal and socially progressive, were authored by members of the boyar class, almost all of them either dignitaries or associated with power. In addition, most of these authors were those whose privilege extended to foreign travel (and before the 1840s, this was not easy to do) and higher education qualifications.

Secondly, in terms of the Romanians' broad political-cultural choices as set out by their intellectual élite, most texts advocate a rapprochement with Western Europe, a distancing from the 'East' (the Ottoman suzerain power and the Russian protecting power), and a clearly expressed inclination to distinguish themselves from the 'South-East' of Europe (a trend continued today in the form of a reluctance to be seen as part of the 'Balkans'). Anti-European views were rarely expressed before 1821, and when they were, they originated in dogmatic disputes largely fuelled by the Patriarchate of Constantinople.[21] On the contrary, most authors viewed education in West-European schools and travel abroad in a very positive light. Attacks on the 'corrupting' influence of the West belong almost exclusively to the post-1848 period.

Thirdly, the contemporaries' negative views of the Phanariot period (1711-1821) (see chapter two) are illustrated by the comparative stagnation in the production of political texts between 1720 and 1770 and by the prevalence of ideas of decline and backwardness in the available texts; most of the causes of decline as perceived between 1760 and 1830 are connected to foreign domination or protectorates (Ottoman-Greek between the sixteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries and Russian after 1821), hence the prevalence of foreign political rather than domestic-social issues in the texts covered by the survey. Very few authors in the period prior to 1821 attributed the country's economic and cultural backwardness to the moral corruption and/or the inefficient administration of the native (ethnic Romanian) élites.

Even while treating such comprehensive statements with due caution, they do provide signposts for the understanding of the period up to 1850 as a culturally pro-European, and politically reformist period. This was the crucial period which, by attempting to define concepts such as the nation, the ethnic unity and the shared traditions of the Romanians, the pro-European option and the rejection of the Ottoman, Russian and

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[21] *Ibid.*, pp.80-81.

South-East European models, prepared the ground for landmarks such as the abolition of the Ottoman commercial monopoly in 1829, the union of the Principalities in 1859, the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1866 and eventually for national independence in 1877. The primacy of foreign political concerns in the period was justified, as Georgescu explains, in the eyes of most political agents of the period, who believed that only political autonomy could allow the creation of an independent monetary and banking system, and only the consequent economic growth and integration in the European trade circuit could lead to the kind of society which could freely debate civil and human rights issues such as the emancipation of the Gypsy slaves (achieved in 1855 in legislation if not in actual practice) and the status and rights of women.

Modernisation

As Simon Dixon has observed in connection with Russia, despite the controversy surrounding the concept, modernisation continues to be central to understanding Russian history.[22] By extension, it can be argued that the same is true for East European history in general. Alexander Drace-Francis, in his unpublished doctoral thesis on literature and nation in nineteenth-century Romanian Principalities, has shown that modernisation - which, as a sociological concept was developed in the West to refer to the growth of states and societies on the basis of rationalisation, science, industry, capitalism, democracy and secularism - became for Central and East European societies a model or a process to be emulated or rejected, according to the viewpoint of the various native political constituencies. In his argument, he explains that, in spite of the ideological charge of the concept of modernity - which has been repeatedly blamed for its Eurocentrism and its too vague character - the notion of modernisation remains a powerful explanatory tool in any attempt to understand the radical political and societal changes that took place in the Romanian Principalities in the period between c. 1750 and 1850.[23]

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[22] Simon Dixon, *The Modernisation of Russia 1671-1825* (Cambridge U.P., New Approaches to European History, 1999), p. 5.

[23] *Literature, Modernity, Nation - The Case of Romania, 1829-1890*, unpublished PhD dissertation, (School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, 2001), esp. pp. 11-13.

In a relatively early attempt to discuss eighteenth- and nineteenth-century East-European areas in terms of modernity and modernisation, Peter F. Sugar tries to show how the very generality of the concept can be a strength rather than a weakness.[24] By pointing to the many interlocking meanings of the concept (Westernisation, Europeanisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, revolutionary transformation), Sugar demonstrates its functional adaptability to place, time and circumstances. More importantly for my own focus on the boyar class in this thesis, he highlights the role of reforming élites in Eastern Europe when he says that modernisation 'is always forced on premodern societies either by circumstances or by the determination of a modernizing minority'.[25] As I hope to show in more detail in chapter two, the will of the modernising boyar class of the Romanian Principalities was probably the main source of the sweeping changes effected in social and political structures around 1800. More controversially, however, Sugar outlines three models of modernisation available to the Balkan lands: the Venetian-Dalmatian, the Habsburg-Hungarian, and to a lesser extent, the Wallachian model.[26] To my knowledge, no scholar has yet engaged seriously with Sugar's suggestions of 1977, although they raise a number of intriguing questions and issues. His proposed three models imply that the only potential templates for modernisation were those areas of East-Central Europe which were never or which were only partly subjected to Ottoman domination, a view which more recent revisionist approaches to the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans might wish to contest. Moreover, this is a view that partly corresponds to popular perceptions in the area about the comparative backwardness of the former Ottoman-controlled areas compared to those in the Habsburg sphere of influence. My discussion of the Phanariot régimes' role in modernising the Romanian lands (see chapter two) offers some tentative counter-arguments to Sugar's dismissive view of the Ottoman heritage.

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[24] Peter F. Sugar, 'Some Thoughts on the Pre-Conditions of Modernization and their Applicability to the European Provinces of the Ottoman Empire', an article of 1977 republished in *Nationality and Society in Habsburg and Ottoman Europe* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 1997).

[25] *Ibid.*, p.78.

[26] *Ibid*, p. 94.

Modernisation is understood by most sociologists today as a nexus of processes such as industrialisation and the rise of (global) capitalism, urbanisation, secularisation, class formation and the division of labour, individualism, consumerism and plurality of choice, and increasingly complex institutions such as the centralising state and its growing bureaucracy, civil society and its encompassing public sphere, as well as expanding education and communication. The extent to which the lands and peoples of East-Central Europe participated in these processes and were able to create or emulate such institutions lies at the heart of the debates about the 'otherness' and backwardness of these regions and ultimately about their European or non-European character. This is a major debate in East-Central European historiography and it falls well beyond the limits of this thesis. However, tradition, change, continuity, derivative influences, competing models of modernisation, Ottoman vs Habsburg influences, legacies and perceptions, are all notions which have informed my own reflections and have shaped my way of thinking about old régime Romania. One notion in particular was central to the debates in which the Romanians themselves engaged passionately in at least two important periods, 1770-1830 and post 1848: Europeanisation. As such, it is worth a brief attempt at a definition.

Europeanisation

Alex Drace-Francis has suggested that the earliest recorded use of the word 'Europeanisation' in the English language might possibly be found in Jeremy Bentham's *Correspondence*, and, by an interesting coincidence, it applies to his perception of the position of the Romanian boyar élites vis-à-vis Europe and its civilisation. Bentham spent a week in Bucharest and Iaşi from late December 1785 to January 1786 on his way from Constantinople to the Crimea, where his engineer brother, Samuel, was busy building ships for Russia under the supervision of Prince Potemkin. Amidst general complaints about the lack of amenities such as furniture and cutlery, poor transport and services, baksheesh-giving and the overall inefficiency of society, he recorded his views of the Romanians as 'a vegetable species' among whom only two or three 'Europeanised' nobles could be found, one, a certain 'Constaki' - probably Costaki - founder of a theatre in Bucharest and self-confessed disciple of Hélvétius, and two others, the young

brothers Cantacuzino, whom Bentham highly recommended as suitable company to his correspondent, about to visit the Principalities.[27]

But, while in the 1770s and 1780s 'Europeanisation' was understood both by foreign visitors and by the natives as a derivative cultural model mainly involving learning foreign languages and adopting Western lifestyles, as the nineteenth century progressed, and especially after 1848, the internal debates around the models of Europeanisation acquired an increasingly political meaning. According to Vlad Georgescu, although the number of theoretical texts devoted to the issue was rather limited (only 37 out of the over 2,000 he studied), they were extremely influential in fuelling a debate that reached its climax around the 1870s and 1880s. What these theoretical approaches (for example, the contributions of the forty-eighter Mihail Kogălniceanu, of Alecu Russo - on whom more in chapter three, 'Consumption, Fashion and Europeanisation', and of Barbu Ştirbei) had in common was the assumption that the way to modernisation in Romania ran through a reasonably paced, gradual synthesis of tradition and Western borrowing, rather than through a break with tradition. Positions became more radicalised in the 1870s, especially among members of the 'Junimea' (The Youth) Society in Iaşi, such as its leader Titu Maiorescu, Th. Rosetti and P.P.Carp. Reacting against a too rapid absorption of Western - especially French - ideas and values in lifestyle, culture and political institutions, Maiorescu developed his famous notion of 'forms without content' to reject what he regarded as a purely derivative, imitative process of cultural assimilation. As members of the Conservative Party, ministers and politicians, the 'Junimea' members were in a position to act on their theoretical assumptions, but the precise nature of their practical influence remains difficult to assess. However, according to Georgescu, the Conservative governments - in which Maiorescu served - never legislated in an anti-European spirit and the formula of 'forms without content' remained rather theoretical, vaguely defined and susceptible to endless re-interpretation. The late nineteenth-century Liberals, too, had their own 'native' models for modernisation, more practice-oriented than the Conservatives', and varying widely in terms of similarities and opposition to the latter. The Liberal I.C. Brătianu, for instance,

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[27] Jeremy Bentham, *Correspondence*, Letter of 8 January, 1786, from Iaşi. For the presumed identity of the Cantacuzino brothers, see also the Romanian translation of Bentham's letters in Maria Holban and others (eds.), *Călători străini în ţările române* (Foreign Travellers to the Romanian Lands), vol. X, Part 1 (Bucharest, 2000).

argued in his *Bilanțul situațiunii* (An overview of the situation, 1858) and in *Discurs* (Speech, 1869) that, far from being alien imports, Western and French influences were grafted on what was originally a 'Romance' and 'European' stem by virtue of the Romanians' Latin origins.[28] This debate cannot be followed in any great depth here, but it seems clear that being pro- or anti-European in late nineteenth-century Romania did not follow any clear-cut divisions in terms of party political affiliation, although most proponents of modernising projects were members of the first generation of boyars to have benefited around the 1830s and 1840s from University degrees abroad and form contacts with the West. The way this generation - which included forty-eighters such as Kogălniceanu, C.A. Rosetti and D. Brătianu - constructed its political identity and envisaged the country's future largely depended on family traditions (for example, the Golescu family, boyars, liberals and revolutionaries) and presumably also on the academic traditions of the foreign Universities these young men attended and the foreign, largely French, contacts they had (for instance, the Rosetti family whose connections with Jules Michelet, the Collège de France and French Freemasonry I am hoping to explore in future research).

That French influence was central to modernising Romania is today uncontested. The classic study is Pompiliu Eliade's *De l'influence française sur l'esprit public en Roumanie* (Paris, 1898)[29] which investigates very comprehensively and in great detail all the channels available (merchants, French émigrés, imports of books and newspapers, diplomatic contacts, the Russian army of occupation, schooling) for the penetration of French ideas into the Danubian Principalities and their impact. There are shorter, more recent studies which cover much the same ground, but, more than one hundred years later, Eliade's territory would certainly deserve a fresh look.[30] Most

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[28] Vlad Georgescu, *Ideile politice*, pp. 81-86.

[29] Published in Romanian in 1982 (Editura Univers, Bucharest) and 2000 (Editura Humanitas, Bucharest) as *Influența franceză asupra spiritului public în România*.

[30] For instance, Alexandru Duțu, 'L'image de la France dans les Pays Roumains pendant les campagnes napoléoniennes et le Congrès de Vienne', in *Nouvelles études d'histoire*, vol. III (Bucharest, 1965) and, among the more recent contributions, Dan Berindei, 'Diffusion des "idées françaises" dans les pays roumains et l'impact de la Révolution de 1789' in the miscellaneous volume 1789 *Weltwirkung einer grossen Revolution* (Berlin, 1989) and the same material in Romanian in Dan Berindei, *Românii și Europa - Istorie, societate, cultură*, Vol.I: Secolele XVIII-XIX (Bucharest, Ed. Museion), 1991. An older, but still very useful study is Germaine Lebel, *La France et les Principautés Danubiennes* (Paris, 1955).

authors dealing with the subject have done so by simply listing imports of books and journals, testimonies of travellers and French diplomats, and the favourable reception of French ideas in the Principalities has been generally taken for granted without further analysis. However, the presence on Romanian territory of one copy of Deputy Carnot's speeches or the Romanian translation in 1790 of *Les mystères des Franc-maçons* does not in itself explain very much. Why the consuls of revolutionary and then republican France should be enthusiastically received at court by an essentially autocratic régime and an essentially aristocratic society - as contemporary diplomatic sources testify - and why the streets of Bucharest or Iaşi could resonate with impunity to the sound of *Vive le son du canon* are bound to remain mere anecdotes unless backed by a very careful analysis of the circulation and availability of texts and journals, of readership and of the social structures in the far from monolithic polities of Wallachia and Moldavia. Moreover, French influence should be placed in the context of Great Power political and economic rivalry in South-East-Europe. Surprisingly, as far as women's history is concerned, the evidence unearthed so far suggests that not one of the controversies about women's roles and rights emanating from revolutionary and Napoleonic France ever reached the Romanian lands, where, as I suggested earlier, debate on social issues appears to have been almost totally absent in the period.[31] During the revolutions of 1848, at a time when the French impact on ideas and political culture in Romania had matured, the most radical measure envisaged by the authors of the revolutionary programmes was equal access of both sexes to education.

Writing in the 1920s, at a time when the battle between traditionalists and modernisers became acute and the debate acquired hard-line Orthodox overtones in nationalist-traditionalist circles, the literary critic Eugen Lovinescu (1881-1943) contributed to the debate on French influence with his *Istoria civilizaţiei române moderne* (A history of modern Romanian civilisation, 1924). Starting from the then fashionable but rather mechanistic concepts of influence, imitation, and the more ineffably transcendental *Zeitgeist*, he proposed the law of 'synchronicity' to suggest that modern Romania

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[31] Two important studies on theoretical debates around the social status of women in the eighteenth century and on the critique of excessive revolutionary activities by women in France are Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Cornell University Press, 1988), and Mary Seidmann Trouille, *Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment - Women writers read Rousseau* (State University of New York Press, 1997).

emerged in the early nineteenth-century alongside Western European nations owing chiefly to the cultural and ideological influence of the superior French culture. In his view, it was not the emergence of capitalism and the market or the lifting of the Ottoman monopoly on Romanian trade (1829) which effected the change, but the slow erosion of traditional, conservative (Slavonic, Phanariot, Orthodox) values under the impact of a dynamic French culture, as delineated earlier by Pompiliu Eliade.

The debate between traditionalists and modernisers continued well into the twentieth century. It was only curtailed by the advent of Communism which, of course, imposed its own 'modernising' agenda without further consulting its intelligentsia.

Final Observations

Ostensibly, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Romania was very much a man's world. Yet, as I am hoping to show in my discussions of consumption, family law, law codes, schooling and professional opportunities, women secured roles, both in the domestic and, increasingly, also in the public arena, which, in their own less visible ways, contributed to the wider societal changes alluded to above.

In many ways, this is a premature venture, and it can be argued that trying to produce a general overview of Romanian women's history between 1750 and 1850 before a respectable body of detailed, specific studies has been published, betrays at best naivety and at worst an opportunistic wish to jump on the bandwagon of West-European gender studies. I confess to both errors and I am perfectly aware that the end result is a rather eclectic mix that could be dismissively categorised as 'notes towards Romanian women's history'. And yet, this project can be defended at least on the grounds that it identifies some of the available sources for women's history in Romania, as well as pointing to issues that are central to European women's history in general and the ways in which they are or not applicable to the history of women in South-East Europe, thereby providing signposts for future research, including my own. A subsidiary function of this research exercise has been to introduce into the English-language academic circuit - albeit in the limited-access niche of unpublished doctoral theses - a

body of older and more recent Romanian research which would otherwise be out of reach, beyond the iron curtain of the language barrier.

Chapter Two

The Boyars: Landowners, Dignitaries, Power Elites

I have succeeded by dint of great exertion to win one vizier's favour; but now he has fallen and another has taken his place, and then another. Each time I have to start afresh.
Letter of Alexandru Mavrocordat, Grand Dragoman of the Ottoman Porte 1673-1709, and founder of the first Phanariot dynasty

This thesis took most of its source material from the world of the Romanian nobility (the 'boyars')[1], the class that left the greatest amount of written testimonies behind. Owners of land, manors, riches and Gypsy slaves, founders of churches and hospitals, heads of families and patrons of client networks, the great boyars (members of the first class of nobility, as opposed to the lower classes, two and three) also dominated the government of the Romanian Principalities throughout what is arguably the most politically fertile period in their history, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The history of the Romanian political class from the earliest recorded times up to the early decades of the twentieth century is a story of a handful of 'great families', of their resilience and adaptability and of their late demise under the impact of new forces to which they failed to adapt.

In addition to great boyar monopoly over the institutions of government, it was the boyar class as a whole which presided over the emergence of a political and national consciousness in the two Principalities. In a series of studies published in the 1970s and 1980s and based on ample quantitative evidence, Vlad Georgescu showed - at a time when it was politically uncomfortable to champion such views - that the Romanian boyars were the main, if not the sole, agents of political change in old régime Wallachia and Moldavia. One of Georgescu's studies of political ideas, based on 2,049 texts, mainly petitions and memoirs addressed to Constantinople (the Ottoman Porte, the suzerain power) and St. Petersburg (Russia, the self-appointed protecting power) by the Romanian notables of the Principalities and of Transylvania between 1369 and 1878,

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[1] Term of Old Slavic origin, also used to designate the Russian pre-Petrine nobility. For the Romanian boyar class, see the comprehensive entry in Ovid Sachelarie and N. Stoicescu (eds.), *Instituţii feudale din ţările române - Dicţionar* (Bucharest, 1988).

demonstrated the dominant role of the boyars in Romanian foreign affairs initiatives and in the advocacy of internal, social and constitutional reforms from the eighteenth century onwards. Thus, for 218 authors of political texts in the Principalities in the period 1750-1831, 159 were boyars.[2] The absence of a developed urban middle and professional class and the high level of education required by a career in politics may be - and traditionally, were - possible explanations for the great boyar monopoly of high politics and for their considerable contribution to the creation of a political culture. However, Neagu Djuvara has shown that second and third class boyars and non-nobles outnumbered the students of noble origin at the Phanariot princely Academies of Bucharest and Iaşi, and that the first to gain university degrees abroad before 1830 were in fact mostly sons of wealthy merchants and upwardly mobile lower classes.[3] The historian and genealogist Ştefan S. Gorovei has suggested that the Romanian boyar class as a whole was much more permeable and fluid and allowed for upward (and downward) mobility to a larger extent than the exclusive West European aristocracy.[4] However, at the very top was a fiercely protectionist and virtually closed circle of boyars of the first class and, according to Djuvara, political manoeuvring and decision-making at the highest level remained the preserve of this coterie belonging to around twenty-one aristocratic families, in a tradition that extended beyond 1821 and well into the nineteenth century.[5] Based chiefly on documents relating to Divan membership in Wallachia, Djuvara also showed that power between 1771 and 1848 was concentrated in the hands of around ten old native families, most notably the Filipescu, Văcărescu, Ghika (Romanianised Albanians), Racoviţă, Ştirbei, Kreţulescu, Brâncoveanu, Golescu, Grădişteanu and Bălăceanu families.[6]

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[2] Vlad Georgescu, *Ideile politice şi iluminismul în Principatele române, 1750-1831* (Political ideas and the Enlightenment in the Romanian principalities) (Bucharest, 1972), p. 178 sqq., quoted by Neagu Djuvara, 'Les grands boïars ont-ils constitué dans las principautés roumaines une véritable oligarchie institutionnelle et héréditaire?', *Südostforschungen*, XLVI (1987), p. 48. Cf. also Georgescu, *Istoria ideilor politice româneşti (1369-1878)* (The history of Romanian political ideas) (Colecţia istorică Jon Dumitru Verlag, Munich, 1987), p.15 and passim.

[3] Djuvara, 'Les grands boïars', pp. 49-50.

[4] Ştefan S. Gorovei, 'Clanuri, familii, autorităţi, puteri (Moldova, secolele XV-XVII) (Clans, Families, Authorities, Power - Moldavia, 15-17th centuries), *Arhiva Genealogică* (VI), nos.1-2 (1994), pp. 87-93.

[5] For a similar view on the continuity of great boyar leadership, see Paul Cernovodeanu, 'Clanuri, familii, autorităţi, puteri (Ţara Românească, secolele XV-XVI)' (Clans, families, authorities, power - Wallachia, 15th-17th centuries), *Arhiva genealogică* (VI), nos.1-2 (1994) pp. 84-5.

[6] Djuvara, 'Les grands boïars', p. 42.

I have said earlier that the history of the Romanian political class in the ancien régime was the story of 'great families', whose members were the promoters of a veritable 'politics of the families' against both the centralising measures of the Prince ('Domn' from Lat. 'dominus') and against the assault of lower status groups and of foreigners. It was also the story of how a 'noblesse d'épée' (Slav. 'jupan') became a 'noblesse de robe' ('dregători' from Lat. 'dirigere') between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries and of how issues of family connections, matrimonial strategy, clientage and patronage within the charmed circle of these families became interlocked with the development of government institutions and of South-East European geopolitical complexities.

Did Romania have a 'feudal' system proper? Can one speak of orders and clear-cut corporate identities in mediaeval and old régime Moldo-Wallachia? Did there initially exist a native, hereditary aristocracy? Were the principalities in the ancien régime centralising monarchies? As Romanian historiography at the present moment is rethinking its tools, methods and objectives, these and related issues - much debated in the inter-war period and to a lesser extent in the 1970s and 1980s - are now coming under fresh scrutiny, but are well beyond the scope and aims of this thesis. What follows is an attempt to outline briefly the growth of the Romanian noble class, its structure in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the political and social contexts in which it had to operate.

Origins and Development of the Boyar Class

According to what by oversimplification I shall call the Panaitescu-Djuvara hypothesis[7], the Romanian aristocracy originated in the Slavic warlords who imposed their domination over the *Romania Orientalis* from the sixth century AD. onwards, mingling with the Romanised native population on the territory of ancient Dacia. The process continued with the establishment of the Bulgarian tzarate, which by the ninth century AD. incorporated most of these territories. There is written evidence for the existence of a fully 'Romanianised' ruling class by the thirteenth century AD. Over the next

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[7] For a cogent survey of the hypotheses on the origins of the Romanian boyar class, see Djuvara, 'Les grands boïars', pp. 1-56.

centuries, this group developed into a native aristocracy, incorporating along the way - and especially after the fall of Constantinople and an increased Byzantine-Greek social influx in the principalities - many Byzantine features, such as the absence of hereditary noble titles and the quasi-monopoly of state offices by a very small number of élite families. A competing theory of origins, championed by Radu Rosetti and Constantin Giurescu, among others, and 'officially' adopted by Romanian historiography, as Paul Cernovodeanu put it, claims that the boyars were originally 'native' land-owning peasants entrusted with roles in military leadership, whose existence was attested as early as the tenth century AD.[8] The ideologically positive connotations that an 'autochthonous' theory might have had for Communist historians is self-evident, and, like much else in early Romanian history, this debate is still open.

In their relentless push north-westwards, the Ottomans attempted to conquer the Principalities as early as the fourteenth century, but failed to transform them into *pashaliks* proper, for a number of complex reasons which are still unclear and cannot be discussed here.[9] By the fifteenth century, however, Wallachia and Moldavia became Ottoman dominions, controlled according to the strategy of the *dar al-'ahd* ('abode of the covenant') which guaranteed their autonomy in exchange for a régime of material obligations.[10] Under this arrangement, the Principalities retained their own administration, political structures and, until the eighteenth century, their native princes. However, the Prince became increasingly, and especially from the seventeenth century onwards, a top civil servant in the Ottoman state hierarchy, while continuing to pose as a sovereign by divine right at home. After 1659, when the Ottomans suppressed revolts in both Principalities, and especially after the peace of Karlowits (1699) and Charles

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[8] Cernovodeanu, 'Clanuri, familii', *Arhiva genealogică*, VI, nos.1-2 (1994), 77-86.

[9] Two short studies addressing this issue specifically are: P.P. Panaitescu, 'De ce nu au cucerit Turcii Ţările Române?' (Why the Turks did not conquer the Romanian Lands), in *Interpretări româneşti. Studii de istorie economică şi socială* (Bucharest, 1947), pp. 144-159, and, more recently, Mihai Maxim, 'De ce n-au cucerit otomanii Ţările Române?' (Why the Ottomans did not conquer the Romanian Lands), *Studii şi articole de istorie*, LX-LXI (1993), 170-176.

[10] For the 'dar-al-'ahd' system as a halfway house into the Islamic world, see Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (New Approaches to European History, Cambridge, 2002), p. 46. For a Romanian perspective on Ottoman domination based largely on Ottoman sources and legal terminology, see Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace - The Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers* (East European Monographs, No. 563, Boulder, Co, 2000).

XII's defeat by Peter the Great at Poltava (1709), the Porte realised that its control over Moldavia and Wallachia was going to be challenged by the emerging Eastern powers and decided to appoint devoted rulers selected from the exclusive circles of Greek families in the area of Constantinople called Phanar. In a relatively short time, a permanent link was established between the office of the 'Dragoman' (interpreter) of the Porte and the title of 'Hospodar' (Prince, or more appropriately, governor) of the Danubian Principalities, which meant that only rich and influential 'Dragomans' could hope to gain, by licit or illicit means, the Moldo-Wallachian thrones. In practice, the title was sold to the highest bidder, who subsequently attempted to recoup his losses by raising taxes and dues and by selling, in his turn, government and administrative offices to boyars increasingly dependent on state service. (More on Phanariots and Phanariotism below, pp. 42-47)

Throughout their history, the native boyars built their wealth, power and sense of identity within the complex network of relationships that evolved between the Ottoman suzerain, the Prince, his Greek Phanariot clients, and the rest of society: clergy, peasants, Gypsy slaves, and a growing merchant and professional class which often sought - and gained - entry into boyardom. Contesting the Ottoman-appointed ruler and appealing to one great power or another (France, Russia, Austria, Turkey) for the preservation of the principalities' autonomy and of their own rights as a class became the boyars' main foreign political objective and dominated Romanian political life up to at least the 1840s-1850s, when a new social and national awareness led to political energies being increasingly channelled towards reforming society and building the nation.

As far as the Phanariot régimes proper are concerned, the frequent change of Princes (37 in Wallachia between 1716 and 1821, with an average of 2.8 years of rule each[11]) led to administrative instability and to discontinuities which slowed down the actual practical effects of their often enlightened modernising reforms. In addition, the venality

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[11] This information is to be found in Ligia Livadă-Cadeschi, *De la milă la filantropie. Instituţii de asistare a săracilor din Ţara Românească şi Moldova în secolul al XVIII-lea* (From compassion to philanthropy. Poor relief in eightenth-century Romanian Principalities) (Editura Nemira, Bucharest, 2001), p. 20. Her overview of the Phanariot period is a very cogent summary based on most of the resources currently available, and I refer interested readers to her sources for the information and the figures cited.

of both secular and ecclesiastic offices from the top downwards engendered corruption on a large scale, a ruinous scramble for positions among boyars, as well as tensions among factions of boyars and among natives and foreigners (Greeks and Levantines), which fragmented society and had a powerful, and as yet hardly studied, impact on matrimonial strategies and family structures.

The Structures of Power and Government
The Prince

As already mentioned, the principalities were *de jure* autonomous and, as such, they retained their own forms of government, albeit under the leadership of a foreign Prince imposed by the Turks. The system of government throughout the Phanariot period proper (which officially ended in 1821 as a result of the anti-Ottoman Greek-Romanian revolt) has been described as a 'Constantinopolitan' monarchy with elements from both a Byzantine-Ottoman autocracy and from monarchic absolutism. As I shall attempt to show later, most of these Princes also presented themselves as defenders of the new socio-political ethos of the eighteenth century and some of their reforms, however short-lived, appeared indeed to originate in the spirit of Central European enlightened despotism.

The Prince was central to the workings of government and society, from foreign policy, to the courts of justice and even down to climate and epidemics, as Cristina Codarcea has shown in a brief but suggestive study. The Prince, Codarcea contends, ruled by divine right but his conduct was open to criticism and he was held personally responsible for all the events that affected his subjects' lives, including bad harvests, diseases and locust invasions. Natural disasters were regarded as consequences of the moral qualities of the Prince, who was deemed 'lucky' or 'unlucky' - in chronicle language - according to the ways in which he handled taxation, law and custom. As a rule, if he infringed the traditions of customary law, and especially if he tried to impose new, unprecedented taxes, he (and his lineage) attracted the Church's anathema and the hostility of the people who did not hesitate to give them the most disapproving of sobriquets. This apparently simple, but really complicated network of interest, duty and power betrayed the tensions at the Romanian courts between Church, Prince and People: God's grace imposed moral duties on His anointed deputy on earth, whose

authority could, however, be questioned by the Church - at least up to the seventeenth century- and whose memory was constructed for posterity by a grateful or rueful population.[12] To these tensions was added, in the eighteenth century, direct Ottoman intervention in the form of the Phanariot régimes, which diminished the status and the margin of manoeuvre of the Prince, while still allowing him the Byzantine-Ottoman pomp and circumstance of court ritual and forcing him to impose intolerably harsh fiscal arrangements. In the next chapters, I shall attempt to show to what extent, in such circumstances, some of the Phanariot rulers were able to overcome limitations in order to initiate legal and administrative measures meant to create a more rational government in the enlightened and modernising spirit that emerged in eighteenth-century Europe.

The Assemblies

In both principalities[13], the Prince was aided by a twelve-member (sometimes eight-member) Council ('Sfatul domnesc', called 'Divan' from the seventeenth century onwards) which comprised only boyars of the first class as well as the Metropolitan and a number of bishops. (See Appendix four for boyar titles and classes). Membership of the Council was through direct appointment by the Prince. Family relations, matrimonial arrangements and client interests were all of paramount importance in the appointments, and Princes frequently ran the danger of being taken hostage by difficult-to-manoeuvre group interests and of being caught between the iron grip of the Porte on the one hand and the ambitions of the scheming boyars on the other. In addition to the Council, a second body of privileged social groups was associated to government, albeit infrequently: the Country Assembly ('Adunarea ţării'), called up at irregular intervals to be consulted on fiscal matters or constitutional changes. Regarded by some historians as an assembly of the estates, or even as a representative body operating within a *régime de notables* ('regim boieresc'), it may have been in fact simply a way for the Prince to widen decision-making to include boyars who were not members of the Divan,

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[12] Cristina Codarcea, 'Impôts, croyances et pratiques religieuses', in Alexandru Duţu et Norbert Dodille (eds.), *Culture et Politique* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 1995), pp. 73-82.

[13] For ease of presentation, I am discussing political structures and realities in both Wallachia and Moldavia at the same time. Details and dates slightly differed, but the principles of government were largely the same. For handy reference, see the entries in Sachelarie and Stoicescu (eds.), *Instituţii feudale*.

provincial landowners, as well as members of the clergy and the military.[14] Like its Russian counterpart the 'Zemskij sobor', the Assembly had no clear-cut composition or attributions and, under the double assault of the central power and the Ottoman suzerain power, its power declined in the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the fact that the members of the Prince's Council were also members of the Country Assembly suggests, in the words of Cristina Codarcea, 'a governmental strategy which aimed persistently at increasing the power of the Prince and of his group of faithful nobles at the expense of this institution', until it became little more than a mechanism for creating and strengthening the loyalty of the oligarchs towards the throne.[15]

The Courts of Justice

Until late in the nineteenth century, there was practically no separate judiciary in the Principalities: the Divan operated as both State Council and supreme tribunal, with the Prince acting as supreme judge and ultimate appellate instance. In principle, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries any state official ('dregător', member of the Divan) was authorised to judge, and judicial matters became overwhelmingly the main activity of this body. The function of judge was honorary (although, in fact, and increasingly arbitrarily, it became highly lucrative) and the incumbents had no professional training. The first to attempt a professionalisation of judges was the reformist Phanariot Constantin Mavrocordat, who ruled ten times alternately in Wallachia and Moldavia between 1730 and 1769. This enabled him to pass similar decrees which led to a relative, if short-lived, political and administrative uniformity in the two lands. In 1741 in Moldavia, he appointed three great boyars whose duty was to attend Divan sessions whenever there was a trial and who were paid 50 lei monthly. He created a new office, that of 'ispravnic', approximately 'district judge'. The 'ispravnici de ținut' in Moldavia and the 'ispravnici de județ' in Wallachia acted as delegates of the Prince at district level and were in charge of tax collecting, but also had judicial powers. Consequently, many

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[14] For a more detailed discussion of the Country Assembly and the Wallachian state in the seventeenth century, see Cristina Codarcea, 'Le caractère de l'état valaque - quelques considérations', in Laurențiu Vlad (ed.), *Pouvoirs et mentalités* (Bucharest, 1999), pp. 71-87.

[15] Vlad, *Pouvoirs*, p. 87.

of the Divan's powers were devolved to district authorities, while the Divan itself became an appellate instance. In addition, all state officials were to have salaries, rather than collect their own income from tax-payers in the form of the often arbitrary 'havayet'. The emphasis on the need to keep accurate written records of litigations (copied in duplicate in registers called 'protocol' with sealed pages, sent monthly to the Prince for inspection) completes a picture of a comprehensive and radical programme of legal modernisation which worked in phase with similar developments in Western and Central Europe. There is some evidence that an attempt was also made to separate secular from ecclesiastic judicial procedures, with the church having jurisdiction only over canonic affairs. In practice, however, church hierarchs continued to be involved in all cases of family, matrimonial and patrimonial disputes, both at regional and at Divan levels.[16]

The actual procedure in specific cases of rape, abduction, adultery and divorce will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

The Great Boyars: Roles, Activities, Continuity

Belonging to the boyar class was traditionally determined - as it was with most European nobilities - by a family's lineage, by military service and land ownership, irrespective of whether the boyar had a function or held an office at court. The nobles always had official duties, but aristocratic status was not determined by tenure of offices. However, starting with the reforms of Constantin Mavrocordat (1740, 1741), admission to the boyar ranks was made dependent on the acquisition of a salaried office, although the title remained thereafter hereditary within the family, even when not accompanied by a political function. Mavrocordat's reforms maintained an older distinction between 'first-class' and 'second-class' boyars, but expanded the numbers within both, so that, for instance in Wallachia, the first class, formerly made up of only six office titles, ended up encompassing sixteen titles prefixed by the particle 'Vel' (from Slav. 'great'), from the great 'ban' to the great 'şetrar', all members of the Country's Divan. Also in the first class were: the great 'aga', the great 'armaş', the great 'cămăraş'

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[16] More details on Mavrocordat's reforms in Florin Constantiniu, *Constantin Mavrocordat* (Bucharest, 1985), especially pp. 149-161. See also entry for 'judecător' in Sachelarie and Stoicescu (eds.), *Instituţii*

and the great 'portar'. The second boyar class comprised all the dignitaries who were not members of the Divan (with the particle 'vtori', second, and 'treti', third, in front of their title) as well as court servants of all categories.[17] In addition to these, there were a number of purely honorary titles ('paialâcuri' from the Tk. 'paié'), granted to supernumerary ancient and land-owning families who lost out in the scramble for offices. Belonging to the boyar class was gratifying not only for a family's honour, but also to its budget, as it brought with it a salary, tax exemptions and a number of other privileges, such as owning 'scutelnici' (dependents or clients, exempt from paying state taxes). Thus, being a boyar in office was a guarantee of prosperity, which helps explain situations like those analysed in this thesis of lesser boyars or non-boyars desperately trying by any means possible to acquire a 'kaftan' - the symbolic and metonymic expression of state office - and the ensuing privileges, as they tried, for instance, to ensure dowries for their nubile daughters.

Mavrocordat's reform of the boyar status and rights is a good example of how a virtually enlightened attempt at rationalising the functioning of the state apparatus - very much in phase with the spirit of Central European reformism - could be deflected by the financial pressures of an under-performing economy under foreign monopoly, opening the door to the proliferation of the very abuses it tried to pre-empt. Dan Pleşia has attributed the increase in the number of titled offices throughout the eighteenth century to the venality of the Phanariot régimes in general, under increasing financial pressure from the Porte, and more specifically, to the Prince's wish either to reward his Greek-Phanariot *côterie* or to 'buy' the much-needed cooperation of the recalcitrant and divided native boyardom. Prince Alexandru Moruzi (Moldavia, 1802-1807) seems to have been particularly generous in creating and granting new titles and their accompanying fiscal privileges. Moruzi created for instance the 'Vornic de Politie', the 'City Vornic', with an annual income of around 31,000 lei which he realised from the collection of foreign residents' dues, a monthly salary of 250 lei and 80 scutelnici. By comparison, the annual income of 6,000 lei paid to the 'Vornic de Cutie', the Vornic in charge of the 'Charity

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feudale.

[17] Dan Pleşia, 'Statutul boierimii şi evoluţia boicriilor de la reforma lui Constantin Mavrocordat pînă la desfiinţarea rangurilor şi privilegiilor (1858)' (Boyar Status and the Development of Offices from the Reforms of Constantin Mavrocordat to the Abolition of Rank and Privileges), *Arhiva genealogică* I (VI), nos.3-4 (1994), p.170.

Box' (the budget for charitable donations, another innovation), must have seemed paltry. The latter, however, seems to have enjoyed great liberties in administering the revenue collected for charitable projects.[18]

The inflation of offices was gradually accompanied by an increase in the number of boyar classes, from the initial two to four and even five, and by growing tensions between the old 'first class' - the oligarchs who held the reins of power and paid no taxes - and the others - the *homines novi*, the provincial nobles, the ennobled commoners and foreigners and other 'parvenus', who competed for influence with the established power élites. It is in this conflict and in this competition for power and resources that the historian can seek an explanation for what is sometimes rather crudely interpreted as mere 'ideological' warfare between a 'conservative', privileged, backward great boyardom and a 'liberal', forward-looking and even 'radical' new or petty boyardom. In addition, the social historian and the genealogist will have to look at the matrimonial strategies of the boyar class as a whole and at the game of 'exclusion' practised successfully by the oligarchs if they are to establish with greater accuracy than is possible at this stage the links between such strategies, wealth, social mobility, client networks, and access to the structures of power and government.[19]

The Russian-sponsored Organic Regulations (1831-2) kept most of the boyar privileges intact, in spite of the criticism levelled at ancien régime abuses in the preliminary reports drawn up for the Commission in charge. These statutes stipulated, however, that no new boyar title should be granted by the Princes unless it was directly connected to state office, echoing Mavrocordat's reform of almost one hundred years earlier. However, the 1857-58 Moldavian *Vidomostia* (Census, Register) offers ample evidence that illegal creations of new titles and 'ennoblements' by decree continued for a considerable time and right up to the abolition of privileges and the disappearance of

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[18] Pleşia, 'Statutul', p.172.

[19] For a short article in English on boyar social mobility and the inflation of offices, see Paul Cernovodeanu, 'Mobility and traditionalism: the evolution of the boyar class in the Romanian Principalities in the 18th c', *RESEE*, XXIV, no. 3 (1986), 249-257. For what is to my knowledge perhaps the only study so far linking politics and matrimonial strategies, see Matei Cazacu, 'Stratégies matrimoniales et politique des Cantacuzènes de la Turcocratie, XVe - XVIe siècles', *RER*, XIX-XX (1995-1996), 156-181.

the boyars as a class in 1858. After that date, land ownership became again the main source of power, and the boyars returned to administering their lands in the economically favourable circumstances created by the Treaty of Adrianople (1829).

The creation of new boyars and titles can be regarded as the only visible measure of social mobility in a society which, in spite of real economic growth - especially from the mid-nineteenth century onwards - remained entrenched in a network of privileges and castes. As in other areas, the hesitant and discontinuous statistical information makes any attempt at pan-European comparisons hazardous. The following should therefore be considered solely as illustrative of the persistently oligarchic nature of the Wallachian and Moldavian societies. In his study of 1856, the Lombard Ubicini advanced the figure of 3,200 boyar families in Wallachia and 2,800 in Moldavia, that is a total of around 30,000 individuals, against, 120,000 merchants and professionals, 3.2 million peasants and, at the very bottom of society, around 200,000 or 250,000 Gypsy slaves, owned by the monasteries or by individual landowners. However, of the boyars, only 70 individuals in Wallachia and 300 in Moldavia were associated with state power as members of the Council or the Assembly, which represents less than 1.5 per cent of the total boyar population.[20]

Ubicini's figures (totalling 370 individuals from 6,000 families) suggest that about one in seventeen families had an 'MP' - figures that are broadly in line with the more recent calculations by Neagu Djuvara, based on the 267 boyar names appearing in written documents from 1774 to 1848, which show that only 30 families maintained themselves continuously in the leadership structures of Wallachia, and only 15 in those of Moldavia between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries.[21]

Given the exclusive nature of the circles of power and the remarkable resilience of a small number of first-class boyars in top positions in the state apparatus, it is not

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[20] Figures proposed by Ubicini, as well as by the traveller Édouard Thouvenel, *La Hongrie et la Valachie. Souvenirs de voyages et notices historiques* (Paris, 1840), and by the Romanian historian and politician Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Esquisse historique sur l'histoire, les moeurs et la langue des Cigaines* (Bucharest, 1837), both quoted by Catherine Durandin, *Histoire des Roumains* (Paris, Fayard, 1995), pp. 104-5.

[21] Neagu Djuvara, 'Les Grands boyars?', p. 41.

surprising that, as late as the 1840s, native observers still deplored the difficulties faced by the young men - mostly from boyar families of the second or third class - returning home after studies abroad to find themselves branded as 'revolutionaries', 'sans-culottes' and 'carbonari' and consequently blocked from politics and employment.[22] It is against the backdrop of what Vlad Georgescu has termed great boyar 'enlightened conservatism' that future research must explore in greater depth the emergence of a political class and a 'modern' political culture in the Romanian Principalities after the 1850s.[23]

Before moving on, I must say a few final words on the complex and controversial nature of the Phanariot régimes.

Natives, Greeks, Phanariots: the Men of the Land ('Pămîntenii') and the 'Others'

Posterity has not been kind to the Phanariots. In the Romanian language even today, rightly or wrongly, the words 'Phanar' and 'Phanariotism' are synonymous with intrigue, bad administration, political corruption and clientage, love of luxury, idleness and even anti-Europeanism.

The penetration of Greeks in the Principalities, which started roughly with the fall of Constantinople, gained momentum in the seventeenth century, with scholars, clergy and candidates to the throne finding a more congenial atmosphere there in which to pursue careers, gain wealth or fulfil leadership ambitions. This period is widely regarded by historians today as the so-called 'proto-Phanariot' period in the history of Romania. In 1711 in Moldavia and 1714 in Wallachia respectively, as the Ottomans lost confidence in the native rulers and felt the need to strengthen their grip on the Principalities, the practice of appointing Greeks and Levantines from among the *dragomans* (interpreters) in the Phanar quarter of Constantinople as Princes (*Hospodars*)[24] became official policy, marking the start of the so-called Phanariot régimes. Strictly speaking, the

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[22] The Moldavian boyar, politician and poet Vasile Alecsandri quoted in Catherine Durandin, *Histoire*, p. 100.

[23] On boyar reformism, see Vlad Georgescu, *Mémoires et projets de réforme dans les Principautés roumaines*, Vol.1, 1769-1830 (Bucharest, 1970); vol.2, 1831-1848 (Bucharest, 1972).

[24] For this term, see Glossary.

Phanariot period lasted until 1822 when the Porte was forced by internal and international pressure to revert to native rule.

Traditionally, views on Phanariot rule have ranged from the healthily critical to the wildly vituperative, and it is not difficult to select negative pictures from very early on. Thus Jean-Louis Carra, secretary to the Moldavian Phanariot Prince Grigore Al. Ghica, future Girondin and victim of the Revolution, sided clearly with the anti-Phanariot school of thought when he wrote in the 1770s:

> These 'ispravniks' [i.e.district governors], as well as all the public officers and those at court, have no other business than the freedom to steal and cheat wherever they can. This is the Greek spirit at its most brilliant: when the officers do not earn enough, they instigate a lawsuit or a litigation against some rich merchant or burgher; and once in their hands, the victim can only escape with the help of money.[25]

Anti-Phanariot views were echoed by both foreign and Romanian observers throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, frequently modulating - as Carra's did - into critiques of the modern Greeks' degeneracy, which rapidly became a cliché in both Western and Romanian travel writing and historiography. However, this derivative literature owed its rapid spread largely to translations and free borrowing by authors from one another and possibly much less to direct observation or impartial analysis. Traian Ionescu-Nișcov, for instance, has shown that it was not difficult for negative views such as Carra's, Thomas Thornton's (*The Present State of Turkey*, London, 1809) or Marc-Philippe Zallony's (*Essai sur les Phanariotes*, Marseilles, 1824) to develop into a historiographic paradigm which counted among its practitioners distinguished historians such as R.W. Seton Watson and the Romanians Mihail Kogălniceanu (1837) and Pompiliu Eliade (1905). It was notably due to historians such as Nicolae Bălcescu (in the 1840s), A.D. Xenopol, V.A. Urechia (writing in the 1880s) and especially Nicolae Iorga in the 1920s and 1930s, that a more positive parallel view of the Greek-Phanariots started to emerge, which focused on the role of the Greek merchants,

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[25] (Translation mine). The French original reads: 'Ces ispraveniks, ainsi que tous les officiers publics & ceux de la cour, n'ont d'autres appointements que la permission de piller & escroquer partout où ils peuvent. C'est içi où brille l'esprit grec des Grecs modernes: quand les officiers ne gagnent pas assez, ils font susciter adroitement un procès ou une querelle à un riche marchand ou à un riche bourgeois; & quand la victime est entre leurs mains, elle n'en sort jamais qu'à force d'argent'. J.L. Carra, *Histoire de la Moldavie et de la Valachie* (second edition, Neuchâtel, 1781); quoted from first edition (Iași, 1777), esp. pp. 178-190.

scholars and Patriarchs in spreading the superior Hellenic culture in the Balkans and South-East Europe.[26] That trend continued with more recent contributions by notably Andrei Pippidi, Cornelia Papacostea-Danielopolu, Ştefan Lemny, Matei Cazacu and by the speakers at the 1975 Symposium on Phanariotism in Thessaloniki, to name only a few.[27]

The last word has not been said on the Phanariot régimes and historians may still hesitate today between, say, regarding Prince Constantin Mavrocordat as either an incompetent administrator who abolished the national army and ruined the judicial system, or as the enlightened reformer who abolished serfdom, rationalised government and encouraged the arts. Similarly, one may view the Phanariots as either backward, ill-educated despots who thwarted the country's natural pro-European development or as enlightened rulers who built schools and hospitals, gave Romania its first modern jurisprudence and connected it to Europe via the Greek culture. The debate on the nature and paradoxes of Phanariotism which has been going on for two centuries has raised a number of issues of interest to the social historian. The extent to which Greeks and Levantines married native Romanian women to be able to settle in the Principalities, the legislation that occasionally attempted to prevent them doing so, including interdictions to marry or buy land, the faked genealogies of some Phanariot families, and not least, the degree of ethnic tension created between native Romanians and immigrant Greeks, all deserve closer scrutiny. Was there a strong overlap of interests between the Greek Phanariots and the native élites, so strong that it might have

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[26] Nicolae Iorga, for instance, in 'Au fost Moldova şi Ţara Românească provincii supuse fanarioţilor?', *AAR.*, Memoriile secţiunii istorice, Seria III, t. XVIII (1936-1937), 347-366. Traian Ionescu-Nişcov, 'L'époque phanariote dans l'historiographie roumaine et étrangère', in *Symposium - L'Époque Phanariote* (Thessaloniki, 1975), pp. 148-9.

[27] For contributors to the Symposium, see above, note 14. See also Andrei Pippidi, 'Phanar, Phanariotes, Phanariotisme', *RESEE*, XIII, 2 (1975), 231-39; Matei Cazacu, 'L'Eglise orthodoxe entre le renouveau et la tradition: Phanariotes et Anti-Phanariotes', in Christian Hannick (ed.), *Sprachen und Nationen in Balkanraum* (Böhlau Verlag Köln Wien, 1987), pp. 43- 64; Ştefan Lemny, 'La critique du régime phanariote: clichés mentaux et perspectives historiographiques', in Al. Zub (ed.), *Culture and Society* (Iaşi, 1985), pp. 17-30. Cornelia Papacostea-Danielopolu, 'Élites et tendances égalitaires à l'époque phanariote et postphanariote', *Etudes danubiennes*, Tome XI, No. 1 (1995); Toader Nicoară, 'Le Discours antigrecque (sic!) et antiphanariote dans la société roumaine (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles)', in Maria Cr•ciun, Ovidu Ghittă (eds.), *Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe* (Cluj University Press, 1995), pp. 205-11; Bogdan Murgescu, '"Phanariots" and "Pământeni". Religion and Ethnicity in Shaping Identities in the Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire', in Crăciun, Ghittă (eds.), *Ethnicity*, pp. 196-204.

annulled the ethnic differences in favour of class solidarity - or did ethnicity matter, and if it did, in what ways and at what levels of social hierarchy and power?

During this period, the term 'pămîntean' (man of the land, native) emerged as perhaps the outcome of the earliest proto-nationalist attempt to distinguish between the established élites and the newcomers. But what did 'native' mean in a land where, for instance, some of the most distinguished boyar and princely families such as the Mavrocordat and the Cantacuzinos (Greeks), the Ghicas (Albanians), or the Rosettis (Italian Levantines) married into the Romanian nobility and were assimilated long before the Phanariot time, or where native families such as Călmaşul Hellenised their name into Callimaki and fully participated in the Phanariot system? Were the Racoviţă merely Romanian boyars who had sold out to the Turco-Phanariot system to protect class interests? Were the search for a 'domn pămîntean' (native ruler) before 1821 and the encouragement of anti-Greek feelings throughout the period merely the reflection of crude attempts on the natives' part to deflect attention from their own contribution to the country's ills and to the depletion of its economic resources? Or was it a genuine attempt to articulate a national ideal, based on language and 'ethnicity'?

