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CONCEPTUALIZING MOLDAVIAN OTOMANNESS: ELITE CULTURE AND OTTOMANIZATION OF THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MOLDAVIAN BOYARS[G]

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For over six centuries of its existence, the Ottoman Empire achieved a considerable success in bringing together and governing vast expanses of Africa and Eurasia, spanning across areas as disparate as modern-day Ukraine and the shores of the Indian Ocean. While the empire itself ceased to exist in the aftermath of World War I, it nonetheless left an indelible cultural imprint on its former territories, be it in the form of Turkish-style coffee on the coffee table or pencil-shaped minarets embedded in the landscape.[1]

However, few historiographical traditions that emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in this post-imperial space have been willing to embrace the Ottoman past. More

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[1] For the concise discussion of the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, see Halil Inalcık, "The Meaning of Legacy: An Ottoman Case," in *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, ed. L. C. Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 17-29.

often than not, the imperial heritage was seen as an embarrassment to be repudiated rather than integrated into national historical narratives of Southeastern Europe and the Middle East.[2] Inspired by national agendas and orientalist discourses, the history of the Ottoman rule was recast as a period of foreign occupation, emphasized by such notions as the "Turkish yoke" and decay (*intihat*).[3] Correspondingly, various forms of dissent and opposition to the Sublime Porte were brought to the fore as expressions of the national struggle of subjugated nations for independence.[4]

This discursive rejection of Ottoman past went hand in hand with the physical erasure of imperial heritage from the landscape of newly-born nation-states.[5] Whereas new generations of architects and urban planners remolded the cities along western lines[6], a similar shift was takingplace in the

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[2] Caroline Finkel, "Ottoman history: whose history is it?" *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 14,1-2 (2008): 1.

[3] Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "The "Turkish Yoke" Revisited: The Ottoman Non-Muslim Subjects Between Loyalty, Alienation and Riot," *Acta Poloniae Historica* 93 (2006): 177-195; Rifaat A. Abou-El Haj, "The Social Uses of the Past: Recent Arab Historiography of Ottoman Rule," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14, no. 2 (1982): 185-201.

[4] For instance: "Although turned into Turkish "pashaliks," the Christian nations in the Balkans fought five centuries on end with great dignity and heroism against the Ottoman domination. The Turkish annals themselves remember many upheavals of the Christian nations in the Balkan sometimes led by clergy." Nicolae V. Dură. "Political-Juridical and Religious Status of the Romanian Countries and the Balkan People during the 14th-19th Centuries: Some General Remarks," *RESEE*, 21 (1989), 1-2: 167.

[5] Eyal Ginio and Karl Kaser, "Introduction: Towards a Comparative Study of the Balkans and the Middle East," in *Ottoman legacies in the contemporary Mediterranean: The Balkans and the Middle East compared*, ed. Eyal Ginio and Karl Kaser, Conference and lecture series 8 (Jerusalem: The European Forum at the Hebrew University, 2013), 3.

[6] Yorgos Koumaridis, "Urban Transformation and De-Ottomanization in Greece," *East Central Europe* 33, 1-2 (2006): 213-41; Emanuela Costantini, "Dismantling the Ottoman Heritage? The Evolution of Bucharest in the Nineteenth Century," in *Ottoman legacies in the contemporary Mediterranean: The Balkans and the Middle East compared*, ed. Eyal Ginio and Karl Kaser, Conference and lecture series 8 (Jerusalem: The European

sphere of material culture and fashion. The adoption of European-style garments by the elite and the invention and promotion of "authentic" national dress were at the center of a wider socio-political project of remolding yesterday's imperial subjects into European-style modern national communities.[7]At the same time, traditional Ottoman-style material culture became an object of derision as backward, tasteless and posing serious health risks.[8]In the Danubian principalities, the political underpinnings of this shift in fashion was not lost on contemporary observers, such as Alecu Russo:

> "[It] took a single spark to set on fire everything from the *caksır*s and the *şlik*s to the *mest*, the *cübbe*, and the whole content of our ancestors' wardrobes. [...] The change in costume signaled the new spirit of awakening. The new ideas and progress emerged from the tails of the frock coat and the pocket of the waistcoat."[9]

Forum at the Hebrew University, 2013), 231-54; Maximilian Hartmuth, "Negotiating Tradition and Ambition: Comparative Perspective on the "De-Ottomanization" of the Balkan Cityscapes," *Ethnologia Balkanica* 10 (2006): 15-34; Maximilian Hartmuth, "De/constructing a "Legacy in Stone": Of Interpretative and Historiographical Problems Concerning the Ottoman Cultural Heritage in the Balkans," *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 5 (2008): 695-713.

[7]Mirjana Prošić-Dvornić, "Pokušaji reformi odevanja u Srbiji tokom XIX i početkom XX veka," in *Gradska kultura na Balkanu (XV-XIX vek): Zbornik radova,* vol. 2, ed. Verena Han (Belgrade: Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, 1988), 177-206; Angela Jianu, "Women, Fashion and Europenization: The Romanian Principalities, 1750-1830," in *Women in the Ottoman Balkans: Gender, culture and history*, ed. Amila Buturović and İrvin C. Schick (London - New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007)

[8]Mirjana Prošić-Dvornić, "Pokušaji reformi odevanja," *passim*.

[9]Alecu Russo, "Studiemoldovană," in Alecu Russo, *Scrieri*, edited by Petre V. Haneş (Bucharest: TipografiileRomane Unite, 1934), 12. Translation by Angela Jianu, "Women, Fashion and Europenization: The Romanian Principalities, 1750-1830," in *Women in the Ottoman Balkans: Gender, Culture and History*, ed. AmilaButurović and İrvin C. Schick, Library of Ottoman studies 15 (London - New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 201–30, 214.

In Romanian scholarship, the problem of sartorial modernity and its place within the transformation of early nineteenth-century societies of Moldavia and Wallachia has attracted considerable attention, with authors examining the process by which new fashions transformed mentalities, identities and social practices of the time. The framework of modernity provided a powerful tool for explaining both the shifts in material culture, as well as those in the spheres of politics and society, while also bringing to the fore the paradoxes of Romanian modernization project in the nineteenth century.[10]

In contrast, the previous transformation of Moldavian and Wallachian material culture – the very adoption of Ottoman-style costumes by the elite in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – has not received similar attention. Instead, it is usually interpreted as a skin deep phenomenon, limited to the sphere of aesthetic tastes and sartorial choices, with little bearing on the wider cultural phenomena. However, if by donning top hats and waistcoats nineteenth-century Romanians constructed their identity as modern Europeans, it seems only justified to ask whether the preference for *kaftan*s and *cübbe*s corresponded to a similar shift in their ancestors' identity.Unfortunately, this topic has hardly found any resonance in modern historiography of the Danubian principalities.

Several factors contributed to this relative neglect of seventeenth-century change in Moldavian-Wallachian material culture, some of which can be attributed to the available sources.

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[10] Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, "Constructing a New Identity: Romanian Aristocrats between Oriental Heritage and Western Prestige (1780-1866)," in *From Traditional Attire to Modern Dress: Modes of Identification, Modes of Recognition in the Balkans XVIth-XXth Centuries*, ed. ConstanţaVintilă-Ghiţulescu (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011); ConstanţaVintilă-Ghiţulescu, *Evgheniți, ciocoi, mojici: Despre obrazele primei modernități românești, 1750-1860* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2013).

In contrast to the Europeanization of Romanian fashion in the first half of the nineteenth century, which occurred in the context of burgeoning press, literary production and nascent public sphere, the adoption of Ottoman dress left us with far fewer sources documenting and conveying contemporary perspectives on the shift in material culture. As a result, while we know what the boyars of the period were wearing, we are often at loss regarding the rationale behind their sartorial choices and meanings associated with particular choices, preventing us from constructing meaningful sartorial biographies of individual boyars. [11] This, in turn, poses significant challenges in drawing a link between material culture and corresponding expression identity. This task is further complicated by the fact that the early modern period witnessed the adoption of similar styles of clothing across Central and Eastern Europe: as the Polish-Lithuanian and Hungarian nobilities embraced Ottoman-style clothing as "national costume," they also imbued their sartorial preferences with meanings starkly different from those the same objects had had in their original context.[12] Thus, since similar garments could signify either the owner's status as servant of the sultan or a proud nobleman, we should not assume that the transfer of material objects and models corresponded to a similar transfer of symbolic messages embedded in the products of material culture.

While the problems posed by the sources partly account for this relative neglect of the topic, historical paradigms dominant in Romanian scholarship have played an even bigger role. Firstly, the dominant attitude towards the relationship between the principalities and the Porte, summarized in the

[11] For the concept of sartorial (auto)biographies, see Pravina Shukla, "The Future of Dress Scholarship: Sartorial Autobiographies and the Social History of Clothing," *Dress* 41, no. 1 (2015): 53-68.

[12] Jianu, "Women, Fashion and Europenization," *passim*; Vintilă-Ghiţulescu, "Constructing a New Identity".

question "why did the Turks not conquer the Danubian principalities?' and the archival hunt for 'capitulations', stressed separation rather than connectivity, relegating the topic of Ottoman-Romanian relations to a much narrower sphere of diplomatic and military history. This came at the expense of underplaying commonalities and interactions between Moldavian-Wallachian and Ottoman societies in the spheres of everyday life, material culture, discussed almost as an afterthought.

The teleological and nation-centric vision that characterizes much of Romanian scholarship, further contributed to the exclusion of Ottoman cultural influence from its master narratives.These studies present the history of the Danubian principalities as a prelude to the modern Romanian nation-state as a part of Europe. Accordingly, the Ottoman political and cultural influence is presented as foreign and detrimental impact that steered the Romanian society away from its historical trajectory by way of force. In this context, it comes as no surprise that some scholars celebrated the sartorial revolution of the nineteenth century not only as a harbinger of modernity, but also as a sign of Romanians' return to their "natural" path of development, distorted by the centuries of living under the "Turkish yoke," while, the adoption of Ottoman material culture is decried as an aberration.[13]

However, the development in the fields of Romanian and Ottoman historiography in recent decades increasingly subverted these narratives. Among Ottomanists, the rejection of the 'decline paradigm' in the 1980s and 1990s allowed scholars to break away from the static vision of the empire and reassess the social, political and economic dynamics of the seventeenth

[13] Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Politică şi modă la cumpăna secolelor XVIII-XIX," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie «A.D. Xenopol»* 33 (1996): 57.

and eighteenth centuries.[14] At the same time, the field of Ottoman cultural history, long neglected in historiography, witnessed a robust resurgence, providing new perspectives on Ottoman identity and intellectual life in the early modern period.[15] While the changes in Romanian historiography were less revolutionary, the opening of the field nonetheless subverted the existing paradigms and opened new vistas towards the early modern period, including the reassessment of the process of Ottomanization of the elite culture in Moldavia and Wallachia.

The scope of this paper is to provide a conceptual scaffolding for analyzing the process of the reception of Ottoman-style material culture by the elites Danubian principalities and its impact on elite identity in the early modern period. As I argue, in order to understand these changes, the framework has to take into account not only the developments in material culture, but also encompass the underlying social, political and cultural transformations of the period. Moreover, in order for it to be meaningful, it is necessary to rethink the character of Moldavian-Wallachian relations with the Sublime Porte and the wider Ottoman ecumene. By recasting the boyars as a subordinate provincial elite of the sultan's 'well-protected domains' rather than just a ruling class within the narrow confines of the Danubian principalities allows us to integrate them into the wider socio-cultural dynamics of the Ottoman Empire and engage in meaningful historical comparison.

At the center of this framework lies the concept of Ottomanization, understood as "the gradual political, economic, social and cultural integration of provincial notable families into

[14] M. F. Çalışır, "Decline of a "Myth": Perspectives on the Ottoman "Decline"" *Tarih Okulu* 9 (2011): 37–60.

[15] Dana Sajdi, ed., *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century* (London - New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 2.

the Ottoman elite,"[16] a process that swept through the empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While the concept has been predominantly applied to the Sunni Muslim elites of the Ottoman domains and indicated their growing identification with the imperial center, I argue that it also constitutes a powerful tool for understanding the developments in the Danubian principalities, elucidating the context in which Moldavian and Wallachian boyars adopted and adapted Ottoman material culture and identities in the early modern period.

In order to do this, the present paper is divided into three main sections. In the first part, I unpack and calibrate the notion of Ottomanization as it will be applied for throughout the paper. As I argue, Ottomanization was not an exclusively Islamic phenomenon, and should be distinguished from related, but nonetheless distinct processes of Islamization and Turkification. Differentiating between these phenomena is crucial, since it allows us to apply to the boyars of Moldavia and Wallachia on par with other provincial elites of the empire, be they Christian or Muslim. The following section addresses the ways in which material objects of consumption circulated between the Danubian principalities and the Sublime Porte. As I argue, the growing embeddedness of Moldavian-Wallachian elites into Ottoman institutions and patronage networks shaped the flow of Ottoman luxury items and accounted for the unequal distribution of such items within the elite. The third part of the study investigates the link between reception of Ottoman-style luxury items and identity, discussing the categories of sources that allow us to draw a link between these two phenomena.

[16] Ehud R. Toledano, "The Emergence of Ottoman-Local Elites (1700-1900): A Framework for Research," in *Middle Eastern Politics and Ideas: A History from Within*, ed. Ilan Pappé and Moshe Ma'oz (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), 154.

Ottomanization – What's in the Name?

At the first glance, the notion of "Ottomanization" hardly seems a useful and precise methodological tool. Applied liberally in a variety of disciplines, it has been employed as a shorthand to denote any process, which brought the object of study closer to the Ottoman imperial model. Sine this could indicate a plethora of sometimes contradictory phenomena, it is necessary to first address the concept itself and calibrate it for the purposes of this study. As I argue, the key difference in the usage of the concept is that between a narrower, form-centered definition employed predominantly by architectural and art historians, and the wider, more encompassing understanding of the concept by historians focusing on social and political history of the empire.

In its simplest form, the notion of Ottomanization came to indicate the spread and adoption of Ottoman-style objects, motifs and aesthetic preferences across the physical and cultural space, both within the empire and beyond. In this sense, the extent of the process was defined by the circulation of portable products, such as *kaftan*s, İznik ceramic tiles and arms, as well as their inclusion into artisanal and artistic repertoires. In this sense, the process of Ottomanization would include such distinct phenomena as the selective adoption of Ottoman footwear in Renaissance Dubrovnik, the transformation of noblemen's costume in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the inclusion of popular Ottoman patterns by the silk manufacturers in Italy.[17]

[17] Nurhan Atasoy et al., *İpek: Imperial Ottoman silks and velvets* (London, New York, N.Y: Azimuth Editions, 2001), 182–4; Irena Turnau, *History of Dress in Central and Eastern Europe from the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century* (Warsaw: Institute for the History of Material Culture, 1991); DjurdjicaPetrović, "Dubrovčaniiturskaobuća u XV ipočetkom XVI veka," in Han, *Gradska kulturana Balkanu (XV-XIX vek)*, vol. 1, 9-32.

This form-oriented definition of Ottomanization has also been adopted in the studies devoted to the material culture of the Danubian principalities.[18] However, the limitations of such an approach soon become apparent. While useful for analyzing external features of particular objects and describing aesthetic trends, these approaches leave out the important issue of meanings embedded in particular objects. The act of acquiring and displaying Ottoman garments does not automatically mean that their owners embraced symbolic meanings embodied in these objects, since they were recalibrated to the agendas of the adopting parties. In the process of cultural transfer, such objects could acquire associations in stark contrast to those they had in their original context. Ottoman costume provides an illuminating example of these differing and often contradictory meanings. For Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the act of donning of Ottoman garments and visiting a *hamam* constituted a performative act of ethnomasquerade[19], while for others the adoption of foreign exotica served as a display of aristocratic cosmopolitanism. [20] Even more poignantly, the wholesale reception of Ottoman fashion by the Polish-Lithuanian nobility came to be associated with its attachment to the idea of *aurealibertas* of noble privileges, an association which would

[18] See for instance Alexandru Alexianu, *Mode şi veşminte din trecut: Cinci secole de istorie costumară romanească*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1971), 271-6.

[19] Kader Konuk, "Ethnomasquerade in Ottoman-European Encounters: Reenacting Lady Mary Wortley Montagu," *Criticism*, 46 (2004), 3: 394-6.