Figures advanced recently show that the participation of ethnic Romanian boyars in the Phanariot system of power and privilege was considerable. On the basis of what he admitted was a cursory survey of archival material, Dan Pleşia concluded that, between 1774 and 1821, the Wallachian dignitaries of the first class came from 24 Romanian families as compared to 31 'trans-danubian' ones.[28] Similarly, according to figures obtained by Neagu Djuvara, it would appear that throughout the Phanariot period, 80 % of the offices in the Divans of Moldavia and Wallachia were in the hands of native oligarchs. The continuity of Romanian great boyar family in the highest of the land's state offices was confirmed by a census of 1829: out of 60 dignitaries included, 44 were descendants of ancient families and only 11 belonged to Phanariot families proper.[29]

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[28] Pleşia, 'Statutul boierimii', p.175.

[29] Djuvara, 'Les Grands boyars', p. 41.

Similar questions regarding political allegiance and ethnicity have been asked - perhaps less often - in connection with the Romanian Orthodox Church which, as I have shown, was closely associated to the state through participation in the Divan. Its subordination to the Patriarchate of Constantinople meant that many of its hierarchs, including the Metropolitans, were Greek Phanariots appointed in the same way as their secular counter-parts, through bidding for their post. Matei Cazacu has raised a number of interesting points about the structure and roles of the Church in this period. Priesthood was exempt from the heavy state taxation of the Phanariot period and became a very attractive career option for many young peasants who could afford to buy their ordination. The inflation of ill-educated village priests matched that of boyar titles. But did this actually create a split between a wealthy Greek hierarchy which defended the predatory Turco-Phanariot system and the Romanian priests, living and working alongside their parishioners and perceived increasingly as champions of the 'nation' and of the people rather than of Christendom proper? Cazacu has advanced the ingenious theory according to which the possibility of blaming greedy Greek hierarchs was one of the reasons why anti-clericalism, so widespread in eighteenth-century Western Europe, never developed in the South-East European churches.[30]

Yet, as already suggested, the historical 'truth' about the Phanariots is probably located at the confluence of objective statistics and subjective perceptions and representations by contemporaries or near-contemporaries. Vlad Georgescu established that, rightly or wrongly, the period 1711 to 1821 was in fact perceived by contemporaries as a distinct period with specific features, marked by a general decline of society and by a deflection of the 'natural', 'European' course of Romanian history. The production of political memoirs and projects climaxed in the period 1768 to 1774 (significantly, the year of the treaty of Kuchuk Kainardzhi, when Russian protectorate became a reality) and subsequently in the years when great power intervention in the Eastern Question encouraged the Romanian boyars to petition in favour of native rule and the respect of traditional agreements and treaties. Short of openly denouncing the abuses of the suzerain power, the Porte, these texts attacked its Phanariot deputies and were dominated by anti-Greek feeling and by a few key themes such as overall decline, the

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[30] Cazacu, 'L'Eglise orthodoxe', p. 62.

degradation of the Prince's status, the violation by the Ottomans of the country's traditional rights and privileges and the corruption of the Phanariot ruling circles.[31]

Recent revisionist assessments of the Phanariot régimes - most of which are listed in the footnotes to the present chapter - have tried to balance the old negative views of this period with a more positive picture. Against the older emphasis on the detrimental impact of the Phanariot system, resulting in economic backwardness and socio-political retardation, recent studies have highlighted enlightened initiatives such as the codification of customary law, the establishment of schools, hospitals and charitable institutions, and other cultural achievements. In this view, Bucharest and Iaşi under the Phanariots became 'centres of Hellenic culture, a crucial intersection of Ottoman, Russian, Italian and central European influences', as Mark Mazower put it.[32] It is perhaps in the light of these criss-crossing cultural currents that the social history of the Phanariots should best be studied. In subsequent chapters, I attempt to follow this approach to some extent and show in what ways such initiatives by rulers or private individuals contributed to the modernisation and 'European integration' of the Romanian Principalities, while also pointing to the forces of tradition and resistance to the new trends.

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[31] Georgescu, *Istoria ideilor politice româneşti (1369-1878)*, esp. pp. 61-63.

[32] Mark Mazower, *The Balkans* (London, 2000), p. 55.

Introduction to Part One

Legislative codification and the rationalisation of jurisprudence lie at the very heart of Enlightenment reform projects in many areas of Central-Eastern Europe and Russia. Of such initiatives, the work of Catherine the Great's Legislative Commission (active from 1767 to 1774) and the resulting *Nakaz* is probably one of the best-known examples, owing no doubt to the debate it sparked off among philosophes.[1] Judging from the number and quality of law codes and decrees of a juridical nature promulgated in the period 1780 to 1818, the performance of the Phanariot Princes in this area is outstanding, and legal reform can be said to be at the centre of an often mentioned yet understudied Romanian Enlightenment.

By the time Phanariot legislators started work, a number of legal codes were already available to judges in both Principalities: in Moldavia, *Cartea românească de învăţătură* (The Romanian Book of Teachings, also known as *Cartea românească de pravile împărăteşti*) of 1646 and in Wallachia, *Îndreptarea legii* (The Correction of the Law) of 1652.[2] To these were added in Phanariot times, the *Sobornicescul Hrisov* (1785, Moldavia) and the *Pravilniceasca condică* (The Ipsilanti Code, 1780, Wallachia) followed by *Codul Callimah* (The Callimachi Code, Moldavia, 1817) and *Legiuirea Caragea* (The Caragea Law, Wallachia, 1818) initiated by Alexandru Mavrocordat, Alexandru Ipsilanti, Scarlat Callimachi and Ioan Caragea respectively.[3] Use was also made in Moldavia of Andronache Donici's *Manualul juridic*, a law handbook of 1814.[4] The last legal provisions relevant to the period covered by this thesis were those of the *Organic Regulations* (1831, Wallachia; 1832, Moldavia). Broadly speaking, these codes operated a synthesis of common law, Roman-Byzantine law and legal practices arising

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[1] On the Nakaz and the debates on legislative reform in the eighteenth century, see Simon Dixon, *Catherine the Great* (Longman, 2001), especially pp. 2-3 and 75-78. Significantly, the Nakaz was promptly translated into Romanian and published in Iaşi in 1773. See Urechia, V.A., 'Documente dintre 1769-1800', in *AAR*, Seria II, Tom 10 (1887-88), pp. 271-73.

[2] Andrei Rădulescu and others (eds.), *Îndreptarea legii* (Bucharest, 1962).

[3] Andrei Rădulescu and others (eds.), *Sobornicescul hrisov* – ediţie critică (Bucharest, 1958); Andrei Rădulescu and others (eds.), *Pravilniceasca condică* – ediţie critică (Bucharest, 1957).

[4] Andrei Rădulescu and others (eds.), *Manualul juridic al lui Andronache Donici* – ediţie critică (Bucharest, 1959).

from occasional princely decrees, and, according to Byzantine tradition, did not abrogate each other, but were in force concomitantly until 1865, when they were supplanted by the Civil Code. This plurality of simultaneously valid written laws ('pravile') gave judges considerable freedom of choice and interpretation, and explains why, throughout the early nineteenth century, juridical practice was persistently ambiguous and arbitrary.[5] The arbitrariness was enhanced by another feature of the Romanian ancien régime legal system, namely the position of the Prince as supreme judge, the authority which gave final sanction to a decision of the court in the state Divan. In practice, this meant that the will of the Prince as representative of divine justice overrode common and written law, as well as legal precedents set by his previous decisions.[6]

Of the Phanariot Princes, Constantin Mavrocordat (active between 1739 and 1743 in both Principalities) and Alexandru Ipsilanti (active 1774-1780 in Wallachia and 1786-88 in Moldavia) were probably the most vigorous reformers in matters of law. The former took measures towards an increasing professionalisation of the judges and attempted to replace the fees they exacted from plaintiffs and defendants with state incomes. Written records of each case were to be kept in special registers sent monthly to the Prince. The trend towards increasing rationalisation of legal procedures and strict definition of competencies was continued by Alexandru Ipsilanti, who created specialised departments such as, for instance, the so-called departments of the seven and of the eight ('departamentul de opt şi de şapte') - named from the number of judges sitting in them - as well as a department hearing the cases of foreign citizens in the Principalities ('departamentul străinelor pricini').[7]

The Organic Regulations continued such trends towards a clearer separation of judicial powers, well-defined state incomes and shorter trials. In addition, they abolished the

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[5] Ligia Livadă-Cadeschi, Laurenţiu Vlad (eds.), *Departamentul de cremenalion. Din activitatea unei instanţe penale muntene (1794-1795)* (The Criminal Department. The activity of a Wallachian penal court 1794-1795) (Bucharest, Nemira, 2002), p. 10.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 12. For the Prince's central role in the functioning of state institutions and of society at large, see Chapter one of the present thesis.

[7] Ioan Ceterchi (ed.), *Istoria dreptului românesc* (A History of Romanian Law), 3 vols, (Bucharest, 1980-1987), vol.2, pp. 169-174.

Prince's right to sit in judgement, recognising only his right to endorse final decisions, and made torture illegal.[8]

However, prescription always lags behind practice and, as we shall see in the following chapters, outmoded laws continued to be invoked, class bias retained its force and the involvement of the church in court hearings remained considerable throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the following chapters I attempt to show how justice operated in practice via a selection of cases relating chiefly to loss of virginity ('stricarea fecioriei'), dowry provision and divorces. Apart from giving information on procedures, my sample of documents, comprising 72 dowry lists and dowry litigation papers from 1730 to 1840, as well as 27 testaments and inventories from 1726 to 1836, also highlights the ways in which moral, spiritual and patrimonial considerations were negotiated by litigants and judges alike, while also pointing to the general worldview on which legal transactions were founded.

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[8] *Ibid.,* pp. 174-181.

Chapter Three

'It is a Christian and Lawful Thing to Marry...' -

Virginity, Dowries and Marriage[1]

> *A girl's dowry is her honour*
> (Romanian proverb, collected
> in the early nineteenth century
> by Iordache Golescu)

Dimitrie Cantemir (b.? - d.1723), the historian and Prince of Moldavia, gave in *Descriptio Moldaviae* (written 1716) a description of quaint Moldavian traditional wedding rituals performed in similar ways in peasant and aristocratic contexts.[2] He noted that, traditionally, it had always been considered 'shameful' for a young girl or for her parents to look for a husband, and that the searching had to be done by the young man's family and friends, in the guise of 'pețitori' (Lat. petitores). These had the task of first finding out whether the girl's family were sympathetic to the future groom and then to go and ask for the girl's hand. This was done in a highly elaborate ritual the language of which was a striking mix of pagan and Biblical symbolism. In the speech uttered by the 'petitores' leader (the 'staroste', the elder), the search for the bride was referred to as a hunting party come to the house to look for a shy deer that had escaped previously. The parents then produced an old, wrinkled, bedraggled servant, and asked: is this the deer you are looking for? The staroste uttered a highly ornate description of their game, the details of which he was free to improvise: she had golden hair, hawk's eyes, teeth like jewels, lips redder than the cherry, a lioness' waist and a swan's neck, and her face was brighter than the moon and the sun. Then, as the 'pețitori' threatened to send in an armed search party, the girl was finally produced, adorned to the best of her parents' abilities.[3]

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[1] The documentary basis for this chapter includes a sample of 72 dowry lists and dowry litigation papers from 1730 to 1840 (only three documents are from 1658 and 1678).

[2] Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descriptio Moldaviae/ Descrierea Moldovei*, written around 1716 in Latin as *Descriptio antiqui et hodierni status Moldaviae*, remained in ms. after the author's death in 1723, passing from hand to hand until it was finally serialised and then published in German translation in 1771. My quotations are from the bi-lingual Latin/Romanian edition of 1973 published by the Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest, p. 311.

[3] The survival of this ritual well into the nineteenth century, at least in rural areas, is attested by Dora D'Istria, who witnessed it in a peasant hut in Romania in the 1850s. Cf. *Les Femmes en Orient*, 2 vols., (Zürich, 1859), vol.1, pp. 38-43. For Dora D'Istria's background, see my introductory chapter, pp. 11-14.

The emphasis placed upon virginity implied by the pre-nuptial ritual of the 'shy deer' was reinforced within a post-nuptial ritual in which the bride's parents were received at the couple's home after an obligatory absence of three days. If in the meantime the groom had found out that his bride was not a virgin ('impure' was the euphemism used in this case), on the third day, as the parents came to enquire after their daughter, they were publicly dishonoured by having to pull themselves the cart that took their disgraced daughter back to the parental home. In addition, the wronged groom had the right to keep the girl's dowry as compensation and to ask for a refund of any wedding expenses he had incurred. If, on the contrary, the girl was found to be a virgin, a lavish banquet was given at the groom's house and the guests would each place a little gift on the bride's night-gown, proudly displayed on a table. Cantemir adds that in boyar circles, however, the night-gown with its tell-tale signs was discreetly shown only to the bride's parents rather than to the whole assembly. Likewise, in the unlikely case that a boyar's closely guarded daughter was found to be 'impure', less drastic arrangements were available in noble circles, involving topping up the dowry list or quietly taking the girl back home without further fuss.[4]

There seemed to be an almost general consensus in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Wallachia and Moldavia that to be married was a good or at least a necessary thing. As will be seen in a separate chapter, the ecclesiastical tribunals attempted to save endangered marriages, but an in-depth study of the theological and legal aspects of the Orthodox attitude to marriage and divorce is still to be undertaken. But, while the Romanian church's doctrine of marriage for the period considered remains still an unknown, Romanian popular wisdom seemed in no doubt that marriage was a good thing. 'A house without a woman is like springtime without a flower' and 'a bachelor is like a man with no shirt on his back' proclaimed two of the thousands of popular sayings collected in the early nineteenth century by the Wallachian boyar Iordache Golescu.[5] There were dissenting voices, however, as I suggest in my last chapter, where I discuss literary and confessional texts produced in the period concerned. One disenchanted

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[4] Cantemir, *Descrierea*, pp. 321-7.

[5] Iordache Golescu, *Povăţuiri pentru buna cuviinţă* (Wise words for good behaviour) (Bucharest, 1975), p. 229, p. 236.

boyar, for instance, scribbled these thoughts in the margin of a Book of Hours: 'On St. Basil's day in early 1825 I was joined in matrimonial union to Căsăndriţa [...]. It is a good, Christian and lawful thing to marry, but oh, what a bitter cup! I would tell my children not to take this step, let them better live in celibacy, for they will be better off, the times being what they are!'[6]

In spite of such cautionary tales, most people were driven to drink of the embittered cup of 'conjugality'. Celibacy was left to the poor, the unlucky, the ugly and the too old. The 'marriage obsession' was especially acute among families with daughters. Nothing gives a clearer indication of the urge to marry well (that is, to partners of equal or equivalent social status) in eighteenth-century Romania than the almost desperate efforts families made to provide suitable dowries to their daughters and the victorious joy with which they announced a daughter's marriage.

The law codes of the period (*Îndreptarea legii*, The Correction of the Law, 1652; *Pravilniceasca Condică*, the Ipsilanti Code, 1780; *Legiuirea Caragea*, The Caragea Code, 1818 in Wallachia; *Sobornicescul Hrisov*, 1785, *Manualul juridic*, The Law Manual, by Andronache Donici, 1814 and *Codul Calimah*, the Callimachi Code, 1817, in Moldavia) stipulated that a woman's male kin was responsible for providing her with a suitable dowry so that she does not marry beneath her family's status. In the wedding ritual described by Cantemir, as they stepped before the altar in front of the officiating priest, the bride and groom had to walk over a pile of coins to show that they despised worldly goods and that theirs was a spiritual union that had nothing to do with the entrapments of riches.[7] Yet, in the less rarefied arena of the marriage market, for impoverished élite families, the impossibility of offering their daughters a good dowry could be a source of great social pressure and even of a great deal of pain. A series of harrowing documents of the old Moldavian family Başotă from 1721 to 1733 tell a story of debt, poverty and family drama set against the backdrop of the political troubles of the time. The 'Vistier' (Treasurer) Nicolae Başotă, fallen on hard times following a reshuffle at the Treasury at the start of a new reign, was imprisoned for debt some time

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[6] Ghe. Ungureanu, *Familia Sion. Studiu şi documente* (Iaşi, 1936), p. 33.

[7] Cantemir, *Descrierea*, p. 323.

around 1720.The rest of his life seems to have been a long struggle to provide for his five daughters, one son, and grandchildren, from the little that was left of his once great wealth, ravaged by the bailiffs and by invading hordes of Russians and Tartars. Retired into a monastery as a monk under the name Nicodim, in 1733 he settled his final scores, leaving his last remaining piece of land to one of his grand-daughters. 'And although I have endowed her mother' - the humbled and ageing boyar says - 'from what was left to me after all that happened, I made her a small part, whatever that will be, for I could not do more'. Impoverished - he was 'only body and soul' he says - and left in the care of two of his daughters, he died soon afterwards.[8]

In a letter of 1796 to Hagi Popp - the Transylvanian merchant who provided members of the Romanian élite with their luxury goods, foreign newspapers and credit, as well as acting as counsel and confidant [9] - Pârvu 'biv 3t Logofăt', a lesser rank boyar, refers to problematic attempts to obtain a good marriage for his wife's younger sister, lacking in the necessary material endowments. The family's duty to marry a young girl according to her family's status is expressed here in affectionate terms, as the writer tries to enlist the merchant's help in persuading one of the suitors: '[...] for you have been taught by God [...] I feel sorry for a girl such as this, and we shall be bringing shame upon ourselves if we do not endeavour to marry her to a man that suits her'.[10]

We do not know what happened to Pârvu's sister-in-law. Nor do we know what happened to his own three daughters, as they came on the marriage market in 1808, shortly after devastating Russo-Turkish armed clashes were played out, as they frequently did, on Romanian territory. 'As this unfortunate country is under a curse, three times did the Turks rob my house', Pârvu writes to merchant Hagi Popp, 'three times I endeavoured to restore it to its former state, but this last time I lost everything; they took all my beasts, my horses, my cattle, all my jewellery and capital, so I did not

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[8] For all the documents and the background to Başotă's decline, see Nicolae Iorga (ed.), *Studii şi documente* (Bucharest, 1909) vol. XVI, pp. 370-88.

[9] For the Transylvanian Hagi Popp trading firm, see chapter five, 'Women, Fashion and Europeanisation', p. 142 sqq.

[10] Iorga, *Studii*, vol. XVI, Doc.162, pp. 32-33.

even have enough left to run and find refuge with you [in Transylvania, where many boyars habitually exiled themselves in times of war], and I roamed through the forrests with the villagers. I have three lasses, two of whom have come of age; and for the eldest I already have suitors [i.e.'pețitori', see Cantemir, above] and, because I cannot afford to give her a dowry according to our rank, I tell the suitors that I am not ready yet... They [i.e. the Turks] burnt down my houses, so I settled on my estate in the country'. He asks Hagi Popp to send some clothes and some jewellery or household items to help towards the girl's dowry.[11]

That nubile daughters were a burden can be seen from a letter of 1816 from the Moldavian 'logofăt' Balș to a fellow boyar, urging him to speed up the division of an estate for the benefit of 'vornic' Ioniță Moșanu, a case which illustrates how important dowry provision was even in poverty-afflicted families at the top of boyar ranks: 'He is, as you well know, a poor man with a heavy household full of children and daughters of a marrying age. Do write to him and call him to you and give him his due. You will thus do a favour to an old man burdened with so many daughters'.[12]

Such requests were probably not uncommon, as shown by a letter from 1814 in which two Wallachian boyars asked a high official to intervene on behalf of an elderly 'postelnic' who needed the income from a paid office in order to marry his three daughters.[13] This illustrates quite clearly the ways in which family and social pressures contributed to the scramble for positions at court among the boyar class and to the venality of offices, already aggravated by the financial needs of the princes.[14]

A daughter's marriage was good news, even when there are no suggestions of family poverty. Writing to the same Transylvanian merchant Hagi Popp, the 'vornic' Ștefan Prășcoveanu gave him the big news of a recent wedding in January 1781. Prășcoveanu,

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[11] Iorga, *Studii*, vol. XVI, Doc. 263, pp. 44-45.

[12] Letter XXXIX, in L.T. Boga (ed.), *Documente basarabene*, Vol.2: *Scrisori și răvașe 1660-1860*, (Chișinău, 1928), p. 34.

[13] Mihai Caratașu (ed.), *Documentele Văcăreștilor* (Bucharest, 1975), p. 213.

[14] For the sale of offices in Phanariot Romania, see my outline in chapter two, p. 34 and pp. 39-42.

who asked Popp to send a gardener all the way from Transylvania and frequently ordered luxury goods from him, was obviously a wealthy man. The language reflects a certain ease, although the irony (the father is no longer 'burdened', but 'blessed', with nubile daughters) suggests that providing so many dowries was no easy task: '[...] and because God has blessed us with a lot of daughters, all coming into marriageable age one after another, we keep marrying them off year in year out, as we did this year, on the 10th of this month, with the happy wedding of our daughter Sultana'.[15]

Dowries: Givers and Recipients

The law codes required fathers and brothers to provide for their daughters and sisters who came of marrying age.[16] In the absence of close male kin, any male relative, acquaintance, trustee, or the widowed mothers had to offer suitable dowries, that is dowries that helped girls make suitable matches with men of equivalent status and rank. In this way, church and state, as dispensers of law and justice, ensured the preservation of the class status quo, on which social stability rested. Dowry money and other assets were meant to help the young couple set up their new household and make investments, but ultimately the dowry provided economic security to divorced wives, widows and especially children in case of parents' separation or death.

Poor or orphaned girls could in some cases be endowed by generous donations, as suggested by the 1811 testament of the very rich and pleasure-loving Wallachian boyar Barbu Știrbei (d.1812) who left money to a church his family had founded, to monasteries 'in Asia' (presumably at Mount Athos) for commemoration services for himself, as well as a sum large enough to dower 'one hundred poor girls'. The well-preserved archives of the Hagi Popp trading house in Sibiu (Hermannstadt, in Transylvania) contain the correspondence of the Știrbei family (Barbu, his mother Dumitrana and his wife Catinca) from Oltenia (southern Wallachia) which testifies to the mix of consumerist hedonism that led them to order the latest fashions and luxury foods from Western Europe, and of a God-fearing Orthodox religiosity that prompted

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[15] Iorga (ed.), *Studii şi documente*, vol. 8 (Bucharest, 1904), Doc. 19, p. 5.

[16] Cf. the *Ipsilanti Code*, Chapter 'Pentru zestre', par. 5; the *Donici Manual*, Chapter 33, par.1.

them to build and endow churches and perform charitable work in order to restore the balance between the new spirit of individualistic self-indulgence and a traditional Christian-inspired austerity.[17]

In special cases, it was the ruling Phanariot Prince himself who provided the dowry. The consort Princesses usually came from Constantinople surrounded by a 'harem'[18], which included young orphaned girls from the Greek Phanariot nobility, and for these, they sometimes tried to find suitable husbands among the native Romanian boyars. These matches presumably had the double role of charitably marrying the girls off and of securing alliances with the normally factious and conspiratorial boyars against the volatile sponsorship of the Ottoman Porte. According to the son of one such Greek girl, the poet George Sion, it was not uncommon for the Princesses to make ad hoc match-making attempts on behalf of their protégées. It was on the occasion of a Sunday morning reception at court in Bucharest, during the reign of Mihai Suțu, around 1820, that the Princess, summoning the young 'serdar' Ioniță Sion, introduced him to one of her young ladies-in-waiting. It took her only a few minutes to get the orphaned young girl, Eufrosina Schina, engaged to the bewildered boyar, and the event was announced on the spot to the assembled courtiers. If the memories of their son George are to be trusted, the hastily concluded marriage was a happy one, until Eufrosina died in 1842, giving birth to her eighteenth child.[19]

The late (1840-1845) case of a young Moldavian wife's repudiation by her husband suggests that poor girls could get dowries as a result of sentences passed in the courts. In this situation, after a trial the details of which elude us, the young husband was found guilty of unjustifiably sullying his young wife's reputation and was sentenced to endow

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[17] For orders and the activities of the Hagi Popp company, see chapter five, 'Women, Fashion and Europeanisation', p. 142 sqq. The rise of charitable institutions and activities during the Phanariot régimes has been studied recently by Ligia Livadă-Cadeschi, *De la milă la filantropie. Instituții de asistare a săracilor din Țara Românească și Moldova în secolul al XVIII-lea* (From compassion to philanthropy. Poor Relief in eighteenth-century Wallachia and Moldavia) (Bucharest, 2001) and my comments in chapter four, 'Divorce', p. 99.

[18] This was the term used for the female entourage of a ruling Phanariot Princess, although, technically speaking, it did not imply similarities with actual harems at the Ottoman Porte, and did not involve total seclusion of the women concerned.

[19] Ungureanu, Gh., *Familia Sion. Studiu și documente* (Iași, 1936), pp. 71-75, p. 128.

a number of poor girls.[20] This is a late variant of one of the penalties imposed in the eighteenth century by the ecclesiastical tribunals to men found guilty of having abducted or raped virgin girls. The offender had the option of endowing his victim rather than have his nose or hands cut off.

Dowries could be given by parents not only to daughters but also to sons. Out of the forty dowry documents listed by L.T. Boga for Bessarabia (the Moldavian area between the rivers Prut and Dniester, secured by Russia in 1812 and part of the future Soviet Moldavia) for the years 1734 to 1844, four were dowries given to sons, a feature which Boga considers as originating in Moldavian unwritten customary law.[21] It is not clear whether in such situations the bride would get her own dowry as well, nor whether the sons' dowries had the same legal standing as the daughters'. One of the dowries collected by Boga was given in 1827 by 'preoteasa' (i.e. priest's wife or, most certainly in this case, widow) Catrina to her adopted son Toader. The document lists cattle, farming utensils, bee hives, and one house with outhouses and other annexes, parts of a landed estate and parts of a vineyard, the whole of which were due to him after his adoptive mother's death. The precondition for the offer was that she should be allowed to live in the same house and be provided for by the adopted son until her death. No other children, impending wedding or bride's name is mentioned in the document, which was probably in fact a settlement in favour of the adopted son and a way of securing the childless old woman's economic future rather than a wedding gift proper.[22] All the other dowries given to sons from my sample are offered by fathers, mothers and even brothers specifically upon a son's marriage.

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[20] For the case of Zulnia, niece of Costache Conachi, see *Revista istorică*, An VII, Nos. 4-6 (1921), pp. 104-105.

[21] L.T. Boga (ed.), *Documente basarabene*, vol.1 (Chişinău, 1928), Prefaţă, p.II. For dowries given to sons, see also Doc. 7/1839 in N. Iorga (ed.), 'Documente botoşănene', in *Buletinul Comisiei istorice a României*, vol. VI (Bucharest, 1927), pp. 31-34 and Iorga, *Anciens documents de droit roumains* (Paris-Bucharest, 1930), vol.2, p. 295.

[22] L.T. Boga (ed.), *Documente*, Vol.1: Foi de zestre 1734-1844 (Chişinău, 1928), pp. 45-46.

Dowries: Form and Content

As can be expected, dowries are formulaic documents[23], usually starting with: 'Dowry list '('izvod de zestre') that I/we give, (with God's mercy), to my/our daughter/son/sister...' continuing with the items given, often with their value in money, and ending with the signatures of the offering relatives and of their witnesses. (three according to the usual format, although the extended family and a priest usually took part in the dowry negotiations).The givers often made it clear - for possible contestation purposes - that the dowry items were offered freely, while, less frequently, the male recipients (i.e. the grooms, never the brides) signed themselves and certified that all or only some of the items were given. At the end of a dowry list given in 1798 by a Moldavian noble family to their daughter, a short paragraph was appended twenty years later (!) probably by the rather mean and property-conscious groom: '6 pairs knives I have not received, 12 iron frying pans I have not received, 6 iron pots I have not received, 6 trays they have not given, 2 candle-stands they have not given, 1 washing basin and jug they have not given, 1818, August 10, Ștefan Isăcescu șetrar'.[24] In 1815, the same Ștefan Isăcescu was marrying his own daughter, Zmaranda, and, ever the cautious guardian of his property, he warned at the end of the dowry list: 'For the above mentioned assets, I declare with due fear of the Almighty God, that I have given everything, and if my son-in-law Enăcachi will ask for more from my son, saying that I owe him money or things, let him not be believed, because I swear upon my soul that I do not owe him money or other expenses'.[25]

In this particular case, the documents allow us to follow in time episodes of a family saga. One last document dates from January 1824, when the boyar married a second daughter, Catinca, to Alexandru Muca. This time the dowry list starts with 'A silver icon of the Holy Virgin to help and support them', a formulaic variant used by the more

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[23] The format that gradually imposed itself for dowries was created by Metropolitan Antim Ivireanu around 1700. Cf. Constanța Ghițulescu, 'Zestrea între normă și practică'. Țara Românească în secolul al XVII-lea' (I) (Dowries between legal norm and practice. Seventeenth-century Wallachia), in *Studii și materiale de istorie medie*, vol. XVIII (2000), p. 213.

[24] Boga (ed.) *Documente,* vol.1, p.13. For other dowries listing 'items not given' see Boga (ed.), *Documente,* p. 13, pp. 17-18.

[25] Boga (ed.) *Documente...,* pp. 21-2.

religious-minded parents. It ends, however, uncharacteristically, with a paragraph written by Isăcescu's first son-in-law, giving elliptic clues as to the formidable character of the family's patriarch, 'şetrar' Ştefan, and to the rather hasty marriage (due to pregnancy?) of his daughter Catinca: 'Being aware that my brother-in-law Alecsandru Muca is found rather unprepared by this unexpected matrimony with my wife's sister, and seeing that he finds it impossible to live with my father-in-law in the same house, I lovingly and gladly receive him in mine for one year, during which he will build a house for himself on the estate of Stărceni'.[26]

Rather than give information on family conflicts and misunderstandings, the standard eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century dowry ended, as has been seen, with a warning that any more claims by bride, groom or their descendants should not be taken into consideration, or with blessings for the new couple from the dowry givers. The warning could sometimes take the extreme form of a 'curse', a device well-known in Romanian legal history the variants of which need further investigation.[27] In dowries the curse functioned as a sort of protective seal meant to deter further claims and counter-claims that could lead to ruinous and lengthy court litigations. Here is an example from a 1777 Moldavian dowry: 'and whoever would be tempted to claim these from the children, let them be cursed by the Good Lord and his chaste Mother — for these have all been given in fear of God. [...] And so I sign myself: C. Başotă Ban.'[28]

Usually, however, relatives preferred to append a final blessing for the young family, as in the following case. The dowry given in 1780 by the Moldavian 'vel Vornic' Nicolae Roset (Rosetti) to his daughter Ileana is typical both for the lack of subjective and biographical elements and for the kind of items the daughter of a well-to-do and respectable eighteenth-century family could expect at the start of her new life: a list which itemises rich ermine and sable furs, expensive jewellery and a great range of household items concludes with 2 estates,Voroteştile and Şercanii [...], 8 acres of

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[26] Boga (ed.) *Documente*, pp. 37-8.

[27] For a recent short study of the use of the 'curse' in Wallachian governmental and ecclesiastical documents from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century see Cristina Codarcea, 'La malédiction dans les ancients documents de la Valachie (XIVe- XVIe siècles'), in *RESEE,* XXXII, 1-2 (1994), 53-61.

[28] Iorga (ed.), *Studii şi documente*, vol. 7 (Bucharest, 1904), pp. 152-53.

vineyard on top of Vităneşti, 15 Gypsy souls (i.e. individuals), 15 mares and one stallion, 250 'lei' (Romanian currency) for good bed linen, 1000 lei for a carriage, 1 horse and other things, and blessings from God and from us'.[29] Both the clothes and the Gypsy slaves as essential dowry items can be read on one interpretive level as evidence of the grip of traditional values and conservative inertia on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Romanian upper class members. The mixture of Turkish-named silks and Asian furs remained a well-defined presence in dowries throughout the period, reluctantly giving way to the occasional parasol or silk gloves, especially after the 1790s. This suggests that even when European clothes had almost completely replaced the Turkish female wardrobe around 1820-1830, the rich old Ottoman fabrics and garments retained enough of their monetary and sentimental value for them to be passed on to daughters and granddaughters.[30] As for the Gypsies, they continued to be donated individually or collectively well into the 1840s and close to 1855, the year of their official emancipation. It is almost touching to see the stubborn persistence with which the boyars kept thinking of their privileges *sub specie aeternitatis.* At the end of a prosperous-looking dowry offered by a Moldavian boyar to a female cousin in 1822, he gives, for legal purposes, detailed explanations about the previous owners of three donated Gypsy slaves, and adds: '[...] for these three Gypsy souls, let them be for ever slaves to my cousin Ecaterina and to her descendants generation after generation'.[31]

Who Could Marry?

Irrespective of the family wealth, the availability of a dowry or a couple's wish to marry, there were theological and legal impediments to marriage. The church was particularly anxious to prevent marriages of under-age partners (under 12 years of age for girls and under 14 for boys), of persons within the forbidden eight degrees of consanguinity, as well as unions between adoptive parents and adopted children, Godparents and Godchildren, and guardians and minors in their custody. Known as 'mixing of the blood' ('amestec de sânge'), marriages of this kind were considered incestuous. Likewise,

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[29] Theodor Codrescu (ed.), *Uricarul,* Vol. XI (Iaşi, 1889), pp. 249-50.

[30] For transition in women's fashions, see chapter six, 'Women, Fashion and Europeanisation'.

[31] L.T. Boga (ed.) *Documente basarabene,* Vol.1: *Foi de zestre* 1734-1844 (Chişinău, 1928), p. 29. For the legal status of Gypsy slaves, see chapter eight, 'Women, Households and Gypsy Slaves'.

marriages between native Romanians and foreigners, of people divided by confessional differences, of free people and Gypsy slaves were equally prohibited, as was the fourth marriage, even when celibacy was the result of former spouses' death.[32] Even certain occupational groups were under an interdiction to marry. Executioners, for instance, because they were usually recruited from condemned criminals, were not as a rule allowed to marry.[33] However, for some marginalised social categories, the offer or prospect of marriage could mean a way out into respectability or even the chance to escape death. The Romanian historian V.A. Urechia cites a legal practice that survived for some time after the Organic Regulations (1831, 1832): the Prince could grant freedom to a man condemned to death or hard labour if a girl offered to marry him.[34] For those individuals thus excluded from the marriage market, or for those too unlucky or too poor to find a partner, entry into a convent was often the only honourable alternative.

Virginity and the Price of Honour

The wedding scene from Cantemir above would suggest that rural Moldavia (and by extension Wallachia) was in the early eighteenth century a place where a bride's virginity was highly valued, and that it was in aristocratic circles that it gradually lost its high status, becoming increasingly a bargaining tool for unscrupulous grooms. However, the same Cantemir also alleges that girls from noble families were comparatively more chaste or at least better guarded than their rural counterparts, who traditionally indulged in some pre-marital sexual experimentation that was condoned, if not even encouraged, by the elders.[35] Most foreign observers noted throughout the

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[32] For a summary of absolute and relative impediments to marriage, see Anicuţa Popescu, 'Instituţia căsătoriei şi condiţia juridică a femeii din Ţara Românească şi Moldova în secolul al XVII-lea' (Marriage and women's legal status in eighteenth-century Wallachia and Moldavia), in *Studii - revistă de istorie*, Tom 23, No.1 (Bucharest, 1970), pp. 55-80.

[33] See, for instance, the late case of Gavril Buzatu, executioner in Moldavia, who asked the authorities for permission to marry in 1844. Cf. Gh. Ungureanu, *Pedepsele în Moldova la sfîrşitul secolului al XVIII-lea şi începutul secolului al XIX-lea* (Punishment in Moldavia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century) (Iaşi, 1931), pp. 12-13.

[34] V.A. Urechia, *Istoria românilor*, Vol. 8 (Bucharest, 1897), pp. 53-54.

[35] Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descriptio Moldaviae* (Bucharest, 1973), p. 313.

eighteenth century that élite young women were indeed kept well isolated from the male gaze and most, at least in the early half of the period, did not see their future husbands before their wedding day. According to the same more or less informed observers, morality started to decline among the élite only around 1800 as foreign influences led to the emancipation of women from the control of their male kin and introduced forms of sociability (balls, the theatre, travel) and a new French-influenced culture which had a considerable impact on relations between the sexes. A study of love, courtship and sexual practices in ancien régime Romanian society remains to be undertaken, and one should guard against conveniently neat views of a traditional, puritanical peasant and rural world versus a depraved, irreligious court élite.[36] In fact, most cases of rape, abduction, elopement and litigations over loss of virginity throughout the eighteenth century belong to the world of peasants, artisans, publicans, and urban lower and middling classes rather than to the boyar circles.[37] Where such cases transgressed class boundaries, the church and the state, supported by the class-conscious codes of law of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were quick to intervene and send all parties back to their respective social pigeon-holes, as will be seen in some of the case histories below.

As Nicolae Iorga and Matei Cazacu have pointed out, Romanian legal practice before 1859 (date of the union of Moldavia and Wallachia) was based on tension between the Roman-Byzantine legal tradition on the one hand, and the unwritten law of the land on the other. The law codes cited above were all compiled on the basis of the so-called Byzantine 'nomokanons' dating back to the sixteenth, fifteenth and even to the ninth century and earlier. Some of their provisions hardly corresponded to the new seventeenth- and eighteenth-century social realities of the Romanian Principalities. In practice, the verdicts reached by the Romanian ecclesiastical and princely courts were a compromise between the severe theological prescriptions of the Byzantine norm and the

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[36] For suggestions towards such a study, see Andrei Pippidi, 'Amour et société: arrière-plan historique d'un problème littéraire', in *Cahiers roumains d'études littéraires*, Vol.3 (1988), 4-27; Ştefan Lemny, *Sensibilitate şi istorie în secolul XVIII românesc* (Sensibility and history in the Romanian eighteenth century) (Bucharest, 1990), especially Chapter 'Viaţa între Eros şi Agapé' (Life between Eros and Agapé); Neagu Djuvara, *Le Pays Roumain entre l'Orient et l'Occident* (Paris, 1989). This investigation should be pursued, however, on a stronger basis of archival evidence.

[37] It is difficult to judge at this stage whether this is due to the fact that members of the boyar élite were less likely to come forth with sordid tales of rape or sexual misconduct.

more flexible common law, which also incorporated princely decrees become legal practice.[38]

In a society and at a time when parents, the church and the state had almost absolute control over marriages, pre-marital sex, elopement, abduction and even rape were the only means the young had of exercising their freedom of choice. For such offences, the *Îndreptarea legii* of 1652, for instance, built an intricate Byzantine-inspired casuistry which prescribed penalties such as death, mutilation, penance, exile, loss of wealth and dishonour in degrees and combinations that varied according to the details of each individual case. Thus, for instance, a father was allowed to go unpunished if he killed a daughter who indulged in pre-marital sex or who became pregnant outside marriage (Chapter 244, Art. 31). A slave or servant who raped his master's daughter was burnt alive, and so was the daughter herself if the relationship had been consensual (Chapter 252). An abductor who raped his victim under threat of arms and with the help of accomplices was uncompromisingly sentenced to death (Chapter 259). Yet, even this strict Byzantine legal system allowed ways out for rapists and abductors who were willing or were allowed (by parents etc) to marry their victims, or who were rich enough to pay a fine (normally 'a third of a kilogram of gold', Rom.: 'o litră de aur') or could provide a suitable dowry to the girls whose chances of marriage they had undermined (Chapters 253).

Alternative provisions within the Byzantine legal tradition itself, as well as what may be presumed to be the more relaxed attitude in such matters of the unwritten law of the land, allowed the Romanian church and princely tribunals to compromise in practice and to opt increasingly for pecuniary penalties. The so-called 'şugubina' or 'deşugubina', a 'tax' on immorality, mentioned by Cantemir in his *Descriptio Moldaviae*, was payable by the offenders to the Grand Vornic, the highest civil authority at district level. Documents from 1741 show that the latter exacted 12 'galbeni' (gold Hungarian coins) from any man for making a virgin pregnant, but only 12 lei for extra-marital relations with a widow. Also called 'a womb tax' ('gloaba pîntecelui'), it was paid to Gypsy

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[38] N. Iorga, *Anciens documents de droit roumain* – avec une préface contenant l'histoire du droit coutumier roumain, 2 vols, Paris-Bucarest, 1930, p.2; Matei Cazacu, 'La famille et le statut de la femme en Moldavie (XIVe -XIXe siècles), in *Revista de istorie socială*, II-III (1997-8), p. 3, p. 7.

women's owners by men who had intercourse with a Gypsy, or to the parish 'protopop' (highest-ranking priest) if the offender was a priest.[39] According to Cantemir, this legislation had the contrary effect of making it easier for young men to experiment with pre-marital or extra-marital sex, as it only entailed the payment of the fine rather than a more severe punishment or loss of honour.[40] There were attempts, notably by the reformist Prince Constantin Mavrocordat in 1740-41,[41] to rationalise the payment of the 'immorality tax' in order to limit abuses by the district authorities. In Moldavia, this fine became obsolete in 1754, but it is not known when it ceased to be exacted in Wallachia.[42]

It is difficult to speculate at this stage on the reasons why and the speed with which the Romanian Orthodox church and the state, otherwise mindful of the stability of marriage, allowed a softening of the characteristically harsh penalties imposed by Byzantine law. It may have been a response to the changes and the new pressures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when new mentalities and perhaps an increasing compassionate awareness of human frailty could no longer accept the grim deaths and mutilations prescribed by the jurisprudence of a previous age. More pragmatically, this relaxation could have been the result of the sheer greed of church and civil officials who thought that 'sin' might be a good source of profit, or even a reflection of the weak impact that the church really had among the general population. Whatever the explanation, in this climate of compromise, virginity itself soon became a commodity over which women and men fought and negotiated regardless of its spiritual value. For women, loss of virginity could be sometimes used to gain a husband or a dowry, while many men either hoped to marry their willing or unwilling victims or to use accusations of 'impurity' against their brides in order to force a top-up of the dowry.

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[39] Cf. documents from N. Iorga (ed), *Studii şi documente*, VI, and Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, (Bucharest, 1973), note 16, p. 317. For the 'şugubina', see also Iorga (ed.), *Anciens documents de droit roumains* (Paris-Bucharest, 1930), vol. 2, p. 282.

[40] Cantemir, *Descrierea*, p. 313.

[41] For other reforms initiated by C. Mavrocordat, see chapter two, section: 'The Courts of Justice'.

[42] Matei Cazacu , 'La famille et le statut de la femme en Moldavie (XIVe- XIXe siècles)', in *RIS*, II-III (1997-8), 1-16, p. 7.

Thus, for instance, in Wallachia in 1795, Maria, a young orphaned girl, daughter of a lesser boyar, sent a petition to the Prince accusing a young man of having broken his promise of marriage. Here is her petition, with the long, rambling sentences that were a feature of such documents, suggesting a breathless verbal denunciation of a painfully felt wrong : '...there came suitors to my house, among them one Zamfiru Braşoveanu, telling me he was a bachelor and he would marry me, and taking me from my house, took me to the countryside where he kept me for two or three months and then brought me back to my house, and as he fell ill, I nursed him back to health, and then we pledged ourselves in seriousness, and I gave him his groom's gifts ('boccealîc') and others, and he took my diamond jewellery and others, of which I can provide a list, and now I see he reneges on his promise, and he will not give me my jewellery back, leaving me with child as well.' Summoned by the judiciary commission appointed by the Prince, the young man alleged in self-defence that the girl had not been a virgin. The judges, however, appealed to his moral sense (he should not 'harm his own soul') as well as to his respect for rank, telling him to marry the girl, as she was 'a lesser boyar's daughter, not a widow, and he had not taken her from the streets, but from her parents' house'. After a reconciliation ceremony which involved a lot of hand-kissing - both of the priest and of the groom - the couple were married. A rich dowry, including 11 diamond necklaces valued at 150 'thaler', as well as many items of clothing worthy of a boyar's daughter, may have helped melt the young gold-digger's heart.[43]

In this case, the judges accepted what appears to be a transgression of class barriers, as Zamfir Braşoveanu seems to be a commoner. No such transgression was allowed in a similar case of 1794, also from Wallachia: Dragomir, a young free peasant, ('ţăran clăcaş') wanted to marry a young lesser boyar daughter. As the girl's widowed mother refused the match, Dragomir and four of his mates resolved to abduct her. The abduction was aggravated by the presence of weapons, by extreme violence against both mother and daughter, and by the rape of the girl in the house of a priest who, curiously, preferred to leave the house rather than perform a marriage against the girl's wish, thereby leaving her at the mercy of her abductor. The arrival of a group of Gypsies known to the girl as belonging to a neighbouring boyar put an end to the saga, as the

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[43] V.A. Urechia , 'Domnia lui Moruzi - 1793-1796', in *AAR*, Memoriile secţiunii istorice, Tom XV, 801-03.

Gypsies immobilised the wrong-doers and called the girl's male kin. At the conclusion of the investigation, the district authorities quoted the ninth-century *nomokanons* of Basil the Great, which prescribed the death of the abductor, the exile of his accomplices and the expropriation of all their wealth. Interestingly, however, the girl was first offered the 'chance' to marry her abductor, which she refused citing the difference in rank, as she was the descendant of land-owning ancestors and the daughter of a lower-rank court official ('fată de slugă Domnescă, pogorîtă din bătrîni cu moşie de baştină'), while he was simply a peasant who, although free, was bound to perform labour on the estate he lived on. Although the language of the district authorities' letter to the Prince describing the proceedings concludes in a slightly ambiguous way, it appears that the strict prescriptions of the Byzantine law was applied in this case, as the abductors were exiled pending trial, while their assets, listed in an appendix, were confiscated and given to the girl towards a dowry in the hope of a future marriage to a suitable husband.[44]

Another case involving the transgression of the class divide was that of Elena Mavrodin, daughter of a 'medelnicer' from Wallachia, who, in spite of the difference in wealth and social status, planned to elope with and marry Stancu, a former servant in her late father's house. As her brother managed to obstruct the plan, the two were brought before the district authorities, who were quick not only to recommend the most severe punishment for the man, but also to condemn the girl herself who, the letter to the Prince said, had 'behaved in a reckless manner, plotting with such indecency and with such a lowly and worthless man and bringing dishonour upon her parents and relatives with her wish to marry of her own accord an unsuitable man...'. In response to the document detailing the case, Prince Alexandru Ipsilanti sentenced Stancu to hard labour and sent the girl to a convent to make penance and await there his further decision.[45]

In many cases of rape or of consensual pre-marital sex, the value of lost virginity gradually came to be estimated in precise monetary terms according to the offender's wealth and ability to pay. In 1795, at the princely court of Wallachia, a young manservant got involved with the sixteen-year-old daughter of a peasant woman,

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[44] V.A. Urechia, *Istoria românilor*, Tom III, Seria 1786-1800 (Bucharest, 1893), pp. 210-13.

[45] Urechia, *Istoria*, Tom VIII (Tom 1 al seriei 1800-1821), (Bucharest, 1897), pp. 425-26.

promising marriage when they were found out. As he failed to keep his promise, the mother summoned him to court, where he was sentenced to pay the standard 'third of a kilogram of gold' ('o litră de aur') for the girl's lost virginity. Unable to pay, he had his hair shaved and was banished after a good beating, the punishment prescribed by the old Byzantine *kanons* and by the *Îndreptarea legii* of 1652. In a similar case of the same year, the girl's lost virginity was 'priced' at 50 'thaler', precisely the money value of four silver dished listed in a Wallachian dowry of the same year. (see above, Maria's dowry, page 66).[46]

In cases where it was presumed that girls hoped to gain a husband by falsely accusing men of rape or broken promises of marriage, and where evidence of a girl's good character or witnesses to the alleged rape were absent, the oath was the procedure used to settle matters well into the first half of the nineteenth century.[47] Thus, a man accused of rape could declare under oath either that he had not committed the crime, that the girl had not been a virgin, or that she was known to have a bad reputation. The procedural and moral ambiguities of the 'oath' as evidence is illustrated by a case of 1791 in which the now famous Greek revolutionary Rigas Velestinlis[48] was accused of rape by the servant girl Bălaşa. As the then 'grammarian' ('grămăticul') Rigas made a written declaration in which he showed himself ready to state under oath that he had not deflowered the girl, Bălaşa herself, a simple, illiterate girl who made her mark on the papers carrying the final decision and was possibly confused or intimidated by a display of learning and maybe even of power, accepted a settlement of 20 'thaler', for fear, she said, that either of the sides 'might have their souls harmed' if asked to make an oath. [49]

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[46] Urechia, *Istoria,* Tom VIII, pp. 803-04.

[47] For increasing uncertainties about the value of 'oaths' in legal practice, see Ioan Ceterchi (ed.), *Istoria dreptului românesc,* 3 vols (Bucharest, 1980-87), vol. 2 (1984), pp. 340-01.

[48] For more information on Rigas, see, for instance, Jean-Yves Guiomar, Marie-Thérèse Lorain, 'La carte de Grèce de Rigas et le nom de la Grèce', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française,* No. 319 (Jan-Mars 2000), 101-125.

[49] For Bălaşa's statement, see N. Iorga, 'O hartă a Ţerii Româneşti din c.1780 şi un geograf dobrogean', (A map of Wallachia and a geographer from Dobrogea') in *AAR,* Memoriile secţiunii istorice, Seria II, Tom. XXXVI, No.25, (Bucharest, 1914), p. 930.

As Simona Cerutti has shown in the altogether different context of summary judicial procedures in eighteenth-century Turin, the oath was a highly subjective device that had very much to do with the logic of natural law rather than with the more formalised procedures of positive law. It engaged only the individual's conscience before God and its function was not so much to establish the truth as to put an end to the dispute.[50] The relation of natural law to Byzantine law and to Romanian common law and legal practices needs further investigation, but it is quite obvious that Bible oath, performed in church with pomp, before the Metropolitan and the church hierarchs could be a highly intimidating affair, as evidenced in a case of 1802. Dositei, Metropolitan of Ungro-Vlachia, related in writing to the Prince the case of Maria and her mother, probably peasants, who had lodged a complaint against Vasile, accused of having 'spoilt' the girl's virginity:

> I asked the plaintiff and her daughter Maria if they had any evidence to bring into court and they said they did not, but the girl Maria said that she was willing to take an oath to prove that the above-mentioned had spoilt her virginity; as there was no other evidence, we gave spiritual advice to both sides, trying to reconcile them and warned them to keep their souls out of harm's way. We gave them two days to consider and as the Bailiff ('Zapciul') brought them again before us, we sent them to the holy clerics to finish the job. They [the clerics] told us that, taking them into the holy Metropolitan church, they gave Maria spiritual counselling and warned her about the power of the oath she was about to take. As they approached the appointed place, and in the presence of all the sides and of the Bailiff, the aforementioned Maria would not proceed with the oath, and confessed the truth, that the named Vasile was not guilty of sinful intercourse with her, that they had had love for each other, but there had been no intercourse [....][51]

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[50] Simona Cerutti, 'Normes et pratiques, ou de la légitimité de leur opposition', in Bernard Lepetit (ed.), *Les formes de l'expérience* (Paris, 1995), p. 142.

[51] Urechia, *Istoria românilor*, Vol. 8 (Tome 1 of series 1800-1821) (Bucharest, 1897), p. 424. My translation. The original text of the Metropolitan's report reads as follows: [...] am zis dară jăluitórei și fie-săi Maria, de are vr'o mărturie să aducă la judecată spre dovadă și răspunseră că nu are pre nimenĭ, fără cât Maria fata dise, că va încredința ea prin jurămînt, cum că pârîtul ĭ-au stricat fecioria; la care alt mijloc de dovadă ne fiind, le-am arătat duhovnicesce sfătuiri la amêndoŭ părțile, că dóră îĭ vom împăciui, seaŭ dreptul cum vor sci să arate judecățeĭ, ca să nu-șĭ vatême sufletul vr'o parte, dându-le și soroc dĕ douĕ dile ca să-șĭ maĭ iae sémà și așa de isnóvà aducêndu-ĭ Zapciul la noĭ, ĭ-am orînduit la cucernecĭ clericĭ, ca să dee sfêrșit trebeĭ, carĭ ne arătară, că ducêndu-ĭ în sfînta biserică a Mitropolieĭ, unde dupĕ ce maĭ întêiŭ molitva lor aŭ arătat Marieĭ puterea jurămntuluĭ și duhovnicesce sfătuind-o dupĕ ce s'aŭ apropiat la locul cel orînduit unde față fiind tóte părțile, i Zapciul, numita Marie n'aŭ vrut a săvêrși jurămîntul, ci aŭ mărturisit adevĕrul, că nu este pârîtul Vasile vinovat în fapta pĕcatuluĭ cu dênsa, f•r• numai dise ea, c• dragoste ar fi avut amêndouĭ, iară împreunare nu [...].

Such accusations against men must have become frequent enough in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for the church and the Prince to make repeated attempts at reversing the trend. Thus, in 1792, Metropolitan Cosma of Ungro-Vlachia sent a plea to Prince Mihai Suţu of Wallachia in which he invoked the sanctity of marriage as a sacrament and deplored a situation in which the people of the lower orders of society engaged in pre-marital relations, girls lost their virginity, men were forced to take false oaths for fear of dishonour and fines, children were born out of wedlock or, which was worse, mothers killed their babies. The Metropolitan suggested radical remedies: the Prince was to issue a decree to be publicised throughout the country to the effect that state and church authorities were no longer to receive the complaints of girls and young widows, fines could no longer be charged for immorality either by the state or the church officials, and only cases of rape where strong evidence was available were to be brought to the courts. Parents were to dower their daughters, and keep a watchful eye over their chastity until they were due to be married.[52]

The decree ('nizam') was renewed by Prince Constantin Ipsilanti who, on the demand of the Metropolitan, asked the district prefects in 1805 to reject the complaints of wronged girls and women against men who had abandoned them or broke their promises of marriage. The prelate's memorandum invoked procedural and moral reasons: the complaints were followed by interminable court hearings where men, out of cowardice, committed perjury in order to evade the accusations, while women were left with their chastity and reputation damaged. From the church's point of view, both sides subsequently lived in an unredeemed state of sin.[53]

In spite of such attempts, by 1814, the abusive fines and taxes that some church officials exacted for allegations of immoral behaviour had apparently become so indiscriminate that Prince Ioan Caragea had to intervene in person when the wife of an Austrian subject in Wallachia found herself wrongly accused. The Prince wrote to the Metropolitan requesting that village priests and their superiors, the 'protopopi', stop the practice of

[52] V.A Urechia., *Istoria românilor*, Tom VIII, 1800-1821 (Bucharest, 1897), pp. 101-03.

[53] Urechia, *Istoria,* VIII, pp. 428-29, and Neagu Djuvara, *Le Pays Roumain roumain entre Orient et Occident* (Paris, 1989), p. 196.

charging the women rightly or wrongly accused of 'sinful' behaviour, making it clear that charging fines and taxes was against the canons of the church and that the prelates' only duty was to give spiritual counselling and exhort such women to confession. An identical letter was sent to the district prefects, whose duty it was to oversee the application of the decree in the countryside.[54]

Conclusions

This analysis of dowry provision, pre-marital sexual behaviour and marital choice is grounded in a narrow archival source base and it obviously raises more questions than it offers answers. A stronger selection and a more even distribution of the archival evidence over the period considered is needed in order to establish trends and disentangle continuity and change not only in the provision of justice, but also in people's attitudes towards issues such as virginity, chastity, marriage and love. The word 'love' itself is conspicuously absent from the documents cited, which is not surprising, as we deal with codes of law and judicial documents which are confrontational in nature and point to conflicts rather than to harmony in society. Yet, it can be suggested, even the earliest law codes made some attempts to deal with the imponderables of human affectivity, such as when the *Îndreptarea legii* (1652), for instance, in Chapter 259, Par.39, attempts to make concessions for 'romantic passion' in cases of abduction: 'When there will be love ('cînd se vor iubi amîndoi') between the abductor and the abducted girl, and there will be no other way for them to come together, and for the love they have for one another they will plan to run away together, then, as some of the teachers say, the abductor will not suffer punishment, for he is as it were mad for love'. The *Pravilniceasca Condică* of 1780 attempted more than a hundred years later to minimise the case for 'love', stipulating that abduction and elopement without the parents' consent contravened Christian morality and as such had to be punished.[55] A case of 1793 shows the kind of amputation of individual freedom such an uncompromising stance entailed. Engaged to a man she did not love, a young

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[54] Urechia, *Istoria*, Tom X, Partea A (Bucharest, 1900), pp. 58-9.

[55] I owe this observation to Constanța Vintilă, *Construction et déconstruction du couple. Les jeux du mariage dans la Valachie du XVIIIe siècle*, D.E.A. d'Histoire sous la direction de Mme. Arlette Farge, Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris, 1998-99), pp. 33 and 35.

girl threatened suicide or flight. As the father did not relent, and with the support of her brother, she eloped at night with the man she loved. The father ended up by accepting the union, but the church intervened, deciding that the elopement contravened both parental authority and the lawful engagement ritual. At the end of the trial the father was excommunicated, and his chosen fiancé forced to marry the girl, although by this time she was no longer a virgin.[56] The case of 1802 of Maria the peasant girl who invokes the love she had for a man whom she accused of breaking his promise of marriage (see above, p. 69), shows that instances of romantic impulses expressing themselves against the severe voice of the law were probably more common than we think, and that jurists and the protagonists themselves were increasingly willing to allow for human 'frailty' to assert itself. It would be worth investigating on the basis of quantitative analyses of serial documents to what extent the litigants themselves managed throughout the Romanian long eighteenth century to force a reinterpretation of the law codes and force changes in legal practice to suit the emerging sensibilities of the age.[57]

Not least, the relations between church and state in the Romanian ancien régime and the attitude of the Orthodox Church towards sexuality and marriage should be investigated in depth. Equally worthy of attention are issues pertaining to the very religiosity of the Romanian people, especially in the light of recent suggestions that, contrary to traditional representations, the Romanians were never in fact a deeply Christianised or a deeply religious people and that the teachings of the church were never strongly embedded in people's consciousness and in the workings of society.[58] The allegations of immorality and libertinage in Romanian eighteenth-century society should be explored in this context.

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[56] Vintilă, *Construction*, p.33. For the archival source of this case see Ms. No. 143 (14 July 1793), pp. 224-226, Romanian State Archives.

[57] For a discussion of love, emotion and sensibility on the basis of literary texts and personal narratives, see chapter eight.

[58] For this challenging view, see, for instance, Daniel Barbu, *Firea românilor* (The Romanian character) (Bucharest, 2000), especially the chapter 'Etica ortodoxă şi "spiritul" românesc' (Orthodox ethic and the Romanian 'spirit').

One positive impression that one gets even from studying a relatively small proportion of the archival sources available concerns a certain legal competence that people, including women, possessed in the period studied. It seems quite obvious - although lack of evidence reduces the possibility of diachronic comparison - that women were quite aware of their rights and were - perhaps increasingly - willing to take their cases to court in spite of intimidating procedures such as the oath or of restricting measures such as the decision not to prosecute rape and breach of promise cases. The emergence of a conception of individual rights and of individualism itself in Romanian society could well be studied within the promising framework of the history of jurisprudence and of legal practices.

Chapter Four

Divorce and the Crisis of the Family

> *'Perhaps in no other country of Europe is the sacred*
> *tie of marriage less well respected, or violated with*
> *less remorse'*
>
> Edmund SPENCER, *Travels in the Western Caucasus, including*
> *a tour through Imeritia, Mingrelia, Turkey, Moldavia, Galicia,*
> *Silesia, and Moravia, in 1836* (London, 1838)

Edmund Spencer's *bon mot* could perhaps be dismissed as simply a well-turned sentence from someone who passed briefly through early nineteenth-century Romania rather than as an informed comment. But he was not the only traveller to raise his eyebrows at the moral state of the Romanian nation in that period of constant flux and national soul-searching. And he certainly was not the most severe critic of that state.[1] Here is how the French consul Lagan viewed the situation in Moldavia in 1828 in a report to the French Foreign Ministry:

> Moral depravity could be no worse than in this remote corner of Europe [...]. No sooner married, [...] in other words at large, most women allow the lower side of their nature to emerge, bestowing their favours generously and only differing among themselves in the degree of harm they do not do. Without tenderness for their children, they usually form no deeper affection for their spouses. Therefore, divorces are very common. The lightest pretext is good enough to enter a second or even a third marriage.[2]

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[1] The works by M.R. Ungureanu and Neagu Djuvara quoted throughout this chapter abound in negative travellers' testimonies about the moral health of the Romanian nation in the period I am considering. The vast collection of *Călători străini despre ţările române* (Foreign travellers' accounts about the Romanian lands), published by the Romanian Academy, which has currently reached the later eighteenth century (vol. X) is also an important source for such narratives. In spite of a habitual reliance on travel writing in Romanian historiography, a solid comparative study of these sources is still unavailable. Klaus Heitmann published an important study on German representations of the Romanians: *Das Rumänenbild im deutschen Sprachraum, 1775-1918. Eine imagologische Studie*, Köln, Böhlau, 1985; a Romanian edition was published in Bucharest, 1995.

[2] Quoted in M. R. Ungureanu, 'Însemnări de taină pentru câteva genealogii moldovenești (I)' (Secret notes for several Moldavian genealogies), *Arhiva genealogică* II (VII), 1-2, (Iași, 1995), 21-46, p. 21. The original French text reads as follows: La dépravation des moeurs ne saurait être plus grande que dans ce coin de l'Europe [...] Les femmes [...] à peine mariées, c'est-à-dire libres, elles se laissent aller pour la plupart, à leurs mauvais penchants, prodiguent leur faveur et ne se distinguent, à bien dire, que par le mal qu'elles ne font pas. Sans tendresse pour leurs enfants, elles n'ont ordinairement aucun attachement pour leurs maris. Aussi les divorces sont-ils très communs. Le plus léger prétexte suffit pour convoler à un second et troisième mariage.

Not a few of the critics put in fact the blame for moral decline on Romanian women, in line with a European tradition which viewed women, irrespective of their social or political power, as the bearers and guardians of the values of civilisation, good manners, taste and moral health. The Consul-General in the Principalities William Wilkinson (1818) blamed the inadequate education women received and the early age at marriage for their immaturity and their readiness to opt out of marriages in a country where divorce was available and sanctioned by the Church. Most German travellers of the same period blamed the alleged amorous inclinations of Romanian women for the decline in the general levels of morality.[3] The Russians blamed Western influences, the Germans blamed the Russian occupation, others merely deplored the general luxury and idleness of the boyar class as a whole.[4]

But the supposed relaxation of morality and the consequent frequency of divorces had native critics as well. Thus, Saint-Marc Girardin in *Souvenirs de voyages et d'études* (1852)[5] reported a discussion he had with a Wallachian boyar around 1830 in a Bucharest salon. His interlocutor, still dressed in the Oriental style, lying on a sofa and fingering incessantly his amber rosary, longed for republican virtue and, in a curious rhetorical twist, almost offered an apology of adultery as a cure for divorce:

> The foundation of healthy morality is family spirit; amongst us, owing to the easy availability of divorce, the family lacks all stability [...] Children whose mothers live in one family and whose fathers live in another, not knowing who should be the object of their respect and of their love, lack focus and a moral framework; women find their second and third husbands in the same soirée, as they amble on the arm of their fourth and smile upon the flirtatious jokes of their fifth. [...] You may be certain that what you call adultery in your society would be a sign of progress in ours, and that what in yours is an illness, in ours would

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[3] M. R. Ungureanu, 'Graniţele morale ale Europei. Despre morala cuplului în societatea românească la începutul secolului XIX' (The moral borders of Europe. On domestic morality in early nineteenth-century Romanian society), *Secolul 20*, nos. 7-9 (376-78) (Bucharest, 1996), p. 101.

[4] Ungureanu, 'Graniţele morale', pp. 102-3.

[5] Saint-Marc Girardin (1801-1873), liberal, anti-republican and anti-Jesuit journalist and professor of literature at the Sorbonne, member of the Académie française (1844), was a champion of Syrian Christians, Greeks and Romanians in their anti-Ottoman struggle.

be deemed the beginning of health. Adultery is impossible in our society, because it is only the prelude to a second marriage...[6]

No such 'defence' of social conventions and marital hypocrisy was good enough for Dora D'Istria.[7] From her life-long exile, some twenty years after Saint Marc Girardin, in the 1850s, she visited her native city, Bucharest. She uses a conversation with a Romanian lady of the boyar élite as a device for mounting an anti-Catholic (and especially anti-Jesuit) direct attack against the views of Girardin's boyar from an Orthodox and one may even say a feminist point of view:

> The 'great boyar' and all those who reason like him are hypocrites obviously. They could not care less about 'society, duties, dignity', etc. What they seek is absolute power with no controls; a power to dominate which does not have to fear anything in its delirious excesses; a domination which leaves woman without any resources against tyranny and its extravagance. Our Church, however, has shown more justice and more common sense. Instead of taking the side - as the Papists did - of the oppressors, it took the side of unarmed weakness against force. By acting thus, it has deserved eternal gratitude from all Christians.[8]

Travellers' objections to Romanian mores were due, naturally, as much to cultural, educational and religious differences as to individual prejudice and idiosyncrasies, and it is often impossible to disentangle them from accurate, impartial observation, as the theoretical literature on 'otherness', travel accounts and cross-cultural stereotyping has demonstrated. It will be some time before rigorous quantitative analysis of the legal

[6] Quoted by Neagu Djuvara, *Le Pays roumain entre Orient et Occident* (Paris, 1989), p. 119. The French original reads as follows: Le principe des bonnes moeurs, c'est l'esprit de famille; chez nous la famille, grâce à la facilité des divorces n'a aucune stabilité [...] Ces enfants qui ont une mère dans une famille, leur père dans une autre, et qui ne sachant à qui rattacher leur respect et leur amour, n'ont ni centre ni point de ralliement; ces femmes qui dans une soirée rencontrent leurs deux ou trois premiers maris, sont au bras du quatrième, et sourient aux agaceries du cinquième [...] Soyez sûr que l'adultère tel que vous l'avez, serait chez nous un progrès, et que ce qui est votre maladie, serait pour nous un commencement de santé. L'adultère est impossible dans notre société, car ce n'est que le prélude d'un second mariage...

[7] For Dora D'Istria's life and work, see chapter one, pp. 11-14.

[8] My translation of the following passage: Le 'grand boyar' et tous ceux qui raisonnent comme lui manquent évidemment de franchise. Ils se préocuppent assez peu de la 'société, des devoirs, de la dignité' etc. Ce qu'ils veulent, c'est le pouvoir absolu sans contre-poids; c'est une domination qui n'ait point à craindre de trouver sa fin dans ses folies et dans ses excès; qui laisse la femme sans aucune ressource contre la tyrannie et contre l'extravagance. Notre Église a été plus juste et plus sensée. Au lieu de sa ranger, comme la papauté, du côté des oppresseurs, elle a pris parti pour la faiblesse désarmée contre la force. En agissant ainsi, elle s'est acquis des droits éternels à la raconnaissance de tous les chétiens. (Dora D'Istria, *Les Femmes en Orient*, vol.1, Zurich, 1859, p.71).

archival sources in Romania will produce the framework needed to contextualise the often colourful personal testimonies of travellers and diplomats. Such is the current state of research that often what are supposed to be serious studies on specific areas of social and institutional history of the Principalities resort to travellers' accounts rather than to internal sources. It is notably the case of the three-volume *History of Romanian Law* edited by Ioan Ceterchi in the 1980s, which cited Wilkinson's and the doctor William MacMichael's [9] views on morality and divorce rather than internal primary evidence.[10]

The transcription (from hand-written Cyrillics) and the study of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Romanian family and court documents started in earnest only in the 1990s and it is making steady, but slow, progress. The archival material on divorces is abundant compared to other aspects of social life[11], but the preliminary explorations into this material have only produced so far small-scale, tentative, studies that announce future lines of enquiry rather than offering solid conclusions. In one such early essay, the historian from Iaşi University Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu still relies heavily on travellers' testimonies for his picture of family life in early nineteenth-century Romania. He simply mentions the 'enormous number' of divorces in Moldavia in the first half of the nineteenth century compared to earlier periods, but admits that a statistical distribution of divorces by period, region or social class is still impossible.[12] Although his study was based on archival searches, he gives no figures, claiming, however, that the annual average number of divorces grew towards the mid-nineteenth-century, reaching absolute maximum values in years of crisis (wars, epidemics, poor harvests,

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[9] For William MacMichael, see Introduction to Part two, pp. 123-24.

[10] Ioan Ceterchi (ed.). *Istoria dreptului românesc*, (A history of Romanian law), 3 vols, Bucharest, 1980-87; cf. the sections on divorce, pp. 254-55.

[11] For Wallachia in the period 1780-1850 thousands of divorce papers were kept in *Condici şi pricini_de căsătorie* in the archives of the Metropolitan Church. They are now at the Library of the Romanian Academy (B.A.R.) under Shelfmarks 635-656 (22 vols.) and 3934-3941 (8 vols.). For Moldavia, similar sources are kept in the Archives of the 'Dicasteria Mitropolitană' (the Metropolitan Dikasterion = The Court of the Moldavian Metropolitan Church). Cf. Violeta Barbu, "'Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit omul să nu despartă'. Studiu asupra divorţului în Ţara Românească în perioada 1780-1850' ("Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder". A study of divorce in Wallachia in 1780-1850), *RI*, Tome III, No.11-12, (Noiembrie-Decembrie 1992), pp. 1144-145.

[12] Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, 'Însemnări de taină', *Arhiva_genealogică* II (VII), 1-2 (1995) p. 21.

famine). In a second shorter study, Ungureanu claims that most divorces were in the upper echelons of society, followed by almost immediate remarriages.[13]

Younger Romanian researchers, such as Constanța Vintilă Ghițulescu, who have been working on archival family papers of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but whose work is still largely unpublished, claim that the seventeenth century was a time when tradition and conventions were still held in respect, before the mores started to deteriorate in the early nineteenth century.[14] According to Ghițulescu, in a first stage, the traditional model of familial unity and harmony started to collapse especially among the lower classes throughout the eighteenth century, the implication being that greater public exposure in the village led to greater pressures on couples and hence to increased difficulties in sustaining life together. She claims that in boyar circles greater privacy ensured that the conjugal bond remained stronger well into the eighteenth century in most families. The Wallachian great boyar Iordache Crețulescu is cited as an example of a conscientious civil servant and strict *pater familias* who never mixed public and private and who managed to sustain a harmonious forty-year-long marriage with his wife Safta Brâncoveanu amidst their large family.[15]

The documentation of divorce cases which I have seen shows indeed that in most cases family conflicts in rural areas involved all of the village community. When one spouse or both decided to petition for divorce, the first recourse was the parish priest, who usually made an attempt at conciliation argued on the basis of the teachings of the Orthodox church. If there was no settlement, the case or the application for divorce was put forward to the 'protopop' (an 'arch-priest' at district level) or even directly to the Metropolitan. In most cases, one of the spouses was the petitioner, but in severe cases

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[13] M.R. Ungureanu, 'Granițele morale ale Europei', pp.104-05. Ungureanu's long-awaited full-scale study on divorce in Moldavia is due to be published in Romania, but details on publishers or publishing date remain unknown.

[14] Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, 'Viața în doi. Identitate familială în Țara Românească în secolele XVII-XVIII' (Conjugal life. Family identity in Wallachia, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), in Mirela-Luminița Murgescu (ed.), *Identități colective și identitate națională. Percepții asupra identității în lumea medievală și modernă* (Collective identities and national identity. Representations of identity in the mediaeval and early modern world) (Bucharest, 2000), pp. 53-73.

[15] Ghițulescu, 'Viața în doi'. p. 62.

where public morality or the peace of the community were breached, the village community itself complained to the authorities. There were attempts at reconciliation mediated by the church, and even trial separations before the divorce was finally pronounced in the many cases where marital relations were deemed to be beyond redemption. Thus, family conflicts were often played out very vocally in the public arena, the neighbours or the community being asked to provide evidence in court against the defendant.[16] The evidence produced by relatives, neighbours, and servants was often little more than gossip or rumour, but it carried great weight, especially if sanctioned by oaths and a 'curse' ('carte de blestem') issued by the ecclesiastical authorities to discourage would-be perjurers.[17] Often, the degradation that followed public exposure was such that normal relations between the spouses could no longer be resumed after the crisis. In 1788, the 'logofãt' Constantin was accused of adultery by his wife. Found guilty, he was sentenced to prison and hard labour, although in the course of the hearings the behind-the-scene realities of the couple's life were mercilessly exposed. Married young to a dowry-less girl, Constantin had been working hard all his married life to provide for his wife and keep her in style. Perpetually unhappy with her living standards, the wife, however, made life hell for Constantin who, longing for domestic bliss, tried to find it in an alternative relationship outside marriage. Once out of prison, he was, however, ready to resume the marriage on condition his wife declared herself at least willing 'to recognise him as a husband and master' if not to give him the uxorial gratitude and affection he craved. In order to ensure a smooth transition to a more peaceful domesticity, the two were sent by the Metropolitan to live for a while in the household of the 'logofãt' from the 'Law Department' ('departamentul de judecatã'). As the wife, however, continued her very public nagging, Constantin finally admitted he could no longer 'come near her' due to the 'great dishonour' he had endured when she resorted to the law and their life became public. In his report to the Prince, the Metropolitan had to concede defeat in his fight to save the marriage and recommended divorce.[18]

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[16] Mihai Rãzvan Ungureanu,, 'Granitele morale', pp.105-06.

[17] For the use of the 'carte de blestem' in old Romanian legal proceedings, see my chapter three, 'It is a Christian and Lawful Thing to Marry', p. 60.

[18] Constanța Vintilã-Ghitulescu, 'Viata în doi', pp. 68-71.

As suggested above, the divorce procedure was relatively simple and straightforward: either of the spouses could send a petition for separation to the local or county priest ('protopop') or directly to the Metropolitan of Wallachia or Moldavia. The latter sent a citation to the defendant and ordered a local enquiry to be conducted in the village/town/county/area of the plaintiff by a panel composed usually of local parish priests, sometimes aided by the civil authorities. The summary of the evidence and testimonies collected by this team and of those heard in court was the basis for the Metropolitan's 'anaforaua pricinei' (report on the case) which he appended with suggestions for a resolution and sent to the Prince for a final decision and a hearing in a 'civil court' ('tribunal politicesc') or in front of the country's 'Divan' (assembly of great boyars headed by the Prince, see chapter two, page 36). Although the investigations as well as the Metropolitan's report and the Prince's decision were based on the legal provisions of the *Callimachi Code* (Moldavia 1817) and the *Caragea Code* (Wallachia, 1818), in divorce cases throughout the nineteenth century, many earlier regulations and Byzantine 'kanons' continued to be applied long after social realities could no longer be reasonably expected to conform to their outdated template.[19]

Not only is it impossible at this stage, as suggested above, to provide statistics on numbers of divorces per capita, ratios of divorce cases per social group, region or period, but it is equally problematic to give any figures for how many cases resulted in divorce, or for the ratio of male to female plaintiffs in these cases. In the study already cited, Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu claims that in more than three quarters of divorce cases it was the woman who initiated the proceedings, and this, in spite of a social and juridical context that was generally unfavourable to women and where any minor lapse in a woman's conduct was mercilessly exploited. However, as already noted, in spite of his archival explorations, he fails to produce the necessary figures (what samples did he collect? over what period? does this include Wallachia as well as Moldavia?).[20]

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[19] Cf. below, the divorce case of Catinca Suţu in 1843, during which articles were cited from the 1652 *Îndreptarea legii*.

[20] Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, 'Graniţele morale', p.110. As already noted, Ungureanu will probably produce the expected information in his forthcoming study on Moldavian divorce, see note 10 above.

The most rigorous small-scale study of divorce in the Romanian ancien régime to date belongs to Violeta Barbu who, using her reading of hundreds of divorce cases from the archives of the Wallachian Metropolitanate, has attempted to show how, increasingly, the strict legal framework of court and church justice became insufficient and unable to accommodate the variety and drama of real-life marital conflict and breakdown.[21] Although still steering clear of rigorous statistical evidence and limiting herself to Wallachia, hers is the first attempt to place divorce practices in a post-Byzantine and Eastern Orthodox tradition and to suggest lines of enquiry for future East-West comparative work.

Divorce and the Orthodox Church

Barbu shows that, in contradistinction to the Western Augustinian tradition on divorce as it was enshrined by the Council of Lyon (1274), which established marriage as one of the church's sacraments, thus excluding the possibility of divorce as well as the possibility of re-marriage as long as the former spouse was alive, the Eastern Church showed more flexibility and did not accept the dogma of the indissolubility of marriage. It was this position of the Orthodox Church which, as we have seen above, earned the praise of Dora D'Istria. Whether the Eastern Orthodox Church saw marriage as more of a contract than a sacrament, as Matei Cazacu has suggested[22], is an issue worth exploring in the future. According to Barbu, marriage retained its sacramental quality in Orthodoxy only insofar as it imposed on couples the moral obligation to faithfulness. But while it allowed for divorce and up to two re-marriages, the Eastern Orthodox Church was keen to retain its absolute control over all matters pertaining to the couple's intimate life, including the dissolution of marriage.[23] In most cases of marital conflict and divorce, the Prince indeed followed almost invariably the recommendations of the

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[21] Violeta Barbu, "'Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit omul să nu despartă". Studiu asupra divorțului în Țara Românească în perioada 1780-1850' ("Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder". A study of divorce in Wallachia in 1780-1850), *Revista istorică*, Tomul III, Nr.11-12, (Noiembrie-Decembrie 1992), pp. 1143-1155.

[22] Matei Cazacu, 'La famille et le statut de la femme en Moldavie (XIVe- XIXe siècles)', *RIS*, II-III (1997-8), p.4.

[23] Barbu, "'Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit', p.1145.

Metropolitan, although the latter always deferred to the final authority of the secular powers.

Barbu has established that, in the early decades of the period, abandonment, adultery, drunkenness and violence, abuse and blood ties between the spouses, were the typical reasons invoked in the quest for the dissolution of marriages. Halfway through and towards the end of the period considered, between 1800 and 1850, new themes emerged, linked to the discovery of the spouse's 'otherness' and its impact on the relationship: 'bad' character, ethnic or confessional difference as well as the previously taboo area of sexuality (impotence, sterility, fear of the body, conflicting sexual attitudes) as well as other, more intangible reasons for discord listed under the umbrella term 'incompatibility'.[24]

Reasons for Divorce

Adultery was a major offence, and older legislation demanded the capital penalty for it, although in practice this seems to have been rarely respected even in periods prior to the eighteenth century. By omission, the legislation of the time perpetuated the double standards that allowed boyar husbands to commit adultery or keep lower-class - often Gypsy - concubines with impunity, while women risked exile into convents or even death. While a woman caught *in flagrante* in the marital home could be killed with impunity by the husband, the law codes did not specify the penalty, if any, that a husband incurred in a similar situation. Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu believes that there was an in-built misogyny not only in the law texts, but also in the way sentences were passed, very often on the basis of biased evidence from the husband or the community.[25] An early seventeenth-century case of female adultery in the upper classes illustrates the price an adulterous wife had to pay to keep her life, although the accusing husband was not exactly innocent. The woman's fault was aggravated by the fact that her fellow sinner was a 'servant' and as such, they could both be lawfully killed if caught in the marital home by her husband, hurt not only in his manly pride, but also in his self-respect as a member of the upper classes. The husband, great 'paharnic' Lupu

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[24] Barbu, "'Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit', p.1146.

Mehedințeanu, was keen to exact the ultimate revenge, and the fallen wife would have been executed, had the Prince not intervened in person on the request of the woman's relatives. Maria, the wife, had her life spared but she and her two daughters from a previous marriage were thrown out into the streets. A social outcast for the rest of her life, Maria ended up in old age at the mercy of one of her daughters and her husband, who beat her and abused her continuously on accusations that she had given a larger dowry to another daughter. Later, upon the death of Lupu Mehedințeanu in 1618, it was discovered that he had had a son by his mistress Elina at the time when he was still married to the unfortunate Maria, a fact which does not appear to have caused a stir in the society that had ostracised his wife.[26]

Judicial murder as penalty for adultery, although still theoretically prescribed by the law codes, gradually became unacceptable throughout the eighteenth century, as society moved towards more enlightened legal practices. When in 1780 a cuckolded husband took the law in his own hand and killed his wife's lover, the boyar judges were horrified by the brutality of the crime in a 'civilised' time when, they claimed, surely an amicable solution could have been found. The husband was sent for penance to the monastery of Snagov (Wallachia), while the wife was due to appear before the Divan.[27]

While the case for a legal system flagrantly favouring men is not easy to build, divorce proceedings certainly placed hurdles in the path of any woman who petitioned against her philandering husband. A woman whose husband was away for work or business and who learned he had a concubine had to provide adequate proof and repeatedly ask the husband over a period of three years to give up the extra-marital affair, before she could file for divorce. In boyar circles, and presumably in other milieus as well, as long as the men's extra-marital affairs did not threaten the welfare of the legitimate family, such relationships and any resulting offspring were tacitly tolerated. In an early case of 1653, Anicuța Catargi, née Cantacuzino (both the Catargis and the Cantacuzinos were among

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[25] Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, 'Granițele morale', pp. 105-6.

[26] For more details on the case of Lupu Mehedințeanu and his wife Maria, see Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, 'Viața în doi', pp. 72-3, based on documents published in *DIR*, II, p. 116-7; 346-7; and *DRH*, XXIV, p. 553; XXV, p. 89.

[27] Vintilă-Ghițulescu, 'Viața în doi', p. 67 and p. 72 and Barbu, '"Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit', p. 1149.

the oldest and noblest families in Wallachia), silently accepted her husband Ianache's long-term relationship with a Gypsy servant girl by whom he had two children. When Ianache died and his assets were divided strictly among the blood family, Anicuṭa had the good grace to ask a relative to make donations to the two children born out of wedlock.[28]

Violeta Barbu has shown that, for instance, for the very short period from 1780 to 1783, most divorce petitions followed the abandonment of the matrimonial home by one of the spouses, usually the man, and less frequently, the woman.[29] While desertion in itself may or may not have been something to be lamented, it was closely linked to the duty, defined by the codes of law, of all men, irrespective of status and rank, to provide for their wives and family. Lack of maintenance money, especially where children were concerned, was a legitimate ground for divorce.[30] That the strength and survival of the family - and the consequent advantage to the state budget - were at the centre of the legislators' and judges' concerns is suggested by the great number of matrimonial cases in which the man was ordered to pay. Thus, to give only one example, in Wallachia in 1777 a bigamous lower-class husband who could not produce the required divorce decree ('carte de despărţenie') was ordered by the court and the Prince to take back his first lawful wife and provide for her, as well as for the child issued of his second, invalid, marriage, which had lasted seven years.[31] The precise nature of financial provision by the state, in the form of institutionalised care, is not easy to delineate, but by the late eighteenth century, orphaned or financially deprived children, in Wallachia at least, would be supported by the 'orphanotrophy' ('orfanotrofie'), which subsisted largely from grants from one section of the state budget called 'cutia milelor' (literally, 'donation box', into which certain fines, fiscal penalties, as well as private and public donations were paid).

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[28] Vintilă-Ghiţulescu, 'Viaţa în doi', pp. 69-70 and Violeta Barbu, 'Câteva diate muntenești din a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea' (A few Wallachian testaments from the latter half of the seventeenth century), in *RIS*, I (1996), p. 499.

[29] Barbu, "'Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit', pp. 1147-148.

[30] Cf. Vintilă-Ghiţulescu, 'Viaţa în doi', p. 54.

[31] Ghe. Cronţ and others (eds.), *Acte judiciare din Ţara Românească 1775-1781* (Bucharest, 1973), Doc. 242, pp. 264-65.

Bigamy seems to have been quite widespread in the period considered, at least among the lower rural and urban classes, at a time when wars, Turkish invasions and quarantines took and kept men away from their homes for months and sometimes years. A case from 1781, where both partners were already married, shows not only the relative leniency of the church, but also the same focus on the economic survival of the woman and her children. The Prince Alexandru Ipsilanti advised the 'Biv vel clucer' Grigore Razu, the 'caimacam' (highest civil authority) of Craiova, to call forth a certain Stroe and make him pay the 45 'thaler' due to his concubine Ioana, whom he had apparently abandoned. The Prince himself draws attention to the fact that, according to the law, the man's punishment should have been more severe, but that there were extenuating circumstances: an unspecified 'uprising' ('răzmirița') - a time of moral and legal confusion - and the presence of children, who needed their father's ongoing support.[32] As Violeta Barbu has shown, the article of law cited in such cases was Art. 235 of the *Îndreptarea legii* (1652), formulated by Patriarch Dionysius as early as 1094, which allowed a woman to get a divorce and re-marry if she could prove that the husband had been away for five years, and had contributed nothing to her upkeep.[33]

As can be expected, abuse, ill treatment, and continuing discord ('traiul rău', the bad life) were frequently invoked in divorce cases, most often by the women plaintiffs, and more rarely by men. In most cases, the outcome was either attempts at reconciliation by the church or temporary separation until the culprit - usually the drinking husband - mended his or her ways. A written statement engaged the guilty party to turn a new leaf and resume decent marital relations. Such cases were by no means limited to the lower or labouring classes, although one can presume that in boyar circles recourse to the very degrading publicity of a divorce was more rare.Thus, in 1830, a young boyar wife complained that her husband beat her up repeatedly with a whip even while she was pregnant. In another divorce suit which lasted years, and in which the accusations and counter-accusations remain difficult to verify, a first attempt at reconciliation resulted in a written 'contract' whereby the partied pledged themselves to live a good life together. The wife, however, subsequently coyly complained to her confessor that her husband

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[32] Cronț and others (eds.), *Acte judiciare*, Doc. 904, p. 970.

[33] Barbu, "'Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit', pp. 1147-1148.

would not respect one 'point of the contract', which presumably meant that he was not willing to do his conjugal duty. Byzantine legislation and consequently the *Îndreptarea Legii* (1652) called a man's rejection of intimate relations 'enmity' ('vrăjmăşie') towards his spouse and allowed the neglected wife to seek divorce.[34]

A Wallachian case of 1777, involving a middle-class family, illustrates the fact that the secular authorities could in fact take a stricter moral stance in divorce cases than did the church. It also suggests, as does the 1836 case presented below, that a bias certainly operated in some cases, possibly because a wife and mother was expected to be a bearer and exemplar of moral values and as such, her lapse from marital respectability was more serious than the man's. In this case, Maria, a widow with children who remarried a captain at the time of the 'uprising' (possibly an anti-Ottoman campaign, a time of uncertainty, invoked in many documents of the time, when a woman needed a man's support) sought divorce a few years later, on the grounds that her second husband became abusive and started squandering money she had inherited from her first spouse. In court, they finally agreed on money matters, but not on continuing to live together. The man accused his wife of being 'bad' and 'rebellious', while she threatened suicide or murder if sent back to live with him.

They were allowed to separate by the Bishop of Rîmnic, and the two surviving children went with each parent according to sex. However, in a second hearing, Prince Alexandru Ipsilanti recommended exile in a convent of the Metropolitan's choice for the woman, who was allowed to take with her her six-months-old, still suckling, baby daughter. Trustees were to be named to administer the children's inheritance money until they came of age. The text of the Prince's resolution made it quite clear that the case was to serve as a cautionary tale of a wife who 'did not obey her husband' and a couple who 'wanted to separate with no valid cause'.[35] As in the case of 1836 below, although the monastic 'exile' was to last only until 'she saw reason', the woman alone paid the price for the collapse of the marriage. Interestingly, neither spouse was to be

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[34] Barbu, "'Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit', pp.1148-9.

[35] Cronţ and others (eds.), *Acte judiciare*, Doc. 321, pp. 353-54.

allowed to re-marry, a decision which does not appear to be based on any of the written canons.

The case of Moldavian 'Hetman' Anastasie Başotă (1797-1869) and of his wife Ecaterina is in many ways a highly illustrative example not only of the accusations that rich spouses could bring against each other, but also of the kind of court rhetoric that could be employed by a well-educated woman in the 1830s. It has been alleged that the marriage of the 'Hetman' to Ecaterina/Ruxandra Balş (daughter of Grigore Balş and Ana Mavrocordat, also related to the ancient families the Ghicas and the Cantacuzinos)[36] had 'made it easier for him to climb swiftly the social ladder of the boyar ranks.[37] But the marriage was a troubled one. In a letter dated 20 February 1837, the Hetman detailed seven long years of alleged conjugal misery and of repeated pleas to the family confessor and to other ecclesiastic figures to intervene and bring his wife to reason. But now he was asking the Metropolitan of Moldavia Veniamin Costachi to grant a divorce. The Hetman complained that, in spite of an annuity of 12,000 lei that he gave her, his wife kept borrowing money and pawned her own dowry jewellery, claiming that she needed to cover the expenses incurred with her own pleas for a divorce. The Hetman therefore asked for a divorce decree ('carte de despărțanie') and for his wife's dowry assets to be placed in trusteeship for the sake of the children: 'for it would be indecent to wreck their welfare as a result of her wretched behaviour'. From the same letter to the Metropolitan it is apparent that the ecclesiastical authorities had already investigated the case and had previously sentenced Ecaterina/Ruxandra Balş to be sent into a convent and there to repent her ways, but that nothing had come of that sentence and, the Hetman went on, he had to endure seven years of a 'Christian martyr's' life as a result. Yet, it was the Hetman's wife who had first petitioned for divorce on 3 October 1836 - and her letter to the Metropolitan shows to advantage not only her epistolary skills, but also the mix of pecuniary and sexual claims that an unhappy or dissatisfied wife could make against her husband:

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[36] For the onomastic ambiguity and the uncertain genealogy, see Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, 'Însemnări de taină', esp. p. 32.

[37] Gh. Ghibănescu, *Başoteştii şi Pomârla. Studiu genealogic şi istoric* (Iaşi, 1929), p.33, apud M.R. Ungureanu, 'Însemnări de taină', p. 27. Cf. also M.R. Ungureanu, 'Granițele morale ale Europei', pp. 111-13.

[...] If until now I have hesitated, Most Holy Father, to rush towards the endless source of Your fatherly kindness, it is because I have kept this as a last resort haven in this my latest misfortune. I did not wish, by a hasty squandering of Your kindnesses, to lose anything, whether of a material or of spiritual kind, and to waste the protection that You, in Your love for humankind, grant to all-enduring and weak innocence.

Now, however, when all my illusions are spent, when evil is on the attack and when the horizon of my hopes is clouded in despondency, now, Saintly and Honoured Lord, I come full of trust to shed onto the bosom of Your Fatherly mercy the tears that my prolonged suffering is incessantly bringing to my eyes. Now I run with extended hands to ask for Your succour and escape from the engulfing waves of spiritual destruction and material loss.[38]

Ecaterina/Ruxandra cites nine years - rather than just seven - of unrelenting domestic pain, years during which 'my home, Most Holy Father, is like that of birds that dwell in darkness', that is, she explains, she lived in two modest rooms in a dilapidated corner of her parental home, 'unfit even for a servant'. She complains of lack of sufficient food as well as of the absence of those amenities that would suit her 'rank' and 'circumstances'. The coup de grace, however, is delivered at the very end of the letter when Ecaterina/Ruxandra explains in covert, but unambiguous terms the total estrangement between the two spouses over the previous years. She considers herself to be not only impoverished, but also practically a 'widow':

Five years have now lapsed since my aforementioned husband knows not my bed. [...] I do not deem it necessary to offend Your ears with the story he gave as an explanation for this deed, which is not only unlawful, but also contrary to all the rules of decency. But this is the whole truth. It is five years since I have no abode, no table and no life together with my husband and I roam, like a ghost, lamenting the waste of my parental home, and surrounded by all sorts of good-for-nothings.

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[38] My translation of Ecaterina Başotă's letter of 3 October 1836 reproduced in M.R. Ungureanu, 'Însemnări de taină', pp. 29-31. The original reads as follows: De am întârziet, Înalt Preaosfinţâte Stăpâne, a alerga până acum cătră nesfârşitul izovr al părinţâştii Voastre bunătăţi au fost că mi-am păstrat această adăpostire pentru vremea nefacerii cei mai de pi urmă, ca nu cu o ră întrebuinţare bunătăţâlor Voastre să pierd cât de puţân, materiialnic sau în gândire, din scutirea şi apărarea ce obicinuiţi a dărnici cu iubire de oameni neputinţâi şi pătimitoarei nevinovăţâi.
Acum însă, când toate celi lăturalnice închipuiri s-au sfârşit, când răul s-au obrintit şi când orizontul nădejdilor meli s-au închis din toate părţâle de pâcla ce ponegrită a diznădăjduirei, acum tocmai, Preaosfinţite Stăpâne, vin cu cinstire să vărs în sânul părinţâştii Voastre milosârdii lacrămile ce îndelungatile mele pătimiri le storc cu îmbelşugare din ochii miei fără contenire. Acum tocmai alerg cu mânule întinsă şi ceiu agiutoriu şi scăpare din valurile ci mă îngrozăsc şi cu pierzarea sufletească, şi cu prăpădirea materiialnică.

> Therefore, Most Holy Father, lacking as I am in the pleasures of matrimony and hindered in the free use of my wealth, I consider myself today to be a mere shadow, nothing more than an object of trade, insofar as the Hetman Anastasachi Başotă calls himself my spouse only to enjoy the fruit of my wealth.[39]

Ecaterina Başotă's language is rather discreet, but she is nevertheless firm about her rights as a married woman and, as Violeta Barbu has shown (see above), this letter belongs to a period where women were becoming increasingly articulate about their wish for a divorce and did not flinch from having their private lives on very public display in court.

As in so many other cases of the same period, the outcome for the Başotă family, as outlined in the Metropolitan's resolution of 5 March 1837, was divorce. A victory of individual freedoms over the traditional values of marital cohesion or at least of mutual marital tolerance? Yes and no. A separation both of 'corps' and of 'biens' was decided upon, with Ecaterina's dowry assets being placed under trusteeship to serve for her and her growing children's upkeep. Yet, unexpectedly, and perhaps as a suggestion that the Romanian Church was not in fact as tolerant of divorce as its detractors accused it - or at least that the Hetman enjoyed some influence at court - the divorced wife was sent to the convent of Văratic. The decree stated that the sentence was not meant 'as a punishment, but to instil fear in her'. In actual fact, it was a penalty imposed solely on the woman for the collapse of marital love and for a separation that both spouses had sought.[40] It is not known how long Ecaterina/Ruxandra Başotă spent in the convent, but subsequent family documents show that in 1849 the Hetman was keeping a precise register of the expenses of the 'household of Her Ladyship Ruxandra Balş', a register

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[39] Ibid, p.30: Cinci ani sânt trecuţi de când cel mai înainte bărbat al mieu nu-mi cunoaşte patul. O dişănţată îndărăptnicie a sa l-au rătăcit întru pidosnică hotărâre. De cinci ani trecuţi, sângur de la sâni s-au osăbit de culcuşul mieu. Nu socotesc a de trebuinţă a vă încreţălui auzul cu povestirea pricinii ce l-au îndemnat la o asămine şi neleguită, şi puţân cunoscută pravililor bunii cuviinţi faptă. Îndestul că şi aceasta esti un netăgăduit adevăr. De cinci ani, zăc, de când nici sălăşluirea, nici mâncarea, nici împreună pitrecire cu bărbatul mieu nu o cunosc, ce, stârcind singură ca o stafie, bocesc răsâpirile părinţăştii lăcuinţi, încungiurată de tot feliul di neîndemânări.
Aşadar, Preaosfinţăte Stăpâne, lipsită şi de plăcerile însoţărei, şi de folosul averii mele, eu astăzi nu mă cunosc decât o sutchipuire, un lucru de negoţi, adică că dum(nea)l(ui) hatmanul Anastasachi Başotă pâzăşte numile de soţu al mieu pentru ca să tragă numai folosurile averii mele.

[40] See comments on the text of the divorce decree of 17 March 1837, in Ungureanu., 'Însemnări de taină', pp. 31-2.

that continued uninterrupted until 1857, upon the lady's death. It is possible that the two spouses continued to live under the same roof for the sake of a more efficient administration of their descendants' assets.[41]

The good health of the spouses was considered of prime importance: procreation required sexual health and, in the case of the lower classes, house and field work demanded a good physical condition, especially in women. If one of the spouses, and especially the woman, became ill, the church promptly decided to separate the couple allowing the other to re-marry and look after household and children. Sometimes, ailing spouses themselves recognised that they needed to free their able-bodied partners to get on with their lives. Maria, a Moldavian, possibly already in a convent, wrote to her husband, allowing him to re-marry: 'I am hereby letting you know that I am ailing and unfit to run a household; and therefore, should you need a woman, take another as a wife'.[42]

The non-consummation of a marriage, impotence (also sterility?), and, as we have seen, the withholding of sexual relations by one of the spouses, were traditionally valid grounds for divorce. From the 1830s onwards, owing possibly to a real relaxation of moral constraints and also as a result of prolonged wars and military occupation in previous decades, venereal diseases proliferated in the Principalities and doctors and nurses were increasingly summoned to court to testify in divorce cases, contributing to what Philippe Ariès has termed the 'médicalisation de la famille'.[43] In the area of sexuality, as Violeta Barbu has observed, new variations emerged in the reasons women invoked for divorce, ranging from the dramatic to the grotesque. Barbu cites the case of a very young girl (unspecified year), married to a tailor, who was so terrified by the prospect of intimate relations, that she had to be sent finally into a convent and the marriage was dissolved. The 1849 case of the young Eliza Kociturov, freshly out of a 'pension', shows, according to Barbu, how far society had come in accommodating the new expectations of well-educated élite girls. The new developments had much to do

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[41] Ungureanu, 'Însemnări de taină', p. 32.

[42] Vintilă-Ghiţulescu, 'Viaţa în doi', p.54.

[43] Barbu, '"Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit', p.1151.

with changes of mentality over time, but also with class. While deserted wives of more modest conditions had to wait patiently for six years before they could divorce, the young Eliza Kociturov expected in 1849 to be divorced quickly and without much questioning simply because her husband suffered from halitosis, for which the doctors consulted had found no cure.[44] The young Eufrosina Mano (b.1787), married by her parents against her will to the 'căminar' Iordache Golescu, an honourable, learned high-rank boyar, found her husband rather unattractive: 'il en était trop laid', she complained in 1804 as the couple sought a divorce. The divorce decree ('carte de despărțenie') issued reluctantly by the Metropolitan Dositei of Ungro-Vlachia was as much a sermon against the evil of discord and scandal that 'breaks homes and ruins entire parishes' as an indictment of the wife, who dared challenge the accepted view that girls had no freedom of choice in marriage. The only valid reason the Metropolitan could find to pronounce the divorce was the fact that Eufrosina had left her matrimonial home and returned to her parents. No exile to convent in this case, in spite of the high moral tone: Eufrosina was the daughter of one of the highest-ranking boyars in the Country and the grand-daughter of a Phanariot Prince on her mother's side. Freedom of choice was in fact starting to break up the conventions, at least in the rarefied circles of the élite.[45]

While, as we have seen, impotence and venereal diseases were promptly penalised, mental disorders remained a grey area that divorce petitioners often sought to exploit and where the church and the judiciary often stumbled for the right decision. The Codes of law stipulated generally that spouses could only be separated if one of them was already insane or mentally disturbed and failed to declare this before the marriage (cf. in Wallachia *Îndreptarea Legii*, Art.178; in Moldavia *Codul Callimachi*, Chapter 2, Art. 72). As Joița Prâșcoveanu found out in 1794, she could not be separated from her husband the 'medelnicer' Gheorghe Jianu, who was allegedly insane and had threatened to kill her, because his mental condition was said by the church to be no more than 'a

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[44] Barbu, "'Ceea ce Dumnezeu a unit', pp. 1152-153.