[20] Bianca M. Lindorfer, "Cosmopolitan Aristocracy and the Diffusion of Baroque Culture: Cultural Transfer from Spain to Austria in the Seventeenth Century" (PhD dissertation, European University Institute, 2009); Bartolomé Yun Casalilla, "Introducción: Entre el imperio colonial y monarquía compuesta: Élites y territorio sen la Monarquía Hispánica (ss. XVI y XVII)," in *Las redes del imperio: élites socialesen la articulación de la Monarquía Hispánica, 1492-1714*, ed. Bartolomé Yun Casalilla (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2009).

surprise the Ottoman officials.[21] Thus, the form-centric approach to Ottomanization, while important, is insufficient for unearthing the link between material culture and identity.

Another important, and less obvious, limitation of such an approach is the tendency to depict Ottoman material culture as a static and unchanging repertoire of motifs and patterns rather than as a dynamic artistic and artisanal tradition. This essentialist approach often coincides with the tendency to identify the art of Süleymanic period as the peak of Ottoman cultural and artistic production, followed by the period of decline in creativity and artistic quality, remedied only by the import of Western European models.[22] While this orientalist thread has largely disappeared with the rejection of the "decline thesis", it nonetheless re-emerges frequently in studies devoted to the adoption of Ottoman models in other parts of the world.

Another current of scholarship, with its center of gravity in the field of urban and architectural history, has promoted a different approach to the concept of Ottomanization, examining the intersection between artistic production and political power. Such scholars as Gülrü Necipoğlu, Shirine Hamadeh, Amy Singer and Heghnar Watenpaugh emphasize the role of symbolic and ideological concerns in imperial architectural and urbanistic patronage.[23] By erecting imperial mosques and

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[21]Adam Jasienski, "A Savage Magnificence: Ottomanizing Fashion and the Politics of Display in Early Modern East-Central Europe," *Muqarnas* 31 (2014), 1.

[22] For the discussion see Can Erimtan, "The Perception of Saadabad: Can Erimtan: The 'Tulip Age' and Ottoman–Safavid Rivalry," in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi (London - New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), *passim*.

[23] Amy Singer, "Making Jerusalem Ottoman," in *Living in the Ottoman realm: Empire and identity, 13th to 20th centuries*, ed. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull (Bloomington - Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016); GülruNecipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion, 2011); ShirineHamadeh, *The city's pleasures: Istanbul in the eighteenth century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); HeghnarZeitlian Watenpaugh, *The image of an*

establishing public institutions in the form of *külliye*s, soup kitchens and baths, the members of the Ottoman dynasty and their officials not only provided basic services to the population, but also projected Ottoman identity by inserting dynastic landmarks into the urban landscape.[24] In this context, the crystallization of Ottoman imperial style by Mimar Sinan in the course of the sixteenth century signaled not the peak of this architectural tradition, but rather the formation of a portable blueprint, which could be used to convey the dynastic message across the empire.[25] Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this blueprint remained flexible enough to accommodate new architectural trends and forms of patronage without losing its political and ideological message.[26] This politically-driven patronage was by no means limited to architecture, and corresponded to the emergence of a distinctly Ottoman style of miniature[27] and tile decoration.[28]

The major advantage of this approach to architectural and artistic Ottomanization is the link it draws between the evolution of artistic repertoire and political power. Within this model, members and servants of the dynasty deliberately sought to promote imperial identity through visual landmarks and indelibly Ottoman style. Especially in the case of Friday mosques (*cami*), where the *hutbe* in the name of the sultan was

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Ottoman city: Imperial architecture and urban experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th centuries (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[24] Singer, "Making Jerusalem Ottoman," 123-124.

[25] Necipoğlu, *The age of Sinan*, 37–43. On the concept of portability, see Alina A. Payne, "Introduction," in Dalmatia and the Mediterranean: Portable archaeology and the poetics of influence, ed. Alina A. Payne, Mediterranean art histories 1 (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2014), 1–20, 3.

[26] Shirine Hamadeh, "Splash and Spectacle: The Obsession with Fountains in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul," *Muqarnas* 19 (2002): 123-148.

[27] EmineFetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), 11-14.

[28] Gülrü Necipoğlu, "From International Timurid to Ottoman: A Change of Taste in Sixteenth-Century Ceramic Tiles," *Muqarnas*7 (1990): 136-170.

read during the congregational prayer, we can identify particular concern of the Sublime Porte to exercise close oversight due to their role in promoting sultanic legitimacy.[29]

However, there are also significant limitations to this approach, which reduce its applicability to the context of the Danubian principalities. Firstly, the focus on the agency of the imperial center in the initial push to establish Ottoman-associated mosques and *vakf*s and a top-down manner in which it is framed tell us little about the attitudes of local elites towards this process. Moreover, the lack of direct Ottoman architectural patronage in Moldavia and Wallachia limits the applicability of this paradigm and has often been cited in Romanian historiography as the argument that the Ottoman conquest never took place.[30] While, as I argue elsewhere[31], this is not entirely justified, and Ottoman-inspired architectural motifs do appear in ecclesiastical architecture in Moldavia and Wallachia[32], they constitute too small a sample to provide a meaningful comparison.

These conceptual limitations encourage us to embrace another approach to the Ottomanization, developed within the context of the discussion on the imperial decline and decentralization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While its origins go back to the studies of Albert Hourani and Norman Itzkowitz in the 1950s and 1960s[33], it was only in the

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[29] Nenad Dostović, "Dva dokumenta iz tuzlanskog sidžila iz 1054-55 H.G./1644-45. godine u Gazi Husrev-Begovojbiblioteci," *Anali Gazi Husrev-Begove Biblioteke* 33 (2012): *passim*.

[30] For the argument, see Edgar Quinet, "Les roumains," *Revue des deux* mondes, 2 (1856), 2: 26-27.

[31] On this topic, see Michał Wasiucionek, "Danube-Hopping: Conversion, Jurisdiction and Spatiality between the Ottoman Empire and the Danubian principalities in the seventeenth century," in *Conversion and Islam in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Lure of the Other*, ed. Claire Norton (London – New York: Routledge, 2017), 77-99.

[32] Lucia Ionescu, "Barocul târziu moldovenesc în arhitectura ieşeană," *Ioan Neculce* 4-7 (1998-2001): 322.

[33] Albert Hourani, "The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent in the XVIIIth

1990s that the paradigm took its current shape. Its proponents argue that the phasing out and discontinuation of the 'classical' institutions of the Ottoman Empire - such as the *timar* system or *devşirme*- did not constitute a sign of decline, but rather a response to changing social and economic circumstances.[34]

The key factor in this development is the integration and monetization of economy in the course of the sixteenth century, epitomized by the rise of cash *vakfs*.[35] This growing monetization created new sources of wealth beyond the sphere of agricultural production. Willing to tap into this new pool of resources, the Porte overhauled its revenue-raising apparatus, gradually phasing out the *timar* system and auctioning off tax farms to the highest bidder *(iltizam).*[22] This shift had tremendous consequences as it allowed for the influx of former tax- paying *(reaya)*population into the ranks of the military-administrative class *(askerî),* increasing competition for appointments and contributing to the growth of grandee households, which took over the dominant position within the Ottoman political system.[36]

In the provincial setting, the transition from *timar* to tax farming involved the provincial notables in the business of

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Century," *Studia Islamica*, 8 (1957); Norman Itzkowitz, "Eighteenth Century Ottoman Realities," *Studia Islamica*16 (1962); Dana Sajdi, "Decline, Its Discontents and Ottoman Cultural History: By Way of Introduction," in *Ottoman tulips, Ottoman coffee: Leisure and lifestyle in the eighteenth century,* ed. Dana Sajdi (London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 1-40, 5.

[34] Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 123; M. F. Çalışır, "Decline of a "Myth": Perspectives on the Ottoman "Decline"," *Tarih Okulu*, 9 (2011): 38-9.

[35] Jon E. Mandaville, "Usurious Piety: The Cash Waqf Controversy in the Ottoman Empire," *International Journal of Middle East Studies 10,*no. 3 (1979): 292; Baki Tezcan, "Searching for Osman: A reassessment of the deposition of the Ottoman sultan Osman II (1618-1622)," (unpublished PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2001), 144.