[45] General R. Rosetti, *Familia Rosetti*, I, p.146, note 9. For the text of the divorce decree, see C.G. Mano, *Documente din secolele al XVI-lea- XIX-lea privitoare la familia Manu* (Documents from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries relating to the Manu family) (Bucharest, 1907), pp. 316-7. Eufrosina Manu subsequently married the widowed and very powerful 'Hatman' Răducanu Roset by whom she had seven daughters.

bewildered and harmless loquacity' brought about seven years into the marriage by the premature death of children and by other misfortunes. After hearing the witnesses ('worthy persons of rank' and the 'landlord'), the Metropolitan and the Prince of Wallachia Alexandru Moruzi decided instead to persuade the husband's wealthy father to provide funding for a separate household for the young couple, who had been living with Gheorghe's parents. As Constanța Ghițulescu has shown, cases of marital trouble caused or encouraged by live-in parents were frequent, and the judges often had to insist on the young couple's setting up house together on their own rather than pronounce in favour of separation or divorce.[46] In the case of 'medelnicer' Jianu, the husband's unhappy state of mind appears to have been intricately linked to cohabitation within the extended family, a link that was probably established on the basis of the witnesses' depositions.[47]

The much later (1843) case of Catinca Suțu (née Mavrogheni) disturbingly exposes both the increasingly obvious limitations of the law codes, as well as the limits of medical expertise in areas pertaining to emotional life and mental health. The social pressures linked to high rank and wealth also point to the convenient ways in which interested parties (spouses, in-laws, judges, etc) could attempt to twist the law. In September 1843, Grigore, fourth son ('beyzadé') of the former Prince of Wallachia Alexandru Suțu (d. 1821), sent an application for divorce to the Metropolitan Dikasterion (tribunal) of Moldavia, against his wife Catinca, from the Phanariot family Mavrogheni. Following on the husband's accusations, the Metropolitan asked for a panel of three clerics to investigate what Grigore Suțu had termed the 'disagreeable and insufferable behaviour' of his wife Catinca who, he had alleged, destroyed 'the honour of my house and of my noble ancestry' (Gk: eikogenia). The report to the Prince drawn up by the Dikasterion on the basis of the ensuing investigation by the clerics and two local witnesses, reads like an episode from a picaresque novel. It was found out that Catinca, in love with the young lesser boyar Toader Chiuciuc, forced a monk to bless her engagement. Then, late at night, as no priest was available to officiate the wedding, the two lovers dressed up one of the groom's servants as a priest, thus improvising a fake wedding ceremony. The

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[46] Vintilă-Ghițulescu, 'Viața în doi', especially pp. 66-7.

[47] Case documents in V.A. Urechia, 'Domnia lui Moruzi 1793-6' (The reign of Moruzi 1793-6), *AAR*, Tom XV, Memoriile secțiunii istorice, pp. 804-5.

next day, Catinca sought a genuine priest, but first visited the grave of her groom's father, seeking his 'blessing'. In the meantime, as the groom, who appears to have been a reluctant party throughout the proceedings, disappeared, she sought refuge in neighbouring boyar houses. Nobody, however, received her, as the rumours of her scandalous behaviour had spread.

The report to the Dikasterion details a second attempt to wed Toader Chiuciuc, as Catinca took 3,000 lei from her marital home and attempted to flee, but her servants hid the coach and horses away; she managed to run away, again late at night, but yet another attempt at marrying Toader according to the proper procedures failed. The authors of the report preferred to remain silent on 'the more indecent acts of Her Ladyship' and concluded with a list of her debts to the probably less wealthy Toader Chiuciuc to cover the wedding expenses. Not one of the witnesses questioned by the panel seems to have had any sympathy for the passion that Catinca had developed for her dream bridegroom. They all emphasised the 'troubled' state of her mind during all this turbulent time, as well as her frequent fits of anger and 'madness', for which, it was said, her husband had patiently attempted to provide all the medical and emotional support throughout the marriage. The report cited Articles 187 and 215 from the by now outdated *Îndreptarea legii* (1652), to suggest that Catinca had a blemished reputation and was guilty of far more than squandering the family wealth. She was, according to the text of the report, 'the maddest of mad women and the whore of whores'. The use of the ancient code of law was an argument later used by Catinca's mother in her attempt to contest the divorce proceedings and to restore her daughter's reputation. (see below)

Catinca's proved 'madness' or 'mental illness' would have justified not only the divorce, but also the requisitioning of all her dowry/wealth on the grounds of her immoral and irresponsible behaviour which was undermining not only the welfare of the household but also the honour of her husband's family. No doctor was called in to testify to the nature of Catinca's alleged illness, and one can speculate endlessly about the power relations and the interests binding the Prince's son, the boyar witnesses and the ecclesiastical investigators, who marvelled at the young husband's 'noble magnanimity' in trying to cope with his disturbed wife. Catinca was sent to the convent of Agapia to be 'brought to her senses' with the help and prayers of confessors and wise old nuns. Her

husband became the trustee of her wealth, which he had to administer for her and their five children, in a decision ratified by the Moldavian Prince Mihai Sturdza. Later in the same year, 1843, Catinca's mother, the 'postelniceasa' Elena Mavrogheni, was allowed to take her repudiated daughter to the parental home in order, it was said in the decision, to 'guide her towards wisdom, self-restraint and obedience'.

On 4 February 1844, however, Elena sent a plea to the Prince in which she detailed accusations of cruel behaviour on the part of her son-in-law Grigore Suțu as well as denouncing the 'scandalous' way in which the divorce had been obtained. Elena Mavrogheni invoked errors in the divorce proceedings and accused Grigore Suțu, who, she said, had been aware of the highly emotional psyche of his wife, of using 'outdated' codes of law (the *Îndreptarea legii*, 1652) to obtain the separation. She accused 'beyzade' Suțu of invoking his wife's alleged madness in order to obtain control of the Mavrogheni wealth which of right should have been returned to Catinca. A new investigation was ordered by the Prince, but neither side attended the new hearings, and the divorce decree was granted by the Metropolitan on 3 August 1844. The ensuing report admitted the procedural errors, and especially the fact that the initial separation had been decided unilaterally, as Catinca had not been summoned into court and her testimony had not been heard. In addition, the new report admitted that there was insufficient evidence in support of the initial statement that Catinca's 'madness' had resulted from her depravation. Suțu was advised to take his wife back for the sake of the children, but he declined. The dowry was duly returned to Catinca, who became again an eligible heiress. She and her mother were, however, prepared, according to the documents cited by Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, to sue the members of the former Dikasterion for defamation (e.g. 'the maddest of mad women...'), but whether they did so or not remains unknown.

Catinca was re-married in what was probably an attempt at social rehabilitation by her mother sometime between 1844 and 1847 to the lesser nobleman Ioan Vlahuță, recently arrived from Constantinople. The second husband in his turn, however, requested a divorce on 1 September 1847, on the grounds that his mother-in-law had conspired to marry him off to Catinca, and he invoked the recurrent nature of her mental illness which, he claimed, he discovered on the second day of his marriage and which rendered

his life unbearable. The marriage, whereby she had gained a second husband and a restored reputation and he, as a foreigner from Constantinople, gained rights as a native resident, was dissolved later. Catinca never remarried.[48]

A Woman's Place

For the period 1750 to around 1850, the codes of law are the only documents known to contain prescriptive norms relating to the roles of women and, more specifically, to the actual 'public' physical/geographical spaces within which women were able to move freely, as opposed to the strictly 'private' space of the household. Thus, the Wallachian *Îndreptarea legii* of 1652 established a few clear situations of transgressions of the acceptable norms by women, such as, for instance, when a married woman went - according to the text of the law - 'to the baths or to banquets with other men without the husband's consent; if she has dinner outside the home in a house where none of her relatives is present; if she attends 'games' (theatrical performances?) and horse races without her husband's consent.' (Art.214) The Moldavian *Callimachi Code* (1817) saw such transgressions as grounds for divorce: a woman is to be penalised, the text said, 'if she eats, drinks or goes to the baths with strangers without her husband's consent, if she spends the night in an unknown house, if she goes to the 'sights' (theatre, entertainment,?) without her husband's consent'. (Chapter 2, Par. 121, Arts. 4, 5, 6) The codes did not use a specific vocabulary defining the public vs. the public sphere and, as can be expected from texts of this nature, they did not provide a rationale for keeping a woman within the boundaries of her home or for allowing her to venture beyond them. Such stipulations had more to do with establishing the husband's authority on the basis of an implicit code of marital honour than with clearly defining the legitimate areas for female activity.

As already discussed, the codes of law, including the increasingly obsolete 1652 *Îndreptarea legii,* were in force well into the nineteenth century, and even their most bizarre or backward stipulations could be invoked as late as the mid-nineteenth century

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[48] Files in Arhivele Statului Iaşi, fond Mitropolia Moldovei şi Sucevei, B. 196/1843, f.1. in M. R. Ungureanu, 'Însemnări de taină', pp. 21-46, as well as Ungureanu, 'Graniţele morale', pp. 106-8.

by religious and secular judges lacking a more modern legislation. Thus, for instance, the necessity of the husband's consent for a wife wishing to go out, visit, or travel on her own was the focal point for a marital incident in Moldavia in1832. Maria Balş (b. late eighteenth century. - died 1867 or 1873), the rich daughter of an old Moldavian family (her father was the 'Vornic' Dumitru Bogdan), married to the equally wealthy Toader Balş in 1809, was by no means a recluse. As a young wife, in the 1820s, when most Moldavian boyar families lived in exile in Chişinău (Kishinev, today in the Republic of Moldova) after the anti-Ottoman revolts of 1821, Maria attracted the attentions of the poet Pushkin and was at the centre of a swashbuckling episode and a scuffle, complete with misfired gunshots, between the Russian poet and her jealous husband. Apart from high living and flirtatious tendencies, however, Maria also had a passion for travel, which, later in life, she tried to satisfy in ways that her husband found threatening both to his purse and to his reputation. In 1819 she travelled to Lemberg (today Lvov, in the Ukraine), presumably to accompany her daughter Anica, on her way to a 'pension' school there. But in 1832, in her middle years, she made extravagant purchases, sold silverware from her marital home and incurred debts in order to finance a trip to Italy, ostensibly 'to the baths'. She left the Moldavian capital Iaşi while her husband was away from home and, almost halfway to her goal, she was intercepted by threatening letters from home, sent by none other than the Metropolitan of Moldavia, Veniamin Costache, writing on behalf of her concerned husband. The correspondence between the high-ranking Teodor Balş (he became Hetman and later Great Logofăt), the Metropolitan and Maria's mother relating to this incident has been preserved. Responding to the great boyar, who had requested his intervention, the Metropolitan reassured him that both the church canons and the civil legislation ('ocrotirea pravilelor bisericeşti şi a celor politiceşti') were on his side, as his wife had violated the interdiction for women not to 'leave the house without her spouse's permission' ('...un pas care pravilele îl osândesc de a eşi din casă o femee şi a se depărta fără voinţa bărbatului'). Her mother, Smaranda Bogdan, was entreated to intercede and force her daughter to return home in order to avoid the intervention of the church, which probably would have resulted in a very 'public' scandal.

It is not known whether Maria ever reached Italy, but she did return home and the marriage continued in all probability in happiness and mutual trust, judging from the

responsibilities with which boyar Balş later entrusted his wife. The account books of the Balş household for 1834 list 730 lei given to Maria herself to manage the kitchen and the necessary supplies - a huge responsibility in a household with dozens of Gypsy slaves (no less than 78 in 1835) and a host of paid servants (12 in 1834). However, Maria occasionally slipped: in 1834, for instance, she lost 315 lei at the gambling table, a sum, if one compares it with the other sums cited in the books (e.g. 168 lei for 7 casks of Christmas champagne). Nevertheless, she must have been a devoted mother and trustworthy wife, for in 1858 she was 'rewarded' by her husband with the much dreamed-of trip to Italy, via Constantinople, where first she had to accomplish an important political mission: as the Principalities were gripped by unionist fervour, Teodor Balş, an anti-unionist who hoped to gain the throne of Moldavia, sent Maria to the Ottoman capital to deliver secret political messages in high places. The mission failed, Balş never became Prince, and the Principalities achieved their internationally-recognised union in 1859.[49]

Conclusions

Beyond its highly colourful details, the 1843 case of Catinca Suţu (see above, pp. 92-95) highlights a number of issues that only patient archival searches and analysis will clarify. There are issues about the nature of mental illness and about the medical expertise called upon in such cases. In many cultures, being 'in love' was traditionally seen as a form of temporary madness, but did their more impressionable nature place women more than men in weak legal positions in eighteenth-century Romania ? Was there a marked bias against women in court and how could the blurred borderline between high emotionalism and insanity be exploited? What were the loopholes in the legal system that could be used by unscrupulous petitioners, and were these more likely to be men, women or parents and relatives of young couples? What exactly, in terms of social standing, patrimonial and family interests, was at stake and who had more to lose?

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[49] The full story of Maria and Toader Balş, based on private papers scattered in private and public collections, in Vasile Panopol, *Moldovence eroine puşkiniene* (Moldavian women Pushkin met) (1952), a study still in manuscript, now at the Library of the Romanian Academy, Manuscripts Section, Shelfmark: Ac. 64 - Panopol), pp. 14-49.

That procedural errors could be invoked to contest a decision is suggested by another Moldavian case of 1844, in which Zamfira Baiardi, who had been divorced *in absentia* from her husband, accused the tribunal of having granted the divorce in secret, as her husband, a 'stolnic', and a foreign citizen, claimed he was away from home on business. Like Catinca Suțu, the young Zamfira, whose marriage had lasted only four years, had not been summoned to court and never heard the accusations brought against her. That she wrote an accusing and articulate letter to the Metropolitan Veniamin Costache suggests that perhaps she was one of an increasing number of women who were prepared to challenge their husbands and the authorities.[50] The nature of power and client relations among the boyar petitioners/defendants, the ecclesiastical judges, the members of the Divan and the Prince himself would have to be examined for a significant number of individual cases and families before one can make valid judgements about patterns, trends, and the likelihood of bias and miscarriages of justice.

Finally and crucially, another question remains unanswered: what precisely did women stand to gain or lose in divorces, and in what ways did the status of 'divorcée' and 'widow' differ in terms of power, authority and emancipation from the tutelage of the women's male kin? On a more theoretical level, a study of the Orthodox church's attitude to marriage and divorce in a Romanian context is needed before one can assess its impact on the society's morality and on the development of family relations. Did the mere availability of divorce have a dramatic impact on the ways East-European Orthodox men and women behaved compared to Western society? Did it have an influence on women's emancipation and on Romania's engagement with modernity, as Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu has suggested?[51] Can it be claimed, as Dora D'Istria alleged, that the availability of divorce in Orthodox areas was a sign of an enlightened, liberating approach to matrimonial relations? If this was the case, one may ask why feminism did not develop earlier in these areas and why patriarchal attitudes seem to have endured for much longer than they did in Western Europe.

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[50] M. R. Ungureanu, 'Granițele morale', pp. 113-15.

[51] M. R. Ungureanu claims that 1750-1850 was a period where women started to emerge as individuals per se, rather than as the subservient element in the conjugal equation, and connects this to the emergence of Romanian modernity, in 'Granițele morale', p. 96.

The case studies surveyed above are the mere tip of the iceberg from a vast body of such documents awaiting closer scrutiny and quantitative analysis. They do suggest, however, a few tentative conclusions. It would appear that women's legal competence and willingness to take their case to court grew over the period considered, in spite of the risks of social exposure. In the course of the same time span the inadequacy of the older (Roman-Byzantine) law codes became increasingly visible, allowing defendants to appeal against unfavourable decisions, although a revision of legal procedures and jurisprudence was not to come before the second half of the nineteenth century. The courts themselves, in which the church maintained a substantial presence throughout the period, seem to have paid considerable attention to the economic security of divorced women and especially of children from broken marriages, although there was a permanent tension between emerging compassionate attitudes and the state's limited capacity to protect the weak and the poor. As Ligia Livadă-Cadeschi has shown in a recent study, starting with the late eighteenth century the involvement of the Prince (i.e. the state) in matters of social welfare was increasingly motivated by the need to maintain social order and control as well as by the more traditional Christian and Enlightenment principles underpinning charitable activities.[52]

A study of divorce provision embedded in the wider context of economic history, of the sometimes dramatic fluctuations in the wealth of Romanian élite families, and of the growing involvement of the state in matters of social protection and control might in the future clarify many of the still doubtful trends as well as the questions suggested by my survey in this chapter.

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[52] Ligia Livadă-Cadeschi, *De la milă la filantropie. Instituţii de asistare a săracilor din Ţara Românească şi Moldova în secolul al XVIII-lea* (From compassion to philanthropy. Poor relief in eighteenth-century Wallachia and Moldavia) (Nemira, Bucharest, 2001).

Chapter Five

Women, Dowries and Family Property

The Romanian society of the ancien régime may not have been more conflict-prone or more litigious than others, but it has been noted how often individuals and families went into court to defend their interests. Marital and patrimonial relations - love and land, inextricably bound - were more often than not at the centre of court cases in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The written records of such cases, but also many dowry papers and testaments show the legal and emotional difficulties created by this affective/patrimonial nexus within couples and families. In a society where church and state admitted divorce and up to three re-marriages, it is not surprising that, starting with the eighteenth century, emphasis in the written law codes came to be placed less on the penalties for breach of morality - abduction, rape, marital misconduct, bigamy, etc - than on the need for accurate record-keeping and on standardising the rules affecting dowry provision and inheritance. It was often the case, for instance, that the families resulting from second or third marriages contested, in complex protracted lawsuits that cost money and sometimes lives, the rights of children from previous ones. The need for pricing dowry items and keeping neat estate records became therefore obvious.

In a previous chapter, we have seen the almost obsessive care with which parents sought partners for their children and the negotiations that took place in pre-marital dowry arrangements. A good dowry was not only an emblem of social prestige for a father, but also served as a social regulator in that it helped, as the law required, to marry a daughter to a partner of similar rank and wealth. In this chapter, dowries will be considered from the viewpoint of their economic functions within the family as well as from that of the patrimonial rights women had both during and after the marriage. The discussion will also refer to women's (and children's) rights of inheritance (mainly with respect to their access to the dowry) and to the ways in which property claims and counter-claims could be perceived to affect family relations. Seventy-two dowry papers from 1740 to 1830 and twenty-seven testaments, inventories and property litigation documents from 1726 to 1836, from both Wallachia and Moldavia, have formed the documentary basis for this discussion.

Reading through the Romanian law codes - from the 1640s (the Moldavian *Carte românească de învățătură*, the Wallachian *Îndreptarea legii*) to 1818 (the Moldavian *Callimachi Code* and the Wallachian *Caragea Code*) - one notices a steady refinement of dowry and inheritance legislation, undoubtedly under the impact of an increasing number of litigations in this area. As property, especially landed property, became increasingly important and as nuclear families came to have a clearer sense of their cohesion and solidarities, legislators had to devise neater categories to define both collective and individual patrimonial rights. What follows is a brief outline of this legislation.

As early as 1652, for instance, the *Îndreptarea legii* prescribed that the husband's role was only to administer the dowry assets, while the wife remained the sole owner and had pre-emptive rights over her dowry's worth from her late husband's remaining wealth before other claimants or creditors (Articles 265-6). However, the main beneficiaries of the dowry were the children, and in my view, this is the cornerstone of dowry legislation throughout the period. A woman's proved adultery, for instance, resulted in the loss of her dowry in favour of children, husband or the woman's father, in this order. In the event of a woman's death, likewise, the dowry was allocated in the same order. If either or both spouses died childless, the woman's wealth was divided into three parts: one went to the surviving spouse, if any, the second to any surviving parents and the third was used for commemorative services ('for the soul' of the dead) or went to charity ('cutia milelor') (Art.272). Subsequent legislation only refined this basic outline, placing an increasing emphasis on the need to value dowry assets and to keep accurate copies of these as well as of husbands' wealth inventories (*Ipsilanti Code*, Wallachia, 1780, Section 'Pentru zestre', Art.1)

Thus, for instance, according to the same *Ipsilanti Code*, a widow had to draw up an inventory of her late husband's wealth and of any items missing from her dowry within six months of her husband's death (Section 'Pentru moștenire', Art.8) and, if childless, she could claim the third part of her husband's movable assets if she did not re-marry within a year of his death (Section 'Pentru trimirie', Art.2). This latter prescription was not just an arbitrary rule meant to control and reward a surviving wife's faithfulness from beyond the grave, but a practical way of ensuring that any children born

posthumously within that period were likely to be the late husband's and inherit accordingly. A childless or infertile widow took back her dowry and the pre-nuptial gifts ('darul dinaintea nunţii'.) In addition to these, the *Ipsilanti Code* also ruled that daughters, once dowered, could no longer inherit, and in any case were not allowed to inherit the so-called 'cămin' (the estate that gave a family its name). This was always allocated to the youngest son, in contradistinction to the rule of male primogeniture practised in Western Europe. (*Ipsilanti Code*, Section 'Pentru moştenire', Arts.1, 3). It was he who, bringing his wife into his blood family home, had the duty to look after the ageing, ailing parents, and to keep the land within the family line.

The *Callimachi Code* (Moldavia, 1817) and the *Caragea Code* (Wallachia, 1818) further refined the dowry and inheritance rights of the spouses and children, presumably to bring it in line with new legal practices and with the new political climate.[1] Both codes continued to reinforce the already prominent rights of the children to their mother's dowry, but also seemed to point in the direction of greater rights for the husbands. Both stipulated, for instance, that the bride's parents and the groom with his family could negotiate so-called 'tocmele căsătoreşti' or 'aşezăminte căsătoreşti', nuptial contracts whereby the sides could opt to change the standard rules of dowry provision and inheritance. They could agree, for instance that, in the event of the wife dying without children, her husband rather than her parents could get her dowry (*Callimachi Code*, Section 31; *Caragea Code*, Par.23, 24).

Apart from introducing a certain flexibility in the couple's patrimonial rights, the codes also became much more detailed with respect to the uses to which a woman could put her dowry and other possessions she might have had. While the husband remained the administrator of the dowry assets, the woman could use them to pay her own debts, buy land that brought increased revenue to the family, support children from previous marriages, parents and siblings, buy relatives back from slavery or bail them out of jail.

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[1] It is interesting to note, incidentally, that the *Caragea Code*, while maintaining a woman's subordination to her male kin, for the first time expressly stated that a woman may not seek political functions (Chapter 1, Art.3), an interdiction that may hint at women's increasing social visibility and to new potentially subversive undercurrents in society, but this remains speculative in the absence of a detailed study of Wallachian society under Caragea.

(Callimachi Code, Section 32, Art. 1641 a, b, c) To these, the more politically-conscious *Caragea Code* added that she could use her own wealth to help her husband obtain a political function or title ('cin politicesc') (Section 16, Art.34), a stipulation that seems to give official and legal endorsement to the 'gift-centred' culture of the Phanariot régimes and to the existing practice of the venality of offices. Another hint at the possibility that women may have, at that time, started to meddle in areas traditionally forbidden to them, was the stipulation that if a woman conspired against her husband, she was to lose half of her dowry *(Caragea Code,* Section 16, Art. 42)

The two codes also refined the rules that governed the rights of inheritance over a woman's dowry and other wealth categories which had previously been left out of the legislator's remit. Thus, the 'paraphernalia' (or 'exoprica') - gifts made to the wife during the marriage, the source of which she had to declare - was, like her dowry, her own property and its usufruct belonged only to herself and her inheritors, even though the husband may have administered it *(Callimachi Code,* Section 33). The counter-dowry, a gift made at the wedding by the groom's parents, was claimed by her children or her inheritors at her death, but its usufruct remained the husband's. If, on the contrary, it was the husband who died, the wife claimed the counter-dowry (Idem, Section 34, Par.1676, 1678). In cases where no counter-dowry had been given, the surviving wife claimed not only her dowry, but also a third part of her late husband's total wealth, the so-called 'ipovolon', or 'widow(er)'s rights' (Idem, Section 34). The 'theoritra', a virginity gift offered by the husband on the day after the wedding, went to the woman in case of divorce, or to her children or inheritors in the event of her death (Idem, Section 35).

It seems obvious that, throughout the eighteenth century, the codes - probably the main contribution of the Phanariot Princes to a Romanian Enlightenment ethos - made increasingly bold attempts at providing judges with neat and clear-cut definitions and categories. These gradually took matrimonial jurisprudence well beyond the catechismal moralising of the earlier seventeenth-century compilations of Roman-Byzantine law into a secular-oriented system of law fit for a more reasonable and humane age. Out went the limb-chopping and the church's intrusions into the intimate lives of couples in which, for instance the 1652 *Îndreptarea legii* over-indulged, and in

came the complex rules and clauses pertaining to dowries, usufruct and widow(er)'s rights.

In practice, however, things were much complicated by the persistence of common law and of legal oral traditions, which, added to the lacunary nature of the archives, make the historian's task highly difficult. In spite of work done by legal historians mainly in the 1930s and 1940s, controversies still linger in a number of areas. These will not be solved here, but at least one is worth mentioning, if only to throw light on the conundrums that litter the legal historian's path. It concerns a still disputed gender-specific difference between Wallachia and Moldavia in the area of common-law rights to inheritance: it is alleged that in Moldavia inheritors of both sexes had equal rights to property, including rights to the family land, whereas in Wallachia law operated on the so-called principle of 'male privilege' ('privilegiul masculinității'), which excluded dowered daughters from further inheritance at the death of the parents. George Fotino, a legal historian with an uncommonly positive view of the legal status of Romanian women in the eighteenth century, was among those who challenged this theory, for instance, in his study *Vechiul drept succesoral românesc* (The ancient Romanian law of inheritance), written in 1965-6. He believed that male privilege was a contamination imported into old Romanian common law from Roman law, and that in any case, it only concerned *secundo gradu* heirs, the children of sons, said to be favoured above those of daughters.[2] He also claimed that Wallachia in fact gradually gave up the principle of male privilege throughout the sixteenth century and re-established inheritance law on a more egalitarian basis. The debate is still open.[3]

As suggested by the above outline, the rules of inheritance became increasingly complex during the period considered, and this is reflected in the very intricate lawsuits

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[2] George Fotino, *Pagini din istoria dreptului românesc* (Fragments from the history of Romanian law) Bucharest, 1972, especially pp. 97 to 113. His earlier study 'Studiu asupra situației femeii în vechiul drept românesc' is included in the same volume. It had been published earlier in French as 'Étude sur la situation de la femme dans l'ancien droit roumain' in *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, vol. X, no.1 (1931).

[3] For recent discussions on the theory of 'male privilege', see Violeta Barbu, 'Cronică de familie. Eseu asupra familiei patrimoniale în Țara Românească în secolul al XVII-lea' (Family chronicle. An essay on the patrimonial family in seventeenth-century Wallachia), *RIS* I, (Bucharest, 1996), 29-49, and Matei Cazacu, 'La famille et la statut de la femme en Moldavie (XIVe-XIXe siècles), *RIS*, II-III (Bucharest, 1997-8), 1-16.

that opposed spouses, in-laws, and children against stepfamilies and other inheritors or creditors. That such conflicts could be very traumatic can be seen from some of the cases that follow. Because they are taken in isolation and concern families about which little information is otherwise available or known, the dowry litigation papers, testaments and inventories discussed here may not reveal as much as we would like about the precise nature of the power structures constituted within families. Likewise, because the documents are few in number and not evenly distributed regionally or chronologically, it is impossible at this stage to point to regional patterns or to trends in time. They may, however, show how law operated in practice and what were the kind of arguments invoked by litigants and lawyers. Most of the cases mentioned refer to the rights women and their offspring had over the dowries rather than on the couple's joint or acquired wealth, which would have to form the object of a separate study.

Dowries, Wives and Children

That a wife's dowry was forbidden territory for husbands is in evidence as early as the seventeenth century (date to be clarified) in a letter of endorsement of the Moldavian Prince Constantin Duca confirming a boyar's ownership over parts of land belonging to his brother-in-law who had sold parts of his wife's dowry.[4] In 1779 in Wallachia, a court of high-ranking boyars ruled that the daughter of a late merchant could not pay her father's outstanding debts out of her late mother's dowry, but only from any inheritance that her father may have left.[5] Husbands of whatever status who had sold assets from their wives' dowries could find themselves in prison as happened, in the same year 1779 to Nicolae, the son of a 'şetrar' who, from prison, suggested a donation of a vineyard and one male Gypsy slave to compensate his wife, Ecaterina, for her loss. Being summoned to court, the defendant and his wife both agreed to the exchange provided the local authorities checked and found the vineyard in good working condition. The wife was represented in court by her own brother, who acted as her 'vechil' (pron. 'vekil') as was the case for all women, children and other legally 'incompetent' persons, but also for

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[4] In Gh. Ghibănescu (ed.), *Surete şi izvoade* (Documents and records), (Iaşi, 1914), Vol. 8, Doc. LIX, pp. 68-9.

[5] In Gh. Cronţ and others. (eds.), *Acte judiciare din Ţara Românească, 1775-1781* (Bucharest, 1975), Doc. 693, p. 749.

collective juridical persons, such as, for instance, monasteries.[6] (However, not all of the documents mention explicitly the presence of the 'vechil', and in some cases the women seem to be able to speak for themselves in court. Why this should happen remains as yet unclear).

Two cases from 1777, both in Wallachia, demonstrate the centrality of children to all dowry matters and show that, in the event of the mother's death, surviving children could claim her dowry even as grown-ups. The first, set in the world of small artisans in Bucharest, concerns Zamfira, a young married woman, who brought her maternal aunt Ilinca to court, claiming that the latter had abusively taken away her sister's (Zamfira's mother's) dowry upon the death of both Zamfira's parents. The case is interesting not only because, many years after the events, the court ruled in favour of the daughter, but also because it is a showcase for the legal procedure followed in such litigations. In the first instance, Zamfira sent her complaint to the Prince, who instructed one of the members ('the vătaf de copii' - a court clerk in charge of all legal matters related to children) of the Divan (the assembly of notables) to bring the sides in front of an ecclesiastical court headed by the Metropolitan of Wallachia. After a convoluted series of accusations and counter-accusations, and in the absence of evidence or witnesses, the court decided to resort to its ultimate strategy, the oath, which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, was used when all other legal means failed. Ilinca was asked to swear in church that missing dowry items cited by her niece were not in fact in her possession. In his report ('anafora') to the Prince on March 11, 1777, the Metropolitan presented his decision, which the Prince approved on May 6 of the same year. The court decided to resort to the oath, which it always did in a sort of judicial desperation, on the assumption that Ilinca, a God-fearing middle-class woman, would not endanger her soul with a false oath.[7] The outcome in this case is not documented, but we may assume that Ilinca in effect did not dare compromise with a serious spiritual matter such as a church oath.

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[6] Cronţ and others (eds.), *Acte judiciare* , Doc. 744, p. 799.

[7] *Ibid.,* Doc. 302, pp. 330-1.

In the same year, another grown-up daughter, Ancuţa Buzescu, from a boyar milieu, lodged a complaint with the country's Divan against her re-married father and his second wife, whom she accused of keeping in their possession a Gypsy slave and a few items from her late mother's dowry. This time the boyar court could pass its decision on the basis of written evidence presented by the plaintiff, namely a copy of the deceased mother's dowry list. The daughter took back her Gypsy slave, while the county authorities ('ispravnicii de judeţ') were to investigate her other claims, on the order of Prince Alexandru Ipsilanti, appended to the Divan's report ('anafora').[8]

A Wallachian court hearing of 1780 opposed Lucsandra, a young orphaned boyar's daughter, to her aunt and guardian, the 'stolniceasa' (wife of 'stolnic') Zoiţa. The girl, now married, wished to retrieve some of her late mother's dowry assets, and the court of boyars headed by the Metropolitan ruled in her favour, on condition that she repay her aunt for the expenses incurred with her upbringing and her wedding.[9]

How central children, even if they did not survive early childhood or even birth, were to dowry and inheritance claims is demonstrated by a Moldavian case of 1806, which opposed the 'spătar' Manolache Donici and the Monastery Doljeşti for ownership of the estate Dumenii. After her first husband's death, being childless, Ecaterina, Manolache's stepmother, had donated the estate to the monastery. Later, however, she had married Donici's father and had eleven children by him. She subsequently gave the same estate as a dowry to one daughter who died childless and later to a second daughter who also died without posterity, the estate being thus finally left to the widowed father. The court decided that the monastery had no claim to this estate because, according to law, Ecaterina's first letter of donation, made while she was a childless widow, was rendered null and void by her subsequent marriage and the birth of her eleven children. Prince Alexandru Moruzi decided, on the basis of the evidence presented, that Manolache Donici was entitled to his late stepmother's land, as all her eleven blood children and her second husband were now dead. As a gesture of goodwill, the boyar was advised to

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[8] Cronţ and others (eds.), *Acte judiciare*, Doc. 454, pp. 502-3.

[9] *Ibid.*, Doc. 816, pp. 880-81.

make another donation to the monastery for the 'good of the souls' of his stepmother and her dead inheritors.[10]

When a man died leaving outstanding debts, the master of the merchants' guild ('staroste de negustori') was normally entrusted with the task of drawing up and valuing a precise register of assets and debts, so that the wealth could be auctioned and divided among the rightful inheritors and creditors. When, for instance, the Wallachian Constantin Micşunescu (presumed to be of the boyar class) died in 1777, his remaining assets amounted to 10,784 thaler, out of which his widow's dowry and pre-nuptial gift represented as much as 3,903 thaler, duly returned to her before any debts were paid. The age of the surviving children is not mentioned and, in this case, their interests were only considered after those of their mother and of their father's creditors, presumably because the dowry was supposed to serve for the upkeep of both widow and children.[11]

When a couple had children but none of them survived for long after the mother's death, the dowry was usually divided into three: one part went for the 'good' of the deceased soul (i.e. payment for commemoration rites), the second to the widower, and the third to the closest blood relatives of the dead woman, as evidenced in two Wallachian cases of 1777 and 1783.[12] Expenses for the wife's illness were covered by the husband, as the law required, but the cost of the funeral was met by her parents, as they were the ultimate recipients of her dowry. In the absence of children, in cases of a woman's death or divorce, the dowry went to the woman's parents or next of kin.

As widows, women enjoyed, if not greater property rights than when married, at least a greater autonomy and authority in terms of household management and the education of children. The documentary evidence shows that the implicitly preferred solution was for widows not to remarry and to devote the rest of their lives to the administration of the wealth and to the upbringing and marriage of children, although there were generally no testamentary clauses demanding obligatory renunciation of a second marriage. Many

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[10] From L.T. Boga (ed.), *Documente basarabene* (Chişinău, 1931), Vol. XIV: Hrisoave şi cărţi domneşti 1607-1806, pp. 92-6.

[11] Cronţ and others (eds.), *Acte judiciare,* Doc. 250, pp. 273-4.

[12] *Ibid.,* Doc. 251, p. 275, and I. Filitti (ed.), *Regeste şi documente* (Bucharest, 1938), vol. 2, p. 7.

dying husbands left their wives as executrices of their wills and heads of their households, and many women enjoyed a measure of freedom in the way they used their dowries and other wealth left after the deaths of their husbands. Thus, for instance, in 1797 and 1808 in Wallachia, Neaga, a merchant's widow, gave written pledges to contribute to the upkeep of a hospital and a church and adjacent school she had founded together with her late husband. The money was to come from the revenue of lands she had donated to the hospital as well as from her own money, presumably her dowry. The two written letters, signed and sealed by Neaga with her own seal (which suggests a degree of administrative autonomy at least), were, as in many similar cases, contracts that ensured not only the perpetuation of the couple's remembrance through charitable acts, but also a safe haven for a childless widow's last years and an assurance that commemoration rites would continue to be performed in the church endowed by her.[13] (For the cost and the customs of commemoration services, see Appendix three)

The same concern for the welfare of the testator's soul after death is in evidence in a later Wallachian testament of 1840, of the probably young and ailing boyar lady Catinca Slătineanu, who divided her wealth between her mother and her husband, only five years into marriage. In so doing, she mentioned an interesting prescription for the disposal of dowries in wills, for which I could not identify as yet any clause in the legal codes of the period, namely that the law only allowed her to dispose freely of half of the dowry, the other half having to go to the surviving mother. With no children of her own, the young Catinca left her best clothes and her bridal bedlinen to her two 'beloved' nieces, and entrusted both mother and her 'beloved' husband to bury her in her chosen ground and pay for her commemorations. As a final act of redeeming charity, the husband was also instructed to liberate Marica, the Gypsy slave who had attended Catinca from childhood, and give her money and some of her mistress' clothes.[14]

Coming back to widowhood, this brought indeed some degree of freedom, but with it came also a greater amount of responsibility, which was not always dutifully

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[13] From N. Iorga (ed.), *Studii și documente* (Bucharest, 1909), XVI, pp. 79-82.

[14] Filitti, *Regeste și documente*, II, Familia Slătineanu (1712-1862) (Buch, 1938), p. 21. Cf. also Catinca's dowry of 1835 quoted in the same collection.

discharged. And just as dowry-squandering husbands could be penalised, an inheritance-squandering widow was likewise liable to prosecution, which shows once more that children, the survival of the family and, for boyars, a concern for possible social decline were the main issues in dowry and inheritance arrangements. In a letter of 1781 from the Wallachian Prince to the panel of trustees appointed after the death of a 'pitar', the trustees were advised that the widow, Ilinca Lehliu, made rather liberal use of her dowry and of her husband's inheritance, incurring debts and endangering her three children's future. It was recommended that in the future she was not to be allowed to make any sales or enter any contract without the trustees' permission. Likewise, her eldest son and daughter were to be entrusted to two relatives for upbringing, while her youngest child was to be temporarily left in her care.[15]

Repeated marriages (up to three, as allowed by the Orthodox Church) created complicated relationships between the step-families, and often led to merciless competition over property, especially between widows who tried to secure the welfare of their children and suitable marriages for their daughters. Some of the stories of such conflicts are particularly gruesome, as well as raising interesting legal issues.

In December 1777, the Wallachian 'postelnic' (high-rank boyar in charge of foreign relations and protocol at court) Sandu Vărzaru returned home from a business trip to find his young wife, Bălaşa, unexpectedly dead in childbirth, already buried, and the house emptied of many possessions, including the young woman's dowry assets. Following his complaint addressed to Prince Alexandru Ispilanti, the committee of high-ranking boyars appointed to investigate found out that the young wife's stepmother, Catrina Deleanu, had instructed her Gypsy slaves to commit the theft before the husband returned. Summoned to court by the court clerk ('zapciu de aprozi') and asked to swear an oath, the stepmother admitted the theft and presented a written pledge to return the stolen goods. The court ruled that only the husband could inherit on three legal bases: firstly, the late wife's deathbed wishes, confirmed under oath by witnesses; secondly, the fact that the couple had had a child, albeit it did not live; and thirdly, the fact that Catrina Deleanu was only a stepmother and not a blood relative of the young

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[15] Cronţ and others (eds.), *Acte judiciare,* Doc. 922, pp. 981-82.

woman. The Prince approved the court's decision, granting the loser a right of appeal in front of the Divan.

A follow-up to this story occurred in January 1778, when the indefatigable widowed stepmother, having a young son herself with the late Bălaşa's father, was challenged in court by Bălaşa's married sister, Joiţa, over the late father's inheritance. The report to the Prince is one of the rare examples of legal documents mentioning explicitly the delicate negotiations that judges had to perform sometimes between the written codes and customary law:

> [...] investigating the case, we wish to inform Your Highness with this anaphora that, according to the law, although the girls have a right to make claims over the estate of their father equally with other siblings, the custom of the land, which is observed in this country, renders the written law null and void, so that a married daughter will have to be content only with the dowry that her father has bestowed on her, and has no other claims over the inheritance, with the exception of cases when her father vouchsafes to leave her something in his will.

The court's decision, approved by the Prince, was that Joiţa could only be entitled to her late mother's dowry assets, the remaining wealth of the father belonging rightfully to his second wife Catrina and her young son. Apart from raising the vexing question of inheritance rights in Wallachian vs. Moldavian customary law (see above, page 104), both cases make it otherwise clear that only blood children were entitled to their mother's dowry.[16]

Family Stories

Testaments - both of men and women - sometimes unexpectedly tell family stories and throw much needed light on the actual rapports of family members in conflict and, more rarely, in harmony. Rather than being mere lists of cutlery, cattle, household utensils, jewellery and Gypsies, testaments often provided men and women with a chance to settle scores, reward love, penalise misconduct and gain a measure of control over posterity. They could also often be meditations on the vanity of human life and attempts

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[16] Cronţ and others (eds.), *Acte judiciatre,* Doc. 458, pp. 507-08 and Doc. 461, pp. 511-12.

in articulo mortis to save one's soul. As such, they are eloquent less for the legal than for the human detail.[17]

The 1781 testament of Bălaşa, daughter of the late 'stolnic' Toader Carp, is a story of two marriages. With some bitterness, after a full list of her dowry gifts, she speaks of her 'impoverished' first husband, the 'serdar' Vasile Scărlet, who, during a twelve-year-long, childless marriage, sold or otherwise squandered her golden diamond ring, her diamond earrings and a diamond cross, her horse-drawn carriage, cattle, and silver jewellery (all of which she lists meticulously). However, although, as she recounts, she and her second husband spent a lot of money and time on court cases against her first husband's inheritors to recoup her lost dowry assets, some of the remaining cattle were sold, she explains with rueful self-righteousness, to pay for 'commemoration and duties and other charities for the soul of the deceased'. The second husband, the 'pitar' Ianachi Mavrichi, who 'showed compassion and care in my illness and weakness', is 'especially' remembered and rewarded with a gift of Gypsy slaves. Anastasia, his daughter from a former marriage, raised 'with great love' by her stepmother Bălaşa, was named executrix of her will. It goes without saying that, with the jewellery, cattle and Gypsies given to her stepdaughter came the duty to pay the funeral expenses, as well as to perform the much coveted services in the year after death, all, she adds, 'according to the list I am going to append'. A good name for posterity as well as a healthy soul in heaven's good books were, as always with Romanian testators, essential: '...I give Ioniţă the Gypsy son of Nastasia to my stepson Costachi so that he will remember me, and I give Ioana the Gypsy sister to Ioniţă and daughter to Nastasia to my stepson Dimitrachi, so that he too remembers me' ('ca să aibă şi el a mă pomeni'). Even the insolvent and ineffectual first husband finds a niche in Bălaşa's will: 'I give Maria the Gypsy to the church of Jijia, where the body of my late first husband lies buried'. The will ends with the customary curse against any of her kin who 'might be tempted to change my will', as well as with the testator's signature and seal.[18]

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[17] More on attitudes to death in Violeta Barbu, '"Sic moriemur": the discourse upon death in Wallachia during the ancien régime', *Revue roumaine d'histoire*, XXXIII, 1-2 (1994), 101-121.

[18] L.T. Boga (ed.), *Documente basarabene*, vol. III, Testamente şi danii 1672-1858 (Chişinău, 1928), pp. 15-19.

The 1785 testament of the widowed Ruxanda Carp (from Moldavia) starts with a long introduction on the transitoriness of human life before recounting another story of insolvent husband and embattled widowhood. This time the wife consented to the sale of her dowry assets, including lands, for the payment of her husband's debts, and the tone is sad rather than vindictive as she narrates how, after eighteen years of marriage, the husband decided to end his life in a monastery, not without leaving some outstanding debts. As a final compensatory gesture, however, Dumitru Carp donated his family estate - given to him as dowry (for dowries offered to sons, see my chapter on 'Virginity, Dowries and Marriage') - to his wife. The beneficiaries of Ruxanda's will - mainly in land and Gypsies - are Irina, a niece, and Costache, a hard-working adopted son, who are instructed to agree amicably on any future sale of land or house. The niece thus rewarded possessed, according to her aunt, the inestimable merit of being meticulously observant of all that was to be done 'for the souls of my husband's late parents and for our own souls and mindful of all the Christian duties'.[19]

A poignant later testament is the will drawn in the 1830s by the Moldavian 'Vel logofăt' Vasile Razu. Highly devotional in tone, the text reads like a sermon preached to his children and heirs about what is due to both the heavenly and the earthly powers. They should love God, the boyar advises, but also give due honour 'to the lord and master of this Country chosen by God – knowing that power is given from above and the master is but His representative on earth – you should submit to him, listen to him and faithfully serve him...'.The children are advised to show compassion to servants and behave like parents, not like masters, and are enjoined to abstain from litigations over the inheritance or, he threatens, they will be 'deprived of my fatherly blessing'.

The testament contains a particularly glowing and emotional tribute to his wife Catrina:

> I have also considered for my much beloved spouse Catrina, with whom I have lived
> for over 30 years, and by whom I had daughters and sons, who has honoured me with
> her honest life, and with wise economy has governed my household, always looking
> after me in my grave illnesses and especially now in old age keeping wake by my
> side with great care; our union and her companionship bringing such sweetness in our

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[19] Boga (ed.), *Documente basarabene*, vol. III, pp. 20-2.

life together, I could not show myself ungrateful for so much love and kindness that she has shown towards me and my children; and, especially as she was a daughter of boyars, and brought a dowry and some money into the marriage, and as I had to settle abroad, all of these considering, I gave her a part of all that is mine [...]

Vasile Razu's unusually emotional testament concludes with a plea to his wife Catrina and his eldest son Iancu to watch over the education of the younger son, Mihai:

And I am addressing you, my beloved spouse and oh, my beloved son Iancu, endeavour, as he is too young, to teach him the value of good deeds, and look after him in his youth, for youth may tempt him into base things, endeavour to keep him away from these and keep him on the path that leads to virtue and good fortune. Thus I beg you and this is my wish, and so may you have my blessing. Vasile Razu Vel Logofãt. [20]

Farewell message, manual of education, homage to a good wife, spiritual guide, Vasile Razu's testament summarises a way of life that must have featured in the world picture of at least one section of Romanian ancien régime society. Based on compassion, virtue, thriftiness, civic responsibility, but also imbued with a sense of the dignity that the boyar title implied, Vasile Razu's prescriptions are, one might say, an aristocratic variant of what is commonly thought of as a decent, honest, bourgeois way of life. How pervasive such a view was in boyar circles and how actively it was pursued by the Romanian 'noblesse de robe' (i.e. the tiny fraction of boyars with court and civic functions, as outlined in chapter two) is difficult to judge. However, as the discussion on the law codes and the sample of primary documents presented here suggest, it would appear that the ecclesiastical and the secular authorities of the period worked quite consistently towards bringing order both to the social and to the religious dimensions of

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[20] My translation of the original Romanian: Socotit-am dar şi pentru preiubitul meu soţ Catrina, cu care am trãit peste 30 ani, cu care am fãcut fii şi fete, care cu cinstitã ei viiaţã cinstindu-mã, şi cu înţeleaptã iconomia ei ocârmuind cele din lãuntru a casii mele şi peste tot cãutându-mã la grelile mele boale şi mai ales acum în vreme bãtrâneţãlor mele, cu mare purtãri di grije privighiind lângã mine, a cãreia înoţãre şi întovãrãşire fãcându-mã sã sãmt o dulce viiaţã înpreunã n'am putut sã mã fac nemulţumitori [sic] şi nerãsplãtitor de atâta dragoste şi bunãtate ci-au arãtat cãtrã mine şi cãtrã creştiria copiilor mei, mai ales fiind şi fatã de boeri, luându o şi cu zãstre, şi cu orece bani şi rãmãind şi strein, toate aceste socotindu-le i-am fãcut şi eu o parte dintru amele...' (p.84); 'Cãtrã voi întorcând cuvântul meu, o iubitul meu soţ şi o iubitul meu fiu Iancule sãliţi-vã cu dânsul pãrã este tânãr a-l deprinde la fãptã bunã, sã aveţi purtare de grijã de tinereţile lui, el este tânãr, ţinereţile [sic] poate sã-l îndemne la multe lucruri netrebnici, sãliţi-vã a-l îndepãrta dela aceste pre cât a fi cu putinţã, nevoiţi-vã a pune în drumul care-l duce la cinste şi la norocire. Aşa vã rog şi aşa vã poftesc, şi aşa sã aveţi blagosloveniia me. Vasile Razu vel logofãt. (p.85), in Boga (ed.), *Documente basarabene*, vol. III, pp. 82-5.

human life. While the insistence on the posthumous good 'health' of the soul to be obtained through the correct rites and the fact that the Metropolitan and the Prince were still the ultimate guarantors of order and justice point to a traditional, paternalistic society, the legal attempts to protect the family and the need for good management of money and households both by men and women sprang from a desire to reconcile Christian spirituality and the secular pursuit of material gain and welfare. This amounted to a holistic vision of a religious, moral and well-administered polity of individually responsible citizens. In such a society, women still performed the traditional roles of supportive spouse and nurturing mothers, but the documents show that sometimes, through the death of the husband, they were socially elevated to become heads of households in their own right. In this role, they had to use all their stamina and resourcefulness to ensure the survival of their families both in economic and in spiritual terms.

Many issues relating to property and inheritance could not be addressed here. Were dowered daughters really excluded from the family inheritance? Did this happen only in Wallachia and if it did, how was it justified in jurisprudence? How did judges negotiate between custom and written law? Were there biases in favour of men, especially in cases when the judges were fellow high-ranking boyars? In precisely what ways did legal practice in the mid-nineteenth century differ from the mid-seventeenth? In what ways did the Romanian dowry and property laws differ from similar legislation in neighbouring countries with a similar Roman-Byzantine heritage in the period considered? Did the Code Napoléon and the Austrian civil code (1811) have any impact on the Caragea and the Callimachi Codes, as suggested in the work of earlier legal historians, and what were the consequences for women's rights? These are some of the questions awaiting the attention of researchers as archival material will continue to be retrieved and as the work of the early historians of Romanian law will be rediscovered and reassessed.