[36] İ. Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: the Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650*(New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 77; Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," 146.

government. Local elites and household agents sent by the *mültezim*s acted as subcontractors of the imperial grandees, collecting revenue on the ground.[37] This led to the rise of provincial powerholders such as Jalilis in Mosul or 'Azms in Damascus, who managed to establish themselves as partners of the central elite and gradually took over the actual provincial governance.[38] This trend only accelerated with the introduction of *malikane,* which transformed short-term contracts into quasi--proprietary rights over the shares of revenue, effectively privatizing the fiscal apparatus of the empire.[39] However, this privatization - as Ariel Salzmann and Dina Rizk Khoury pointed out - did not necessarily mean the demise of the state. On the contrary, by coopting the provincial notables, the Porte managed to expand its social base and tie the fortunes of local households to those of the Ottoman polity.[40] As a result, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries experienced a period of rapid horizontal and vertical integration in the socioeconomic, political and cultural spheres, even as the political power was increasingly taken over by factional leaders. In the most recent formulation of this current, Baki Tezcan argued that this period saw the emergence and maturation of the 'Muslim political nation of the Ottoman Empire'.[41]

The developments in the sphere of material culture seem to confirm these trends, as the cultural influence of the center

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[37] Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Regime Revisited: "Privatization" and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Politics and Society*, 21 (1993), 4: 401.

[38] Shimon Shamir, "As'ad Pasha al-'Azm and Ottoman Rule in Damascus," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and AfricanStudies*26 (1963): 1-28; Dina RizkKhoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[39] Salzmann, "An AncienRegime Revisited," 403-4.

[40]Ariel Salzmann, "Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire: Rival Paths to the Modem State*", The Ottoman Empire and its heritage*, (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2004), 11.

[41] Baki Tezcan, *The second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modem World,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11.

expanded during this period, both horizontally and vertically. While the number of monumental foundations sponsored by members of the elite across the provinces generally decreased during this period, newly ascendant local actors filled the void with smaller- scale institutions. As ShirineHamadeh's study of Istanbul architectural history in the eighteenth century has shown the growing role of the 'middle- class' patrons as founders of fountains and other types of small-scale architectural objects, pointing to the phenomenon of *décloisonnement* of Ottoman architectural patronage and material culture.[42] This expansive trend was not limited to the sphere of architecture. As Amanda Phillips has shown, the second half of the seventeenth century saw the appearance of *çatma*cushion covers of inferior quality and smaller size, which suggests that - while they imitated the patterns of more luxurious objects - were destined for a less affluent population.[43] In turn, this popularization and fall in quality fueled the emergence of alternative designs at the upper end of the spectrum.[44]

From our perspective, this understanding the concept of Ottomanization carries significant advantages. Firstly, it provides a general socio-political framework for analyzing center-periphery relations in the 'post-classical' Ottoman Empire, providing us with a clear picture of the underlying dynamics between the integration of material culture in this period. Secondly, it offers a workable setting for analyzing the interplay between identity formation and material culture among "subordinate groups" in the imperial periphery. Finally, it highlights the agency of local elites, which allows us to include the discussion of reception and hybridization into the discussion

[42] Shirine Hamadeh, *The city's pleasures: Istanbul in the eighteenth century*(Seattle: University of Washington Press,2008), 79.

[43] Amanda Phillips, "A Material Culture: Ottoman Velvets and Their Owners, 1600-1750," *Muqarnas,* 31 (2014), 1: 160-2.

[44] Ibid., 162-7.

of cultural transfer. Thus, in the following sections of the present study I will apply this notion of Ottomanization, aptly defined by Hülya Canbakal as "the creation of a composite elite through the functional and social merger of imperial officials and local powers [...] made possible by an inclusive system of privilege distribution located in the capital, and it was the degree of economic, social and, possibly, ideological integration thus achieved between the center and provincial elites of different kinds that set the eighteenth century apart from the earlier Ottoman centuries."[45]

So far, scholars have predominantly applied the concept of provincial Ottomanization to the Sunni notables across the empire, thus begging the question of its applicability to the boyar elites of Moldavia and Wallachia. In order to address this issue, we have to examine the relationship between three distinct phenomena: Ottomanization, Islamization and Turkification. While these three processes are often conflated in scholarship, distinguishing between them is of crucial importance for our understanding of the Ottoman center's interaction with peripheral elites.

The relationship between Ottoman and Turkish identity is arguably easier to disentangle. While Christian sources employed the expression "to turn Turk," this label played a limited role in the identity of Ottoman elite. As both contemporaries and subsequent generations of Ottomanists pointed out, the elites drew a clear distinction between themselves and the Turks, seen in terms of "ethnicity-not-transcended and attachment to tribal ways and cultural codes," and was generally associated with uncouth nomads rather than cosmopolitan members of the Ottoman

[45] Hülya Canbakal, *Society and politics in an Ottoman town: Ayntab in the 17th century*. The Ottoman Empire and its heritage (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2006). 6.

administration.[46] Thus, despite the conflation of the ethnic and political terms abounding in historiography, it is important to emphasize that the Ottoman Empire shunned rather than embraced the term.

A more complex issue is the relationship between the process of Islamization and Ottomanization. After all, Muslim identity was central both on political and personal level for both the empire as a whole and to the majority of its subjects. This tremendous role that the religion played in Ottoman Empire as a marker of difference in administrative practices and everyday life, as well as the importance of Islamization processes in the Balkans, would suggest that process of Ottomanization would include conversion to Islam. Modern historiography reinforced this view, approaching non-Muslim inhabitants of the empire as a members of religious-based *millet*s, autonomous institutions that included Ottoman non-Muslims, excluded from the imperial social and political life.

However, as recent scholarship increasingly points out, the early modern *millet* structure is largely a modern construct and the pre-Tanzimat arrangements were more flexible and piecemeal. The Ottomans often coopted different non-Sunni groups and powerholders into the system of administration, which included Orthodox bishops and *kocabaşı*sof Morea, Druze emirs of M'an family and even Shi'a tribes in Mount Lebanon.[47] Obviously, the most important example of such an incorporation

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[46] Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum," *Muqarnas*, 24 (2007): 11.

[47] Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn, "Problems in the Ottoman Administration in Syria during the Sixteenth and SeventeenthCenturies: The Case of the Sanjak of Sidon-Beirut," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24 (1992): 665-75; Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman rule. 1516-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010), 41. For the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the problem of Orthodox millet, see Tom Papademetriou, "Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church", in *The Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7–8.

of non-Sunni communities are the Phanariots, which starting from the mid-seventeenth century constituted a crucial element of central imperial elite and identified themselves as the servants of the Porte.[48] This ad hoc bargaining and inclusion created multiple points of contact and opened avenues for upward mobility for such indivduals as Panagiotis Nikoussios or Mavrokordatos family, who took an active role in the political life of the empire as a whole. Thus, in the words of Antonis Anastasopoulos: "[Non-Muslim elites], too, were part of the multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-faith, multi-layered, yet unified Ottoman society, which despite the existence of significant rifts within, shared certain basic common experiences and values, and above all what might be called its 'Ottomanness'. There is plenty of evidence which suggests that non-Muslim elites largely aspired to inclusion in the Ottoman elite and not separation from it [...]"[49]

Further argument in favor of distinguishing the processes of Islamization and Ottomanization lies in the manner students of the Middle East deployed the concept. As they argue, the process of Ottomanization can be observed in the seventeenth and eighteenth in such locales as Mosul or 'Aintab, towns that often had embraced Islam in the first millennium CE. Even if we take into account the fact that the Ottoman elite actively promoted and in many respects reshaped the Hanafi *madhab*, the chronological gap makes it clear that we should conceptualize conversionto Islam and adoption of Ottoman identity as two different, although often intertwined processes. In effect, there are no conceptual obstacles to employing the notion of Ottomanization - as defined in the present section – to the Danubian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. The

[48] Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an empire: governing Ottomans in an age of revolution,* (Berkeley. CA: Berkeley University Press, 2011*).*

[49] Antonis Anastasopoulos, "Introduction," in *Provincial elites in the Ottoman Empire,* ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), xi-xxviii, xvi.

following section will address this issue and discusses the nexus between the evolving Ottoman elite and the inclusion of boyars into the empire-wide circuits of gift exchange.

Danubian Principalities and the Imperial Circuits

Romanian scholarship has predominantly defined the relationship between the Sublime Porte and the Danubian principalities as one of 'tributary states,' juxtaposing them against the provinces under direct administration of the Porte.[50] This clear-cut distinction reinforced the claim that Moldavia and Wallachia managed to avoid Ottoman conquest and integration into the Ottoman Empire. Within this model, Moldavians and Wallachians remained outside the imperial society and empire, and interacted with the Sublime Porte as separate, autonomous states.

However, recent scholarship has challenged this view by blurring the boundary between these two, allegedly distinct categories. According to the proponents of this model, rather than seeing the Ottoman Empire and its satellites as internally homogenous and differentiated entities, we should rather approach the 'well-protected domains' as a composite polity ruled by a maze of *ad hoc* arrangements and different circuits of power that often straddled different jurisdictions.[51] This picture is further amplified by the rise of household politics and the shift of power away from formal institutions that occurred during the

[50] For the discussion see Mihai Maxim, *Ţările Române şi Înalta Poartă: cadrul juridic al relaţiilor româno-otomane în evul mediu*(Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993); Veniamin Ciobanu, *Statutuljuridic al principatelor române în viziune europeană (sec. al XVlll-lea) (Iaşi:*Editura Universităţii „Alexandru loan Cuza", 1999); Viorel Panaite, *Război, pace şi comerţ în Islam. Ţările române şi dreptul otoman al popoarelor,* 2nd ed., (Iaşi: Polirom, 2013).

[51]See for instance: DariuszKołodziejczyk, "What is inside and what is outside? Tributary states in Ottoman politics," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centunes,*ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2013), 421-32.

seventeenth and eighteenth century. Thus, rather than focusing on the formal status of its constitutive parts, we should instead turn to the socio-political dynamics of the system and the place of particular sets of actors within the system.

As I have argued elsewhere, the comparison of social, political and economic dynamics in the Danubian principalities and the Ottoman provinces brings to light striking parallels. As was the case in other parts of the empire, the monetization of Moldavian and Wallachian economies restructured the local elite along new lines, while increased social and spatial mobility brought about the influx of new groups into the system, known in Romanian historiography as "Greco-Levantines."As Radu Păun's meticulous research has shown, this process expanded the ties of the local elites to the imperial center, as the new families sought integration into the fabric of boyar class, while retaining their connections in Istanbul.[52]While this process was a tumultuous one, with resistance to the 'Greeks from Ţarigrad' becoming a rallying cry for rebellion, most families succeeded in their efforts to insert themselves into the boyar class and find allies among autochthonous lineages. This remains in line with the parallel process of formation of hybrid 'Ottoman- local' elites described by Ehud Toledano for Arab lands of the empire.[53][54] What is more, the evidence suggests that this mixed character continued in the eighteenth century, under the so-called Phanariot regime. As Paul Cernovodeanu pointed out, the composition of the princely council in this period indicates that the most powerful local lineages adapted well to the new

[52] Radu G. Păun, "Pouvoirs, offices et patronage dans la Principaute de Moldavie au XVIIesiecle. L'aristocratieroumaine et la penetration greco-levantine" (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Paris: L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 2003).

[53] Ehud R. Toledano, "The Emergence of Ottoman-Local Elites," 148-9.

[54] Paul Cernovodeanu, "Mobility and traditionalism: the evolution of the boyar class in the Romanian principalities in the 18th century,"*Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Europeennes*, 24 (1986), 3: *passim*.

circumstances, while the lower rungs of the elite gradually lost out, relegated to the newly established legal category of *mazili.*

Striking parallels can be also discerned in the evolution of the principalities' economic ties with the Porte. The second half of the sixteenth century brought an increasing commodification of the position of the voyvode, which was effectively being sold to the highest bidder. The competition among pretenders and the demands of the Porte contributed to the skyrocketing amount of *harac* and set the voievodes into a spiral of debt, culminating with the rebellion of November 1594. However, after *harac* payments resumed at the beginning of the seventeenth century, its amount not only was significantly lower, but also stagnated throughout the seventeenth century, with the growing share of the cash flows being now funneled into gifts for Ottoman officials.[55]

While often interpreted as the recognition of the Moldavian-Wallachian ability to resist the Porte, this changes in *harac* payments in the seventeenth century find parallels within the Ottoman Empire. Research conducted by MuratÇızakça has shown that the shift in the balance of power away from the ruler and towards grandee household had an impact on the terms of tax-farming contracts within the *iltizam* system. Despite the apparent growth of taxable resources, the value of contracts held by high-ranking officials stagnated for decades due to the holders' ability to prevent competitive bidding and tax reassessment. [56] Similar developments in Moldavia and Wallachia suggest that rather than simply trying to outbid their rivals, the voievodes increasingly approached the high-ranking

[55] Tahsin Gemil, *Ţările române în contextul politic internaţional (1621-1672)*(Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1979), 14-5; Bogdan Murgescu, *România şi Europa: Acumularea decalajelor economice : 1500—2010,* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2010), 33.

[56] Murat Çızakça, "Tax-farming and Financial Decentralization in the Ottoman Economy, 1520-1697," *Journal of European Economic History*, 22 (1993), 2: 231.

officials of the Porte and formed patron-client ties based on exchange of different types of resources.

This integration into empire-wide patronage and economic networks was by no means restricted to the rulers; grand boyars increasingly resorted to patronage ties in order to improve their position or subvert hostile voievodes. This growing connectivity between Moldavian-Wallachian and Ottoman political arenas meant that factional conflicts among boyars often spilled into the Ottoman political arena. The case in point is the conflict between Grigore Ghica, the client of Köprülü Ahmed Pasha, and the Wallachian branch of Cantacuzino family, who tied their fortunes to Kara Mustafa Pasha, thus contributing to the growing tension between the two grandees.[57] This growth of factional ties suggests a crucial process of social and political integration between the elites of the Danubian principalities and the Ottoman political center, in line with the process of Ottomanization elsewhere in the imperial periphery.For our discussion here, the crucial aspect of this growth of cross-border factionalism is the role it played in the circulation of material goods. In this regard, the growth of patronage ties between grandees and Moldavian-Wallachian boyars embedded the latter in the circuit of gift-giving, which constituted an integral part of Ottoman households as patronage systems.

As was the case in all premodern societies, gift exchange in the Ottoman Empire was a crucial aspect of social and political interactions, reflected in an elaborate and nuanced terminology of gifts. [58] The act of giving were crucial in establishing social hierarchies and lubricated the wheels of governance, as well as expanding and maintaining patron-client

[57] On this topic, see Wasiucionek, "Politics and Watermelons," 225-35.

[58] See Ann Lambton, "Pīshkash: present or tribute?," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57, (1994), 1.

relations. In her analysis of the circuits of gift exchange, Hedda Reindl-Kiel identified different circuits that held the empire together and provided necessary cohesion, while at the same time spanning between official institutional hierarchies and patronage networks. As the scholars argues, we can talk of the *cycleof care and dependency*, as the gifts flowed down from the imperial center down the household structure; *the cycle of effectiveness*, which bound Ottoman officials and provincial notables; finally, *the cycle of honor and career*, crucial for the patterns of promotion within the ranks.[59] These gifts included a variety of objects, ranging from foodstuffs to silverware to luxury garments. While many of these gift exchanges were initiated by the Porte, the objects acquired social life of their own as they started to circulate among officials along factional and administrative lines. Apart from the luxury objects introduced into the circulation by the ruler, this stream of *hediye* was also complemented by the acquisition of goods on the market by the officials themselves, sometimes for exorbitant prices. [60] Finally, the confiscation of grandees' possessions (*müsadere*) and their subsequent redistribution also fueled the circuits of gift-giving throughout the empire.

Within the political and administrative logic of the Ottoman Empire, high-quality objects, such as *hil'at*s, served a triple purpose. Firstly, they were used a tool of displaying social status, as well as indicating social and political hierarchies. This was achieved through the lavishness of attire informed the public of an individual's position within society, while at the same time the act of giving reinforced personal allegiances and vertical ties between different ranks of the elite. This was true both for the 'official' relations between the sultan and his

[59] Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "Breads for the Followers, Silver Vessels for the Lord: The System of Distribution and Redistribution in the Ottoman Empire (16th-18th centuries)," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 42 (2013), *passim*.

[60] Michael Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics and the Ulema Household* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 149–53.

servants, as well as for 'informal' patronage ties between officials.As Michael Nizri's analysis ofFeyzullah Efendi's household has shown, the *Şeyhülislam* kept detailed registers of the distribution of luxury items between his clients, thus providing evidence of the gifts' role in enhancing factional cohesion and loyalty.[61] Finally, the high monetary value of luxury objects also played a role in factional strategies, since they could be commodified and sold on the market in order to raise cash.[62] Taken together, these different applications of luxury objects and their place in the circulation and conversion of different types of capital explains why even those sections of the Ottoman elite that conformed to a more modest public attire – such as *ulama* – stockpiled hundreds of lavish garments.[63]

Archival evidence suggests that Moldavian and Wallachian elites partook in this complex system of flows, with luxury objects circulating both ways between the Danubian principalities and the Sublime Porte. While further research is necessary, we can nonetheless identify several channels through which luxury objects of Ottoman origin made their way into the boyar households. Both the meanings associated with particular channels, as well as their connection to the political sphere varied significantly.