Conclusions

At the end of this still rather selective exploration of dowry legislation in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Romania, one can advance a few tentative conclusions as a basis for further explorations into matrimonial jurisprudence.

The legislation in force during the period under study placed dowry provision in the hands of a woman's male relative or acquaintance. This, together with parental and church control over choice of spouse would seem to maintain women's marital lives in the firm and almost absolute grip of a male/ecclesiastic order within a relatively benevolent paternalistic system. The fact that a woman retained sole ownership of her dowry, wedding gifts and 'virginity gift' (theoritra), and that a husband could be prosecuted, penalised and even imprisoned for squandering a dowry, provided a measure of economic security for women and their surviving children, the main beneficiaries of dowry assets. Yet, at the same time, a certain relaxation in the formerly strict church-sponsored rules for separation and divorce - as well as the very availability of divorce - provided women with some freedom of opting out of oppressive or abusive marriages. More importantly for the discussion of dowry arrangements, women, passive as wives-to-be, gained a certain amount of economic independence once they got married, by virtue of the fact that not only could they sue a dowry-squandering husband, but they also could in certain cases, carefully specified by the law codes, use some of their dowry wealth for paying off their own debts or for looking after ailing spouses, children and parents. This, in conjunction with a concern for status, explains why so many boyar fathers agonised over the dowries they had to provide to marrying daughters. As has been seen from one of the case histories, a wife also enjoyed the right to dispose of her dowry as she wished in her will. It would seem that the *Callimachi* and the *Caragea Codes* (1817, 1818) introduced the innovation of 'marital settlements' ('tocmeli căsătoreşti') which allowed parents, brides and grooms to make pre-nuptial arrangements about, for instance, who would inherit the dowry in case of death, but this is a point that needs further study. Finally, as widows, if they did not remarry after the legal 'one year's mourning' ('anul jelirii'), women had full control over the household administration and over their children's education and daughters' endowment.

At this stage, one cannot point to clear trends and shifts in legal practices and one should recognise that it is premature to talk of 'liberalising' trends in the application of matrimonial and dowry legislation. One can point, though, to the fact that, especially after the *Callimachi* and the *Caragea Codes*, the emphasis was increasingly placed on a standardised and neatly categorised jurisprudence, and less on the moral categories underlining individuals' legal rights. This, and other factors, led arguably to the gradual erosion of the traditionally close links between church and state in matters of law. Whether the relative 'secularisation' of the law also led to the 'moral crisis' famously deplored by foreign and native observers in the early nineteenth century is a contentious issue (see my chapter on 'Divorce and the Crisis of the Family').

But while such theoretical issues will remain unresolved for the time being, the documents I have presented here have at least the merit, as 'family stories', of giving a voice to men and women who would be otherwise lost to history. They grappled with issues of morality, legality, duties and rights, church and state, public and private spaces, in a transitional society struggling towards a clearer sense of its own identity and of its own institutions. But more importantly, the language some of them used shows concerns that went beyond mere human acquisitiveness and mundane self-interest, and touched on issues of affective family bonds and Christian spirituality in a besieged world where such aspirations might have been obscured by the demands of mere survival.

Introduction to Part Two

Travel narratives, literary texts and iconography are sometimes treated as poor relations in social history. Suspect sources, charged with the ballast of 'importunate pathos', to use Fernand Braudel's words, their evidence is too ambiguous to be of much use to the historian, runs the traditional argument against them.[1] And yet, recent years have witnessed a rehabilitation of literary and iconographic sources, now regarded as providing a much-needed corrective to potentially distorting *post hoc* historical constructs. In addition, in such a source-poor area as Romanian women's and social history, travellers' accounts have been recognised as legitimate tools for exploring self-representations by a people, a social group or an age. The ten-volume published collection of documentary literature written by foreign visitors to the Romanian lands is a recognition of its importance.[2]

However, in recent years, and in the wake of Edward Said's seminal and much-debated study on *Orientalism* (1978) the inherently polysemic subjectivity of travellers' 'tales' has sparked off heated debates. An increasing body of works has brought the study of 'otherness' and of cultural stereotypes to the relatively new area of perceptions of Eastern Europe in history. Maria Todorova, for instance, engaged polemically with Said's postulates and with the question of whether 'Orientalism' might have an East-European variant, 'Balkanism', in her very erudite *Imagining the Balkans* (1997). More controversially, Larry Wolff in his *Inventing Eastern Europe* (1994) suggested that 'Eastern Europe' as a political-geographic concept was the brain-child of Enlightenment *philosophes*, armchair travellers guilty, among other things, of having contributed to a mental Iron Curtain which still divides Europe today.[3] While it would take another doctoral thesis to deal with the issues raised in these two studies, one consideration

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[1] Braudel quoted in 'The Relevance and Ambiguity of Literary Evidence', in Michel Vovelle, *Ideologies and Mentalities*, (Polity Press, 1990), p. 33.

[2] Maria Holban, Maria Matilda Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu, Ion Totoiu (eds.), *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* (Foreign travellers' accounts about the Romanian lands), vols. I-X (Bucharest,1968- 2001)

[3] See also the critical observations of Michael Confino in his review article 'Re-Inventing the Enlightenment: Western Images of Eastern Realities in the Eighteenth Century', *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue canadienne des slavistes*, vol. XXXVI, nos. 3-4 (September-December 1994), 505-22.

which suggests itself immediately has to do with concepts such as 'invention' and 'imagination', and the doubts they raise about narratives of travel - whether real or philosophical - as appropriate sources for historiography. My own use of relevant fragments from travellers' accounts in this project started from the assumption that, by playing European foreigners' perceptions against the natives' self-representations, I might get closer to the ways Romanians from 1750 to 1850 positioned themselves vis-à-vis a Europe seen both as a model and as an observing judge.

I have not attempted a critical sociology of travellers to Moldavia and Wallachia in the period concerned, nor have I tried to deconstruct their views in the polemical terms used by Wolff and Todorova. However, because the travellers I have used are considerably different in terms of background, status and duration of stay in the Romanian Principalities, in the next section, I am presenting brief biographical sketches of the most important figures.

The Travellers

The French-born Swiss painter Jean Étienne Liotard (1702-1789) was a contradictory mix of itinerant court painter in the best eighteenth-century tradition and an artist who did not compromise with truth, which explains why he was criticised by Horace Walpole for his arch-realism and possibly why he died in relative obscurity. Known also as the 'peintre Turc', he spent five years in Constantinople wearing a beard and Turkish dress, and specialising in 'Orientalist' genre portraiture, before visiting Moldavia in 1743-43 as court painter to the Phanariot Prince Constantin Mavrocordat (1711-1769).[4]

While his polished realism informs his presumably highly accurate depictions of Turkish dress, his importance for the intellectual history of Romania lies in the largely unknown work, now partly lost, commissioned from him by Mavrocordat. As Remus Niculescu has shown, his extant black-and-red chalk drawings of the Prince, his wife

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[4] For more information on his life and work, see detailed entry in E. Benezit, *Dictionnaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs* (Paris, 1999), Tome 8. For his stay in Moldavia and details on individual works, see the bibliographic references in chapter six.

Ecaterina (née Rosetti) (Ill.2) and their children were meant to illustrate a joint Moldo-Wallachian history, a cherished project of Mavrocordat, which was never completed. The scholar Karol Peterffy, a Jesuit from Bratislava, from whom the history was commissioned, died, leaving an unfinished outline entitled *Prodromus historiae Principatuum Valachiae et Moldaviae.*[5] The symbolism and significance of this project cannot be discussed in any detail here, but I am arguing, as a working hypothesis, that it was meant as a legitimising tool on the part of Mavrocordat the Phanariot who probably felt he had to justify his ten alternate reigns in Moldavia and Walachia in terms of a continuous 'Romanian' history. Liotard's formal portraits, of strong Byzantine inspiration, are clearly what we would call today propaganda art, but they are also symbolic of a very ambitious - and possibly premature - project of cultural synthesis, which linked the Principalities to an encompassing and enduring Greek vision of a resurrected Byzantium. Whatever the actual power of Phanariot consort Princesses, Ecaterina Mavrocordat is seen in Liotard's portrait - possibly the only formal portrait of a Phanariot princess apart from those found in church murals - as fully sharing in her husband's glory and thus participating in his vision of a 'Romanian' rather than simply Moldavian historical continuum.

Jean Louis Carra (1743-1793), the scion of an impoverished family, left France at the age of twenty-four in shady circumstances (rumours spoke of never ascertained theft) and for nine years travelled throughout Europe, as far as the Ukraine and Russia.[6] He spent one year (1775-76) in the Moldavian capital Iaşi as tutor to Prince Grigore Al. Ghica's sons as well as his French secretary, but left the Moldavian capital dissatisfied with his position and resentful that, following a rift, the Prince only paid him half of the agreed return fare.[7] It has been suggested that the rift, about which Carra is secretive,

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[5] The Latin manuscript is now at the Library of Budapest University (Fonds Kaprinay, XXIV). The Romanian translation was published by Andrei Veress in *Istoricul marele serdar Gheorghe Saul 1743-1781, AAR.*, Memoriile secţiunii literare, seria a 3-a, V (Bucharest, 1931), 83-87. Cf. Remus Niculescu, 'Jean-Etienne Liotard à Jassy, 1742-1743', *Genava*, XXX (1982), 127-166, pp. 151-52.

[6] Hoeffer (ed.), *Nouvelle Biographie Universelle* (Paris, 1853); G. Pascu, *Călători străini în Moldova şi Muntenia în secolul XVIII – Carra, Bauer şi Struve* (Foreign Travellers in Moldavia and Wallachia in the eighteenth century) (Iaşi, 1940).

[7] *Histoire de la Moldavie et de la Valachie, avec une Dissertation sur l'état actuel de ces deux Provinces, par M.C... qui y a fait un long séjour* (second edition, Neuchâtel, 1781), p. 197.

was due to his Masonic affiliation and to suspicions that he may have been involved with a group of noblemen hostile to the Prince.[8] Given his subsequent career in France as radical revolutionary and anti-monarchist[9], one may suppose that Carra was never sympathetic to the Turkish-sponsored Greek 'despotic' régime of the Principalities and to the mores of the Oriental provincial courts in Iași and Bucharest. His *Histoire de la Valachie et de la Moldavie*, first published in Paris in 1777, enjoyed a French second edition, two German editions in 1789 and 1821, as well as a Romanian translation as late as 1857. Ever mindful of French trade interests in the area - interests which French governments were slow to grasp - he posited the concept of history-writing as a tool for efficient, informed politics. 'Sans une connoissance particulière des moeurs d'une nation & du caractère de son courage, la connoissance géographique du pays et celle du nombre des soldats sont presq'inutiles', he mused.[10] With an endearing self-publicising zeal – as he sought the position of consul in Bucharest, finally refused to him – Carra advises governments to encourage and sponsor those men of letters who, like him, armed with a knowledge of foreign languages, take up the study of foreign nations.[11] More significantly, he theorised on the ideal of the traveller as philosopher, whose objective must be the codification of a universal moral law as a basis for mutual understanding and peaceful cohabitation between nations. On this enlightened premise he based his criticism of Asiatic indolence and corruption and his insights into the obstacles that stood in the way of the Romanians' Europeanisation.

Alexandre-Maurice Blanc de Lanautte, Comte D'Hauterive (1754-1830) started his diplomatic career at the French embassy in Constantinople in 1784, and in 1785 became secretary to the Greek Prince of Moldavia, Alexandru Mavrocordat Phiraris. The journey from Constantinople to Moldavia resulted in a highly spirited travel diary that

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[8] G. Pascu, *Călători străini*, pp. 72-3.

[9] Co-editor of the *Annales Patriotiques*, Deputy (first Jacobin then Girondin), he was executed by the Revolutionary Tribunal in October 1793 owing to suspicions regarding his relations to Roland (Hoeffer, *Nouvelle Biographie Universelle*). For a recent study of his life and activities, see Stefan Lemny, *Jean-Louis Carra 1743-1793: parcours d'un révolutionnaire* (Paris, l'Harmattan, 2000).

[10] Carra, *Histoire.*, Discours Préliminaire, p.xxii.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. xx.

was only published in 1877.[12] His one-year long stay in Moldavia, up to the deposition by the Ottomans of Alexandru Mavrocordat, is documented in two works, one in the 'state of the nation' genre and the other in the long tradition of advice to monarchs, in this case Alexandru Ipsilanti, successor to Mavrocordat.[13] Back in France and ruined during the Revolution, he occupied briefly the post of Consul in New York and subsequently, under Talleyrand's protection, worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as Director of the National Archives.

An enthusiastic partisan of the Romanians, D'Hauterive advises the new 'Hospodar' of Moldavia, Alexandru Ipsilanti, an enlightened Prince who had already demonstrated his worth as Prince of Wallachia for seven years. (According to the Ottoman custom, the Greek princes were often 'rotated' between the two Principalities). D'Hauterive probably knew that his counselling on enlightened leadership would not fall on deaf ears with a French-educated Prince who had reduced taxes, reorganised trade, administration, justice and finances, as well as modernising the Academy of Saint Sava, the precursor of the University of Bucharest. However, Ipsilanti did not reign in Moldavia long enough to initiate reforms there, but he would probably have agreed with the Count's proposals for improving farming and trade, for the education and gradual emancipation of the Gypsy slaves and maybe even with the transition to European dress (see below, Chapter six). His reputation for philo-Austrian sentiments cost Alexandru Ipsilanti his life at the hands of his Turkish masters: tortured to declare the amount and location of his wealth, he was decapitated in 1806.

Of the travellers who visited the Principalities for very brief periods, Lady Elizabeth Craven (1750-1828) left on her Grand Tour with a very personal agenda. She was probably hoping that, on her return, both her divorce, her 'indiscreet' behaviour (as her

[12] *Journal inédit d'un voyage de Constantinople à Jassy, capitale de la Moldavie, dans l'hiver de 1785,* Revue de géographie (1877), tome II, pp. 120-131;274-287. For D'Hauterive's credentials as knowledgeable observer of the geopolitics of South-East Europe, see also Hugh Ragsdale, 'Russian projects of conquest in the eighteenth century', in Hugh Ragsdale (ed.), *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 75-102.

[13] *La Moldavie en 1785, faisant suite au Journal d'un voyage de Constantinople à Jassy, par le Count D'Hauterive,* in Revue de géographie (1879), tome II, pp. 366-376; (1880), tome I, pp. 45-58; *Mémoire sur l'état ancien et actuel de la Moldavie présenté à S.A.S. le Prince Alexander Ypsilanti hospodar régnant en 1787);* I have followed the bi-lingual French-Romanian edition of D'Hauterive's three works, published in Bucharest in 1902.

friend Horace Walpole discreetly put it) and her ambiguous relation to her future husband, the Margrave of Anspach, would have been forgotten or accepted by London society.[14] Almost by accident, she became not only one of the most glamorous lady travellers to the Orient, but also probably the first West-European woman to visit the Danubian Principalities and Transylvania.[15] Feminine, coquettish and seeking important men's attention, she is self-consciously aware of her worth as a traveller and, as a consequence, her narrative is constructed to a large extent around her own person and her reaction to events: 'Among Mr. Win's neighbours were several as fat, fair, and heavy, as some of our Country `squires', she writes to the Margrave from Vienna in December 1785. 'I suspect the English lady and her horses will be the subject of their fireside conversation for some time'.[16] In Greece she was brave enough to descend, attached with ropes, into the alarming dark depths of the Grotto of Antiparos, a place that no women and few men ever attempted to see, as the French ambassador in Constantinople observed, complimenting her.[17] To Bucharest, she brought her keen eye for detail and for fashion accessories. Her description of 'Oriental' ceremonial at court and of the 'Turkish music' (the Prince's band of Turkish musicians) accompanying her carriage everywhere is meant to offer an entertaining view of 'otherness' rather than build into a theory of national character and institutions.

William MacMichael (b. 1784; MD Oxon. in 1816) published in 1819 his *Journey from Moscow to Constantinople in the years 1817, 1818.* Illustrated with his own landscapes, the book is replete with details of Moldavian social life and with judicious observations which, he modestly claims, may have their value 'especially when viewed with reference to the actual state of tranquillity of the rest of Europe'[18]

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[14] Hugh Tregaskis, *Beyond the Grand Tour* (London, 1979), pp. 21-28; Billie Melman, *Women's Orients,* (Macmillan, 1992, second edition 1995), pp. 48-49.

[15] *Letters from the Right Honourable Lady Craven to His Serene Highness the Margrave of Anspach during her Travels through France, Germany, and Russia in 1785 and 1786,* (second.edition, London, 1814), p. 258.

[16] *Ibid.,* p. 119.

[17] Tregaskis, *Beyond the Grand Tour,* p. 24.

[18] William MacMichael, *Journey,* Preface.

Larry Wolff is right to point to the dichotomous nature of most Enlightenment discourses on Eastern Europe and Russia, and travellers to the Romanian Principalities are no exception in providing them. Most of their narratives are underlined by a basic 'Europe vs. Orient' cultural opposition Yet, as I hope will become apparent in the following chapters, far from being a vision of irreconcilable opposites, these narratives highlight the essential 'Europeanness' of Moldo-Wallachia as being temporarily obscured by Ottoman domination, a view to which the Moldo-Wallachians themselves subscribed when they self-deprecatingly proposed 'enlightened' Europe as a model to be emulated by their 'backward' country. At the very end of the period, in 1848, Jules Michelet was thinking in the same terms, albeit coloured by Romantic sentiment and by a newly-found recognition of French-Romanian kinship, when he spoke of 'l'infortunée Roumanie', the 'nation sacrifiée', whose well-being was threatened by the Turks and the Russians alike, while an oblivious Europe looked on.[19]

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[19] Jules Michelet, 'Madame Rosetti -1848' (1853) in Michel Cadot (ed.), *Légendes démocratiques du nord* (Paris, 1968), especially pp. 210-216.

Ill.1: Jean-Etienne Liotard, **Presumed portrait of Mary Gunning, Countess of Coventry**, pastel, c. 1750 (Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire)

Ill.2: Jean-Etienne Liotard, Portrait of the Moldavian Princess Ecaterina Mavrocordat (1742-43), red and black chalk (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett)

Ill.3: Charles Doussault, *A Soirée in Iaşi*, 1848
(from *Album Moldo-Valaque ou guide politique à travers les Principautés du Danube*, Paris, *l'Illustration*, 1848)

Ill.4: Mihail Töppler, Presumed portrait of Safta Ipsilanti (c.1806)

(Romanian Art Gallery, National Art Museum, Bucharest)

Safta Ipsilanti (née Văcărescu), wife of the Phanariot Hospodar Constantin Alex. Ipsilanti is represented in Töppler's portrait in a hybrid mix of West-European, 'Empire' dress and Oriental accessories (e.g. the head-dress, a *čapsa*, a small, flat bonnet adorned with jewels; the shawls), and with the eyebrows joined at the middle using antimony.

Ill. 5 : The votive mural in the Church of Vladimir-Gorj (Oltenia, Little Wallachia) (c. 1830)

The founding family (Vasile and Marica Tunşianu and relatives) are shown in Oriental dress, while a young man described as 'Cavaler' Gheorghe Magheru, future leader of the 1848 revolution, is represented in a frock-coat.

Ill. 6: C.D. Rosenthal (1820-1851), the portrait of Maria Rosetti as *România revoluționară* (1850).
She is represented wearing traditional ethnic Romanian dress and clutching the tricolour flag. (The National Art Museum, Bucharest)

Chapter Six

Women, Fashion and Europeanisation

> *Le vêtement, plus qu'aucun élément de la culture matérielle, incorpore les valeurs de l'imaginaire social et les normes de la réalité vécue; c'est le champ de bataille obligé de la confrontation entre le changement et la tradition'* – Daniel Roche, *Histoire des choses banales*, p.214.

The history of dress and fashion in Western Europe has in recent years become an important chapter in social history. The way people dress – located at the intersection between necessity, aesthetics, seduction, frivolity, ethnic-political allegiances and economics – is nowadays a legitimate vehicle for the study of mentalities, as well as of the rise and demise of régimes and societies.

In this chapter I am looking at clothes, fashions and consumption as interfaces between cultures, as systems of signs and symbols which can encourage imitation or prompt rejection. The travel literature of the period shows how insistently, throughout the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, Western and Eastern Europe looked at each other's clothes, even literally fingered each other's clothes, trying to fathom what exactly appearances might reveal or conceal in terms of human character, social attitudes, political allegiances and cultural determinations. The basic opposition that was at the heart of all these exercises in sartorial reading was broadly between 'European' (i.e. West European) fashion on the one hand and 'Oriental' fashion on the other, that is - for the purposes of the present discussion - the dress worn in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in the Near East, the Balkans and the East European dominions of the Sublime Porte. Focussing on the development of clothes design and fashions in the Romanian Principalities, between, roughly, 1750 and 1850, I shall be trying to reconstruct, from a number of very different sources, West European perceptions of the Romanians in the period, as well as the ways in which the Romanians used clothes, fashion accessories, fashionable household items and luxury imports in order to construct individual and collective identities in terms of their own perceptions of 'Europe' and 'European-ness'.

I have already mentioned in the introduction to Part Two of my thesis the importance of travellers' accounts for Romanian social history and the major ten-volume collection of such accounts in Romanian translation. There is in addition much documentary travel literature not yet published in Romanian, published a long time ago in obscure periodicals or insufficiently exploited so far. Iconography - chiefly lithographs by itinerant artists, votive church murals and the earliest producers of formal portraiture in early nineteenth-century Romania - is another source which has been investigated to some extent by art historians and historians of costume such as Al. Alexianu, Andrei Cornea and Adrian Silvan-Ionescu.[1]

To a lesser extent, internal primary sources such as the period's dowry papers, testaments and wealth inventories, have been used, but they, of course, never offer a 'living' image of how clothes were actually worn or of what they meant for wearers, donors and observers. What these latter sources have preserved, however, is the extensive and, until the 1850s, almost exclusively Turkish lexicon of wardrobes, as well as information on prices and consumption, and on the 'social circuits' of clothes, that is, on the ways clothes were purchased, offered, transmitted and recycled in the period under consideration. It has to be said that the period of sartorial transition in the Principalities is in fact much shorter than announced in the title of this thesis, covering practically the decades between the 1780s and the 1830s. During this time, an accelerated pace of change dramatically transformed upper-class female fashions, the patterns of consumption, imports and leisure, domestic amenities and interiors, as well as, one can presume, the élites' - especially élite women's - sense of their own identity. The urban élites, on which this discussion is focussed, include higher and lesser nobility, a few wealthy merchants and some members of other upwardly mobile urban socio-professional groups, such as doctors and civil servants, who, as shown in Chapter

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[1] Such painters include itinerant artists such as Luigi Mayer (active 1790s and early 1800s), Louis Dupré (1789-1837), Jean-Etienne Liotard (1702-1789), as well as the earliest producers of formal portraiture in Romania such as Mihail Töppler (active in the early nineteenth-century). Cf. Al. Alexianu, *Mode și veșminte din trecut* (A History of Romanian fashion and costume), 2 vols, (Bucharest, 1987); Andrei Cornea, *"Primitivii" picturii românești* (The 'Primitives' of Romanian art.) (Bucharest, 1980); Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Artă și document* (Art as Document) (Bucharest, 1990) and *Moda românească 1790-1850. Între Stambul și Paris* (Romanian fashions 1790-1850. Between Istanbul and Paris) (Bucharest, Editura Maiko, 2001). Most of the works of the Romanian 'primitives' have been recently returned into the public domain with the (re)opening, after many decades, of the Gallery of National Art at the Art Museum in Bucharest.

two, could gain relatively easy access into the boyar class. The term 'Phanariot' or 'Greek-Phanariot' designates - as shown in the same chapter - members of the Ottoman-imposed governing élites of Wallachia and Moldavia between 1711 and 1822, but the upper class groups I have in view also include the ethnic Romanian boyars, who, as landowners and state officials, administered the Principalities and exploited their resources in conjunction, if not always in harmony, with the Phanariots.

Travellers, Exoticism and 'Turquerie'

The writings of travellers to the 'Orient' often include very tactile little dramas of foreigners and natives curiously gazing at or touching each other's clothes, the Turkish bath scene in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters (written 1716-1718) being the most famous scene of this kind. One such traveller's tale provides a convenient introductory insight into what a lady of the Phanariot élite must have looked like in the 1790s.

Travelling to Constantinople via the Romanian Principalities in 1794 on a more adventurous route than was customary for young English men on the Grand Tour, the young and wealthy John B. Sawrey Morritt (1772-1843) of Rokeby Hall in Yorkshire, and his two companions crossed the Carpathians from Transylvania into Wallachia in carriages perilously drawn by oxen. Afterwards, shaken for days on the terrible Wallachian roads of the time, they were only too ready to be enchanted by the effortless hospitality of a Wallachian lady who received them, surrounded by her children and her maidservants, in the absence of her husband, an 'aga', (i.e. police prefect), away on business.[2] This tableau of exotic domesticity and colourful costume was complemented on the following morning by the minimal and unusual Turkish breakfast of coffee and rose sherbet.

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[2] She was at one time temporarily identified by Paul Cernovodeanu as Ilinca Argintoianu, from a well-known Romanian boyar family from Oltenia (Little Wallachia), and her servants were probably Gypsy slaves rather than Greeks. For the controversy surrounding her identity, see Eric D. Tappe, Trevor J. Hope, 'A Cambridge Don and his companions in the Balkans (1794): some unpublished correspondence of Robert Stockdale, J.B.S. Morritt and Randle Wilbraham', *RESEE*, XVIII (1980), no. 4, 591-615. Cf. also entry by Paul Cernovodeanu in Holban and others (eds.), *Călători străini*, vol. X, Part II (Bucharest, 2001), pp. 1232-235.

She was seated on a low board sofa which filled the whole of one side of the room, surrounded by five or six Greek slaves in great state, [Morritt wrote to his sister on 25th July 1794][...]. Her gown was long-sleeved, coming up before no higher than her cestus, which was tied *à la Campbell*.[3] It was gathered round her ankles and legs like trousers, and was made of a spotted light muslin. On her head she wore a flat-topped high cap with a gold tassel on the top, and a shawl handkerchief round her forehead, her hair hanging loose about her shoulders. Over her gown she wore a long light blue silk pelisse edged with fur, with half-sleeves; on her feet she had thin yellow-leather boots, with slippers, which she left at the side of the sofa to put up her feet, for they all sit cross-legged, *à la Turque*. Over her bosom she wore a thin fold of muslin which fastened under her cestus; and I assure you, though not of the *première jeunesse*, it is difficult to imagine a more elegant figure.[4]

The drawings of the Viennese painter who accompanied Morritt on his travels are presumed lost.[5] The works of the French-born Swiss 'peintre Turc' Jean-Etienne Liotard (1702-1789) offer a plausible suggestion of the general appearance of a Greek-Romanian Phanariot lady. Liotard spent a long time in Constantinople (1738-42) and in Moldavia (1742-3), where he gained first-hand knowledge of the lines, colours and fabrics, as well as of the social and political conventions of the Turkish costume. (Ill. 1).[6]

The basic elements of what we might call the 'Phanariot look' - an essentially layered look - were, for the women, a light gauze chemise ending in shalvars, covered by a frock, usually of taffeta or velvet, and one or even two superimposed long or short gowns or coats called 'anteri'. In the summer, the anteri could be covered in its turn by

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[3] In all probability, a reference to a well-known society beauty, Lady Charlotte Campbell, painted c. 1789-90 by J.W. Tischbein in Greek classical dress. Cf. Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 273 and 275.

[4] G. E. Marindin (ed.), *The Letters of John B.S. Morritt of Rokeby descriptive of journeys in Europe and Asia Minor in the years 1794-1796* (London, 1914), pp. 62-63.

[5] Al. Alexianu, *Mode și veșminte din trecut* (A history of fashion and costume), (Bucharest, 1987) (first edition 1971), p. 135. Some of the sketches, as well as fragments unpublished by Marindin may have in fact survived and are now kept in the Constantin I. Karadja archives in Bucharest, according to the editors of these archives, Georgeta Penelea Filitti and Lia Brad-Chisacof, *Comorile unei arhive* (Treasures of an archive) (Bucharest, Editura Demiurg, 1996, pp. 62-71.

[6] For two comprehensive studies of Liotard's life and work, see Renée Loche , Marcel Roethlisberger, *L'opera completa di Liotard* (Rizzoli, Milano, 1978) and Anne de Herdt, *Dessins de Liotard - suivi du catalolgue de l'oeuvre dessinée* (Genève, Paris, 1992). For his stay in Moldavia at the court of the reformist Phanariot Prince Constantin Mavrocordat, see Remus Niculescu, 'Jean-Etienne Liotard à Jassy, 1742-1743', *Genava*, XXX (1982), pp.127-166.

a 'fereče' (pron. feredge) or a 'beniş' (pron. benish), or, on grand occasions, by the 'maloté', a very expensive coat lined with ermine fur. The anteri, fereče and beniş were common to both female and male wardrobes so that, details excepted, female and male figures looked very much alike in their long, ample vestments. The colours of these various layered garments were usually vivid yellows, greens, blues, reds and spotless whites, or, especially in the women's light summer frocks, as pictured by Liotard, they were muted, delicate pastel-coloured prints with highly sophisticated patterns. The above is simply the basic outline of the Turco-Phanariot costume, but there were numerous variations in combinations of cut, colour and textures, as Jennifer Scarce has shown in her detailed study of female dress in the Near and Middle East.[7]

John Morritt's sister, although tucked comfortably away in Yorkshire, far from the metropolitan extravagances of London, must have been aware of the vogue for 'Turqueries' that had reached its peak in England and in other parts of Western Europe around the 1770s, that is, about two decades before Morritt's travels. Kickstarted, among others, by traveller-writers such as Lady Mary herself and by earlier Orientalist painters such as Antoine de Favray, Jean-Baptiste Vanmour and Liotard himself (both of whom, incidentally, made portraits of Lady Mary)[8], the craze for Oriental clothes did not, probably, extend far beyond the narrow world of European royalty, very rich upper class circles and a few cognoscenti enamoured of things Eastern. And it is doubtful that full Turkish dress was ever worn outside balls, masquerades or portrait-painting sessions, such as exemplified in the portrait of Mary Gunning, dressed in a costume which was probably an item from Liotard's own studio props acquired in Constantinople.

It can be presumed that for West European upper-class women, such as those who sat for Liotard, being represented in Turkish dress had connotations of Asian opulence,

[7] Jennifer Scarce, *Women's Costume of the Near and Middle East* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1987). This study is especially useful for the abundance of technical details of the ways garments were cut and sewn, rather than for analysis of their meaning or representational values.

[8] Cf. Joseph W. Lew, 'Lady Mary's Portable Seraglio', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 24, 4 (Summer 1991), 432-50; Philip Mansell, 'Art and Diplomacy in Ottoman Constantinople', *History Today*, (August 1996), 43-49; Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head - Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Yale University Press, 1993); Lynne Thornton, *Women as Portrayed in Orientalist Painting* (ACR Edition, Paris, 1985).

exoticism, and romance (as in the 'torn letter' detail of the Duchess of Coventry's portrait, for instance, with its suggestions of romantic intrigue). The device must have been - for both painter and sitters - a way of distancing the subjects from the sartorial norms and conventions of their own eighteenth century daily world in order to exoticise them into Arabian Nights figures of indolent luxuriousness or relaxed, demure sensuousness. For other categories of sitters, such as the foreign diplomats in Constantinople, Lady Mary Montagu, or the Earl of Sandwich, Liotard's travelling companion, a 'Turkish' portrait was meant to establish status and authority in the eighteenth-century public arena, where interest in the Eastern Question and the Middle East was growing apace with the political developments in South-Eastern and Central Europe.

A 'Greek land' straight out of the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainment' was how John Morritt described Wallachia in a letter to his mother.[9] The phrase aptly conveys the meanings that a geographically remote 'Orient', not always clearly conceptualised in terms of ethnicity, could evoke to generations of (West) European readers of Antoine Galland's popular transcriptions of the *Mille et Une Nuits* (1704): story-telling, mystery, confused and confusing, real or imagined, identities of 'the other'.

Clothes and Hygiene

Other travellers to Romania, especially those who spent there a longer time than John Morritt, were sometimes less enthusiastic about the charms of the Asian dress and attached to it meanings that were related to the supposed impact of Ottoman mores and lifestyles on the national Romanian character. Alexandre-Maurice Blanc de Lanautte, Comte D'Hauterive (1754-1830), the French secretary of the Prince of Moldova Alexandru Mavrocordat Phiraris in 1785-86, had an altogether negative view of the Turkish attire, but his concern was less for its doubtful aesthetics than for the damaging effect on health and morality. As an admirer, as most French observers were, of the Moldavians' 'Latin' strength of character and as an Enlightener who believed that the Principalities should follow in the footsteps of civilised Europe, he considered Turkish

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[9] Marindin (ed.), *The Letters of John B.S. Morritt of Rokeby*, p. 60.

dress ill suited both to the national character and to what he envisaged as the Country's future. Turkish dress 'favours indolence', he believed, and is only 'proper for the luxurious lifestyle of a much more opulent nation and for the mildness of a different climate'. Oriental attire renders a robust, well-built, body useless and makes it impossible for the Moldavians (i.e. Romanians), D'Hauterive adds, 'to keep up their active lifestyle'. Eventually, he explains, the luxury and vanity of this adopted lifestyle will utterly corrupt 'the moral qualities' of the natives as well as their health and physical well-being.[10] As far as the women were concerned, D'Hauterive believed,

> The costume is generally speaking barely decent and only to the advantage of women under eighteen years of age. All the inconveniences attending on ageing and pregnancies are revealed to the full. The dress does not cover, as it were, anything other than the body's colour, displaying its shape in all its flabbiness and alteration. Never sitting, rarely standing, their half-reclining body gets flabby, losing, by supporting itself among the cushions from morning till night, the habit of standing upright. [...] Always curled up, never wearing any shoes, they cannot put their feet down and they all slouch rather than walk.'[11]

Such concerns for the health hazards of the Ottoman dress were echoed a few decades later, in full transition period, by the first doctor who oversaw the functioning of Romania's earliest modern hospitals and the emergence of new views on public health. In a monograph published in Bucharest in 1830[12], but referring to earlier realities of 1800 to 1828) Constantin Caracaş, one of the city of Bucharest's chief doctors - and incidentally, one of the first men to adopt the trousers and frock-coat in the Wallachian capital - was equally critical of what he called the 'Asian' dress of both men and women, which he found 'damaging both to the health and to the purse'.

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[10] *Mémoire sur l'état ancien et actuel de la Moldavie présenté à S.A.S. le Prince Alexandre Ypsilanti hospodar régnant en 1787* (Bucharest, 1902), pp. 242-45.

[11] D'Hauterive, *La Moldavie en 1785* (Bucharest, 1902), pp. 347-51. (Translation mine - AJ). The original French text reads as follows: Le costume est en général peu décent et seulement à l'avantage des femmes qui n'ont pas encore dix-huit ans. Tous les inconvénients qui suivent l'age et les grossesses se montrent au grand jour. Le vêtement ne cache, pour ainsi dire, que la couleur du corps, don't il rend les formes dans toute leur mollesse et leur altération. Jamais assises, rarement debout, leur corps à demi-couché s'amollit et perd, en s'appuyant du matin au soir sur les coussins du sopha, l'habitude de se soutenir. [...] Perpétuellement accroupies, jamais chaussées, elles ne peuvent mettre leurs pieds en dehors et se traînent plutôt qu'elles ne marchent.

[12] Dr. Pompei Samarian, (ed.), *O veche monografie sanitară a Munteniei de Dr. Constantin Caracaş 1800-1828),* (Bucharest, 1937).

The long, ample *anteris*, the many superimposed furs, the long shawls used as belts, all of these are a burden to the body which warms up exceedingly, especially in the heated rooms, so that they provoke much sweating, difficulty and *atonia* in all of the body's members. [...] Equally damaging is the spheric *calpak* of colossal dimensions [...] with which they cover their heads; not only is it costly, being made of two or three lambskins brought at great cost from inner Russia [...], but it is too warm for the head, just like the *fez*, worn underneath; this causes much sweating on the top of the head and because of the habit of doffing one's hat for frequent salutations, in the winter and spring it causes flus, toothaches, as well as pain in the ears and in the head.[13]

The Pleasures and Dangers of Westernization

We have seen above that by the time John Morritt was writing admiringly to his sister in 1794 of the Wallachian lady's Turkish dress, the vogue for 'Turqueries' in England, and presumably in Western Europe in general, had declined, as Aileen Ribeiro has shown, to be increasingly replaced by an interest in garments of neo-classical inspiration.[14] At around the same time, the Romanian Principalities, where Turkish dress was the order of the day rather than upper-class ballroom self-indulgence, were rapidly becoming engaged in processes of change which first affected the 'form' and not much later the very 'substance' of society.[15] The new trend was an increasing fascination with all things West-European. The Russian general Langeron resided frequently in the Principalities in the years 1790-1810 during their frequent occupation by the Russian army, and watched the emergence of the new *zeitgeist* with amused condescension:

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[13] Samarian (ed.), *O veche monografie*, p. 107. My translation of the Romanian original: 'Anteriile cele lungi şi largi, blănile cele multe, puse una peste alta, brâul de şal lung, de câte cinci coţi, toate acestea înfăşurând şi îngreuind trupul lor, îl înfierbântă peste măsură şi mai ales când le poartă în camerele lor călduroase, provoc înăduşirea corpului, greutate şi atonie în toate membrele lui. [...] Tot atâta vătămare aduce şi calpacul sferoidal de mărime colosală, [...] cu care îăi acopere capul; pe lângă altele, acesta este şi costisitor prin făptura lui, fiind compus din două-trei pielcele de miel foarte scumpe, aduse cu mare cheltuailă din părţile dinăuntru ale Rusiei, [...]. Afară de această falnică căciulă, tot atât de mult încălzeşte şi fesul, care de obicei se poartă sub ea; acestea cauzând sudoare continuă la cap şi fiindcă obiceiul de a se tot descoperi pentru salutaţiuni, li se întâmplă deseori iarna şi primăvara guturaiuri, dureri de dinţi, de urechi şi cap.'

[14] Aileen Ribeiro, 'Turquerie - Turkish dress and English Fashion in the eighteenth century', *Connoisseur*, vol. 201, pt. 807 (May 1979), pp. 17-23.

[15] See my overview of Romanian debates on tradition and modernisation in chapter one, p. 19 sqq.

With a little time and even less effort, they [i.e. the Moldavian ladies] submitted themselves to a civilization desired by their 'amour propre' and called forth by their natural wit and their veiled charms, imprisoned as they were in their sad and heavy Asiatic vestments. The only thing they were unwilling to discard was the rouge and powder. Their faces are painted in all the colours of the rainbow.[16]

Langeron was in no doubt that the Russian officers were the main channels for the transmission of European fashions and trends into the Romanian Principalities, lands which, in his eyes, seemed stuck in Asiatic barbarity compared to the already Europeanised Russian society.[17]

In 1806, we [i.e. the Russian officers commanding the army of occupation during the war of 1806-12] still found a lot of these ladies in their Oriental costumes, their houses without furniture and their husbands as jealous as ever. But a revolution swept quickly and comprehensively first over Iaşi, then over Bucharest and the provinces. In less than a year, all the Moldavian and Wallachian ladies adopted the European dress. From all over the world, there came to the two capital cities fashion retailers, tailors and couturières [...] Our arrival changed the face of Moldavia more rapidly than Peter I altered the face of his Empire. A few of the younger men also adopted the frock coat, but the older ones as well as those with public functions kept their long beards and their ample gowns. Dancing also underwent a revolutionary change. National dances were banished or fell into disrepute. The fashion was now for Polish, English and French dances, as well as for waltzes, and these ladies, naturally adept at everything they are keen to learn, became proficient dancers in a single year. When we had first arrived in Moldavia, they could hardly walk.[18]

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[16] Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol.3, Supl.1-2, p. 75, note 2. My translation from the French original: 'Il leur a fallu peu de temps et elles ont eu peu de peine pour se soumettre à une civilisation que désirait leur amour propre et que réclament leur esprit naturel et leurs grâces voilées et emprisonnées sous les tristes et pesants habillements asiatiques. Il n'y a que la fard auquel elles n'ont jamais voulu renoncer. Leur visage est peint de toutes les couleurs'. The French-born Count de Langeron took part in all of Russia's anti-Ottoman campaigns from 1790 to 1828 on Romanian territory. His memoirs were published as *Mémoires de Langeron, général d'infanterie dans l'armée russe, campagnes de 1812, 1813, 1814* (Paris, 1902).

[17] Russia's sudden transition from Asiatic backwardness to European sophistication in lifestyles is well-documented. For a recent contribution, see Lindsey Hughes, 'From caftans into corsets: the sartorial transformation of women during the reign of Peter the Great', in Peter I. Barta (ed.), *Gender and Sexuality in Russian Civilisation*, (Routledge, 2001), pp. 17-32. I am grateful to Prof. Lindsey Hughes for this reference.

[18] Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol.3, Suppl.1-2, p.79, note 1. My translationfrom the original French: En 1806, nous trouvâmes encore beaucoup de ces dames en costume oriental, leurs maisons sans meubles et leurs maris fort jaloux. Mais la révolution qui se fit alors à Jassy, ensuite à Bucarst et dans les provinces, fut aussi rapide que complète: Au bout d'un an, toutes les dames Moldaves et Valaques adoptèrent le costume européen. De tous côtés il arriva dans les deux capitales des marchands de modes, des couturières, des tailleurs [...]. Pierre Ier ne changea pas plus rapidement la face de son Empire que notre arrivée ne changea celle de la Moldavie. Quelques jeunes gens adoptèrent aussi le frac, mais les vieillards et les gens en place restèrent avec leurs barbes et avec leur longue robe de chambre.

Langeron's reference to Peter the Great's Westernising programme is both apt and misleading. In a sense, the changes in fashion, household amenities and the patterns of consumerism, leisure and the urban environment between roughly 1780 and 1840 could be said to be in effect a silent revolution that prepared the ground for later political developments. But, rather than being initiated by decree from above, as in Russia, sartorial changes in the Principalities were effected through a more subtle process of transformation largely conducted by élite women. Rapid though these changes were, they did not happen overnight, as Langeron seems to suggest, and, arguably, in the beginning they only affected the surface, rather than the substance of the social fabric.[19] The results, in this period of transition, could be involuntarily hilarious. Arriving in Bucharest in 1818, the English medical doctor and Radcliffe Travelling Fellow William MacMichael (1784-1839) saw the Wallachian boyars 'in loosely-flowing robes' ride 'à la Turc' (Sic!) or 'indolently lolling, and looking very forlorn, in shabby calèches built at Vienna'.' The combination of Oriental and European manners and costume is irresistibly ludicrous', MacMichael thought. 'The boyar looks like a grave Mahometan; but speak to him, and instead of the pompous and magnificent sounds of the Turkish idiom, he will address you in tolerable French, and talk of novels, faro, and the whist'.[20]

By 1818, when the country had returned to Ottoman domination after the Russian occupation of 1806-1812, he could witness the following scene at the recently established 'Club' in Bucharest, where the male spectators

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La danse éprouva aussi une révolution. Les danses nationales furent proscrites, ou au moins méprisées. On apprit les polonaises, les anglaises, les valses, les françaises, et ces dames ayant beaucoup d'aptitude pour tout ce qu'elles veulent apprendre, parvinrent en un an à danser à merveille; lorsque nous arrivâmes en Moldavie, elles ne savaient pas marcher.

[19] The Russians were not the only channels for the transmission of Occidental values. In *De l'influence française sur l'esprit public en Roumanie* (Paris, 1898) Pompiliu Eliade comprehesivley analysed the presence of French princely secretaries such as Jean Louis Carra and the Count D'Hauterive, the arrival of French tutors, governesses and domestic staff, the opening of the foreign consulates in Bucharest and Iași (Russian in 1782; Austrian in 1783, Prussian in 1785, French in 1796, English in 1801), the impact of the French Revolution, and the circulation of imported books and periodicals as so many signs that Romanian society was opening up to Western (i.e. French) influence, as it gradually emerged from the Turkish sphere of influence. Eliade showed that many of the Greek-Phanariot princes and their entourage were highly educated individuals who patronised the arts and contributed to the introduction of potentially subversive Western values into the Romanian Principalities.

[20] William MacMichael, *Journey from Moscow to Constantinople in the years 1817, 1818* (London, John Murray, 1819), pp. 82-83.

[...] were uniformly dressed in huge calpaks, with long flowing robes, and many were smoking Turkish pipes; in short, every thing was Eastern in the appearances of the men, though in the costume of the ladies, who were sitting cross-legged on sofas, there was an evident admixture of French and Oriental attire; their coiffures were richly ornamented with jewels, and they wore French silk dresses, probably made at Vienna, together with the Greek zone and Turkish slippers. Under the jealous eye of the suspicious government of Turkey, the article of dress is a matter of no small importance; and the use of the costume of civilized Europe would be considered as dangerous an innovation, as the adoption of the most enlightened views of modern policy.[21]

I have found little documentary evidence to support the notion that the Ottoman Porte intervened in the sartorial regulations of the Principalities by imposing a ban on European fashions. According to the *Moniteur universel* of 20 July 1806, one Turkish *firman* of that year required all non-Muslim subject of the Porte to wear Turkish dress or risk a penalty tax of between 75 and 100 piastres.[22] The penalty must have been rather light, for, in practice, Western dress continued to be worn, mainly by women, as observers noticed. In fact, it was not long before the Ottoman Porte embarked on its own programme of dress transformation, similar to the Petrine initiatives and imposed by Mahmud II starting with 1829.[23] It is true, however, that the ceremonial dress of the Phanariot Princes and officials and the emblems of their authority were subjected to a strict codification as to colour, type of fur used for the official kaftans, size of the men's pear-shaped head-dress called 'calpaks', and even length of the beards, and it can be presumed that infringements of these codes were likely to be penalised by the Turkish suzerain authorities. The constraints of state office and court ceremonial would explain why, as General Langeron and MacMichael observed, and as historians of costume such as Al. Alexianu have shown, the men remained more conservative than the women in the area of dress at least until the 1840s. (Ill. 3)

The mix of fashions and accessories is quite clearly illustrated in contemporary watercolours and lithographs, which show indeed that women, whether in Greek-

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[21] MacMichael, *Journey*, p.118. The reconstruction of public spaces, assembly and entertainment venues for this period is highly elusive, and it was impossible to find more information on the Bucharest 'Club'.

[22] Cf. Robert F. Forrest, 'The Courier [sic] de Moldavie and Der Kriegsbote: two views of the French Revolution for Romanians', *East European Quarterly*, vol. XXV, part 1 (1991), 91-99, note 1.

[23] Donald Quataert, 'Clothing laws, state, and society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 29 (1997), 403-25.

Phanariot circles or among the Romanian élite, seemed to be at the forefront of a sartorial revolution, although in almost every other respect they remained on the margins of the public arena. Closer to the highest circles of Phanariot power, however, such changes were adopted more cautiously, even by the wives of the ruling Princes, for whom European fashions had mainly a ceremonial use. Christine Reinhard, wife of the newly appointed French consul in Iaşi, was pleased to be received in July 1806 by the Hospodar's wife, Safta Ipsilanti, 'in a dress of red crêpe à la française', while all her ladies-in-waiting were still in Oriental dress. (Ill.4)[24]

Even the naïve votive murals of the churches built and endowed in the early nineteenth century by rich upper-class or even country gentry families display the same uneasy mix of tradition and innovation, and the more forward-looking attitude of the women. (Ill.5)

One can only speculate about the meanings that women themselves might have attached to the transition in fashions in early nineteenth century Romania. The absence of written testimonies by women from this period means that we do not know whether they were aware of any moral or political connotations of such changes or whether they initiated and sustained them in order to symbolically challenge an Oriental, patriarchal order of society where they could have no significant contribution to public life. As we shall see, there is no evidence that their menfolk resisted their demands and their new sartorial preferences. On the contrary, whatever written evidence exists points to the largesse with which their spouses opened their purses, while continuing to drag their heavy caftans and calpaks to court.

Europeanisation and the Voices of Tradition

Opposition to the new Europeanising trends became more perceptible after the 1840s, when male attire itself started to be attracted into the processes of change so wholeheartedly embraced by women. The French-educated Moldavian writer and essayist Alecu Russo (1819-1859) did not hesitate to point to the link between changes in fashion and political subversion. In his view, the frock-coat and waistcoat – the

[24] *Une femme de diplomate - Lettres de Madame Reinhard à sa mère, 1798-1815* (Paris, 1901), p. 201.

'clothes of equality' as he called them - led to the emancipation of a whole generation of Romanians: '[...] new ideas took our country by storm at the same time as the trousers', he wrote in an unfinished essay published in 1851-52[25], 'and the invasion was worse than the attacks of the Tartars; it took a single spark to set on fire everything from the *shakshirs* and the *shliks*, to the *meshti,* the *djubé* and the whole content of our ancestors' wardrobes. [...] the change in costume signalled the new spirit of awakening. The new ideas and the progress emerged from the tails of the frock coat and the pocket of the waistcoat.' For Russo, a Romantic traditionalist, the passing of the Phanariot habits of calculated obsequiousness meant equally the emergence of a new, more democratic civic ethos at court and in towns and the loss of an idealised social harmony in the rural world. For other observers of events as they unfolded in the early nineteenth century, the changes in the lifestyles of the élites were a sign of the collapse of social order and the loss of traditional values, promptly chastised by God's wrath in the shape of natural disasters.