Two of them, which I label as commercial and ecclesiastical circuits, remained relatively removed from the political sphere and had limited impact on the identity of the Moldavian-Wallachian elites, and as such remain only of secondary importance for the topic at hand.

In regard to Moldavian-Ottoman ecclesiastical circuit, the circulation of luxury objects occurred within a specific Orthodox

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[61] Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics*, 149-53.

[62] Amanda Phillips, "Ottoman Hil'at: Between Commodity and Charisma," in *Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination: Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey,* ed. MariosHadjianastasis (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2015), 111-38, 124-8.

[63] Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics*, 138-9.

context. Unlike Ottoman silk fabrics used in Catholic countries – which lacked any features distinguishing them from secular production, - the ties between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and imperial silk manufactures in Bursa and Istanbul meant that the objects produced for Moldavian and Wallachian churches were made for specific ecclesiastical purposes and employed a whole repertoire of Christian imagery.[64] The proliferation of these church fabrics in Moldavia and Wallachia was facilitated in the seventeenth century by the growing involvement of the voyvodes in the affairs of the patriarchate and the Greek Orthodox milieu of the imperial capital.

The other three circuits of luxury items were intimately associated with the political sphere and arguably more likely to influence identity formation processes in Moldavia and Wallachia. Firstly, the *symbolic circuit* was initiated by the Sublime Porte and established the official link binding voyvodes and high-ranking boyars to the imperial center. By means of customary distribution of ceremonial *hil'at*s, the Ottomans not only emphasized the boyars' dependent status, but also symbolically integrated them into the ranks of imperial elite and rewarded them for services provided for the Porte.Numerous references to instances of *caftanirea*, frequently and meticulously registered in the chronicle by Radu Greceanu, clearly show that Moldavian-Wallachian elites positively responded to the inclusion into this circuit and the *hil'at*s distributed by the Porte were seen as a sign of particular honor and a mark of distinction.[65]

Another circuit of luxury items developed along cross-border factional lines and aimed at providing trust and cohesion to patronage networks. While the sources provide

[64] Atasoyet al., *İpek*, 178.

[65] Radu Greceanu, *Istoria domniei lui Constantin Basarab Brîncoveanu voievod (1688-1714),* ed. Aurora Ilieş, Croniciile medievale ale României 8 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1970), 58, 75, 81, 85, 98, 101, 111, 122, 125, 130,132,141,144,153.

fewer references regarding this channel, it is nonetheless clear that gift exchange constituted bread and butter of factional politics. Discussing the cooperation between Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha and the Wallachian branch of Cantacuzino family, Radu Popescu claims that a well-time gift produced by Şerban Cantacuzino in 1660 was crucial for the establishment of this alliance, which was to play a crucial role in Wallachian-Ottoman relations for the following two decades.[66] Exchange of gifts also underpinned the patron-client relationship between Gheorghe Duca and Köprülü Ahmed Pasha.[67]

Finally, we can also identify a more mundane, *quotidian circuit* of gift exchange, meant to lubricate the wheels of government and reward rank-and-file individuals for services provided. Similar to Reindl-Kiel's *cycle of effectiveness*, this practice of according small-scale rewards for subordinates and lower-ranking officials is clearly visible in the financial ledgers produced during the reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu, which enumarate a variety of presents distributed to *çavuş*es and military officers.[68]

Taken together, these channels contributed to the proliferation of Ottoman-style luxury items among the Moldavian-Wallachian elite. However, this process was by no means restricted to the boyars, but extended to other Christian elites of the empire as well. As Karl Binswanger has convincingly pointed out, despite their religious and juridical discourse,

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[66] Radu Popescu, *Istoriile domnilor Ţării Romîneşti,* ed. Constantin Grecescu, *Cronicilemedievale ale României*, 4 (Bucharest: EdituraAcademiei R.P.R., 1963), 126.

[67] Ion Neculce, *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei şio samă de cuvinte,* ed. IorguIordan (Bucharest: Editura de Stat pentruLiteraturăşiArtă, 1955), 132.

[68] See Dragoş Ungureanu, "Constantin Brâncoveanu şiÎnaltaPoartă: Relaţiifinanciaro-vasaliceînluminaCondiciivistieriei," accessed March 16, 2017,file:///C:/Users/Michal/Downloads/Ungureanu-Dragos_Constantin-Brancoveanu-si-Inalta-Poarta-Relatii-financiaro-vasalice-in-lumina-Condicii-vistieriei.pdf

attempts to reinforce Ottoman sumptuary laws throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century were driven by the growing demand for high-quality fabrics by *dhimmi*s and Muslims alike rather than by doctrinal considerations. [69] Similarly, the Ragusan authorities in 1554 were forced to relax their own regulations and allow inhabitants to don Ottoman-style garments.[70] As these failures to enforce sumptuary laws and high demand for high-quality textiles suggest, non-Muslim elites actively sought to acquire luxury objects in accordance with the patterns shared with their Muslim counterparts.

However, this pursuit of Ottoman-style luxury and the mode in which Moldavian-Wallachian elite was integrated into the imperial circuits of luxury goods also bred inequality within its own ranks.Since partaking in many of the aforementioned flows – most importantly the symbolic and factional circuits - was conditioned by boyar rank and political influence, high-ranking members of the elite were had more ways of obtaining Ottoman luxury goods than their less influential peers. Trying to keep up, lower rung of Moldavian-Wallachian elite were thus more dependent on the market, limiting their options and constituting a considerable burden on their economic resources. This likely fueled complaints regarding the rising cost of participation in courtly life in the principalities that started during the reign of Radu Mihnea.[71]

Adopting aesthetic models via patronage networks and circuits of gift exchange is one thing; establishing a connection

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[69] Karl Binswanger, "Ökonomische Aspekte der Kleiderordnung im Osmanischen Reich des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Prilozi za Orijentalnu Filologiju* 30(1980): 56-9.

[70] Djurdjica Petrović, "Dubrovčani i turska obuća u XV i početkom XVI veka," in *Gradska kultura na Balkanu (XV-XIX vek): Zbornik radova,* vol. 2, ed. Verena Han (Belgrade: Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, 1988), 9-32, 2:11-3.

[71] Miron Costin, *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei dela Aron Vodă încoace,* ed. P.P Panaitescu (Bucharest: Fundata Regală pentru Literatură şi Artă, 1943), 70-1.

between the sartorial change and identity is a different story. In the following section, I will attempt to establish a link between these two aspects of early modern Moldavian-Wallachian history and identify the sources that can elucidate the issue at hand.

Ottoman Circuits of Luxury Goods and Boyar Identities

Scholars often assume that patronage and factionalism, due to their instrumental character, have little to no influence on the identities of those involved and thus constitute a marriage of convenience rather than generator of new identities. However, the questions of identity and patronage intertwine, since recruitment into such networks both relies on pre-existing solidarities and is conducive to the formation of new ones.[72] A research conducted by Jūratė Kiaupienė on the sixteenth-century Lithuanian elite has shown, the emergence of the Grand Duchy's political nation was a product of patron-client ties between the members of the Princely Council in Vilnius and provincial nobilities.[73]Also, in the context of the Ottoman Empire, the link between factionalism and identity was of crucial importance. On the one hand, as Metin Kunt pointed out in 1974, common ethnic-regional (*cins*) background played constituted a significant factor in household politics.[74] On the other hand, entry into the faction facilitated the formation of

[72] Javier Auyero, ""From the client's point(s) of view": How poor people perceive and evaluate political clientelism," *Theory and Society* 28, no. 2 (1999): 297-334.

[73] Jūratė Kiaupienė, "The Grand Duchy and the Grand Dukes of Lithuania in the Sixteenth Century: Reflections on the Lithuanian Political Nation and the Union of Lublin," in *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in European Context, c. 1500-1795*, ed. Richard Butterwick (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 82-92.