A man like Ioan Dobrescu (1777-1830), a humble baker and artisan from a suburb of Bucharest, with a strong moral sense and intense Orthodox faith, who kept a daily chronicle of events between 1802 and 1830, reacted with apocalyptic rage (and abysmal grammar) to the cosmopolitanism, the new fashions and consumerist hedonism of the Phanariot élites:

> The females with heads uncovered and hair cut short, naked down to their waist. The men had discarded their own dress and assumed foreign garments, like unbelievers, some German, others Sfrench (sic!), and in other ways, some with close-cropped hair, others with curls like the women. And some of us, the more gifted, would mix with them and read their books, some in Sfrench, others in German, still others Talian (sic!). And thus entered the teachings of that God-forsaken Volter (sic!), whom the pagans hold in such esteem, like a God. And we would no longer observe the days of Lent. Always meats at table. At church we went as to a promenade, to show off our best clothes, the females their devilish ornaments, instead of entering the church with fear of God and pray for our sins. In brief, vanity had her throne in Bucharest. We no longer believed in God, but only in fine houses, and clothes, in cheating, and rich meals, in drunkenness and especially in open whoring. [Entry for 1813-4][26]

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[25] 'Studie moldovană' in Petre V. Haneş (ed.), *Alecu Russo – Scrieri* (Writings), (Bucharest, 1934), p. 12.

[26] Ilie Corfus, 'Cronica meşteşugarului Ioan Dobrescu (1802-1830)', an extract from *Studii şi articole de istorie,* vol. VIII (1966). Here is the original Romanian text: Ia vedeţi, fraţilor, cîtă răutate s-au înmulţit la

Earthquakes, fires, famine and the 'infidels' invasions' were all, in Dobrescu's view, just rewards for the widespread decline of morality. One may assume that such a violent reaction was not isolated, especially among the moral and God-fearing middling and lower classes, as well as, one may presume, among the traditionally conservative Orthodox clergy. Far from the extravagant opulence of the court and the boyars' households, Dobrescu saw the other side of the Phanariot society: the slums, the poverty, the famines and the natural disasters, such as the famous plague that still bears the name of the Phanariot ruler Ion Caragea (1813), and could not help but vituperate not only the luxury, but also what he thought was the superfluous quest for cultural sophistication at the court of Caragea. He gloated when the first theatre built in Bucharest by the Prince's daughter, the well-educated Ralu, burnt down: the 'pagan temple of the Greek gods' had gone, he announced with undisguised joy.[27]

The fact that Ralu played the piano was considered a 'scandal' even by some conservative boyars. The instrument, probably one of the first of its kind in Romania, was, they said, the first step to moral decay.[28] The Romanian writer Ion Ghica tells the suitably romanticised real-life story, placed around the same time – the 1815s - of a young Viennese-educated lady who had brought a piano to Bucharest, playing to the delight of passers-by. Her enraged husband smashed the instrument to pieces and the young woman died, of chagrin, not before asking for her coffin to be made out of the piano's wood. Her deathbed wish was not carried through, however, as the Orthodox priest objected, saying that the 'klavier', as the instrument was then known under its

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neamul nostru, pentru fărădelegile no[a]stre. Că mai întîi, după cum înapoi am arătat, se cutremură pămîntul de căzură sfintele biserici şi hanurile şi casele. Al doilea, arse focul tîrgul mai de tot. Noi tot n-am băgat de seamă. Încă ne-am pus împotrivă cu Dumnezeu. Că întîi era casele învălite cu lemn, pă urmă le-am învălit cu her.. Apoi foametea gro[a]znecă. Şi tot n-am băgat de seamă. Apururea cu frica în sîn, puţin de nu ne-au robit păginii. Apoi, ce să vezi? Muerile cu capetele goale şi tunse, dezgolite pînă la brîu. Oamenii îşi lepădaseră portul şi-şi luoase portu strein, ca paginii, unii nemţeşte, alţii sfranţozeşte, alţii în alte chipuri, cu părul tuns, cu zulufi ca muerile. Apoi ne amestecam cu ei şi cei mai procopsiţi le învăţa cărţile lor, unii sfranţozeşte, alţii nemţeşte, alţii talieneşte. Şi intra învăţătura lui Volter, acela urîtul lui Dumnezeu, pre carele îl avea, păginii, ca pre un Dumnezeu. Şi sfintele posturi nu le mai băgam în seamă. Totdeauna cărnuri la mese. La biserică mergeam ca la o priveală, care şi mai care cu haine mai bune, muerile cu felurimi de podoabe drăceşti; iar nu să intrăm în biserică cu frica lui Dumnezeu, să ne rugăm pentru păcate. Mai în scurt, mîndriia aşazase scaunu în Bucureşti. Nu credeam în Dumnezeu, numai în ziduri, în haine, în înşălătorii, în mîncări bune, în beţii şi mai vîrtos curviia de faţă.

[27] Corfus (ed.), *Cronica*, pp. 373-74.

[28] Ioan Massoff, *Istoria teatrului românesc* (Bucharest, vol.1, 1961), p. 516, note 1.

German name, was the 'devil's instrument' ('instrumentul necuratului'). Other piano-haters of the time were simply content to store their fruit conserves in theirs.[29]

It is impossible at this stage to assess the relative weight of conservative vs. modernising opinions for periods prior to 1850. But 'awakening' and 'progress', the words used by Alecu Russo to describe the new ethos, were no accidents. They had close correspondences in the emerging political vocabulary, as studied by Vlad Georgescu in his *Mémoires et projets de réforme dans les Principautés roumaines* (1970-1972) and *Istoria ideilor politice româneşti* (A History of Romanian Political Ideas, 1987), already discussed in the first two chapters of this thesis.

The word 'Europe' itself became in this era of transition a key cultural term whereby speakers included or dissociated themselves from the civilised areas of the continent. As Pompiliu Eliade pointed out, when in the early nineteenth century the Romanian boyars started to send their sons off to West European schools and universities, the phrase used was that they had been sent 'in', or 'inside' – a self-deprecating way of referring to the 'Orient' as being 'outside' the pale of European civilisation.[30] A sort of cultural Iron Curtain was already operating on the collective imagination in lands where a ban on foreign travel was in force more or less efficiently until at least the 1820s. In spite of more or less vigorously expressed resistance to Western imports, the role of modernising élites in shaping taste and transforming urban culture is now well-established. In addition, élite initiatives in the emergent culture of consumerism corresponded to an in-built sense of an absolute historical imperative for the Romanian Principalities to exit the Orient orbit and occupy their 'rightful' place among the European nations.

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[29] Massoff, *Istoria teatrului*, p. 516, note 1.

[30] Massoff, *Istoria teatrului*, p.374.

Trade, Consumerism and Europeanisation

The pomp and circumstance of the Phanariot court with the rich ceremonial costumes and ever-present example of Turkish opulence could only encourage a taste for luxury that the native Romanian boyars had apparently already acquired. As early as the sixteenth century, fabulous sums were spent on the acquisition of jewellery and ceremonial accessories. A crown made of diamond plates belonging to the Moldavian princely family Movilă cost 12,000 florins in the early seventeenth century, the equivalent price of 40 villages, or 120 pure breed horses, or 800 Persian rugs.[31]

Foreign observers often remarked on the love of luxury among Greek and Romanian nobles alike at the Phanariot courts. 'The Moldavians go bankrupt to pay for their fabrics and furs, and when they appear in all their finery, they look magnificent and in very good taste', says D'Hauterive in his study *La Moldavie en 1785*.[32]

The new Western influences that started to penetrate the Principalities only changed the patterns rather than the scale of élite consumption, while the new political and economic circumstances created by the Russo-Turkish treaties of the late eighteenth centuries led to an opening up of the Romanian markets and the gradual encouragement of trade relations with Europe. Starting with the treaty of Kuchuk Kainardzhi (1774), Russo-Turkish negotiations led to a gradual weakening of the Ottoman monopoly over the Romanian trade. The Austro-Turkish commercial treaty of 1784 intensified commercial relations between Austria and the Romanian Principalities, and the economic 'thaw' continued, culminating in the Akkerman Convention of 1826 and the treaty of Adrianople of 1829, both of which marked a considerable blow to the Ottoman economic control of the Principalities, stipulating the latter's absolute freedom to trade

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[31] Florentina Niţu, 'Pentru o istorie a preţurilor în ţările române: date privind costul podoabelor în secolul al XVI-lea'(Towards a history of prices in the Romanian lands: the cost of jewellery in the sixteenth century), in *Muzeul Naţional*, X (1998), 5-17, p. 7.

[32] Bucharest, 1902, p. 360.

with the other European Countries and to navigate their own commercial vessels along the Danube.[33]

The new conditions favoured the growth of imports from Western Europe in parallel with the continuing exchanges with the Orient. Transylvania was the transit area for the penetration of luxury Western goods into both Wallachia and Moldova. The demand from the wealthy élite of both principalities was such that it led not only to a flood of imports and a revolution in taste, but also to a radical alteration in the status of the merchants, the more industrious of whom accumulated vast wealth and were beginning to be considered on a par with the boyar class. Merchant houses such as Hagi Moscu of Bucharest and Hagi Pop (or Popp) of Sibiu (Hermannstadt, in Transylvania) are the best known of the new brand of traders-cum-bankers-cum entrepreneurs who created the new culture of industry and capital in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Romania.

Hagi Constantin Pop from Sibiu, married to Păuna, a woman from the lesser gentry of Oltenia (southern Wallachia), became the favoured supplier, banker, confidant and friend of some of the oldest and wealthiest nobles in Wallachia, such as the Ştirbei, Bengescu, Dudescu or Jianu families. Founded by Hagi Pop's father and one Oltenian associate during Oltenia's occupation by Austria (1718-1739), the firm – which had import-export as well as banking activities - soon created branches in that province and established links with foreign trading firms in Buda, Belgrade, Zagreb, Fiume, Trieste, Venice, as well as creating its own branch in Vienna in the late eighteenth century. The fact that Hagi Constantin Pop was trusted by the Austrian authorities in Oltenia and had friendly links with the Austrian imperial agent in Bucharest helped create the security needed for a prosperous business and for establishing unhindered links with a host of hard-to-satisfy customers.[34] The well-preserved commercial correspondence, invoices,

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[33] See the study of Apostol Stan, *Independenţa României – Detaşarea de piaţa otomană şi rataşarea de Europa 1774-1875* (Romania's independence – leaving the Ottoman market and joining Europe 1774-1875) (Bucharest, 1998).

[34] For a study of the Hagi Pop House and collections of its documents, see Dumitru Z. Furnică, *Din istoria comerţului la romāni* (From the history of Romanian trade) (Bucharest, 1908), and Nicolae Iorga (ed.), *Studii şi documente cu privire la istoria romānilor* (Studies and documents relating to the history of the Romanians), vol.8 (Bucharest, 1904).

price and shopping lists of the Hagi Pop house are an invaluable source of information on the lifestyle, changing tastes, consumption and mores of the Romanian nobility around 1800. They also offer a rare glimpse into the beginning of modern entrepreneurship in what was otherwise at the time a backward and mainly agrarian economy.[35]

One of Hagi Constantin Pop's more demanding customers was the formidable widow Dumitrana Ştirbei, whose correspondence with Hagi Pop charts the evolving 'European' lifestyles of the Wallachian nobility.[36] Her earliest known order (of January 1778) was a mix of the homely and the flamboyantly exotic: cutlery, crystals of sugar, gun pellets for sparrows and rabbits, a man's shirt and long-johns, but also Brussels sprout and lettuce seeds and, incongruously, a Musk (or Musco, possibly from 'Muscovy') fox fur collar. In June she was asking for a carriage ('carǎtǎ'). On 21 January 1781 she asked for a gardener to be sent to her family estate at Cepturoaia. A seemingly loving mother-in-law to her son's 22-year-old wife, Catinca, in April 1782 she ordered for her two satin-trimmed scarves and small leather gloves. In a letter of 5 April 1784, she mentioned 'Miliort' ('Mylord'), the little dog Hagi Pop had sent and who, alas, had only lived one year, and in her subsequent letters she described in detail the lapdog she wanted as a replacement. The noble, pious, but also avidly consumerist lady must have started quite a trend in remote Oltenia at the time, as evidenced by numerous orders from Oltenian boyars for 'a small, fluffy dog, the smallest in the whole of Europe', or 'a very small, fluffy dog, fit for great ladies' meant as a present for a 'Mamuzel [mademoiselle] Zinca Vǎcǎresco'.

Other posh pets sent to Oltenia as accessories for fashion-conscious boyars were canaries, the detailed specifications for which make sublime reading. On 9 July 1796, the boyar Constantin Socoteanu, signing himself in Greek, ordered a canary, but 'not one which sings on a single note', 'it should know several notes if it is to be worthy of the exalted person for whom it is destined as a peshkesh' (Turkish for a gift or a reward

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[35] For the entrepreneurs as 'the shock troops of early European industrialisation', see R. Gildea, *Barricades and Borders*, 1996, p. 21.

[36] All the excerpts from Dumitrana Ştirbei's letters are from Iorga (ed.), *Studii şi documente*, vol. 8, (Bucharest, 1904).

for a service done).The rest of Hagi Pop's correspondence with other boyar families is replete with orders for an increasing number of luxury fashion goods such as 'shtrimphs' (i.e. Austrian stockings), carriages made in Vienna according to customers' minute instructions, leather and gloves, expensive fabrics, feathers, umbrellas, watches, 'apă de obraz' (lit. 'face water', eau-de-cologne), fine soap, fine silver tableware, furniture, and even wallpaper. One learns also that good quality tobacco was used as moth-killer and that the use of irons for smoothing clothes was not unknown. The orders for luxury foods such as charcuterie, pineapple (requested in 1798 on the doctor's order for a young lying-in mother) lemons, and oranges, Frontignac wine, as well as for foreign newspapers and foreign domestic staff (gardeners, chambermaids, cooks) betray not only the increasingly sophisticated tastes, but also the spending power or, as disapproving others would see it, the extravagance of the élites. Most of these people, especially the men, were still wearing Oriental-style clothes, like Barbu Știrbei himself (Dumitrana's son) at the spa in Karlsbad, where his Pasha-like appearance did not fail to attract West-European attention.[37] However, the orders of new fashion accessories such as stockings, gloves and parasols introduced an alien element that was surreptitiously revolutionising sartorial preferences and trends and was to turn Romania by the 1840 into Europe's – mainly France's – satellite in fashion, amenities, politics, ideologies and mentalities. Before it became a symbol of 'liberté', 'égalité' and 'fraternité', France was a code name for luxury, polished manners, domestic comfort and elegance, without which, the new Romanian consumers believed, there could be no civilisation.

As I showed in my introductory chapters, the vision of a civilised, 'enlightened' Europe to which the Principalities belonged *de jure* by virtue of their Latin origins and socio-cultural aspirations was already in place as a topos in the period's writings. But before it became a political slogan, it emerged as an increasingly obsessive keyword for the élite's lifestyles. The diplomat and polymath Ienăchiță Văcărescu, whose Oriental furs and heavy brocades were admired by the Viennese ladies on a diplomatic mission in 1786, was rich and fashion-conscious enough to be lured into the race for West-European luxuries that engulfed the Greek-Romanian upper classes in the 1780s and 1790s. A document of 1773 from the Văcărescu family archives appears to be a list of

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[37] For details of this trip of 1796, see Nicolae Iorga, 'Un boier oltean la Karlsbad', in *AAR*, Memoriile secţiunii istorice, Seria II, Tom XXIX (Bucharest, 1907), 215-231.

silver and china tableware ordered from abroad: 'Two large serving dishes ('tipsii') for meats, with handles as is customary in Europe, without feet or lids', reads one of the entries. 'Twelve pairs of silver knives and forks, as well as twelve spoons; the forks should be of the English type, that is with three prongs', 'one sugar bowl, with a tong such as the Europeans use for picking up the sugar to place it in the cups' 'twelve Viennese china deep dishes, for serving soup'. And the finishing touches: 'The silverware should be of moderate weight, not too heavy and not too light, but as is customary nowadays among the nobles of Europe', insisted the demanding customer, possibly the great boyar Ienăchiţă himself.[38] There is a considerable amount of nouveau-riche vulgarity in this, and yet, Văcărescu the elder, polyglot author of a scholarly history of the Ottomans and Romania's first lyrical poet, was no mere bourgeois upstart intent on conspicuous consumption and display. Both he and his sons were distinguished writers and their 170-volume library, the catalogue of which has survived, was a very impressive collection of classical and contemporary works, ranging from Homer to Fontenelle (*Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes,* Lyon, 1810) and unnamed works by Mme de Genlis.[39]

Conclusions

Fragmentary though they may be, the narrative and documentary sources presented here have pointed to several interlocking and inter-dependent strands of cultural influence and choice which transformed to a large extent the contents of wardrobes, libraries and larders of late eighteenth-century Romanian élites. While on the surface level, sartorial and culinary choices are a sheer competitive display of wealth, I would argue that, in

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[38] Doc. 16 July 1773, in Mihai Carataşu (ed.), *Documentele Văcăreştilor*, Bucharest, 1975, pp. 59-61.

[39] Carataşu (ed.), *Documentele*, pp. 11-12. Other items include: Strabo's *Geography* in a bilingual Greek-Latin edition, the *Commentaries* of Teofil Coridaleu to Aristotle's *Logic* (Venice, 1725), the *Great Thesaurus* by Varinus (printed in Venice, 1712, with financial support from the Romanian Prince of Wallachia Constantin Brâncoveanu), alongside collector's items such as a *Greek-...Lexicon* of 1532, the writings of the Fathers of the Eastern Church, works of grammar and rhetoric, Plutarch, Xenophon, Cornelius Nepos, Aristotle, as well as more obscure items such as *Hermione or the Premature Betrothed of Hades*, published in Pest. Annexed to the catalogue is a list of French acquisitions, apparently purchased later by Ienăchiţă's son, the poet Nicolae Văcărescu. They include titles such as: *Tableau de l'Amour conjugal, Le Docteur de Cythère, Etrennes véridiques, Grammaire des fleurs, Chansonnier français*. As a whole, the catalogue is a testimony to a great boyar family's many interests, although its range must have been exceptional at the time and must have reflected the unusual intellectual abilities of

less obvious ways, the newly adopted trends in lifestyle helped the members of the boyar élites re-define themselves in terms of a French 'European' cultural, political, and secular identity as opposed to the traditional, Byzantine-Oriental, Orthodox one. This was no straightforward process, and the fact that both the Phanariot circles around the Princes and the Russian occupying armies could see themselves as the civilisers of Balkan 'barbarians' is just one of the paradoxes of transition. Adding to the complexity was the fact that the 'barbarians' themselves believed that they were 'Latin' Europeans whose natural progress towards civilisation was deflected negatively by the 'Asian' Ottoman-Phanariot domination. Placed between a declining Porte and a growing Tzarist empire, the élites of Wallachia and Moldavia looked westwards, and towards France as the source of a new political culture meant to redeem a country which, in the words of a seventeenth-century chronicler, was located 'on the pathway of all evils'. That the women could be in the vanguard of such changes, as seems to be the case, reflects both a certain freedom of choice and an awareness of a need for transformation in society. While men were more constrained in their sartorial choices by the demands of court office and the emblems of Phanariot hierarchies, women took the liberty to reject such codes and opt instead for European fashions, in accordance with what they must have felt was the general drift of forthcoming political change. The choices the élites made in that period changed the culture of appearances, but also created a new understanding of the power of culture in shaping politics and identities.

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one particular dynasty. Research into reading, printing and taste in this period is, as much else, sorely needed.

Chapter Seven

'Good Wives and Tender Mothers'

Women, Education and Social Motherhood

> *...for, in order to have good and Christian citizens, we must first have good and Christian mothers who, with their milk and love, will instil in their sons the redeeming principles of religion and of patriotism.*
>
> I.E. [Ion Heliade Rădulescu], *Curier de ambe sexe*, 1837

The last chapter presented an image of the Greek-Romanian Phanariot ladies of the élite as the fashion-conscious vanguard social forces that made an important and early contribution to their country's Europeanisation. But, while their quick and eager adoption of Western fashions and lifestyles is quite well-documented - especially in the observations of foreign travellers - little is known of their progress in terms of the more formal aspects of education and schooling, especially for periods preceding 1800. Unhelpfully, the general histories of education and schools in Romania[1] focus on the education of boys and young men of the élites and the emerging middling classes, with little or no reference to the education of women. One notable exception is, as will be seen, Nicolae Iorga's early and isolated attempt to save from oblivion the elusive past lives of Romanian women in all their aspects, including schooling and literacy.[2]

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[1] One chapter in A.D. Xenopol's *Epoca fanarioților* (The age of the Phanariots) (Iaşi, 1892); Constantin C. Giurescu and others., *Istoria învățămîntului din România*, (A history of Romanian education) (Bucharest, 1971) and, more recently, several chapters on education in Nicolae Isar's *Principatele române în epoca luminilor 1770-1830* (The Romanian Principalities in the age of Enlightenment) (Bucharest, 1999). For a comprehensive bibliography of the history of primary school education in Romania see the recent outstanding study of Mirela-Luminița Murgescu, *Între "bunul creştin" şi "bravul român" - Rolul şcolii primare în construirea identității naționale româneşti (1831-1878)* (From the 'Good Christian' to the 'Brave Romanian' - The Role of primary education in constructing national identiy) (Polirom, Iaşi, Romania), 1999, esp. pp. 22-28 and the 'Selective Bibliography'. Murgescu does not consider girls' education. Studies on East-Central European women's education in Western periodicals are rare. One example is Iris Parush, 'Women Readers as Agents of Social Change among Eastern European Jews in the Late Nineteenth Century, *Gender & History*, Vol.9, No.1 (April 1997), 60-82.

[2] Cf. especially Iorga's studies 'Ce carte învățau odată femeile le noi' (Women's education in the past), *Floarea Darurilor*, An I, no.3 (1907) 129-45, and *Femeile în viața neamului nostru - chipuri, datine, fapte, mărturii* (Women in Romanian history- portraits traditions, testimonies) (Vălenii de Munte, Tipografia 'Neamul Românesc', 1911).

Education in the Eighteenth Century: boys' and girls' schools

After its modest earliest recorded beginnings in the seventeenth century, with Slavonic as language of tuition and the church as main patron, the expansion of education in the Romanian principalities started to benefit from state intervention in the eighteenth century, gaining momentum from the 1820s and the 1830s onwards. Church-funded elementary schools between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries were presumably mainly aimed at producing priests, and as such they probably did not admit girls. The same can be assumed of classes organised by the princely chancelleries and county authorities ('dregătoriile ţinutale') to train civil servants and copyists ('dieci'), mainly in the use of Slavonic, Greek and Latin.[3] From the eighteenth century onwards, throughout the Phanariot period (1711/1714 - 1821), what can be termed 'state education', as opposed to private tuition at home, was principally due to the initiative of reformist Princes and it exclusively recruited boys and young men. Enlightened Phanariots such as Grigore Ghica (1728-9, Moldavia), Mihai Racoviţă (1741, Wallachia), Alexandru Ipsilanti (1779, Wallachia) provide some of the most notable examples of Phanariot largesse in terms of establishing and funding schools, as well as of importing from Constantinople and from Central and Western Europe a view of educational needs and curricula which was more comprehensive than the sometimes meagre offer of small church and monastery schools.[4] Alexandru Ipsilanti, for instance, founded in 1779 the School of Saint Sava (later to become the Academy of St. Sava, in Bucharest), funded from taxes levied on monasteries (10,000 lei annually) and offering to 75 students state grants that comprised a daily allowance and free clothes twice yearly.[5]

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[3] Giurescu and others, *Istoria învăţămîntului din România*, pp. 35-39.

[4] Grigore Ghica founded schools in Iaşi (1728-29) which offered free tuition to nobles and commoners alike, Cf. Nestor Camariano, Ariadna Camariano-Cioran (eds.), *Cronica Ghiculeştilor - istoria Moldovei între anii 1695-1754* (The Ghica chronicle: a history of Moldavia from 1695 to 1754) p. 287; for Mihai Racoviţă, see list of teachers and their wages at the schools he established in Bucharest in 1741, in George Potra (ed.) *Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului Bucureşti 1634-1800* (Documents relating to the history of Bucharest 1634-1800) (Bucharest, 1982) Doc. 143, p. 178.

[5] Constantin C. Giurescu, 'Un remarquable Prince Phanariote: Alexandre Ypsilanti, voévode de Valachie et de Moldavie' in *Symposium.L'Époque phanariote* (Thessaloniki, 1974), pp.61-69. The school of Saint Sava was reorganised in 1818 by the Transylvanian scholar Gheorghe Lazăr as the first institution of higher education with tuition in Romanian.

The history of the most famous schools in the Principalities, the so-called 'Princely Academies' ('Academiile domneşti') is fairly well-documented.[6] Originating in the schools founded in the seventeenth century by the Romanian Princes Vasile Lupu (ruled 1634-1653 in Moldavia) and Şerban Cantacuzino (ruled 1678-1688 in Wallachia), the 'academies' were destined for the sons of élite families, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries offered courses at primary and intermediate levels in subjects such as grammar and basic literacy in the first cycle and logic, rhetoric, physics, mathematics, astronomy, 'the making and unmaking of things ('despre naşterea lucrurilor şi desfacerea lor', i.e. probably chemistry), Greek drama, patristic literature and the works of the Greek historians in higher cycles.[7] The language of tuition was first Slavonic, then Greek - as were all members of staff during the Phanariot period - and finally Romanian, mainly after the Organic Regulations ('Regulamentele Organice') of 1831, which made teaching in the vernacular obligatory.

As they gradually grew in the 1820s and 1830s, especially from the early nineteenth century onwards, the 'academies' evolved into institutions of higher education proper and started offering courses in science (mathematics, geometry, trigonometry, geodesy) and in technological subjects such as topography and engineering, as well as in law and teacher training. The orientation towards a more practical education had to grapple with the difficulties raised by the absence of a scientific and academic vocabulary in Romanian for subjects previously taught in Greek or French. The first class of 'land surveyors' ('ingineri hotarnici') that graduated in Iaşi in 1818 under the supervision of Gheorghe Asachi, as well as the engineers, jurists and teachers who completed the courses offered in the same period by Gheorghe Lazăr in Bucharest marked the earliest attempts at modern higher education in Romanian.[8] Although both schools had to close down in the aftermath of the anti-Ottoman revolt of 1821, they helped establish a model

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[6] A. Camariano-Cioran, *Academiile domneşti de la Bucureşti şi Iaşi* (The Princely Academies in Bucharest and Iaşi) (Bucharest, 1971).

[7] Giurescu and others, *Istoria învăţămîntului*, pp. 67-68 and 72-73.

[8] More on Gheorghe Asachi, Gheorghe Lazăr and their schools in Nicoale Isar, *Principatele române în epoca luminilor 1770-1830 - cultura, spiritul critic, geneza ideii naţionale* (The Romanian Principalities in the age of Enlightenment, 1770-1830 - culture, critical spirit, the national idea), (Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 1999), pp. 13-18 and 32-49.

and the general principles for higher education in Romania, and both were revived after 1848. The drive towards a more specialised and pragmatic higher education is also illustrated, for example, by the existence in 1835 of a school of 'agriculture' in Pantelimon (Bucharest), or by experiments with a school of 'arts et métiers' in Craiova, destined for the military.[9]

Intermediate and higher education for men in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Romania were driven both by the general Enlightenment ideal of education as a way to individual and national progress, as well as by the pragmatics of land administration (hence, the need for land surveyors) and by a gradually expanding economy. Pleas for the improvement of schools and educational facilities and for well-trained teaching staff were abundant in the petitionary literature of the period (memoranda, petitions, decrees, etc), as Vlad Georgescu has shown for the period 1748 to 1831, but the need for educating women was slow to capture the attention of theorists and legislators.[10] According to Vlad Georgescu, the earliest texts voicing this need belong to the educationalist and teacher Eufrosin Poteca and date back to 1818, 1825, and 1827 respectively, but it was only in 1848 that the equal entitlement to education of both sexes was proclaimed officially and was placed on the political agenda of the forty-eighters and of subsequent governments.[11] Occasional texts referring to women's education, such as Ion Heliade Rădulescu's editorial to the first issue of his paper *Curier de ambe sexe* (1837), emphasised strongly the necessity for girls to be educated, but, perhaps not surprisingly, continued to link it to their future roles as mothers of decent Christians and worthy citizens.[12]

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[9] Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria învățămîntului românesc*, (Bucharest, 1928), pp. 201 and 217.

[10] Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria ideilor politice românești, 1749-1831* (A History of Romanian Political Ideas) (Munich, 1987), pp. 239-46.

[11] Georgescu, *Istoria*, p.241. For some of the original texts, see Eufrosin Poteca, *Cuvinte paneghirice și moralnice*, 1826 (Library of the Romanian Academy, Shelfmark: I 54675). Cf. also N. Isar, 'Concepția iluministă a lui E. Poteca în baza discursurilor sale din anii 1825-1826', *Revista de filozofie*, 12 (1965) (reference in Georgescu, *Istoria*, p. 208, no pages given). For some personalities of 1848 in Wallachia and some of the issues raised by the revolution, see Chapter eight.

[12] I.E. [Ion Heliade Rădulescu], 'Femeile sau cugetul acestei foi' (Women and the spirit of this paper), *Curier de ambe sexe*, 2 (1837), pp. 43-48, quoted in Ștefania Mihăilescu (ed.), *Din istoria feminismului românesc, Antologie de texte (1838-1929)* (Polirom, Iași, 2002), pp. 55-59.

The development of girls' education in the period preceding 1848 remains to a large extent a matter of conjectures based on scant and dispersed data which suggest that, in spite of state intervention in the field of education, women remained largely on the margin. And, while little can be said of the education provided to girls in rural areas or to those from underprivileged urban backgrounds, élite women continued to be educated at home or in private boarding schools ('pensions'), according to their parents' wealth, ambitions and awareness of their daughters' educational needs.

Early Evidence of Female Literacy

The earliest observers who scrutinised not only the way Romanian women dressed and presented themselves in public, but also the way they spoke and behaved, were, predictably for this period in Romanian history, the foreign travellers. The jaundiced and malicious Jean-Louis Carra (1743-1793) believed that the women of Moldavia and Wallachia, even those from the ruling families, were completely illiterate, slightly less ignorant, in fact, than most of the men among 'the barbaric and imbecilic crowd of monks, populace and boyars' that he encountered there.[13] He attributed the lack of learning to the vigilant eye of the church, and especially of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which censored the imports of foreign books, especially from Roman-Catholic Countries. Authors such as Voltaire were notably on the Patriarchate's black list, according to Carra, visibly annoyed that French influence could not spread more rapidly in the Principalities, as it did in fact later, especially after the French Revolution and after 1800.

During a short stay in Bucharest as guest of the controversial Phanariot Prince Nicolae Mavrogheni in 1786, Lady Elizabeth Craven (1750-1828) admired the native and Oriental fashions, but suspected that women smoked when alone in their private quarters and expressed doubts that the fair ladies she met could read or even sign their

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[13] *Histoire de la Moldavie et de la Valachie, avec une Dissertation sur l'état actuel de ces deux Provinces,* par M.C... qui y a fait un long séjour; Nouvelle édition corrigée et augmentée des *Mémoires historiques et géographiques,* publiés par M. de B* * * à Neuchâtel, 1781, second edition (first edition Paris, 1777), p. 212 and 216.

names.[14] The historian Nicolae Iorga, who in the early twentieth century launched a passionate crusade for the recognition of women's contribution to Romanian history, countered with his discovery of the signature - in French - of one of Prince Mavrogheni's daughters on the blank inner cover of a novel by Mme de Genlis.[15]

Although the lives of women in previous centuries are and are likely to remain obscure, there is evidence of female literacy and even learning for earlier and pre-Phanariot periods: Safta, the widow of the former native Prince of Moldavia Gheorghe Ştefan (ruled 1653-1658), used her own seal even after her husband's death and signed herself in Cyrillic, while Ruxandra, the daughter of Moldavian Prince Vasile Lupu wrote and signed 'in her own hand' a document dated 23 May 1686.[16] In the same period, Antimia, daughter of chronicler Grigore Ureche, had a reputation for being 'accomplished and learned',[17] while for the early eighteenth century, Roxanda Mavrocordat, daughter of a Phanariot Prince with a degree in medicine from Padua, is considered the first woman with medical training in Romania and practised among her close family circle.[18] While such fragmentary evidence can by no means provide an accurate picture of a period's levels of literacy, it shows nevertheless that, both in Constantinople and in the Principalities, there was some scope for and interest in educating the young women of the élite, thus partly disabling bleak visions of absolute dark ignorance such as Carra's and Craven's.

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[14] *Letters from the Right Honourable Lady Craven to His Serene Highness the Margrave of Anspach during her Travels through France, Germany, and Russia in 1785 and 1786* (sec. ed., London, 1814), pp. 253-54.

[15] N.Iorga, 'Ceva mai mult despre vieaţa noastră culturală şi literară în secolul al XVIII-lea' (More on Romanian culture and literature in the eighteenth century), *AAR*, Memoriile secţiunii istorice, Seria II, Tom XXXVIII, no.17 (1916), p.796.

[16] Sorin I. Iftimi, 'Sigilii de doamne şi domniţe ale Moldovei' (Seals of Ladies and Princesses of Moldavia), *Arhiva genealogică* II (VII), 1-2 (1995), pp. 292-301.

[17] Iorga, *Istoria învăţămîntului românesc*, p. 29.

[18] Dr. Pompei Samarian, *Medicina şi farmacia în trecutul românesc* (Medicine and pharmacy in Romanian history) (Bucharest, 1938), vol. 1, p. 24.

Transylvanian Schools for Boyar Girls

Nicolae Iorga presents evidence for the existence in the late eighteenth century of a school in Moldavia which took in both boys and girls and which, in the midst of a Greek-dominated education system, also offered tuition by native French and German teachers.[19] There is also evidence that, at a relatively early time, when study abroad was problematic even for boys - as the Phanariot régimes placed at least a theoretic ban on foreign travel and education - élite families in Wallachia and Moldavia could choose, if they had the money, to send their daughters to the Ursulines' School in Sibiu (Hermannstadt, in Transylvania, then under Austrian occupation) or to several Austrian-sponsored church schools in Lemberg (Galicia). In the late eighteenth century and first decades of the nineteenth, the trading house of Hagi Popp in Sibiu, which, as was shown in the previous chapter, provided the newly consumerist Romanian boyar class with their Western luxury goods and books, also offered more unusual services such as sending to Wallachia governesses, tutors, gardeners and cooks or arranging for boyar children to be placed in schools abroad. The rich extant archives of the house, as analysed by Nicolae Iorga in several works, provide some information on the students and curricula of the schools in Sibiu and Lemberg. The first offered classes of foreign language, piano, dance, and needlework, while in the latter, according to Iorga, the girls learnt a sort of Franco-Polish jargon and acquired 'an almost total lack of concern for things Romanian'.[20] Iorga's criticism, however, does not take into account the fact that, at a time in Romanian history when public expressions of national awareness and allegiances were still rather muted, and boys themselves studied for long tedious years the intricacies of Greek grammar rather than more practical or Romanian-oriented subjects, even the rather mundane schooling of the Ursulines could be an advantage for a noble Romanian girl.

We do not know what the censorious Patriarchate of Constantinople thought of such educational escapades in Catholic territory. We know, however, from fragments of correspondence between fathers, Ursuline nuns from the Sibiu monastery ('cloşter' as

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[19] Iorga, *Istoria învăţămîntului românesc*, p. 133.

[20] Iorga, *Istoria învăţămîntului*, p. 134; Iorga, *Femeile în viaţa neamului nostru*, p. 141.

the boyars referred to it in corrupt German), and the Hagi Popp house, of the importance that some high-ranking Romanian boyars attached to their daughters' education. One such father, the influential 'clucer' Constantin Varlaam, was involved in a lengthy (1802-1806) and worried exchange of letters with the nuns and with Hagi Popp himself on the subject of his daughter, Maria, a student in the monastery. He insisted particularly on his daughter learning French and piano and was devastated when the schoolmistress wrote in French that 'Mimi', whom the father showered with gifts of dresses, pomegranates and other delicacies, behaved badly, threw tantrums, and looked, according to the nuns, like a small, fat 'crapeau' (toad) for not wearing her corset. Apart from her inadequate dress sense, she was accused of speaking in a hybrid German-Hungarian-Wallachian-French dialect of her own, rather than learning any of the languages properly. This exercise in character assassination was probably meant to secure the payment of a higher fee from the doting father, who confessed to Hagi Popp that he wanted his daughter 'to learn and refine herself, so that I should get praise in Wallachia, that her studies were not in vain and, moreover, that I should rejoice when I hear people praise her for her accomplishments in all that is good and noble'. By February of 1805, Mimi was still quite ignorant of French, according to visitors who met her and reported to the despairing parent, and Varlaam threatened to stop his payments to the school, but in March 1806 she wrote to her proud father in 'passable' French and 'rather good' German, as he put it in a letter to Popp. After this date the 'Mimi dossier', together with the protagonist herself, vanishes for ever into one of the black holes of history and it is not known what social or marital gains she scored after such turbulent schooling. [21]

Maria Varlaam was not the only Wallachian boyar daughter to study with the Sibiu Ursulines. According to the Hagi Popp correspondence, for instance, the 'Paharnic' Pană Costescu paid lovingly for his two (presumably orphaned) nieces to get educated there between 1808 and 1813. Soon, in an age when the Romanian Principalities started to accept the idea of upward mobility, even well-to-do merchants such as Ioan Băluță could send their daughters to the school. In 1818, he had the same lofty ambitions for

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[21] N. Iorga, 'Contribuţii la istoria învăţămîntului în ţară şi în străinătate 1780-1830' (Contributions ot the history of education at home and abroad), *AAR*, Memoriile secţiunii literare, Seria II, Tom XXIX (Bucharest, 1906-7), pp. 35-38.

his 'Zmărăndiţa' as any of the boyar fathers: he asked Hagi Popp's wife to arrange for the girl to study French, the piano and dancing.[22]

Education in Private Boarding Schools

It is to be presumed that only a minority of the noble or rich middle class families were able or willing to send their daughters abroad. In any case, foreign teaching staff was plentiful in the Principalities: the French Revolution and its aftermath led to an exodus of French men and women who found employment there as tutors and governesses to the children of boyar families, but could also work as secretaries, gardeners and cooks. German tutors were not uncommon, but French remained well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the preferred foreign language - almost a second language - to any respectable family in search of a good education for their children. The account books, invoices, and correspondence of the period have preserved many of these tutors' names, as well as, in some cases, their duties and incomes. Thus, the account books of the Moldavian family Conachi show that, in 1793-5, Ileana, daughter of 'spatar' Gavril Conachi, was educated at home alongside her three brothers by a small army of French and German tutors whose wages vaned mysteriously, presumably according to the level of tuition, age of pupils or workload. Thus, the 'Dascăl Lidu' (tutor Ledoulx) was paid 30 lei per month in 1793-4, compared to the 15 lei monthly paid to 'Antoni Marieş Franţuzu' (Antoine Mériage the Frenchman) in 1794 or to the 10 lei paid each month to 'Constantin Franţozu' (Constantine the Frenchman). 'Mihel Neamţul' (Michael the German) had the honour of having three pairs of German boots made for him by the estate's shoemaker in addition to his wages in money.[23]

A good governess must have been more difficult to find than a boys' tutor, as suggested by the wages paid in 1813 to Elisabeth de Belleville (née Arnoult), governess to the daughter(s?) of the Phanariot Prince and legislator Scarlat Callimachi. She received 250 Dutch *gulden*, almost twice the income of her compatriot Doret, the sons' tutor. A

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[22] Iorga, 'Contribuţii la istoria învăţămîntului', p. 42.

[23] Iuliu Tuducescu, 'Ştiri nouă despre familia Conachi' (New information on the Conachi family), *Revista istorică*, An V, 1-2 (Jan-Feb. 1919), pp. 96-100.

document has preserved a summary of her duties. She was to teach 'moral education, *bon ton*, embroidery, French, grammar, reading, writing, epistolary style, elements of history, geography and mythology'. She was also in charge of recruiting competent teachers of music, drawing and dance.[24] This, as suited the family's rank, was much more than the Sibiu Ursulines' curriculum, and more than most of the private - mostly French - 'pensions' that mushroomed between roughly 1800 and 1850 were prepared to offer. French and piano remained the core of female private schooling throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

The Dangers of 'Pension' Education

By the 1810s and 1820s, fluency in foreign languages and piano-playing came to be regarded with suspicion and hostility by the more conservative-minded, presumably as symbols of the dangers of women's emancipation or as anti-national, corrupting, Westernising influences. The instrument itself - referred to for a long time as 'clavir' in the period - started to be imported in the late eighteenth century, possibly even earlier.[25] We have seen in the previous chapter how, even among the élites, the instrument could be seen as a threat to traditional ways of life, yet piano-playing remained for many a symbol of status and of female accomplishment. In 1809, an ethnic Romanian 'ispravnic' of a Wallachian county, Gheorghiță Drugănescu, was attempting to hire - via the Hagi Popp house - the services of an in-house piano teacher for his young wife. The annual income offered was 500 thaler, and the teacher was to be lodged for free in the boyar's house.[26] In the very wealthy household of 'vornic' Mihalache Sturdza, future Prince of Moldavia in 1834, living expenses were high, partying and gambling frequent, but cultural pursuits were not neglected. Not only were French books and foreign newspapers being purchased, but the house staff for the years 1818-19 included a 'klavir-meister' to repair and fine tune the 'clavir', as well as a piano teacher for the

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[24] Iorga, *Istoria învăţămîntului românesc*, p.159.

[25] Iorga, *Istoria înăţămîntului*, p. 132.

[26] Iorga, 'Contribuţii la istoria învăţămîntului în ţară', p.34.

boyer's pampered and luxury-loving young wife, Safta. He received 13 lei and 90 'paras' monthly.[27]

Criticism of the frivolous education based on ornamental accomplishments received by young ladies at home or in private 'pensions' could be grounded, however, not necessarily in fears of moral laxity or of 'denationalisation', but in the discontent of husbands, fathers, children and other male relatives of young women who were completely unprepared for the practicalities of running large, cumbersome urban households and country estates. In 1817, as the wife of the Moldavian boyar Ioan D. Ghiţescu died giving birth to her fourth child, the father promptly remarried to a much younger woman educated in a private 'pension' in Odessa. 'She was a woman educated [...] with French and piano lessons', one of Ghiţescu's sons ruefully remembered later in his *Memoirs*. 'She had father build a house in Dorohoi, and settled into a life of amusement; she had her own four-horse carriage, separate from father's, as well as her own coachman, manservant, numberless maids, and lived like a princess'.[28] The bitterness that the stepson could not conceal even in his adult age was caused not only by the new wife's conspicuous consumption, but also by the neglect of the children after the re-marriage. The new-born girl, Profira, was given in the care of a wet nurse away from home, while the boys, Ghiţescu says, were subsequently raised at home 'in great absolutism and brutality', although the father showed interest in their formal education

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[27] Gh. Ungureanu. 'Însemnări pe marginea unui manuscris cuprinzînd cheltuielile unei case boiereşti din Iaşi în anii 1818-1819' (Notes on a manuscript list of expenses of a boyar household in Iaşi in 1818-19), *Studii şi articole de istorie*, II (1957), pp. 369-378. For comparison, one can cite other incomes and fees received by occasional or permanent staff in the Sturdza household: the Metropolitan (*vlădică*), called to do a 'reading' at the bedside of the ailing youngest son, received 70 lei only for this visit. The chamber maid received 350 lei annually. One 'arnăut' (Albanian soldier) employed seasonally to oversee the work of men in the vineyard was paid 50 lei in the month of July 1819, and one washerwoman, employed to wash only the servants' clothes, was paid an annual 30 lei. Subscription to foreign-language newspapers cost 180 lei for six months, while 37 volumes of works by 'Ruso' (sic!) were acquired in May 1819 for 375 lei. These figures were selected by Gh. Ungureanu from a manuscript register of expenses in the Iaşi Archives. More details on the Sturdza household in my chapter 'Women, Households and Gypsy Slaves', p. 172 sqq. Also in Moldavia in the 1830s, the Bogdan family spared no expenses to educate their daughters at home and in foreign private pensions: their account books for 1839 show total expenses of 157,000 lei, of which 444 lei was the wages for 3 months paid to a 'Madame franţuşcă', probably the governess of Smărandiţa, their youngest daughter. In 1848 she was in a pension in Russia (in St. Petersburg or Odessa) and received 7400 lei for maintenance. For comparison, in 1847, the Balş household's total expenditure had been of the order of 238,000 lei. [From Vasile Panopol, *Moldovence eroine puşkiniene* (Moldavian women Pushkin met), Bucharest, 1952, ms, Library of the Romanian Academy, Shelfmark Ac-64-Panopol, pp. 45-9].

[28] A.D. Xenopol, 'Din amintirile unui boier moldovean din jumătatea întâi a veacului XIX – Dimitrie Ghiţescu 1814 -1878', Extract from *AAR.*, Memoriile secţiunii istorice, seria II, Tom XXXII (1910).

both at home (with teachers of German and Russian, deemed necessary given the strong links with the increasingly influential neighbouring empires) and abroad. 'Abroad' meant just across the border at the *Normal Schule* in Chernowitz, the choice being dictated, Ghiţescu says, by the fact that 'apart from schools abroad, there was no systematic and regular education at home', i.e. in early nineteenth-century Moldavia.[29]

The Ghiţescus' case was probably more one of emotional deprivation than an illustration of the negative effects of 'pension' education on women and this type of schooling continued well into the nineteenth century. And so did the ambivalent attitudes towards it: while many parents seemed to covet for their daughters the intellectual polish and social competencies offered by the private schools at home and abroad, the more practically-minded deplored the absence of an education with an emphasis on domestic science and even on basic medical knowledge. By the 1830s and 1840s the Wallachian capital Bucharest still teemed with private schools, such as the French 'pension' of J.A.Vaillant[30] which at least offered free tuition to girls from less privileged backgrounds, and other rival establishments such as Comble-Bonnet. Iaşi boasted the first private girls' school founded and run by a Romanian, the 'sluger' (low-rank boyar) Teodor Burada, alongside the French 'pension' Garet and many others.[31] The daughter of Grigore Ghica - the future Prince of Moldavia in 1849 - attended the courses offered by the latter, and subsequently went on to the Institute Van Demergel in Vienna, becoming fluent in French, German, English, Italian, as well as acquiring some knowledge of literature, music and the arts. Somehow, along the way, she must have received at least some medical training, as we find her later at the head of the 'Saint Spiridon' Institute for Midwifery and Foundlings, one of her father's foundations, as well as advising midwives and young mothers on her own Moldavian estate.[32] Her son,

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[29] Xenopol, 'Din amintirile', p.1009.

[30] See also his study *La Romanie ou histoire, langue, littérature, orthographie, statistique des peuples de la langue d'or, Ardialiens, Vallaques et Moldaves, résumés sous le nom de Romans*, 3 volumes (Paris, Arthus Bertrand), 1844.

[31] Cf. N. Iorga, *Femeile în viaţa neamului nostru*, pp. 144-45; Iorga, *Istoria învăţămîntului românesc*, pp. 222-23 and 241. For more details on the private 'pensions', their staff and curricula, see also Iorga, 'Ce carte învăţau odată femeile le noi', *Floarea Darurilor*, A n I, 3 (1907), especially pp. 134-37.

[32] Radu Rosetti, *Amintiri* (Memoirs) (Bucharest, 1925), pp. 44-7.

the historian Radu Rosetti, recalls how she made huge efforts in the 1850s and 1860s to educate village women and to eliminate the dangerous practice still recommended by rural midwives of having the abdomens of women who had just given birth wrapped up in clay.[33]

Women and Medical Knowledge

Such grotesque practices and the high mortality they triggered ensured that the issue of the professional training of midwives became a particularly vexing one in the early nineteenth century, attracting protests and proposals from the public and the medical profession alike. Published in 1827, *Douăsprezece învăţături folositoare pentru femei* (Twelve teachings of use to women) by the doctor Neculai Kiriacopol (d.1842) is probably the best known and one of the earliest of the educational publications destined for women. Published in Iaşi (Moldavia) - the first handbook of midwifery and child care in Romanian - it addressed itself to expecting mothers, young mothers, midwives and wet nurses alike, recommending what the Greek-born, Viennese-educated doctor believed were the latest and best norms of hygiene, gynaecological and obstetric practices in Europe at the time. The author attempted to persuade women that birth pain was natural, and recommended the founding of a school for midwives, (the earliest one was set up in 1839 in Bucharest)[34] whose almost total ignorance (including the neonatal 'clay wrapping' mentioned above) he deplored throughout the book. Dr. Kiriacopol recommended breast-feeding by the mother herself, but also gave advice for the selection of a good wet nurse ('mancă') in cases where milk was lacking or the mother was ill: she 'should not have bad drinking habits, she should not have intercourse with males, or be inclined to sleepiness', the doctor advised with involuntary humour. But, on a more serious note, he also counselled on difficult births, recommending the presence of a doctor, as well as offering very modern-sounding suggestions on dieting and herbal remedies for the quality of the new mother's milk and for her and her baby's general health.

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[33] R. Rosetti, *Amintiri*, p.53.

[34] Dr. Pompei Samarian, *Medicina şi farmacia în trecutul românesc* (Medicine and pharmacy in Romanian history), vol. 2, pp. 283-84.

The Uses of Women's Education

An increasing interest - from the early decades of the nineteenth century onwards - in educational issues and in the future of girls as wives and mothers expressed itself in publications such as Ecaterina Faca's translation into Greek of Jeanne Louise de Campan's *De l'éducation* (1824) as *Pentru educaţia copiilor s.c.l. de o mamă pe care experienţa a povăţuit-o a adăuga şi de la sine oarecare însemnări* (For the education of children by a mother whom experience has counselled to add her own observations).[35] Although the circulation of the book in Romania remains an unknown and its impact impossible to assess, its publication suggests that there was an audience for educational literature of this kind, at least among élite women, who needed a rationale for their domestic roles as wives and mothers. Indeed, Mme Campan's views on girls' education were entrenched in the post-Revolutionary ethos of a retreat into the domestic sphere, discouraging intellectual over-achievement or professional ambitions in young women. Nevertheless, as the daughter of an aristocratic family ruined by the Revolution, she was aware of the need for impoverished young girls to be able to support themselves and as such her curricula - both in theory and in her own practice as a teacher - did not exclude academically serious and practical subjects for girls.[36] The same concern for a more pragmatic education informed various Romanian proposals and plans for female education: the well-travelled Wallachian boyar Dinicu Golescu (1777 - 1830) advertised in 1826 the opening of a school on his estate near Bucharest where boys and girls would be educated in separate buildings, and tuition would be free for commoners, including Gypsy slaves. 'The girls [...] apart from bookish learning, will also concern themselves with what they have to know for the management of the house, so that they may be of help to the parents, and grow towards the spirit of hard work and thriftiness that they

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[35] Romanian translation published in Bucharest, 1839. Ecaterina Faca was the mother of the early historian of East-European women Dora D'Istria, as shown in chapter one, pp. 11-14.

[36] Madame Campan, designated to organise schools for Napoleon's legionnaires, also dreamed of a women's university. See Karen Offen, *European Feminisms 1700-1950* (Stanford University Press, 2000), p.75. For the views of Jeanne de Campan and of another French educationalist, Pauline Guizot, see Karen K. Garver, 'Madame Campan, Madame Guizot, and the education of women in Napoleonic France', in Joyce Duncan Falk (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, Omaha, Nebraska, 1-3 November, 1979 (Santa Barbara, California, 1981), pp. 58-66.

will need when they get married' the advertisement read.[37] The school, however, never took off.

Dr. Constantin Caracaş (1773-1828) - the head doctor of the city of Bucharest - (the same who, as shown in the previous chapter, warned against the health hazards of Oriental-style dress) recommended the opening of state schools for the daughters of nobles, merchants and other well-to-do social groups in his monograph on Wallachia, published in 1830. Referring to the period 1800-1828, the Greek-born doctor (trained in Vienna like his Moldavian peer Dr. Kiriacopol, see above) commented on the inadequacy of a language-centred education system and, while commending girls for the elegance of their Greek and French, insisted on a more pragmatic curriculum in which moral education and economics should have a central place, alongside literature, the arts and domestic science:

> 'Endowed with such an education, adorned with knowledge and liberated from prejudice, they will show themselves in society as good wives and tender mothers' preached the doctor, a well-known admirer of Rousseau. '[...] Apart from this, they will know how to preserve their own health and how to manage their precious time and loathe indolence; showing contempt for dress and the adornment of their bodies, they will endeavour to enlighten their spirit, and strive for the improvement of their homes and for a free and natural education of their children'.[38]

These and other such suggestions were probably heeded and the existing, scattered and lacunary evidence, suggests that some progress was being made in the education of both boys and girls towards tuition in Romanian and towards a greater emphasis on practical disciplines, including, as we have seen in the case of the boys, professional training in engineering, farming, medicine and other technical disciplines. Thus, in 1840, the private school founded in Wallachia by a lady Ştirbei (presumably the wife of the ruling Prince Barbu Ştirbei) made a good impression on a young Transylvanian visitor: 'It can serve as an example to all the ladies, it is being praised by everyone, being remote from

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[37] George Fotino, *Pagini din istoria dreptului românesc* (Pages from the history of Romanian law) (Bucharest, 1972), p. 275.

[38] Pompei P. Samarian (ed.), *O veche monografie sanitară a Munteniei de Dr. Constantin Caracaş (1800-1828)* (Bucharest, 1937), p.130.

the emptiness of fashions, luxury and corruption; the students live in holy moral simplicy and the school is concerned to offer education to girls from poorer families'.[39]

The Beginnings of State Education for Girls

As far as state education is concerned, the first state-sponsored girls' school in Wallachia was that established around 1835 by the aforementioned J.A.Vaillant and his wife, followed by an institute of education for poor girls founded by the Princess Elisabeta Ştirbei and by a second girls' school in 1850.[40] Iaşi had preceded the Wallachian capital by opening its first state school for girls in 1834, an initiative of Prince Mihai Sturdza.[41] The school made steady progress, with 72 students in 1835-7 and 81 in 1839-40. The poet Gheorghe Asachi, the Prince's adviser in matters concerning education, decided to select each year four of these students to attend the courses of the teacher training state school ('école normale'), with stipends paid by the state, thus opening up, presumably for the first time, career opportunities for young women in Romania.[42] Sturdza's school itself showed a marked improvement both in terms of recruitment (the girls, aged from 8 to 15, came from underprivileged urban families, rather than from noble backgrounds) and in terms of subjects taught. Basic reading, writing and numeracy skills were taught in Romanian (according to the provisions of the Organic Regulations[43]) and in Latin, rather than in Cyrillic script, as had been the case previously. Church attendance was central, but so was practical instruction in 'darning, shirt- and dress-making, embroidery, tapestry, and other knowledge useful for home economics', fabric dying, stain removing and even millinery. In 1838, special collections of 'Holy Histories' and 'Moral Histories' were compiled by Asachi's very literate daughter, Ermiona, later to become the wife of Edgar Quinet, the professor at the Collège de France and one of the patrons of the Romanian

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[39] N. Iorga, *Istoria învăţămîntului românesc* (Bucharest, 1928), p. 217.

[40] Cf. Iorga, *Femeile în viaţa neamului nostru*, p.144 and Iorga, 'Ce carte învăţau odată femeile la noi', *Floarea Darurilor*, An I, 3 (1907), p. 141.

[41] Iorga, *Femeile*, pp. 148 sqq.; Iorga, 'Ce carte învăţau odată', pp. 139-40.

[42] Iorga, 'Ce carte învăţau odată", p. 139. Iorga does not mention a date for the start of the teacher training school, initially recruiting only young men.

[43] For the Organic Regulations, see p. 40, 48, 50.

'forty-eighters'.[44] End-of-year exams were introduced, as well as material incentives for the students in the shape of an award - a sort of 'dowry' - of 1,000 lei each. The existing evidence points to similar developments in Bucharest and, especially after the 1848 revolutions, in County and provincial towns.[45]

At this stage, consistent quantitative information, for instance on the numbers of girls being taught as against the number of boys at any given period between 1750 and 1850, and any other measurable indicators of the trends in female education (and even of the general levels of literacy and education in society at large) are fragmentary and uncentralised. Thus, for instance, in Iaşi in 1839, out of the 148 children educated in private schools, 60 were girls. In 1842, Moldavian schools ran by priests on the premises of churches were attended by 291 schoolchildren, among whom 36 were girls.[46] The archives have preserved lists with these figures, but do not always mention the social background of the students. The teachers were a mix of French, Germans, Greeks and Romanians. Another document concerning the school at Târgu Pietrii (County of Neamţ), ran by Gheorghe Papadopulo in 1842, gives some background information on the students, mainly from middling and merchant families (e.g. 'Catinca a neguţitoriului Panaite Mătăsariu' - Catinca, daughter of the (silk?) merchant Panaite Mătăsariu), but no details on the disciplines taught. In private pensions, these continued into the 1840s to be the same mix of basic language and domestic skills. Thus, in Roman in 1842, at the 'Pension' of 'Jan Franţuzu' (Jean the Frenchman), a certain Smaranda, daughter of the 'serdar' Andronachi Baltac, was taught French, German, Moldavian, 'clavir' and needlework. In the same establishment, the son of a major learnt French, German and arithmetic, and two other boys were offered geography classes in addition to the former three subjects.[47]

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[44] More on Ermiona Asachi below, pp. 166-67.

[45] Iorga, 'Ce carte învăţau odată femeile le noi', *Floarea Darurilor*, An I, 3 (Bucharest, 1907), pp. 139-43. Cf. also 'Notice sur l'état de l'instruction publique en Moldavie 1841' in Theodor Codrescu (ed.), *Uricarul - sau colecţiune de diferite acte care pot servi la istoria românilor*, vol. 9 (Iaşi, 1887), pp. 31-32.

[46] Ghe. Ghibănescu and Traian Ichim, 'O pagină din istoria învăţămîntului particular din Moldova (A page from the history of private schools in Moldavia) Extract from *Buletinul Ioan Neculce*, (Iaşi), VI (1927), pp. 1-2.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Hovering between the élitism of the predominant Greek and French language private education in 'pensions' and at home on the one hand, and the initially timid attempts, starting with the 1820s and 1830s, at creating state schools and devising more pragmatic curricula fit for women on the other, Romania did not produce until later in the nineteenth century the women writers, salonnières, journalists, and militant feminists that Paris, London, St. Petersburg already had. However, one has to place this absence in a context where the concept of secular literature as a profession was still lacking and professional male writers themselves were only just starting to appear. It is quite possible that the reason for the backwardness of female education in early nineteenth-century Romania was due as much to the general inadequacy of the political structures and the absence of a 'public' in the West-European sense as to the conservative patriarchal outlook of the political agents. [48]

Women in the Theatre

However, changes were being introduced, albeit slowly. The period from around the 1820s to the 1840s and 1850s was a time of new ideas, projects and reforms which gradually imposed the concepts of education for the lower classes and mass education in the vernacular, and rendered acceptable the possibility of a woman earning her own living by teaching, writing, acting or practising a para-medical profession such as midwifery. Of these, a career as an actress - inexplicably stigma-free - seems the only one open to upper class women, and the first woman who took up acting around 1821 was a Romanian, Marghioala Bogdan, the wife of a 'serdar'.[49] She performed, initially in Greek, in the theatre of 'Cişmeaua roşie', built in Bucharest by Princess Ralu Caragea in 1817. Right from its initially timid beginnings, theatre, both in Greek and later in Romanian, was perceived by the members of the élite who encouraged it, as an eminently political medium that could provide a voice for national consciousness and an arena for nation-building. Around 1821, theatre in Greek was hijacked by the Greek diaspora in the Principalities to feed the patriotic enthusiasm needed for the cause of

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[48] For the beginnings of writings as a profession, see Leon Volovici, 'Quand l'écrivain roumain devient professionnel', *Cahiers roumains d'études littéraires,* 1/1978, 14-26.

[49] Dimitrie C. Ollănescu, 'Teatrul la Români', *AAR.,* Memoriile secţiunii literare, Tom XX (1897-98), p. 37.

Greek independence. Later, the Romanians, initially silenced by the Greeks' achievements and by their own lack of literary and dramatic tradition, were quick to learn how to exploit theatre for their own national projects. The Philharmonic Society (Societatea filarmonică) co-founded in 1826 by the liberal boyar Ion Cîmpineanu and other progressive members of the élite such as Dinicu Golescu and others, had its own conservatoire which trained the first generation of Romanian actors. The Society's main objective was the encouragement of theatre and literature in the vernacular.

Women played an important part and, according to the theatrical reviews of the 1830s, were doing a better job than their sometimes lacklustre male colleagues. Frosa Vlasto, in particular, a young girl of probably modest background, educated in a boyar household and later in the pensions of Duport and Vaillant in Bucharest, became one of the first female students of the conservatoire at the age of 15. She rose to national, and later to European fame, as an opera singer under the name 'Mme Marcolini', married a Romanian boyar, and in her widowhood enjoyed a long career on the Romanian stage under her married name, Eufrosina Popescu. The period's theatrical newspaper columns have preserved the names of other actresses, such as Ralița Mihalache, who joined the Philharmonic Society around 1830, while still illiterate, compensating with her stage presence for the lack of a good education, and enjoyed a long career until retirement in 1881.[50]

A few women thus found employment, creative fulfilment and even, as in the case of Frosa Vlasto, good marital opportunities in the theatre, but the majority remained generally confined within the traditional roles of accomplished young lady or astute household administrators and careful mothers.

Women as Translators

By the 1820s and 1830s, the 'accomplished young ladies' had classical and recent French literature on their bookshelves, apart from the latest Parisian and Viennese fashions and coaches (see previous chapter). A Miss Marieta Cantacuzino had the

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[50] Ollănescu, 'Teatrul...', pp. 110-15.

fourteen-volume *La vie et les amours du chevalier de Faublas*, the works of Delille, an adaptation in French of Ovid's *Ars Amandi* and Fénelon's *Télémaque* in an Italian translation among the books in her library.[51] The example of Ecaterina Slătineanu shows how widespread French was becoming as a language of commercial, political and intellectual communication. She ordered her luxury items from the Zenobie Popp trading house in Vienna in self-assured and elegant French: 'un lit de repos en mérino rouge, un divan et six chaises en popeline, deux fauteuils' she ordered in 1831 and 'une femme de chambre et une bonne cuisinière' in 1832, signing herself in French 'Catherine Slatinian'.[52] Other, more academically-minded, young women employed their multilingual skills to provide the earliest, sometimes published, translations, first into Greek, later into Romanian. Roxanda Samurcaş translated S. Gessner's pastoral *Erast* (The Lover) into Greek in 1819, when she was only thirteen years old. The Romanian translation of the same work by another woman, Zoiţa Grigoriu, followed in 1822.[53] Ralu Suţu, the daughter of the ruling Prince Alexandru Suţu, translated, also into her mother tongue Greek, the work of the Marquise de Lambert (Anne-Thérèse de Marguenat de Courcelles, Marquise de Lambert), *Avis d'une mère à sa fille et à son fils* (1734). The translation was published in Venice in 1819.[54] As in the case of the translated work of Mme Campan later in 1839 (see above, page 159, note 36) nothing is known about the circulation, readership or possible debates around this work, which cautiously argues in favour of intellectual growth for women, but condemns the frivolity and the lack of 'pudeur' of late seventeenth-century French society.[55] It presumably

[51] George Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române* (Bucharest, 1941), p.70.

[52] Nicolae Iorga, *Studii şi documente*, vol. 8 (Bucharest, 1904), pp.76-77.

[53] Dr. Pompei Samarian, *Medicina şi farmacia...*, (Bucharest, 1938), vol. 2, p.129.

[54] I. Bianu; Nerva Hodoş (eds.), *Bibliografia românească veche*, vol. 3, Fasc.I-II, 1809-1817, (Bucharest, 1912), pp.318-19; ms. now at the Romanian Academy under shelfmark CRV I 1054. *Avis d'un mère à sa fille* was the posthumously published (1734) work of Anne Thérèse de Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de Lambert (1647-1733) recommending a University education for women. The Marquise de Lambert had a famous salon frequented by scholars and litterati such as François de Salignac de La Mothe Fénelon (1651-1715), Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757), Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755) et Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux (1688-1763). She was also the author of *Réflexions nouvelles sur les femmes* (1727).

[55] For the work and activities of the Marquise de Lambert see also E. McNiven Hine, 'Madame de Lambert, her sources and her circle: on the threshold of a new age', *Studies on Voltaire*, cii (1973), pp. 173-91.

responded in Romania to some of the educational needs of mothers, governesses and teachers in the period, as well as to a more general societal aspiration to a more ascetic morality.

Ermiona Quinet and Maria Rosetti

Ermiona Asachi, the daughter of Gheorghe Asachi, Moldavian poet, teacher and publisher (b. 16 Dec. 1821 - 1900) was brought up in a highly elevated intellectual atmosphere and started her public life with translations into Romanian of educational and moral literature. Translations of Rut Pichler's *Poema biblică cu trii idile* (A Biblical poem and three idylls, Iaşi, 1839) and *Istoria sfîntă pentru tinerimea moldo-română*, (Holy histories for the Moldo-Romanian youth, signed Ermiona Muruz, Iaşi, 1840) were her contributions to the activities of Moldavian schools initiated by her father.[56] More significant for the cultural and political climate of 1840s Moldavia was her translation of Silvio Pellico's *Doveri degli Uomini*, (1834) as *Despre îndatoririle oamenilor* (On the duties of men, Iaşi, 1843).[57] Although nothing is known about the circulation or reception of the book, Ermiona Asachi's choice of text reflects perhaps her wish to offer the Romanian reading public a book which combined moral education, Christian piety and an exalted view of womanhood. Pellico's short book includes chapters on topics such as: Celibacy; Respect for Women; The Holiness of Love; Defiled Loves; Respect for Young Girls and other Men's Wives; Marriage; Parental Love. In his view, civilisation was based on a chivalric code of honour, which encompassed the cult of the 'female sex, as the sex of all kindnesses, peaceful virtues and the graces'.[58] One can easily see why Ermiona Asachi, future wife of Edgar Quinet,

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[56] Future research should highlight the contribution father and daughter made to Romanian identity and Romanian literature at a time when modern Romanian language itself was under construction. Gheorghe Asachi is known to have encouraged theatrical performances in Romanian and the use of Romanian in schools and higher education. He was unafraid to experiment with the language and, according to V.A. Urechia, he was the author of the first sonnet in Romanian. Cf. V.A. Urechia, *Istoria românilor*, Tom X, Partea A (Bucharest, 1900), pp. 453-54.

[57] Silvio Pellico, Piedmontese poet (1789-1854) a member of the Carbonari, and a representative of the Risorgimento, imprisoned by the Habsburg authorities for his revolutionary activities, an experience he narrated in *I Miei Prigioni* (1832; translated into English in 1853 as *My Prisons*). He is also the author notably of the romantic tragedy *Francesca da Rimini* (1818).

[58] Silvio Pellico, *Despre îndatoririle oamenilor*, Romanian translation by Ermiona Moruz, Iaşi, 1843, p. 112.

student and friend of Jules Michelet, would side with Pellico in his criticism of Voltaire's burlesque poem *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (1762) as well as in his cult of woman as loving mother and heroic saint. However, the new valuation of woman as a worthy contributor to social life continued to be embedded in the rather conservative vision of women's place acceptable in Romania at the time. Both Ermiona Quinet Asachi and her contemporary Maria Rosetti espoused in theory and practice a view of women as heroic consorts of great men, as devoted mothers and as 'sisters' of the revolution.[59]

Mary Grant, born in Guernsey in 1819, of a Scottish father and a French mother, became the wife of the Romanian 1848 revolutionary and ideologue C.A. Rosetti. Her status as a British citizen and sister of the secretary of the British Consulate in Bucharest was crucial in freeing her husband and the other hostages after the crushing of the revolution in the Wallachian city.[60] Although she later became the editor of a short-lived periodical for women, *Mama şi copilul* (The Mother and Child, first issue 1865) and a journalist in her own right, it was essentially as a faithful spouse, mother and helper that she earned a characteristically effusive eulogy from Jules Michelet - the Romanian revolutionaries' mentor - in *Légendes démocratiques du nord* (1853).[61] Michelet's narrative of the way in which Maria shared her husband's revolutionary ideals blurs private lives and public issues in a rather melodramatic way when he portrays Maria as giving birth to her daughter Sophia Libertate ('Liberty', in short Libby) on the very morning when the revolution of 1848 started in Wallachia, while her husband paced nervously up and down the room, looking at his watch. The new-born child herself is presented as the 'revolution' made flesh, the dangerous spirit of a new age to which Maria literally gives birth. Maria's portrait in Romanian ethnic dress as 'Revolutionary Romania' by the revolutionary and painter Constantin D. Rosenthal must

[59] A prolific writer later in life, Ermiona Quinet devoted herself to the celebration of her husband's life and activities in works such as : *Mémoires d'exil* (Paris, 1868), *Edgar Quinet avant l'exil* (Paris, 1887), *Edgar Quinet depuis l'exil* (Paris, 1889); *Cinquante ans d'amitié, Michelet-Quinet (1825-1875)* (Paris, 1893).

[60] C.A. Rosetti (poet, journalist, theatre critic, Mason, revolutionary, politician, republican) belonged to the core group of the 1848 revolutionaries. He was a member of the provisional government and the editor of the first newspaper of the Wallachian revolution, *Pruncul Român*. After the defeat of the revolution, Rosetti, along with the Brătianu brothers, Nicolae Bălcescu, and others, went into exile in France, where he actively popularised 'la question roumaine'.

[61] *Légendes démocratiques du Nord*, Paris, 1852; second edition Presses Universitaires de France, 1968.

count as one of the most successful visual emblems of 1848 in Romania as well as the pictorial expression of emerging nationalist feelings (see Ill. 6). [62]

Conclusions

The early women translators in the Romanian Principalities were mostly young women from Phanariot circles educated in Constantinople with foreign teachers and governesses. Isolated examples such as those presented above, while unable in themselves to illustrate the levels of literacy among the ethnic Romanian upper classes, serve at least to puncture the traditionally negative view of the Phanariot régimes and culture as anti-European, backward and heavily church-controlled. As I have argued in my introductory chapter, it is the now more or less accepted revisionist view that the Greek Phanariot culture in the Principalities did not encourage exclusively the ecclesiastical literature sponsored by the Orthodox church, but served to a great extent as a channel for West European, mainly French, ideas into late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Romania.

It is difficult to say what exactly motivated upper and middle class Romanian families to provide their daughters with the arts-based and sometimes impractical education offered by the pensions and the foreign teachers in a country still in the grip of conservative mentalities and cultural prejudice. It was presumably peer pressure from some of the more cultured Phanariot circles, from the French-educated Russian armies of occupation and from West European diplomatic staff and visitors that convinced Romanian boyars such as Constantin Varlaam and Pană Costescu (see above, pp. 153-54) that a cosmopolitan, multi-lingual education would at least make their daughters more eligible, placing them on a level with the more polished European aristocracy. Their letters concerning their daughters' education are as full of references to 'enlightened Europe' as are the contemporary boyars' orders for pineapples, Viennese carriages and English cutlery discussed in the previous chapter, and this suggests that

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[62] Over the last two years, it has been impossible to see copies of Maria Rosetti's journal *The Mother and Child*. The copies at the Romanian State Archives were out for binding in 2001, only to become unavailable in 2003 due to the poor quality of the paper. At the Romanian Academy, copies of the journal are stocked under a Shelfmark which is currently (2003) unavailable to readers, presumably due to the recent move of the Library into a new building.

'female accomplishments' were in many cases no more than status emblems. The cases of 'Mimi' and 'Zmărăndiţa' (see above, pp. 153-54) may appear élitist, isolated, exceptional and with insignificant impact in a general context of mass illiteracy and ignorance, but are probably sufficient evidence of the modest beginnings that kickstarted a steady progress towards recognition of a woman's intellectual abilities and of her right to education and even to exercising a profession.

The incomplete evidence assembled so far suggests that as girls' education expanded and the intake of students widened to include the daughters of rich merchants, professionals and other members of the emerging middling and increasingly of the lower classes, curricula too became more comprehensive, evolving from the areas of artistic 'accomplishments' to include more serious theoretic subjects, practical domestic knowledge and even professional skills, mainly in midwifery, teaching and the dramatic arts.

However, while young men of aristocratic and middle class backgrounds were by the mid-nineteenth century more or less firmly steered towards the study of science, law, engineering and other such practical subjects, girls' education remained for a longer time a mixed bag of training in literature, the arts and domestic skills, as evidenced, for instance, by the extant notebooks of Anica Gane (b.1827-d.1893). Her father, a Moldavian boyar and police prefect ('aga'), sent her to the French pension of Mme. Haddig in Iaşi, where she studied, from 1841 to 1845, French, history, geography, arithmetic, grammar, drawing and domestic science. Her notebooks, as recorded by her grandson, the historian C. Gane in 1943, contained wildly mixed notes in very good French on various subjects such as Greek mythology, as well as recipes, written in Cyrillic, for cakes, medicinal brews for intestinal spasms, snake bite, toothache and abdomen pain. Her scrapbook for 1846-47 also survived. In it she translated into French novellas by her brother-in-law, the writer Costache Negruzzi, as well as her own very romantic poetry and short stories, which she signed self-consciously: 'Anika de Gane'.[63]

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[63] C. Gane, *Amărîte şi vesele vieţi de jupînese şi cucoane*, (Sad and merry lives of ladies and gentlewomen) (Iaşi, 1943), pp. 360-61, pp. 363-72, p. 375.

She married at 22, had three children and enjoyed a long and conscientious life of complete devotion to husband and family.

A refined education for a girl in the early and mid-nineteenth century was almost invariably of the kind that produced at best good wives and mothers and competent administrators rather than witty salonnières or emancipated writers. Very few were the Greek/Romanian women who, like Ermiona Asachi and Maria Rosetti, gained public recognition for their contribution as intellectuals and mothers, and even fewer those who, like Dora D'Istria (see chapter one, pp.11-14), were able or bold enough to transgress the barriers of traditional morality and leave behind constricting marriages to live a life of intellectual and professional achievement as single women.

Chapter Eight

Women, Households and Gypsy Slaves

A bunch of keys, handed to the young wife after the wedding and worn by her on her belt, was the symbol of her new powers as mistress of the house in the early modern, boyar household: she was the one who administered the supplies and oversaw all operations in the kitchen and the work of the servants and the Gypsy slaves.[1] Early nineteenth-century registers of lands and expenditure provide a good picture of the size of landed possessions and houses as well as the number and wages of paid workers ('poslușnici' and 'scutelnici'), the numbers of serfs, clients and Gypsy slaves and the nature of their activities. Less often, they also offer information on the boyar women's involvement in the daily running of these extended and busy domestic worlds.

Women at Home

The owners of three large estates in the county Dîmbovița (Wallachia), comprising a vineyard with wine-making facilities, houses, gardens, a whole village with a pub, a grocery shop and two shops in Bucharest, the 'Pitar' Dimitrie Piersiceanu and his wife Sultana derived good incomes from cattle, farming, the sale of wine, forestry and money-lending, as shown in their account books for the period 1804 to 1839.[2] They had 'poslușnici' (servants, paid workers and clients) working as household managers ('isprăvnicei'), cattle farmers, coach drivers, handymen, fishermen, publicans and shoemakers, who re-paid the boyar in cash, in labour or in kind in exchange for the state taxes he paid on their behalf. The house staff included a butler, a cook, a male servant, a nurse, a barber, a governess, and various tutors for Greek, French and German. The

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[1] Constanța Ghițulescu, 'Familie și societate în Țara Românească (secolul al XVII-lea)', (Family and society in seventeenth-Century Wallachia), *Studii și materiale de istorie medie*, XX (2002), 89-114, p. 100.

[2] '1804 mart. 1. Condică de toate pricinile și trebuințele casii mele. Dimitrie' (1 March 1804. A register of all the affairs and needs of my house. Dimitrie), in Sergiu Columbeanu, 'O condică de socoteli dintre anii 1804 și 1839' (An account book from the years 1804-1839), an extract from *Studii și articole de istorie*, vol. IV (1962). Interestingly, the register also lists incomes from the so-called revenue from 'pripasuri', i.e. from the sale of lost cattle and horses which boyar Piersiceanu, in his position as 'dregător al armășiei', was entitled to confiscate and either sell or demand taxes for. Salaries were by no means high: in 1810 a coach driver was paid 115 thaler, which bought him 360 loaves of bread and 62.5 'oca' (approx. 175 pounds) of meat.

'arnăut', an armed soldier whose duty it was to guard the household and act as bodyguard when the boyar was in transit, was one of the highest paid among the domestic staff. In 1818, he was paid 200 thaler annually, in addition to a pair of boots, two pairs of 'iminei' (breeches, a part of his uniform), as well as money for the barber, which shows that he was an important status symbol as well as performing a necessary duty at a period in time when the security of households and travellers was under threat from bandits, fires and raiding Turks.[3]

The household of 'vornic' Mihai Sturdza, future Prince of Moldavia in 1834 stood at the very top of Moldavian society in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Sturdza himself, and his first wife Elisabeta (Safta) Roset, married in 1817, symbolised the alliance of some of the oldest and most influential families in the principality: the Sturdzas, Rosettis and Callimachis. Mihai was the son of a Maria Callimachi and Safta was the niece of the former prince Scarlat Callimachi.[4] Their household, like most boyar households of the time, were extended structures, built around the nuclear family and comprising other relatives, teachers, governesses and secretaries, clients, servants, Gypsy slaves and others linked by economic and political interests to the head of the house. (The term used routinely in the period's document to denote this expanded household was 'casa'.) However, the household was also shaped by family tradition, particularly its connection to the former Prince Scarlat Callimachi, initiator of the *Callimachi Code* (1817), a link which meant that the future Prince Sturdza placed himself in a tradition of reformist rule and intellectual distinction which he had to emulate. The presence of a certain 'Monsiu Flechtenmacher' in the pages of a register of household expenses for 1818-1819 (see note 12) shows that one of the jurists who had worked on the Code was also probably employed as tutor to the children of Mihai Sturdza, 'epitrop al şcoalelor' (approx. minister for education) from 1814 onwards, and keen on providing an excellent education for his own offspring.[5] Smaller boyars, such

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[3] *Ibid.*, pp.10-14.Compare the wages of the 'arnăut' to the 50 thaler of the 'ispravnicel', who also received a pair of boots and was exempt from tithe, and the coachman who received 120 thaler. Tutors' salaries were entered only beginning with the year 1826.

[4] Gh. Ungureanu, 'Însemnări pe marginea unui manuscris cuprinzînd cheltuielile unei case boiereşti din Iaşi în anii 1818-1819', *Studii şi articole de istorie* II (1957, Bucharest), 369-378, p. 370. Cf. also entry in Octav-George Lecca, *Familiile boiereşti romăne* (Bucharest, 1899), second edition, Editura Muzeului Literaturii Române, Bucharest c. 2002 (date unspecified). I have used the second edition.

[5] See relevant information in my chapter on education 'Good Wives and Tender Mothers', p. 161.

as Grigorie and Scarlat Plitos, are also mentioned in the register with sums of money paid to them for various jobs they performed for the great boyar Sturdza, only two of the small army of faithful clients which constituted the future Prince's power base.[6]

The complex household, comprising many landed estates, a vineyard, and houses in the country and in Iaşi, as well as dozens of servants and paid workers ('posluşnici'), must have been difficult to manage. Unfortunately, the register does not offer any information on the role the young wife of Mihai Sturdza may have had in overseeing domestic activities in this extended and busy household, but we get a glimpse of her budget and of the ways she disposed of it. She had money in cash, but we are not told whether she received it from her husband or from her native family. She spent money quite liberally on purchases of luxury furs and cosmetics, but she also bought on credit, which led her husband in 1819 to fix the sum allocated to her at 1,000 lei monthly, a decision which may have led, among other factors, to their early divorce. Tantalisingly, the register also lists expenses for theatrical activities, presumably in an improvised home theatre, built by an 'engineer' and guarded by 'Arnăuţi', soldiers from the court, paid with 'baksheesh'. This, together with purchases of foreign books and newspapers and payments to music tutors and piano tuners, referred to in a previous chapter, suggests a house with a vivid cultural life, but we do not know to what extent Safta Sturdza involved herself in theatrical performances.[7]

The archival sources are more generous for a later period in Mihai Sturdza's life, in 1849 and 1850, when, with his second wife, Smaranda, and their children, he lived in Bucharest after his reign in Moldavia.[8] The five detailed account books kept between July 1849 and December 1850 contain a regular daily entry which shows that all supplies for the kitchen were ordered and payments were made by 'Her Ladyship'

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[6] According to some sources, Plitos was the Hellenised name of a Romanian peasant (Pletosu) raised to boyarhood by Mihai Sturdza himself. Grigore Plitos remained faithful to Prince Sturdza until his death. See the discussion of the diary of Elena Hartulari in chapter nine and note 15, below.

[7] Ungureanu, 'Însemnări', p. 375. More information on incomes paid to tutors in the Sturdza household in chapter seven, pp. 155-56.

[8] Zamfira Pungă, 'Cinci condici de cheltuieli ale familiei domnitorului Mihail Sturdza' (Five account books of the Sturdza family), *RIS*, I (1996), pp. 437-506.

('Măria Sa Doamna') herself. But, apart from this generic reference, many entries show in specific detail that she supervised everything from purchases of educational materials for the children to the making of 'jam and preserves'. Although he was now only a 'former' Prince, Mihai Sturdza's household was still being referred to as 'His Highness' court' and the number of boyar clients, as well as domestic staff suggest that it was indeed a miniature court over which Smaranda ruled with an ever-watchful eye: she paid doctors and handymen, as well as paying for all household items, from candles to furniture. She checked and paid the cost of servants' clothes, the expenses for a 'baby Bădulescu', presumably the child of a boyar client, and she paid the barber as well as made donations to the poor via the wife of another client of the Sturdza family.[9] She supervised payments for Gypsy fiddlers playing at parties, of taxes to the Russian and Austrian postal services, for medical prescriptions for ailing staff, charity donations to the poor at Easter and Christmas, as well as expenses for a wedding in a client boyar family (the wedding of 'the daughter of Arghiropulo'). This is quite an impressive list, suggesting the wide-ranging extent of her authority in the household. [10]

The Miclăușeni estate in the county of Roman (Moldavia) belonged to the Sturdza family from the seventeenth century onwards. In the 1840s its owners were Alecu Sturdza and his wife Catinca, also a Sturdza by blood. It was the only one of their numerous lands which they did not farm out and which they ran directly and with a firm hand. The products of its lands, pastures, gardens, vines, distilleries, fish ponds and beehives were meant not only for the estate's own subsistence economy or as supplies for the Sturdza household in Iași, but also for export abroad and for sale at fairs organised on the premises, and it was probably one of the best administered farming-capitalist ventures in the land at the time. The boyar's wife, Catinca, was closely involved in the running of the business and kept a watchful eye on the detailed registers and the correspondence with the trusted 'vătaf' (overseer) Teofan.[11] When away, her

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 453.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 454, 457, 460, 464, 469.

[11] Costin Merișca, 'Organizarea moșiei Miclăușeni și a vieții de la conac în deceniile 4 și 5 ale secolului trecut' (The organisation of Miclăușeni estate and manor life in the 1830s and 1840s), *RIS*, II-III, 1997-98, pp. 69-90. It is interesting - from the viewpoint of a study of 'clientelar' relations in the Romanian ancien régime - that the influential Alecu Sturdza obtained the rank of 'sluger' to reward the competent

husband himself would send her detailed instructions. Thus, he wrote in 1839: 'I believe that now, when the beehives are about to be cut, you will check some of them at least, if not all, and you will have a detailed register written, a copy of which you will bring when you come yourself. Likewise, you will order, while you are there, lists of all the buffaloes and bulls to be made, copies of which you will bring as well; in the future, before the day is out, as soon as the sows give birth, the number of new-born piglets should be written down, as well as the time of their birth'.[12] Every by-product was used with impressive thriftiness: the fat from slaughtered cattle was used for making soap and candles on the premises, while the sediments left after making spirits were mixed into the food of bulls and pigs. Catinca Sturdza also oversaw activities at a small linen manufacture on the estate, where Gypsy workers produced linen and cotton items, napkins, tablecloths and towels. Both the German 'meister' and the Gypsy boys were under close scrutiny for the quality and quantity of their produce. If things went wrong, she ordered the boys to be 'beaten soundly and horns placed on their heads'.[13] 'Sound beating' seems to have been the fate of any servant who disobeyed or who did not perform their jobs competently. However, Catinca seems to have been prominent in dispensing 'affectionate' care to her workers as well as demands and hard discipline. Records from 1841 show that she ordered Teofan to distribute 'opinci' (peasant sandals) to the farmers and clothes to the workers at the linen manufacture, and in 1842 she ordered five barrels of wine to be given to the 'csángós' who had brought over their allocation of yarn.[14]

The Ladies of the House and their Gypsy Slaves

When Lady Elizabeth Craven visited Bucharest in 1786 on her way back from Constantinople to Vienna, she attended a banquet given in her honour, at which, as she wrote, 'detestable Turkish music was played during the whole supper, but relieved now

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work of his vătaf. *Ibid*, p.76. Detailed information on farming and other activities at Miclăuşeni are preserved in documents at the State Archives in Iaşi.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[13] *Ibid.*, p.81.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 75. The 'csángós' (Rom. *ceangăi*) are Roman-Catholic Hungarian-speaking inhabitants of Moldavia.

and then by Bohemians, whose tunes were quite delightful, and might have made the heaviest clod of earth desire to dance'.[15] It turned out that the Gypsy musicians were not only there to provide background music at court dinners, but also to accompany the guests, as they were taken back home at night in a carriage attended by a wild assortment of courtiers.

At around the same time, a French diplomat in Moldavia described the Gypsies as follows: 'Should one wish to see the most absolute freedom in complete servitude, and total joy without the enjoyment of one single civil right, one must look at the Gypsies who roam in the fields or hide in the towns of Moldova [...] the thieves and the assassins come from this class of people.[...] They are all dedicated thieves, especially of horses, and a great number of these miserable creatures fill the salt mines and city jails'.[16]

For Thomas Thornton, too – a British trade representative in Constantinople in the 1790s, these 'chinganehs' (as he called the Moldavian Gypsies on the basis of their Romanian name 'ţigani') were 'the lowest of mankind: a propensity to irregular desires indicates itself from their tender years; they are of a spiteful and malignant disposition, slovenly in their habits, and universally thieves. [...] Offences of a serious nature, such as the stealing of cattle, high-way robberies, and assassinations are generally traced to the chinganehs'.[17]

For William Wilkinson (the British Consul General in the Romanian Principalities around 1814) the Gypsies were a public health hazard: 'The kitchens of the Boyars are,

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[15] *Letters from the Right Honourable Lady Craven to His Serene Highness the Margrave of Anspach during her Travels through France, Germany, and Russia in 1785 and 1786* (London, 1814), p. 253. For biographical details on Lady Craven, see Introduction to Part Two.

[16] Le Comte D'Hauterive, *Mémoire sur l'état ancien et actuel de la Moldavie, 1787* (Bucharest, 1902), pp. 105-7.

[17] Thomas Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey, or a Description of the Political, Civil, and Religious, Constitution, Government, and Laws of the Ottoman Empire* (London, second edition 1809), pp. 335-6.

from the filthy habits of the cooks, and the inattention of the masters, not less disgusting than the common receptacles of swine', he complained.[18]

Probably in most cultures and in all times, the Gypsies have attracted the same mix of fascination and revulsion as is suggested by this small selection of travellers' accounts. However, in Wallachia and Moldavia they were more than either picturesque figures in a landscape or abject, thieving, beggars. In the period under consideration, from around 1700 to 1855, they were a considerable economic and social reality. The management of the self-contained and self-sustaining households of the Romanian-Greek oligarchy of the period, some of which were outlined above, cannot be understood without the humble, but essential, presence and contribution of the Gypsy slaves.

The European Gypsies, it seems, were particularly prevalent in Eastern and Central Europe, forming about ten per cent of the population of the Romanian Principalities in the early nineteenth century.[19] Linguistic research indicates that they were originally Hindu tribes driven westwards by successive waves of early mediaeval invaders, notably Ottoman Turks and Tartars. In areas such as Moldavia and Wallachia, the Gypsies became enslaved by the local lords and they remained so until their official liberation of 1855.[20]

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the first written law codes of the Principalities established strict and sometimes complex rules and penalties for the control of the Gypsies' lives: their marriages, their relations with their masters, their sale, donation, and exchange were all codified in a way that left no doubt about their status as items in the noblemen's households.[21] Thus, for instance, Gypsy slaves could only legally marry with the consent of their owners. Admittedly, by the late eighteenth

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[18] William Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (London, 1820), p. 185.

[19] Neagu Djuvara, *Le Pays roumain entre Orient et Occident* (Publications Orientalistes de France, 1989), p. 270.

[20] For an outstanding recent study on the Romanian Gypsies (including the Gypsies of Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bukovina) see Viorel Achim, *Ţiganii în istoria României* (The Gypsies in Romanian history) (Bucharest, 1998).

[21] For an overview of the Romanian legal codes, see Introduction to Part One.

century, it was recognised that families should not be divided and that the woman followed her husband, but the Gypsy woman's owner had to be compensated either by the donation of another Gypsy woman by the husband's master or with money. As far as marriages between Gypsy slaves and non-slaves were concerned, these were normally considered illegal throughout the period. The Moldavian *Sobornicescul Hrisov* (1785) stipulated that couples thus joined in matrimony should be separated and in certain cases, the officiating priest should be defrocked. Yet, as I have suggested in chapters three, four and five, legal practice was regularly 'softer' than the letter of the increasingly obsolescent law. Gypsy owners and judges alike attempted to strike a balance between a view of slaves as work tools and a recognition of the fact that these Gypsy objects had private lives and rights of their own, and that these had to be considered with a certain respect, especially if one wished to enhance their productivity. Thus, for instance, one article of law revised in 1839 stipulated that a Gypsy slave who married a non-slave was subsequently considered free, and so were the children born of such a union.[22]

Such examples of humanisation in legal texts and practices became more frequent towards the mid-nineteenth century. But the texts that reveal with more poignancy the encroachments of a new sensibility and of new socio-political ideas upon the traditional severity of the law were not the state codes, but the tens of thousands of estate and family papers from the period, a significant number of which are still languishing in archives. Any enquiry into Romanian social history is plagued by the notorious silence of the writers of such papers with regard to their private lives and emotions. As I have suggested, one has to wait until the 1830s and 1840s for the emergence of a culture of personal letter-writing and personal memoirs in the Romanian Principalities. Therefore, the discovery of examples of privacy and intimacy in the earlier texts might be counted a small victory.

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[22] See 'Anafora' (Petition) of 1839 for the revision of the *Sobornicescul Hrisov*, 1785, in Andrei Rădulescu and others (eds.), *Sobornicescul Hrisov – ediţie critică* (Bucharest, 1958).

There were three main categories of Gypsies: the crown or state Gypsies belonging to the ruling Prince, the monastery Gypsies, and the privately-owned Gypsies of the boyar families. Changes in attitudes are easier to follow for the latter group.

Such was their economic value in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, Gypsies had to appear in any respectable and well-to-do girl's dowry. Their place in the dowry lists was probably dictated by the importance attached to them by the giver, but they usually made their appearance in an unintentionally humorous mix of frying pans, diamond rings, cattle, cutlery and bedlinen (see Appendix two). An early dowry list from 1658 of the rich Cantacuzino family of Moldavia mentioned forty-five Gypsy families being given to the new couple at the start of their new life, alongside large expanses of land and an Aladdin's cave of jewellery.[23] Another Moldavian dowry from 1771 starts with the jewellery and ends with '4 Gypsy souls'. In contrast, a 1785 dowry list starts with one estate and six Gypsy families, continuing with twenty mares with their stallion and twenty breeding cows.[24] Another Moldavian boyar's daughter received the following in 1780: '2 landed estates, 8 acres of vineyard, 15 Gypsy souls, 15 mares and one stallion, 250 lei for good quality bed linen, 1000 lei for a carriage and horse, and blessings from God and from us', the hopeful parents added at the very end.[25]

A dowry list of 1831, also from Moldova, but not specifying the social category of the family, starts in the normal, almost formulaic way for dowries of this period, with an icon of the Virgin Mary, as if to invoke protection for the new couple. The document is interesting especially for the information it gives on the skills of the offered Gypsies and on their future role in the new household: Ion the cook was married to Maria, the washerwoman. Lupu (the 'wolf') was the baker, and Vasile the coach driver.[26]

In 1754, the noble Moldavian lady Aniţa Palade had so many Gypsy slaves on her lands that she had a special register drawn up, with details referring to skills, jobs, and even

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[23] Theodor Codrescu (ed.), *Uricarul*, vol.XVI (Iaşi, 1891), pp. 201-10.

[24] L.T. Boga (ed.), *Documente basarabene*, Vol.1: Foi de zestre 1734-1844 (Chişinău, 1928), pp. 8-9.

[25] Codrescu (ed.), *Uricarul*, vol.XI (Iaşi, 1889), pp. 249-50.

[26] Boga (ed.), *Documente basarabene*, Vol.1: Foi de zestre 1734-1844 (Chişinău, 1928), p. 47.

whether they were married to her own Gypsies or to slaves belonging to others. Litigation among Gypsy owners was so common, on the one hand, and cases of runaway Gypsies so frequent, on the other, that such a register proved useful if the owners ever had to appear in court. Among the dozens of Gypsies listed in Aniţa's register are Ursul (the 'bear'), an iron smith, and his woman who, so the document recorded for posterity, was barren - a not unimportant detail, given that the Gypsies' breeding capabilities were potential economic assets for their owners. Other slaves listed were cooks, bakers, carriage-drivers, blacksmiths and locksmiths.[27] This does not exhaust the range of jobs Gypsies performed, and they even had titles that spelled out their specific skills: the 'ciurari' (pron.'tchourari') were the sieve-makers, the 'potcovari' made horse shoes.

The money value of the Gypsy slaves varied according to sex, age, state of health, and, above all, skills, but prices, or their equivalent in kind, whenever they were recorded in documents, were invariably high. Thus, in 1774 in Wallachia, a noble lady sold ten Gypsies to her brother-in-law at a price of three hundred thaler each. It was a considerable price when we reflect that the same brother-in-law acquired at about the same time one horse valued at twenty thaler, which means that the money value of one Gypsy was equivalent to that of fifteen horses.[28] Two years later, also in Wallachia, a coach costing only two hundred thaler was offered as an engagement gift, which gives some idea of the comparative value of these items. Much later, in 1831, a Wallachian doctor's daughter received in her dowry a Gypsy girl estimated at five hundred thaler, the same price as a diamond ring listed in the same document. [29]

In such circumstances, the language of the documents – whether they were dowry lists, bequests, inventories, or letters – could be heartlessly mercantile. The Moldavian document of 1765 referring to 'half of one Gypsy child' is notable for the casualness of

[27] Gh. Ghibănescu (ed.), *Documente româneşti 1723-1757*, Arhiva Muzeului Municipal Iaşi, Fascicula III (Iaşi, 1930), pp. 46-51.

[28] N. Iorga (ed.), 'Documente urlăţene', *Buletinul comisiei istorice a României*, vol. V (Bucharest, 1927) (1926 on inner title page), Doc. 207, pp. 265-6 and Doc. 210, p. 267.

[29] Vladimir Diculescu, *Viaţa cotidiană a Ţării Româneşti în documente 1800-1848* (Daily life in Wallachia in documents 1800-1848) (Cluj, Romania), 1970, pp. 182-3.

its 'pound of flesh' discourse. In that year, the noble widow Zmaranda Racoviţă signed an act of donation to a nearby monastery '...so that it be known that a certain Roman, Gypsy serf of the monastery Căpriana, having kept one of my Gypsy women, Tudora by name, had only one child while they lived together, named Vasile, and half of this child belonging to the monastery by his father and half mine by his mother, I have donated to the monastery the half that is mine, so that the monastery can now own the whole of the aforementioned Vasile, son of Roman and Tudora'.[30] The apparent callousness is probably involuntary, as Gypsies were generally taken for granted at this time as merchandise and disposable property. One is therefore heartened to come across the occasional document where the private language of sentiment attempts to puncture the cold indifference of the public commercial discourse.

Thus, in 1726 a noble widow, probably quite young, and terminally ill, freed Dobra, her Gypsy handmaid (and one of her children) who had looked after her as she lay ill: 'I have forgiven her' – the voice of the testament says in the period's idiom.[31] And although such cases were probably not frequent, they were by no means unheard of. The problematic nature of kindness to Gypsies is illustrated by a rather convoluted litigation among the members of a boyar Wallachian family in 1779, who all made claims and counter-claims for the ownership of an estate and a male Gypsy slave. In a written declaration signed by a lady of the family during the trial, she testified to a rather touching story that had been, deliberately or not, overlooked by the litigants: her sister on her deathbed had set free both the slave and his father, who had both loyally attended her as she lay dying from the plague.[32]

Some owners went to great lengths to secure their economic interests while also protecting their Gypsies' dignity. In 1780, Catrina Catargi, a young Moldavian widow with two children, was fighting bitterly over her dowry and inheritance rights with her late husband's brother. In long and desperate letters of complaint sent to the ruling Prince – the country's foremost and final court of appeal at the time, as I have

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[30] Boga (ed.), *Documente basarabene*, vol. III, Testamente şi danii 1672-1858 (Chişinău, 1928), p. 12.

[31] George Potra (ed.), *Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului Bucureşti 1634-1800* (Bucharest, 1982), p. 160.

[32] Iorga (ed.), 'Documente urlăţene', Doc. 219, pp. 271-2.

mentioned – she reminded him that he was not only the protector of widows and orphans, but also of certain legal and cultural traditions that governed the relations between noble owners and Gypsy slaves. She complained that her brother-in-law had forcefully taken lands and Gypsies that had belonged to her family and proposed to give her in their place deserted estates and alien Gypsy families, on whose loyalty she could not count. It is obvious from the detailed and passionate paragraphs she devoted to her family Gypsies that their importance lay not only in the economic need of a widow with two children. More profoundly, the young widow expressed an emotional concern for the fate of divided Gypsy families, viewed as almost a part of the family, as we can see from this shortened fragment from Catrina's rambling and slightly incoherent message to the Prince: 'he [i.e. the grabbing brother-in-law] kept another Gypsy lass and a lad who were raised by me in my household. [...] and for this [lass] whose mother and brothers are in my house, my heart bleeds to see her in his lordship's house and receive another in mine, and with pain in my heart I beg Your merciful and kind Highness, have pity on my tears, and let it be Your Highness' enlightened order that he give me that lass, not another, let him not take the support of my home, for I am a poor widow with small children, and this is my last wish'. The trial lasted one year and, on the recommendation of the Prince, the panel of high-ranking church officials and civil servants who conducted the investigations, finally decided, among other things, that the Gypsy girl should be returned to Catrina's house.[33]

Lists of revenues and expenses that have come down to us sometimes provide unexpected glimpses into the private world of the Gypsies. Thus, a list of expenses at a Moldavian landed estate for the years 1804-5 compiled by the landowner himself lists rewards in money and in kind for two Gypsy workers. One of them was Gheorghe the Gypsy coach-driver whose annual contract ensured that he was given clothes and that the boyar paid his annual tribute to the state in exchange for his services. One entry is for twenty thaler, a pair of shalvars and a coarse woollen cloth 'djubé', an Oriental-style overcoat, as payment for his services. In spite of these enticements, Gheorghe the coach-driver cut short his activities on that estate, as a final note in the book makes

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 307.

clear: 'He ran away on 16 July of the year 1804, eloping with Tudora, a woman Gypsy of his lordship 'clucer' Nicolae Zaroiene'.[34]

The documents have preserved rare instances of cases where Gypsy owners acknowledged and respected a Gypsy slave's right to a free, private life. In 1740 a Romanian boyar liberated a Gypsy male slave who had expressed the wish to marry a priest's daughter. The liberation papers given to the Gypsy also specified that his children would enjoy all the rights of free people.[35] Not all such love matches were possible, however, and cases of upwardly mobile Gypsies are rare.