[74] I. M. Kunt, "Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 5 (1974), 3: 233-239.

new identity and integration into society. In her superb study of this process in Ottoman Egypt, Jane Hathaway argued that "factional identity served the role that national identity would serve in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although the faction's capacity for absorbing dissimilar groups was much greater than that of most nations, based as they were and are on considerations of ethnicity, language, and territorial origin. In that respect, it may make more sense to liken factional cohesion to that of an army, a club, a British public school, a secret society, or even a Mafia household."[75]

If this is the case, how did the immersion of Moldavian-Wallachian boyars in Ottoman politics affect their identity? Did their adoption of Ottoman-style material culture correspond to the evolution of elite identities, or was it just a simple pursuit of exotica? How did the unequal participation in the circuits of luxury goods affect the internal structure of the elite?

Unfortunately, the relative dearth of ego documents poses a serious challenge in answering these questions. Internal sources provide us with scant information regarding the topic; in contrast, while the accounts by foreign travelers, missionaries and diplomats – despite more elaborate descriptions of the material culture – often use different interpretative grids, providing us with a perspective not necessarily shared by the local elite. Finally, visual sources in the form of votive paintings, offer us with numerous representations of elite attire, but at the same time they lack context, which would allow us to interpret the meanings the sartorial choices were meant to convey. Thus, in order to produce meaningful results, it is necessary to analyze them within the wider archival and historical context.

In this context, Ottoman costume albums (*kıyafetnames)* of the seventeenth century provide us with important cues regarding

75 Jane Hathaway, *A tale of two factions: myth, memory, and identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 43.

the relationship between Moldavian-Wallachian elites and the wider imperial society. Arguably, as Natalie Rothman recently pointed out, the genre of costume albums poses significant challenges as a historical source.[76] As part of the wider muraqqa genre, their current form is the result of the complex process of authorship, selection and compilation, with their contents being added, reorganized and removed. As a consequence of these interventions, identifying the agency behind the albums is a particularly arduous task, even if they include miniatures by a single author.[77] Moreover, by its very nature this type of sources fixes the social and sartorial landscape of the empire, creating a myopic illusion of clear-cut and easily distinguishable categories, which does not correspond to the fluid realities of everyday life. Finally, as a source of Ottoman provenience, they present us with the vision of the imperial society as seen from the center and not necessarily shared by Moldavian-Wallachian boyars.

Despite their shortcomings, kıyafetnames nonetheless provide us with important pieces of information, primarily in terms of selection of socio-sartorial categories. The costume album acquired by the Swedish ambassador ClasRålamb during his mission to Istanbul in 1657-1658, and housed today in the Swedish Royal Library, contains depictions of Moldavian and Wallachian boyars.[78] Both miniatures depict bearded men, dressed in red anteri and a blue kaftan with open sleeves. Both also sport fur-lined caps, identical in form to those represented on the depictions of Greeks.[79]While the miniatures by themselves add little to our knowledge of Moldavian-Wallachian attire, their inclusion in the album meant to represent the Ottoman society is important, since it suggests that the Ottoman miniaturist recognized the boyars as inhabitants of the 'well-protected domains.' This stands in stark contrast with the lack of similar of Polish-Lithuanian

[76]Ella N. Rothman, "Visualizing a Space of Encounter: Intimacy, Alterity and Trans-Imperial Perspective in an Ottoman-Venetian Miniature Album," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 40 (2012): 39-80.

[77] Ibidem, 44-45.

[78] Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm, Ral. 8:o nr 10: 26, 123.

[79] Ibidem, 57.

noblemen and Venetian merchants, in spite of the fact that the latter were a relatively common presence in the Ottoman capital.[80] Thus, the process of selection suggests that the authors of the album saw Moldavian-Wallachian elites as part of the wider imperial society, constitutive of its social and sartorial landscape.

This interpretation is corroborated by the extension of the practice of confiscating property of the voyvodes by the Imperial Treasury (*müsadere*), which proliferated in the seventeenth century. The *müsadere* registers remain an important, and yet largely untapped, source for the material culture of Moldavian-Wallachian elite and the principalities' relationship with the Sublime Porte.[81]While scholars addressing the topic have generally interpreted this process as a breach of Ottoman-Moldavian juridical arrangements[82], it is worth noting that, albeit unpleasant for those involved, the application of *müsadere* was also a distinctive marker of 'Ottomanism' and thus signified the recognition of those subject to the practice as members of the imperial elite.[83]

With this in mind, votive paintings in Moldavia and Wallachia also open new research vistas that go beyond the idiographic description of attire sported by the benefactors. Particularly instructive in this sense is the series of portraits in the Adormition church in the Polovragi Monastery. The monastery, rebuilt from ruins by Danciu Pârâianu, was repainted in 1713 on the initiative of Voyvode Constantin Brâncoveanu. The votive painting of the monastery include four benefactors of the monastery: Matei Basarab, Danciu Pârâianu, Barbu Craiovescu and Petru *vtori clucer*; their elongated silhouettes

[80] On the politics of Ottoman costume albums, see ibid.

[81] Mihai Maxim, "Țările Române și Imperiul otoman", in *Istoria românilor*, vol. 5, ed. Virgil Cândea et al., 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Editură Enciclopedică, 2012): 841.

[82] Ibidem, 839.

[83] Karl K. Barbir, "One Marker of Ottomanism: Confiscation of Ottoman Officials' Estates" in *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz*, ed. Karl K. Barbir and Baki Tezcan (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 135–45.

highlight the meticulously reproduced decoration of their garments. They include a repertoire of indelibly Ottoman motifs, including the oglival forms on the attire of Matei Basarab and Danciu Pârâianu, as well the floral patterns adorning the robe of Barbu Craiovescu. In contrast, the *kaftan* and *anteri* worn by Petru is far more modest, with barely discernible ornamentation.

The reason for this disparity is not difficult to explain: unlike other benefactors, Petru was a low-ranking boyar and his inferior status was conveyed through visual cues. However, the divergence is not in the level of sophistication of the design, but also in its provenience.The pronounced decorative motifs of the grand boyars' costumes, allow us to unmistakably identify their origin as Ottoman and their likely function as ceremonial *hil'at*s received from the Porte; Petru's garment does not provide similar clues.

Taking into consideration what we know about the circulation of *hil'at*sand their symbolic role not only as a gift, but also as a vessel for the sultan's charisma, it seems justified to argue that not only the material qualities of the garments, but also their provenience served as a mark for distinction. As I have mentioned earlier, Radu Greceanu, the author of Constantin Brâncoveanu's official chronicle and contemporary to the church's restoration, showed a particular preoccupation with the instances of *caftanirea*, in each case listing the number of boyars receiving *hil'at*s from the Porte. This number oscillated between 12 and 24, thus including high-ranking boyars, but not those holding inferior rank within the principality. While the latter were also provided with customary gifts, they received them not from the sultan, but rather from the voyvode, thus forming a secondary symbolic circuit of gifts. In this sense, obtaining the *hil'at* from Istanbul reinforced one's status at the apex of Wallachian society, as it set the high-ranking boyars from those who received their garments merely from the voyvode.

Finally, in trying to establish the link between Ottomanization of material culture and identity we have to draw attention to another largely underutilized source, namely boyar and voyvodal signatures and their stylistic features. Large-scale editorial projects of *Documente privind istoria României* and *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, while making the sources far more accessible, have also greatly reduced Romanian scholars' contact with the documents in their original form. However, in the context of the lack of ego documents available for the majority of the boyar class, these often-overlooked elements can provide a partial solution. Since the very purpose of a signature is to produce a visual cue that would connect the document to a specific, identifiable person, it provides us with a glimpse into identity and self-fashioning strategies of the signatory.The ability to sign the document, the choice of Greek or Romanian and the use of the seal can all provide us with the information on the identity of an individual that we would be otherwise unable to access. Thus, in a limited way, in the context of the seventeenth century, they can be approached as surrogate ego documents, some of them containing direct references to the wider Ottoman context.

In a document issued on 28 July 1642, we find among witnesses Evstratie Leurdeanu, a scion of an influential Wallachian lineage, who at this point in his career held the position of deputy treasurer.[84] He signed the document as "Istratie vt[ori] vist[ier]," but above it he attached a seal in the form of *mühür* and with an inscription in Arabic script. The text of the inscription is hardly legible, but according to SpiridonCristocea and Mihai Maxim who discussed the topic, the inscription represents a corrupted form *bin Levordan*.[85] At the same time, the boyar does not seem to have used any other

[84] ASB, M-rea Radu Vodă iv/48.