Towards the mid-nineteenth century, as I have shown in chapter two, new opportunities for travel and study abroad led to the emergence of a younger generation of intellectually alert and possibly also emotionally better educated nobles who imported into Romania new humanitarian and liberal ideas, as well as a new approach to love and marital relations. Not only were such men less tolerant of social inequality and slavery, but they became more sensitive to the quasi-Oriental mystique of the Gypsy, especially of the young Gypsy woman. Historian Radu Rosetti, himself the descendant of one of the wealthiest land-owning family in Moldova, felt the need in 1922, when he published his *Memoirs,* to repent on behalf of the higher classes for what he called 'the darkest stain' on the social landscape of the 1820s and 1830s: slavery. According to information he had gained first-hand from his parents and grandparents, the charms of the young Gypsy girls had never been overlooked by the old-style, shalvar-clad boyars. One of the consequences of such aristocratic rights over the bodies of female slaves, Rosetti believes, was that the boyars' courts swarmed with servant girls who had little Gypsy blood and were in fact closely related to their owners.[36] But the brutality of those seigneurial exactions was no longer appealing to the younger noble men, touched by liberalism and the new Romantic sensibility. One of these new men, another Moldavian, the future poet George Sion (d.1892) encountered around the year 1840 one such Gypsy

[34] Ilie Cojocaru (ed.), *Documente privitoare la economia Ţării Româneşti 1800-1850* (Documents relating to the Romanian economy), vol.1, (Bucharest, 1958), Doc. 4, pp. 73-4.

[35] From Iorga., *Studii şi documente,* vol.V, p. 102, note, in G. Potra, *Contribuţii la istoricul ţiganilor din România* (Contributions to the history of the Gypsies in Romania) (Bucharest, 1939), p. 84.

[36] Radu Rosetti, *Amintiri,* first published 1922 (latest edition Bucharest, 1996), pp. 152-6.

girl, named Anca, with a suspiciously white complexion, green eyes, delicate feet, and a remarkable talent for singing and embroidery. A rarefied and passionate two-year relationship promptly started between the two, terminated only at the deathbed request of the poet's mother, who hoped for a socially acceptable match for her son. Today, Sion's memoir of this affair reads like a Mills and Boon novel. Here is an excerpt: 'I know that Anca, [...] threw herself with ferocious passion upon my virginal innocence. I know that Anca, in all those days when she used to sing to me and shed her tears on my knees, made me experience true love. I know that Anca, Gypsy and vagabond that she was, [...] proved to me that in her veins ran blood that betrayed an origin that was nobler than her humble condition'.[37]

The presence of Gypsies on boyar landed estates was still significant in the 1840s and 1850s and even after their emancipation, which testifies both to their economic importance and to their uncertain status, which kept them in dependency. Thus, for instance, on the Miclăuşeni estate of the Moldavian Sturdza family in 1850 there were no fewer than 832 Gypsies, who had a whole village allocated to them and paid an annual tax in exchange for their accustomed freedom to roam the country for most of the year. They were thus still in a semi-nomadic state and returned to the estate in the autumn to pay the tax and to have their chiefs confirmed by the boyar. From among these, and from the 153 sedentary Gypsies settled in a neighbouring village, the family recruited their servants for their country manor as well as for their house in Iaşi. The evidence suggests that sending Gypsy boys to learn trades such as manufacturing belts and leather-ware was another way of integrating them socially and of turning them into a sedentary, skilled workforce.[38]

By the time boyar Sion fell in love with his noble Gypsy girl, the campaign for the slaves' emancipation had already started. All state and monastery Gypsies were liberated by decree in 1844 in Moldavia and in 1847 in Wallachia. The final liberation of all privately-owned Gypsies came in 1855. According to a Moldavian daily

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[37] Gh. Ungureanu (ed.), *Familia Sion. Studiu şi documente*, (Iaşi, 1936), p. 127.

[38] Costin Merişca, 'Organizarea moşiei Miclăuşeni', *RIS*, II-III (1997-1998), pp. 72-73.

newspaper of 16 June 1856, 264 Gypsy-owners had agreed to liberate their slaves without the financial compensation offered by the Government.[39]

From the above account, then, it is possible to expand our view of Romanian women, from the highest to the lowest in society, from the owners to the owned. It is difficult to generalise about this relationship, except to note, perhaps, that what was always supposedly a purely economic and legal relationship, was also always one which involved human affections, but probably increasingly so with the passage of time.

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[39] Th. Codrescu (ed.), *Uricarul*, vol.X (Iaşi, 1888), p. 33.

Chapter Nine

Men about Women, Women about Men: Textual Representations of Gender

> *In all climates and all countries where women exert their due influence,*
> *urbanity and civilization will be carried to the highest possible pitch. The*
> *improvement of society will always be adequate to the justice and wisdom of its*
> *institutions respecting women. Where women are degraded from their rank in*
> *society, the European sinks into the Turk.*
> Thomas Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey* (1807; second.edition 1809), p.
> 195

Greek Literature in the Romanian Principalities: the Language of Misogyny

As I have suggested in chapter two, the Moldo-Wallachian society of the late eighteenth
and early nineteenth centuries was a hierarchical, fragmented structure, with complex
tensions running between classes and groups, such as between great boyars and inferior
boyar categories, between the Greek Phanariot court and the Romanian élites, between
Phanariot rulers and Ottoman overlords, and not least between a dominant and more
advanced Greek culture and nascent aspirations towards a national culture in the
Romanian vernacular. However, as Greek was the language of everyday
communication, of tuition, administration, diplomacy and literature, Romanian, written
in Cyrillic until 1860, remained comparatively underdeveloped and lacking in the
subtlety and flexibility required for a national literature to be able to flourish.

In this context, a neo-Greek literature produced in the Principalities by the Greek-
Romanian élite as well as by exiled Greeks residing there temporarily, provides the
almost exclusive narrative vehicle carrying that society's values, representations, beliefs
and prejudices. That literature - plays, stories and poetry - has survived mostly in
manuscript and was probably read in small coteries of boyars and literati, but was
substantial enough to project a broad view of Phanariot society, which included ways in
which men and women regarded each other. According to Dr. Lia Brad-Chisacof, the
translator and editor of eighteenth-century Greek texts produced in the Principalities, a
negative view of women was a constant theme, explored through female characters
whose behaviour, at its worst, seems to rehearse many of the attitudes and mores
highlighted in the internal archival documents presented in previous chapters. From the

male perspective of these narratives, women, whether Phanariot princesses, noble ladies, servant girls or shop owners, ruin their spouses with excessive purchases, take lovers, rebel against male authority, talk too much and complain incessantly about the limitations of their lives at home. The 'Gallant Story of Eumenia and Sapphiadis' by Constantin Rosetti (also known as Constantin Bibica), dating from the late eighteenth century, captures most of these themes.[1]

Written in a highly ornate style, the tale is set within the narrative framework of a 'Divan' of the Greek gods, attempting to decide whether it is women or men who most deserve to be allowed to rule in the world. Ares, speaking of physical power and decisiveness, favours men, while Eros supports women, who have the power of beauty on their side. However, they are unable to decide and, urged by the souls of dead men arriving prematurely in Hades on account of their unruly wives, the gods send Belphegor, the lord of the demons, to earth, with a mission to get married and live there for ten years, in order to discover the truth about women and married life. Assuming the identity of Sapphiadis, a handsome and rich young man, Belphegor arrives in a big city accompanied by two demon-servants, and ends up surrounded by males desperately searching for eligible husbands for their young womenfolk. The chosen one, for her reserved and delicate beauty, is Eumenia (approx. 'the delightful one'). The wedding is lavish and costly, with the bridegroom (supposedly a foreigner) being instructed to give presents to all and sundry, but especially to the bride's parents, sisters and brothers. What follows is ten years of slow erosion of the initial bliss, with Eumenia's sexual wiles by night obscuring for a long time the diurnal régime of marital torture. On her wedding night, she initially refuses herself until Sapphiadis agrees to pay the 'price of the bride's virginity' ('theoritra', see chapter three, p. 103). The rest of the marriage is an escalation of Eumenia's demands made in the name of her family's 'noble birth' ('eugenia'): the young wife aims to rule over her servants at the expense of her husband, she spends enormous sums of money and time on luxury purchases, and finally takes up as a lover the godfather of her own child. These traits correspond closely to some of the

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[1] I am indebted to Dr. Lia Brad-Chisacof from the Institute of South-East European Studies in Bucharest for sharing with me her expertise of neo-Greek literature as well as the text of this tale, to be published in her forthcoming *Antologie de literatură greacă din Principate* (An anthology of Greek literature from the Principalities), (Pegasus Press, Bucharest, 2003). Constantin Rosetti (died around 1798) belongs possibly to the Moldavian branch of the Rosetti family.

Phanariot social norms I have tried to present in previous chapters: the necessity for women to marry men of their own rank (chapter three), increasing consumerism (chapter six) and the decline of marriage and mores (chapter five). The theme of the bewildered foreign traveller to a new land, so widespread in eighteenth-century literature, is particularly well handled, and the woman's propensity to luxury is described with Swiftian faux naivety:

> The house was full of women workers, one for the bed sheets, another for the cushions, yet another for the gowns, one for duvets, another for ribbons, yet another for cleaning linen and another for polishing the bronze, and many others for other duties, so that Sapphiadis had to keep delving in his purse to pay the whole neighbourhood. She had other women, all paid, to adorn her hair, to paint her eyebrows, for preparing her water and making her face creams, and dyes and other cosmetics for the face. She had other women who dressed her at the baths, and others to smooth her garments and perform other useful duties, so that poor Sapphiadis was always wondering why a woman should need the toil of so many servants in order to show her face in the light of day.
> (my translation).

At the end of the appointed ten years, Belphegor and his servants, tired of earthly married life, return to Hades, confirming all the worst complaints of the dead husbands. The gods order 'the sins of women' to be written in gold letters on the gates of Hades so that all who enter there should get the message of Rosetti's moral tale: women are Hell.

Literary conventions and stock characters such as the 'nagging wife' or the 'henpecked husband' are not enough to explain why a significant body of literature within one or two decades should propagate such an unrelentingly negative view of women and marriage. Was life in the Principalities as decadent as these texts would have us believe? Some of the archival documents would seem to point to the decades around the year 1800 in Ottoman Europe as the terminal phase of a morally and politically corrupt ancien régime, exacerbated by women's moral decay and love of luxury, which is probably what these texts intend to present.[2] But, given that the West-European intellectual tradition habitually runs to extremes to present women as either 'corrupting' or 'civilizing' forces - a tendency no doubt shared by East-European writing - the satirical texts produced by the eighteenth-century Greek writers of the Principalities are

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[2] See, for instance, my reference to society under Prince Mihai Suţu in Chapter three.

perhaps best regarded as suggestive rather than conclusive evidence of historical realities.

However, we do have another text which, about three decades later, gives us a woman's view of married life. While Constantin Rosetti opted for the ostensibly 'unemotional' mediation of a moral fable, the woman writer of this text favoured the life story format and the language of 'importunate pathos'.[3]

The Memoirs of Elena Hartulari: the Language of Emotions

The Story of My Life by Elena Hartulari is the only known memoir by a Romanian woman dating from the early nineteenth century, written in Romanian (in Cyrillic script) and narrating events which took place in the Romanian lands.[4] The only other known example of a pre-twentieth-century memoir by a woman connected with Romania is the *Mémoires de la Comtesse Edling,* first published in Moscow in 1888. Ruxandra Edling, was born in Constantinople in 1786 to the General Scarlat Sturdza, governor of Bessarabia and his wife Catrina Moruzi, granddaughter of the Moldavian Phanariot Prince Alexandru Moruzi. Written in 1829, the *Mémoires* relate events of 1800-1825, and are therefore near contemporary to Elena Hartulari's personal narrative. The two texts could not be more different, however. Whereas Countess Edling (the wife of Count Edling, the representative of the Court of Weimar at the Vienna Congress) focused on the international manoeuvring surrounding the Congress of Vienna and on her close involvement with the Greek freedom-fighters' cause, hardly ever mentioning events in her personal life, Hartulari's is a very emotional account of her tumultuous life as a daughter, wife and mother. And while Edling's narrative remains mostly silent on her rather remote Romanian connection, Hartulari's is a rich source of information on life in Moldavia in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[5]

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[3] Braudel's formulation used in my Introduction to part two, p. 118.

[4] *Istoria vieţii mele de la anul 1801* (sic) was transliterated from the Cyrillic Romanian original by Gh. Ghibănescu and serialised in *Convorbiri literare,* An 58, oct.1926 - An 61, mai-aug.1928 (In fact, the memoir starts with the year 1810).

[5] *Mémoires* de la Comtesse Edling (née Stourdza), demoiselle d'honneur de sa Majesté l'impératrice Elisabeth Alexeevna (Moscow, 1888). Cf. also Alexandre Stourdza, *Oeuvres posthumes, souvenirs et portraits* (Paris, 1859) for reminiscences of the Countess Edling by her brother.

The daughter of a Greek Moldavian boyar, Grigori Plitos, trusted courtier of Prince Mihail Sturdza (ruled 1834-1849), Elena married an impoverished young Greek, Iorgu (Gheorghe) Hartulari, in 1827.[6] According to her memoir, the young husband gained appointments and titles (from 'serdar' in 1835 to 'aga' and 'postelnic' in 1847) mainly owing to her status as protégée of the Prince. More importantly, he also gained lucrative business connections and financial credit, she claims, through her family's and her own influence with the Prince.[7] She follows her husband's business dealings closely and describes his activities in great detail, giving the names of his associates, information about his business trips, about expenses for presents given to Romanian and Turkish officials, as well as to relatives, about the price of land, all recorded with the interest of a woman who knows that her family's security depends on her husband's efficiency and credit-worthiness.[8]

The memoir abounds in details of a family and domestic nature, describing illnesses and the death of children, breast-feeding and wet nurses, school fees, doctors and quack cures by old village women, but mixed in with family narratives that sound as melodramatic and implausible as anything from *Robinson Crusoe* or *Moll Flanders*. While nothing is known of Elena Hartulari's education or of the literature she may have been exposed to, her style betrays possible literary influences and her tone is very similar to the confessional tone of much eighteenth-century sentimental literature. The well-documented rise of a culture of sentiment and sensibility in late eighteenth-century Western Europe has been linked to the concomitant rise of women's literacy and of consumerism, including the consumption of literature.[9] But while quantitative information on economic growth, consumption, reading and the formation of taste in eighteenth-century France and England is now abundantly available, this is not yet the case for Romanian history. However, one can advance, if only tentatively, the

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[6] Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu (ed.) *Marea Arhondologie a Moldovei, 1835-1856*, Editura Universităţii Al.I.Cuza (Iaşi, 1997), p. 226. For the young Hartulari's upward mobility, *ibid.*, pp. 147-48.

[7] Cf. *Istoria vieţii mele, Convorbiri literare*, instalment of ian-aprilie 1928, p. 75.

[8] Pages 740-741, *Convorbiri literare*, Octombrie 1926, and pages 842, 846, *Convorbiri*, Noiembrie 1926.

[9] See, for instance, G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility - Sex and Society in Eighteenth-century Britain*, (The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

hypothesis that there was a rise in consumption at élite levels in the Principalities if not on the same scale as in Western Europe, at least of a similar nature. I have shown in my chapter on 'Women, Consumption and Europeanisation' how a taste for imported luxury goods and for building large libraries of imported and rare books was evident among wealthy boyars, and how this new hedonism went hand in hand with traditional forms of piety and with expiatory charitable gestures which suggest an unease with the new spirit of consumption.

If we cannot yet quantify levels of consumption and literacy for that period, we can at least point to the possible impact of imported Western literature, as well as to possible neo-Greek and foreign models for Romanians who, like Elena Hartulari, chose to put pen to paper in the early nineteenth century.[10] Thus, for example, a private library in Botoşani (Moldavia) in the 1830s was well stocked with imported publications in Greek or Romanian translation such as: *Don Quixote*, Fénelon's *Télémaque*, the romantic story of Genoveva of Brabant, *Robinson Crusoe* (in Romanian), Lesage's *Le diable boiteux* (1708), and Byron's *Mazeppa*, translated into Romanian by Ion Eliade Rădulescu.[11] The library of the Canta family, also in Moldavia, was a mix of educational literature, fiction and curios: atlases and grammar books mingled with *Chants des montagnards grecs*, Hume's *History of England* (1754-1762), a text on the death penalty by François Guizot, Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, and the letters of the courtesan and salonnière Ninon de Lanclos (1620-1705).[12] The small boyar Vasile Drăghici, the translator of *Robinson Crusoe* into Romanian (Iaşi, 1835) acquired *Gil Blas* in Greek, Mme de Saussure's *On Education*, as well as *Robinson Crusoe* in French (1754) and in Greek (1805).[13] Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Chateaubriand, as well as Voltaire's seventy-volume

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[10] Nicolae Iorga claimed a long time ago that French literature in Romanian eighteenth-century came second only after neo-Greek in late eighteenth-century Romanian private libraries. Cf. Nicolae Iorga, 'Alte note despre cultura şi viaţa socială românească subt Vechiul Regim' (Further notes on Romanian cultural and social life under the Old Régime), extract from *AAR.*, Seria II, Tom XXXIX, Memoriile secţiunii istorice (Bucharest, 1916), p. 10.

[11] Iorga, 'Vechile biblioteci româneşti' (The old Romanian libraries), *Floarea Darurilor* An. I, No.2 (1907, Bucharest), 65-82, p. 77.

[12] *Ibidem*, p. 78.

[13] Nicoale Iorga, 'Oameni şi cărţi' (People and books), *Floarea Darurilor*, Vol. II, No.9 (27 maiu 1907), 129-132, pp. 130-131.

complete works were some of the 1,939 volumes in the library of the wealthy Moldavian family Rosetti- Rosnovanu.[14]

We have every reason to suppose that Elena Hartulari was exposed to some of this literature, the more so as it was available in Greek and Romanian. Her narrative, as I have suggested, is as sensational as any of the picaresque and adventure literature she may have read, while her style, as I will show, bears the imprint of an intense, but dramatically managed emotionalism. She tells, for instance, the story of her very rebellious daughter who marries young against her parents' wishes, is separated after two years and subsequently soon widowed. Her turbulent love life continues and, after attempting to kill her mother by mixing ground glass in her food, she is sent to Paris by her irate father, under the supervision of a French couple returning to the French capital from Moldavia. There she meets an alleged 'Spanish Count' Alba, with whom she lives under promise of a marriage which never materialises. The convoluted story concludes with an attempted suicide and a journey to Iaşi, where the 'Count' manages to extort money from boyar Hartulari before vanishing for ever. The irrepressible daughter then marries a young, impoverished solicitor who, as recorded at the end of Elena's memoir, proceeds to ruin the whole family. The daughter's story provides Elena with the occasion to mention details of a pre-nuptial ritual which looks like the French 'charivari', in which groups of young men march down the streets, chanting accusations of debauchery against the father and alleging that the daughter is just a chip off the old block.[15] It is impossible to say whether this is a French influence or part of an older local tradition.

The tragic tone of this narrative is set from Elena's first sentence: 'From the age of seven onwards, I was destined for a life of suffering'.[16] As I have already anticipated, one of

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[14] Cornelia T. Papacostea, 'O bibliotecă din Moldova la începutul secolului al XIX-lea. Biblioteca de la Stînca' (A Moldavian private library of the early nineteenth century), *Studii şi cercetări de bibliologie*, V, (1963, Bucharest), 215-220. Cornelia Papacostea believes that the richness of Moldavian private libraries in the early nineteetnh century may have been due to the traditional absence of customs duties on the import of books; by contrast, in Wallachia import duties on books had been decreed by Prince Nicolae Caragea as early as 1783 to protect the domestic production of liturgical and Greek texts, p.218.

[15] Elena Hartulari, *Istoria vieţii mele, Convorbiri literare*, Decembrie 1926, pp. 932-33.

[16] *Istoria vieţii mele, Convorbiri literare*, Octombrie 1926, p. 729.

the striking features of this memoir is the availability in Romanian of an articulate language of passions and emotions, used to great dramatic effect by the writer. During a furtive courtship conducted mainly via an exchange of *billets doux* and complete with an attempt at elopement, young Iorgu Hartulari addresses passionate letters to his beloved, as he tries to arrange a clandestine marriage:

> Come, please, my precious, at the appointed hour and rest assured that I will always be faithful to you and be with you in your sorrows. You are so innocent and so strong in your words, which will stay in my memory until my death, as emblems of your innocence and the great nobility of your character. I am yours and you are mine and nobody could ever prevent us from being together. Your slave unto the grave.[17]

Notwithstanding such effusion, marital life was turbulent for the Hartularis: as the young men in the 'charivari' alleged, Iorgu was a serial womaniser who did not hesitate to live openly with his lover, the servant girl Bălaşa, who worked in his own household, as his wife struggled with miscarriages and illnesses, as well as with her pain as a neglected wife and with his violent temper. Interestingly, Elena mentions also the fact that the young peasant women with whom boyar Iorgu conducted these very public affairs were also provided with dowries by him. The husband was only brought to his senses by his final illness, and marital harmony re-asserted itself *in articulo mortis*, in a heightened religious atmosphere and in the presence of family and clerics. At the same time as the language and gestures of pious penitence were revived in the dying husband, the language of passionate love was resurrected in the grieving wife's narrative as she stood by his death-bed: 'Let anybody judge how I felt when told by doctors to wait for the death of the one I had loved madly all my life! As I looked on him, my heart would break and I would go out and hit my head against the walls, crying bitterly!'[18]

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 735. (my translation): 'vin, te rog, scumpa me, la ceasul ce m'ei hotărât şi fii sigură că eu îţi voi fi cel mai credincios şi cel mai cu durere pentru tine, fiinţă nevinovată şi aşa de puternică în cuvintele tale, cari au să-mi rămăe suvenir în memoria mé până la al meu sfîrşit, mărturisind de purtare şi nevinovăţia, ce cu mare *noblesă* o porţi asupra ta. Eu sânt al tău şi tu a me şi nimene nu-i în stare de a ne împedeca.' That such powerful expressions of sentiment in private correspondence were not unusual is suggested also by the very sentimental letters (in Russian and French) left in the archives of the Krupenski family, sent from St. Petersburg to Kishinev by Catrina Krupenski (née Comnen) to her husband Matei. Cf. C. Gane, *Amărîte şi vesele vieţi de jupînese şi cucoane* (Sad and merry lives of ladies and gentlewomen) (Iaşi, 1943), p.221.

[18] *Istoria vieţii mele, Convorbiri literare*, mai-august 1927, p. 121.

Elena Hartulari's Greek tragedy ended with a painful widowhood during which she saw her family ruined and the lives of her children broken by unsuitable marriages and the machinations of a gold-digging son-in-law. Her narrative is an important document which, apart from giving information on many of the themes dealt with in the present thesis (dowry provision, marital arrangements, the omnipresence of the church, court manoeuvres and boyar *cursus honorum*), is also an outstanding source for future study on the rhetoric of courtship and marital love in early nineteenth-century Moldavia.[19] The Memoir also highlights the pivotal role of men (fathers, husbands, princes, clerical figures) in the lives of eighteenth-century Romanian women. The husband may appear as a 'rake' who undermines the wife's emotional balance but, while he is fit and active, he is also the guarantor of financial stability for the family.[20] His death marks the emotional collapse of Elena, and the beginning of economic ruin for his children, all of whom contracted impecunious marriages. The fact that Elena in the meantime has lost the protection of two other male figures, her father through death and Prince Mihai Sturdza through the end of his rule in Moldavia (1849), further illustrates the centrality of masculine authority in the period. This is dramatised in Elena's narrative by a poignant scene at court, when, refused audience by the new Prince, Grigore Ghica, she loses all reserve and laments, very loudly and publicly, the loss of her youth and attractiveness as the cause of her downfall in a world of men. At the end of a very dramatic court scene, she curses the Prince in the presence of his ministers.[21] Elena's rebellion against the masculine establishment is completed by her public condemnation of the Metropolitan of Moldavia, who, in spite of promises to the contrary, had finally married her son without her consent to a woman without wealth at a time when the family was burdened by debt and financial litigations. At the climax of her text, she depicts herself cursing the Metropolitan in the presence of three church hierarchs: 'I have come to thank you for all the help you have given me for my son Nicu, whom you

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[19] For the difficulty of conducting research on the history of love and courtship in Romania, see, for instance, Ştefan Lemny, *Sensibilitate şi istorie în secolul XVIII românesc* (Sensibility and history in eighteenth-century Romania) (Bucharest, 1990), esp. pp. 73-79, and Andrei Pippidi, 'Amour et société: arrière-plan historique d'un problème littéraire, *Cahiers roumains d'études littéraires*, no. 3 (1988), 4-25.

[20] For man as 'rake' and woman as 'virtue in distress' being the central *topoi* of eighteenth-century sentimental literature as well as one of the sources for the awakening of women's self-expression in the period, see Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, pp. xvii-xviii.

[21] Hartulari, *Istoria, Convorbiri literare*, an 61 (ianuarie - aprilie 1928), pp. 77-78.

have taken the liberty of marrying without my consent! I said, and cursed him, so that for any misfortune befalling the boy he should have to account before the Almighty Judge!' [22] As I have suggested in chapter three, the curse in church and in law courts in ancien régime Romania was a very powerful device preventing dowry and testament contestation as well as ensuring truthful depositions in court. In a social context and in a text such as Elena Hartulari's, where the church was omnipresent, a curse on an ecclesiastical figure works as a highly potent symbol of rejection.

Elena Hartulari's *Memoir* was not presumably intended for publication, in spite of the rather artful rhetoric displayed on many pages. The writer herself makes it clear towards the end of her text that she intended it for her children as a reminder of parental care and of the suffering she endured for their sake. We cannot assume, therefore, that she meant her diary to be a public gesture or a cautionary tale. In addition, being the only example of personal, confessional narrative by a woman in this period, Hartulari's text cannot unfortunately be read comparatively to determine how widespread was such rejection of authority, both secular and spiritual. But even as a unique testimony it is a powerful document of a woman's rebellion against the masculine establishment.

Located at the two extremes of a broad spectrum of moral judgements on gender in ancien régime Moldavia and Wallachia, the two narratives presented above are textual expressions of two different rhetorical strategies. By stripping the plot of all emotional baggage, Rosetti's 'gallant tale' purports to present a condensed form of society's collective wisdom on women, while, by allowing emotion to overflow, Elena Hartulari's *Memoir* presents the story of one woman from her own, highly subjective point of view. Both succeed as literature, and as such both are equally problematic as sources for the historian, to the extent that they offer highly selective, partial 'truths' about women, men and marital relations. Both are, however, invaluable as vehicles for the actual terms in which Romanian men and women conceptualised their roles and relationships in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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[22] Hartulari, *Istoria, Convorbiri literare*, an 61 (mai-august 1928), pp. 303-04.

Conclusions

As the first large-scale exploration undertaken so far into the history of Romanian women, the present thesis is essentially a map of a yet virtually virgin territory, and is intended to provide the necessary signposts to what, in ideal conditions, should soon become a more densely populated area. A reconnaissance mission into archival sources, available secondary literature and key issues, it has aimed to combine detailed case study with a broader overview of societal trends in the period 1750 to 1850 in the Romanian Principalities, in order to highlight the legal position of women in the Romanian ancien régime and suggest the extent to which they participated in and contributed to these trends.

This thesis is also an exploration of tradition and innovation at a time in Romanian history which can best be described, as I have already suggested, using the two complementary notions of 'Europeanisation' and 'transition'. While I hesitated to make use of influential conceptual tools such as Habermas's 'public sphere' to talk about transformations which took place in Romania between 1750 and 1850, I have benefited from reflecting on a revised version of the public sphere concept as outlined by Timothy Blanning in *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture* (2002). In the light of my definition of Romanian ancien régime society as essentially 'aristocratic' (see chapter two), I believe one can base future research into this society on Blanning's notion of the emergence in the eighteenth century of a public sphere which 'was not essentially or even mainly "bourgeois". *Sub specie aeternitatis*, it might be said that the period witnessed the beginning of a transfer of cultural power from the nobility to the middle classes, but any suggestion that the latter had "triumphed" is, at the very least, a premature verdict'.[1] In this light, I have made use of 'cultural' sources such as legal codes, travellers' accounts, memoirs, letters, literary texts and iconography to explore the ways in which men and women positioned themselves in their own terms with respect to an autocratic-oligarchic state and to the impact of Ottoman domination and of Russian expansionism. The men and to a lesser extent the women who saw the need for change in this period, were not for the most part 'burghers' and middling classes, but

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[1] T.C.W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture - Old Régime Europe 1660-1789*, (Oxford, 2002), p. 181.

members of a nobility which gradually mutated into a loosely-defined 'bourgeoisie'. It is the task of future research into the political and institutional history of Romania to disentangle the ambiguities and reflect on the complexities of change which accompanied this gradual mutation.

I would like to posit as a tentative starting point a view of Romanian society around 1800 as hovering between the 'representational' culture of the Phanariot régimes (to use Blanning's term, meaning in this case the Byzantine-Ottoman court ceremonials and the theological culture sponsored by the Orthodox church) and the emerging 'public' culture of popular books, imported and translated foreign literature, the press (after 1830), Masonic lodges, 'genre' portraiture and the revolutionary 'propaganda' art which flourished around 1848. Needless to say, these two 'spheres' did not always operate in opposition to each other, as I have tried to suggest in my observations on the reformist Phanariot Princes. It may be found that such a picture does not differ essentially from parallel processes unfolding in Western and Central Europe, although there are differences in scale and lags in time.

The Law. In chapters three, four and five, I explored the ways in which jurisprudence evolved from the repressive *Îndreptarea legii* of 1652 to more enlightened legal prescriptions and practices in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In fact, it has been observed that, in practice, the attitudes of secular and ecclesiastical authorities was always 'softer' than the antiquated Roman-Byzantine legal system. The modern editors of the law codes and a few legal historians have also indicated the impact of 'natural law' and of jurists such as Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and Samuel von Pufendorf (1632-1694), as well as of the Code Napoléon and of the Austrian Civil Code of 1811 on Romanian codes such as the *Callimachi Code* (1817) and the *Caragea Code* (1818).[2] But the impact of foreign models cannot fully explain the gradual relaxation and systemization of legal practices. As I hope I have suggested in my case studies, women did often challenge judgements and legal proceedings and their voiced doubts about the relevance of the old laws probably contributed to legal modernisation. Future research,

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[2] For the Romanian legal codes, see the detailed references in the Introduction to part one and chapters three, four and five. Andrei Rădulescu has suggested, for instance that it was under French influence that the Callimachi Code introduces the 'nuptial contracts' in articles 1634, 1636-7, 1639, 1640, 1641.

however, should investigate in much greater depth, and separately for Wallachia and Moldavia, the impact of property relations on matrimonial strategy and on upward and downward mobility within the three classes of boyars. It is quite obvious that the insistence on equal status for married partners, as well as dowry provisions with respect to divorced women, to children and to widows reflected the concern of the state for the stability of the social order in parallel with any moral and spiritual values the period might have attached to compassion and charitable attitudes. The links between property, class and tradition in ancien régime Romania should be embedded within a general history of law codes and legal institutions.

Consumption and Europeanisation. Historical research into the West-European eighteenth century has made significant progress in the last decades in defining the centrality of trade and consumption for the expansion of the public sphere and of a 'polite and commercial' society.[3] Although insufficiently quantified, the contribution Romanian women made to consumption and the improvement of lifestyles and domestic ambience appears to be considerable. As I have suggested, in the area of sartorial change, women were far ahead of men around 1800, and their freedom of choice in this respect had a significant impact on moulding a new definition of 'Romanian-ness' in terms of allegiance to Western Europe and opposition to the Ottoman (Eastern) sphere of influence.

Education, literature and the circulation of ideas. If the exchange of goods was central to the collapse of tradition, so was the exchange of ideas. But, whereas the contribution of Romanian women in the transition to European fashions is well- documented, their contribution to literary culture and their visibility in the professions is less easy to assess. As I have outlined in chapter seven, the education of girls was centred round what is generally called 'female accomplishments' and the few theoretical statements about women's education in the period focused on the need to prepare them for the roles of wives, mothers and housekeepers. Nevertheless, Europeanising trends were perceptible in this area, too, for example, in adding to girls' curricula fashionable

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[3] For a recent approach to the history of eighteenth-century consumerism and up-to-date bibliographies, see Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford (eds.), *Consumers and Luxury - Consumer culture in Europe 1650-1850* (Manchester University Press, 1999).

subjects such as foreign languages and piano-playing. However, training women for the professions was a relatively late development (around the 1820s-1830s), and we need a better understanding of apparent paradoxes such as, for instance, why a career as an actress should have been deemed acceptable in a society where the presence of the church was pervasive and where even harmless piano-playing could trigger, as I have shown, conservative reactions.

Women and Emotion. I have considered in my last chapter the only known extended text of a private nature written by a Romanian woman before 1850. Although the tone of high drama deployed by the author may not have been the norm for the time, the rhetorical mediation of emotion displayed in this text raises a number of questions about the rise of affective individualism, about the ways in which women related to their family experiences and, not least, about the possibility of women's rebellion against established traditions and against a patriarchal order. Such a study should in the future be closely correlated with the history of reading and literacy and in the context of the literary traditions available around 1800 on the emerging Romanian literary market.

Romanian society around the year 1800 was a society in flux, and, while the accelerated pace of change transformed material culture in the few decades between 1780 and 1830, the search for ideologies, modern political institutions and, not least, new ways of re-defining individual selves and collective identities, was to last throughout the nineteenth century. The key word for this dramatic period can only be 'transition', and it was best defined by a witness to the events, Saint-Marc Girardin:

> Les principautés sont en ce moment dans un état de crise singulier: un pays qui respire l'oppression turque et qui marche vers une grande prospérité, sans pourtant savoir quelle sera sa destinée politique; un gouvernment représentatif sous la sourveillance et le contrôle de la Russie; une société qui se débat entre ses anciennes moeurs orientales et ses nouvelles moeurs européennes, qui a pris de la civilisation occidentale ses formes et son élégance plutôt que son esprit et son caractère; une transition universelle dans les maisons, dans les costumes, dans les lois, dans la langue elle-même, voilà le spectacle qu'offrent en ce moment les principautés.[4]

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[4] Saint-Marc Girardin, *Souvenirs de voyages et d'études* (1852), in Catherine Durandin, *Histoire des roumains* (Paris, 1995), pp.105-106. For Saint-Marc Girardin, see chapter four, p. 75.

In exploring this process of transition, this thesis has had to venture into many areas of archival silence and cultural difference. As a first, exploratory 'raid on the inarticulate'[5], it could only meet with partial success. Its main achievement lies in having pointed to new avenues for research into the history of Romanian women, men, institutions and society in the ancien régime, and it is to be hoped that an increasing number of historians will respond to the lure of these partly charted territories.

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[5] T.S. Eliot, 'East Coker' (Section V), in T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (Faber, 1944, revised edition 1979), p. 26.

Appendix One

The Wedding: a Show to Remember

Dimitrie Cantemir (see chapter three) described a rural wedding ritual that was worlds apart from the lavish spectacle of a Phanariot court wedding, although in both cases the parents spent a great deal of money to see their offspring married in style. Whether the marriage was arranged or whether it was the result of a love match, a wedding at the Phanariot court or in boyar circles was a display of wealth, refinement, pomp and merriment. If the bride and bridegroom were children of boyars they had to go to court, kiss the hand of the Prince and ask for his blessing in the week that preceded the wedding.[1] One day before the wedding groups of young men and girls took the gifts in procession to the bride's home, where the latter tearfully bid goodbye to her parents. The church ceremony took place around midday on a Sunday and the feast could last up to three days in poorer families and seven in wealthy ones.

The wedding in 1719 in Constantinople of the daughter of the Dragoman of the Dutch Embassy - from the Caragea family - is considered an early template for eighteenth- and nineteenth- century Phanariot and boyar weddings in the Romanian Principalities. One of the Dutch guests left an account:

> The German and Dutch guests were seated on the divans with the [Greek] ladies. The festivities started with verse recited by the Turkish *karagöz* [jesters], after which the ladies performed various dances. Fruit, nut preserves, orange, lemon and almond cakes were being served, with rose water for hand-washing and amber fumigations.
>
> The religious ceremony took place two days after these festivities. The Patriarch himself with sixteen metropolitans officiated. The wedding cortège was welcomed by the Turkish music. The feast began. To the right of the groom were seated the Patriarch and his suite, and to the left the former Great Dragoman of the Porte, Alexander Maurokordhátos, friends as well as members

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[1] Constanţa Vintilă-Ghiţulescu, 'Viaţa în doi. Identitate familială în Ţara Românească în secolele XVII-XVIII' (Conjugal life. Family identity in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Wallachia), extract from Mirela-Luminiţa Murgescu, *Identităţi colective şi identitate naţională. Percepţii asupra identităţii în lumea medievală şi modernă* (Collective identitites and national identity. Representations of identity in the mediaeval and modern world) (Bucharest, 2000), pp.56 -7.

of the German and Dutch diplomatic mission. Sherbets and sweetmeats were being served amidst fumigations. Professional actors, among whom a few men dressed in female clothes, were performing. Eventually, the bride rose and was conducted in her room, where her veils were lifted; the bride and bridegroom saw each other for the first time. The bride, wearing a flower chaplet and expensive clothing, was seated among her bridesmaids, also beautifully adorned. The groom sat on her right and the guests were allowed in to witness the bringing in of the gifts which were deposited at the feet of the bride and groom. The groom then went back into the dining hall.

The Patriarch and the metropolitans were now in the centre of the hall. The bride, accompanied by her ladies, entered the room, walking at such a slow pace, that it took her a quarter of an hour to reach the centre of the hall. The religious wedding ceremony started. The rings were exchanged, and the newlyweds drank from one glass that they afterwards threw backwards on a stone slab and smashed to pieces. After the ceremony the bride returned to her room as slowly as before.[2]

The archives have preserved a description of the wedding cortège of Scarlat Sl•tineanu and Catinca Filipescu, both from native Romanian boyar families, at the court of Alexandru Moruzi on 28 January 1795. The groom arrived at court with the following procession:

40 'seimeni' (soldiers)

6 Captains of the 'Agia' (police captains)

6 Captains of the 'Spatharie' (military headquarters)

6 Postelnicei (low-rank boyars, civil servants)

10 horses from the Prince's stables, of which 8 for boyar sons, 1 for the groom, 1 for the boyar appointed to accompany the groom upon coming out of the court;

6 Tchaudars (lackeys), 4 to accompany the groom and 2 for his attending boyar;

Bugles and Gypsy fiddlers

The groom was introduced into the Prince's 'Spatharie' by the Third Postelnic and first he was given his boyar's *kaftan*, went out and re-entered, upon which His Lordship the Vel Camaraş put upon his head the fur *ishlik* adorned with a feather. His Lordship the Camaraş had been appointed by His Highness to accompany His Lordship 'Vel Logofăt' N. Filipescu and the groom to the bride's

[2] C.J. Karadja, 'O nuntă fanariotă' in *Revista istorică*, An IX, Nos.4-6 (April-June 1923), pp. 85-87.

house and bring her to church; with this cortège, he left the Court, to return with the bride. She in her turn had this cortège sent by the Prince:

20 German soldiers
4 Tchaudars
1 of the Prince's coaches with six horses.

And the groom with his cortège went up straight into the church, while the bride entered first Her Highness' harem and, after a deep bow in front of Her Highness, went into the church. And then Her Highness the Princess came to the 'Spatharie' and waited a while with His Highness for the preparations to be made in the church. Afterwards, the Prince and Her Highness together, with their Lordships the boyars and their Ladies went to church to witness the wedding. After church, Their Highnesses returned to the 'Spatharie', the bride and groom kissed the hands of *Vodă* and of his Lady, and so did their Lordships the in-laws and all the relatives. The bride then offered the customary ablutions to Their Highnesses as godparents, and His Lordship the 'vel Vistier' [the groom's father] threw into the washing basin the customary gift of gold coins. Then they all went out of the courtyard with the respective processions and Their Highnesses the *Beizades* [the Prince's sons] went with the wedding guests to the banquet. [3]

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[3] From V.A. Urechia, *Istoria românilor*, Tom III , Seria 1786-1800 (V in Seria 1774-1800), (Bucharest, 1893), pp. 462-3.

Appendix Two

The Dowry of a Boyar's Daughter, Moldavia, 1730
(from the Documents of the Cantacuzino family in Moldavia)

Vel Logofăt Iordachi Canta

Portion for my daughter Balaşa, in lands and other dowry items, given to her when I married her to Vel Comis Aristarcho Chrisosculeu in the year 1730) (Selections):

1 necklace of 60 ug* - 520 lei, 8 paras
1 ruby and diamond necklace, 240 lei
1 chain of 100 Hungarian ug*, made in Ţarigrad [Constantinople], for the making of which I paid 50 lei; 110 grams, 435 lei 4 paras
15 brilliant necklaces, 34 'matcal' (?), 15 lei each, 510 lei
1 pair gold and diamond bracelets, 200 lei
1 pair golden and emerald earrings, 150 lei
1 pair earrings, gold and ruby, each with three brilliant pendants, 120 lei
1 pair earrings, gold and emerald, with brilliant pendants, 110 lei
1 pair earrings with emeralds and brilliants, 40 lei
These are all from her mother.
1 diamond ring, 150 lei, of her mother's   [sister to Prince Mihai Racoviţă]
[...]

Clothes I have given her:

1 tambar (?) shachmarand [rich brocade imported from Constantinople], with sable fur and brilliant buttons
1 tambar made of 'serasîr' [rich Oriental gold-threaded cloth], with brilliant buttons
[...]
1 ghiorde [short ladies' fur-lined jacket] of bellacosa, gold-embroidered, lined with ermine
1 ghiorde of chataia [rich Chinese cloth], with gold-embroidered flowered print, ermine-lined.
[...]
1 sash bought for 30 lei in Constantinople
[...]
6 silver-embroidered chemises
10 gold-embroidered chemises
22 silk chemises
12 silver-embroidered serviettes
[...]
1 Polish table cloth
[...]
2 Turkish carpets   [*ughi = Hungarian 'galben' = 200 ancient 'bani']

[...]
   2 long shawls from Constantinople, 30 lei each
[...]
   2 big copper candlesticks from Constantinople
   1 carafe and glasses made of Gdansk crystal
   1 big wooden chest from Constantinople
   1 small gilded box
   1 coach and six
[...]

Farming items I have given her:

230 beehives
520 big sheep, 200 small sheep
  20 cows with calves
  20 big buffaloes
  20 big mares and 10 smaller ones
   1 stallion

Lands I have given her:

Zadubreuca, a whole village in Cernăuţ, with two fishponds, one water mill, bought by me from the 'Stolniceasa' Ursăchioae and her sons;
[... parts of three other villages]
 10 acres vineyard at Odobeşti
 10 Gypsy families, with their children, as listed in the register given to her.

[from N Iorga *Studii şi documente,* vol. 7 (Bucharest, 1904), pp. 189-93]

Note: words followed by a question mark could not be identified

Appendix Three

A Boyar's Funeral Expenses

A Catalogue of expenses for the funeral of the late 'clucer' Neculai Racoviță. 806, June 9th. (Moldavia) ['clucer' = a high rank boyar in charge of commissioning supplies for the court; see boyar titles in Appendix four]

Lei Paras (leu, pl. lei = Romanian coin; para = Turkish coin, 40th part of a piastre)

Lei	Paras	
12	20	to the priests who read the Gospels
1	-	to a boy who read the Psalter
13	20	for 9 torches/candles of the guilds at 60 paras each
16	20	to the painter for sandal wood and the painting
16	20	for coffin planks, nail and labour
8	20	for three white candles for the arch-priests
11	20	for 12 bells with 'iuzluc' [Tk. Yuz = 100; 'yuzluk' = Tk. Coin = 100 paras) at the Metropolitan Church [so called because the church charged 100 paras]
4	30	figs, raisins, pretzels, foil, lemons, and honey
10	20	500 grams sweets
8	20	for 'țîdule' [payment?] to the arch-priests
15	-	4 painted torches to place around the coffin
20	-	for 8 shawls and two sashes
4	-	to 2 nuns who made the 'coliva' [special funeral cake]
5	-	for the 'cort' (?)
	30	Paper with 'ținte' (?)
61	20	5 gold coins to the Metropolitan and 2 lei another arch-priest
64	-	the 'ecpaia' [the retinue, from Tk. etba = followers, attendants] of the Metropolitan
4	20	to three deacons from another parish
4	-	to 2 Greek priests
35	-	to priests, singers, readers, and the poor

5	-	to three hetman bulibasha [members of hetman's military corps ?]
4	-	to 4 servants of the Agia [police]
4	20	to two impoverished men
15	-	kitchen expenses
2	20	for 10 masses
200	-	for 6 metres and a half cloth 20 lei each
24	-	for two metres 70 cm 'maltin' [lining material ?] for the coffin
132	-	for 22 candles 6 lei each
30	-	600 loaves of bread
150	-	a barrel of 50 litres ('vedre') wine
1	20	one piece 'corde' [?]
10	-	to the women who gave away the charity
20	-	to a 'prescorniţă' [woman who made the 'prescura' = blessed cross-shaped

bread used in masses and given away at commemoration services for the dead] who led
the 'parastases' [commemoration services] up to 40 days

8	-	for 112 pounds of flour; 8 for each cake
76	-	for 7 'sărindare' [prayers for the dead], as follows:

24	2	at the Metropolitan Church
12	1	at the church of St. Haralambie
10	1	at Ciorăneşti
10	1	at Buhăeşti
20	2	at poor churches

Total 76

Grand total 1,001   5   that is, one thousand one lei and five paras

(The Catalogue continues with similarly detailed expenses for the rites and masses performed at 3 days, 9 days, 20 days, 40 days, 6 months, one year, totalling 1,189 lei 5 paras. Cf. Gh. Ghibănescu (ed.), *Surete şi izvoade*, vol. 8, (Iaşi, 1914), pp.209-13)

Note: words followed by a question mark are either foreign (Turkish) words which have since disapppeared from Romanian or words whose meanings could not be ascertained.

Appendix Four

The Main Boyar Titles and State Offices in Wallachia and Moldavia

Class I:

Great Ban (only in Wallachia) the highest office: governor of the region of Oltenia, with administrative, judicial and military attributions; deputy of the Prince*

Great Logofăt (Byz. Logothete, cancellarius, notarius; Fr.grand chancellier, grand palatin)

Great Visternic (Fr.grand trésorier; later finance minister); he collected the land revenue and, in earlier times, supplied the court with expensive furs and fabrics (modelled on the Byzantine 'protovistier')

Great Hatman or Hetman (only in Moldavia)*

Great Postelnic (Fr.maréchal de la cour) in early times, in charge of the Prince's bedchamber; much later minister of foreign affairs

Great Vornics (judge, governor, later interior minister), the great vornic and the great armaș had overlapping attributions, e.g. collecting fines; in the sixteenth century, this title was divided in Moldavia as 'vornic of the upper land' (Vornic de Țara de Sus) and 'vornic of the lower land' (Vornic de Țara de Jos)

Class II:

Clucer (Slavonic term; Fr. intendant et sommelier princier, préfet de palais) in charge of the Prince's supplies, the 'jitnicer' is nearly synonymous

Aga, chief of gendarmes, police; later, police prefect

Spătar (Fr. connétable) army chief, later war minister

Class III:

Comis (Fr.écuyer princier) in charge of the Prince's stables

Căminar

Paharnic (Fr. échanson), served the wine at court dinners; in early times, also in charge of sweets- and sherbet-making, coffee and desserts

Serdar (Tk. general, commander of the Janissary corps) created in the Principalities in the seventeenth century); replaced by Constantin Maurocordat with the post of 'County ispravnic' (Rom. 'ispravnic de ţinut')

Stolnic (Fr.sénéchal, écuyer-tranchant) in charge of the Prince's kitchens and food supplies

Medelnicer (Magyar 'medel' = wash-basin) served at court feasts; brought in the hand-washing vessels

Sulger, Sluger (Fr.intendant général de l'armée) in charge of meat supplies as court

Armaş: military attributions; supervised the carrying out of sentences, and oversaw the executioners; he also supervised the Prince's Gypsy slaves

Jitnicer

Şetrar (in charge of the Prince's tent on the battlefield and with other duties in the army encampment)

Pitar (in charge of bread supplies to the Court)

* With the exception of the 'Ban' and the 'Hatman', the other titles are identical in the two Principalities

List compiled on the basis of:

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Glossary

Anteri = long or short jacket/coat worn over the frock
Asper (Tk. Akche) = small silver coin

Beniş = overcoat
Berat = patent empowering bearer to perform some service

Calpak = big, pear-shaped, male head-dress made of lambskin
Čapsa (pron. tchapsa) = small, flat bonnet adorned with jewellery

Dragoman, drogman (also terziman) = official interpreter at the Ottoman Porte

Ferman = decree, enabling patent
Feraĉe/ fereĉe (pron. feratche) = overcoat worn for going out

Ĝube (pron. djubé) = long coat with slit sleeves

Haremlik = private quarters, family women and friends
Hospodar = Ottoman-appointed Phanariot ruler of the Romanian Principalities in the late eighteenth century

Libade = short quilted coat

Maloté = expensive overcoat usually lined with ermine

Meshti = socks

Odalik = concubine, odalisque

Para = 40th part of a piastre
Peşkeş (pron. peshkesh) = gift

Scutelnic (pl. scutelnici) (Rom.) = 1. category of soldiers recruited from the free peasants and burghers, who enjoyed tax exemptions in exchange for their services; they were disbanded in the early nineteenth century; 2. in the eighteenth century, civilians, originally liberated serfs, granted tax exemption in exchange for several days' work on noble landed estates; ceased to exist after the Organic Regulations, 1832-33.
Selamlik = in Constantinople and Ottoman-dominated areas, men's quarters where visitors were received

Tarpuş (pron. tarpush) = tall pointed cap (could be made of silver brocade)

Vechil (Vekil) = representative (for instance, of a woman or child in court)

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