[85] Spiridon I. Cristocea, *Din trecutul marii boierimi muntene: marele-vornic Stroe Leurdeanu*(Brăila: Editura Istros, *2011), 61-2*.

seal to corroborate documents, which makes his choice of acquiring his own *mühür*rather surprising. Maxim has suggested that the seal shows Evstratie's contacts with the Greco-Levantine milieu in Istanbul. However, if this was the case, it still fails to explain a rather mundane document intended for the members of the Wallachian boyar class. Why did a relatively young boyar from a powerful lineage choose the Ottoman-style seal to convey his identity along with the signature in Cyrillic script?

An even more powerful statement was conveyed by the signature of Moldavian Voyvode ŞtefanTomşa II (1611-1615, 1621-1623). A relatively large numbers issued during his reign are authenticated with a signature that differs significantly from the established models of Moldavian chancery tradition. Identified misleadingly as *monokondyllos*[86], the cipher is inspired by the Ottoman *tughra*, the sultanic monogram, albeit adapted to the Cyrillic script and placed according to the format established in the principality (See Fig. 2).[87] The utmost care to preserve the resemblance to the Ottoman model and the way in which it was adapted rule out any possibility of coincidence or of purely aesthetic inspiration, but show that the voyvode made a deliberate effort to highlight his association with the Ottoman cultural and political models.

Interestingly, ŞtefanTomşa II's Ottoman orientation did not go unnoticed in the fray of factional politics at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Career soldier, who served in the Ottoman army against the Safavids and acceded the throne as a client of Nasuh Pasha and Gürcü Mehmed Pasha, the voyvode was accused by the opposition of "fully adopting the Turkish

[86] See for instance, ASB, Achiziţii Noi cxcv/3 and SJAN – Iaşi, M-rea Galata ii/4. I am currently preparing an article devoted to the of Ştefan Tomşa II's pseudo-*tughra* and its place within both Moldavian and Ottoman context.

[87] Damian P. Bogdan, *Paleografia româno-slavă: Tratatşi album* (Bucharest, 1978), 273–75.

outlook and style of life."[88] While such statements could be dismissed as hostile propaganda, the voyvode's signature suggests that the claim was not unfounded, but reflected to some extent the way Tomşa consciously presented himself to his subjects. In this sense, we can argue that the voyvode should be seen as an "agent of Ottomanization", reflecting the growing interaction and connectivity between the Ottoman imperial culture and the elites of Moldavia and Wallachia.

Taken together, the evidence from aforementioned usage of Ottoman-style seals and *tuğras* suggests that at least partly, high-ranking boyars and some voievodes were consciously highlighting their ties to the Ottoman Empire as part of their identity. The prominence and careful rendition of textile designs in the votive paintings also suggests the process of self-fashioning that was intended not only to convey opulence of the top boyars' material culture, but also their association with the metropolitan culture of the Ottoman Empire. This suggests that the participation in the imperial circuits of gift giving and in the cultural milieu of the imperial elite resulted not only in the transfer of luxury items, but also in the adoption - albeit in a hybridized form - of the meanings and identities associated with them.

Conclusions

As is usually the case with methodology-oriented contributions, the goal of the present study was to provide food for thought and outline possible directions of inquiry rather than provide ready answers. As I have argued, despite frequent references in historiography, the Ottomanization of material culture in early modern Moldavia and Wallachia remains a neglected topic, and its impact on the identity formation of the boyar class has received little to no attention, especially when

[88] *Hurmuzaki*, IV/1, 463.

compared with the nineteenth-century transition towards European-style fashion. Seen through teleological lens of existing paradigms, the Ottoman cultural influence appears as superficial transplant and an aberration, quickly discarded in favor of the modernizing trends of Western Europe. However, when we look at the process on its own terms, it becomes clear that the empire provided a powerful cultural idiom that, once adopted, remained central for boyar culture for over two centuries and, and as such, calls for a careful and multi-pronged examination. The fact that it was ultimately abandoned does not diminish its importance for Romanian history.

However, in order to do this, it is necessary to re-examine basic assumptions and master narratives. A general overhaul of the dominant approach to Romanian-Ottoman relations in the early modern period is long overdue. This would include incorporation of new trends in the field of Ottoman studies, which have generally bypassed Romanian scholarship. In effect, while Ottomanists increasingly point out the flexibility and adaptability of the early modern empire, students of the Danubian principalities often referred to the same empire as a declining and static power governed by incompetent and morally bankrupt officials. Thus, establishing a common ground between these two fields of inquiry is the prerequisite for any meaningful engagement with the impact of Ottoman culture on Moldavia and Wallachia.

This effort should go hand in hand with placing the Danubian principalities within the wider socio-political context of the Ottoman Empire. While the "tributary state" framework represented Moldavia and Wallachia as all but isolated from cultural and social dynamics of the empire, reintegrating them into the imperial ecumene opens new opportunities for comparison and brings to the fore numerous "points of contact" between the local elite and imperial society.Obviously, this is not to say that there were no differences in the mode of integration

of Moldavian-Wallachian elites compared with provincial elites elsewhere in the empire; however, this change of perspective would allow us to engage in an informed comparison and elucidate both divergences and similarities. Thus, as I have tried to show in the present paper, understanding the Ottoman Empire as part of the lived experience of Moldavian and Wallachian elite rather than an external force is crucial for understanding the changes in the sphere of boyar material culture.

Finally, approaching the Ottomanization of boyar material culture requires introduction of new types of sources, as well as reassessment of the old ones. Examining the interplay between Moldavian and Ottoman sources, as well as reading them against the grain allows us to catch a glimpse of the wider processes of identity formation and cultural transfer between the Ottoman center and imperial periphery. A comparison of Muslim elites' inventories and those of Moldavian-Wallachian boyars can provide us with information regarding similarities and divergences of their patterns of luxury consumption, investigating stylistic features of the boyar signatures allows us to trace the influences of the Porte's calligraphic tradition on the local elite, while votive paintings, interpreted with Ottoman context in mind, can yield new perspectives and clues regarding the impact of material culture on identity formation and markers of distinction. In short, "bringing the Porte back" and an informed integration of sources regarding Ottomanization of Moldavian-Wallachian elite can contribute to a major revision of this period in Romanian history, one that would go far beyond the sphere of material culture.

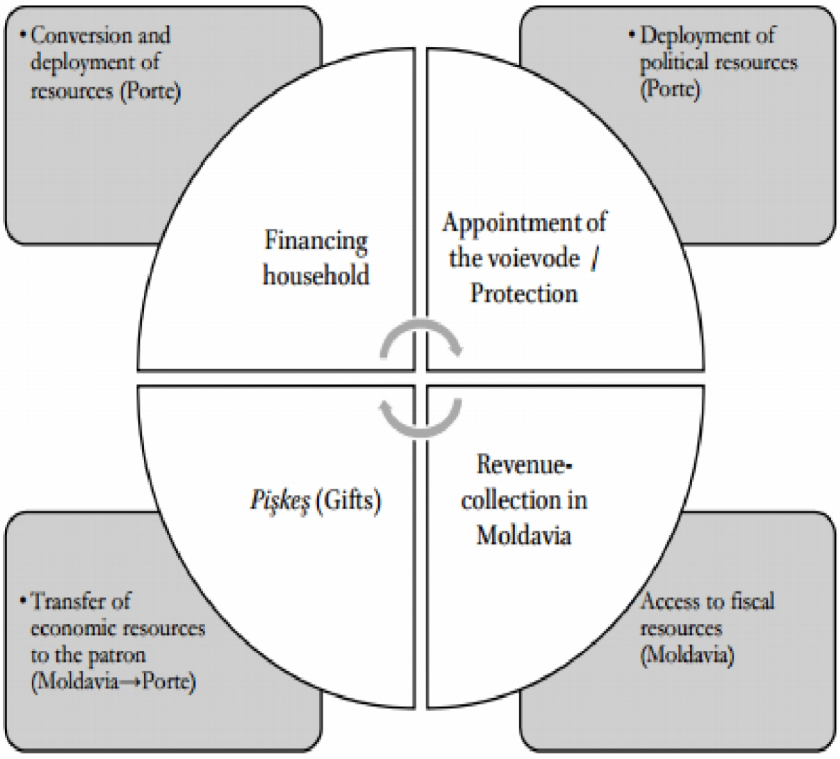

Figure 1. The circulation and conversion of resources between Moldavia and the Ottoman elites in the early modern period – a theoretical model

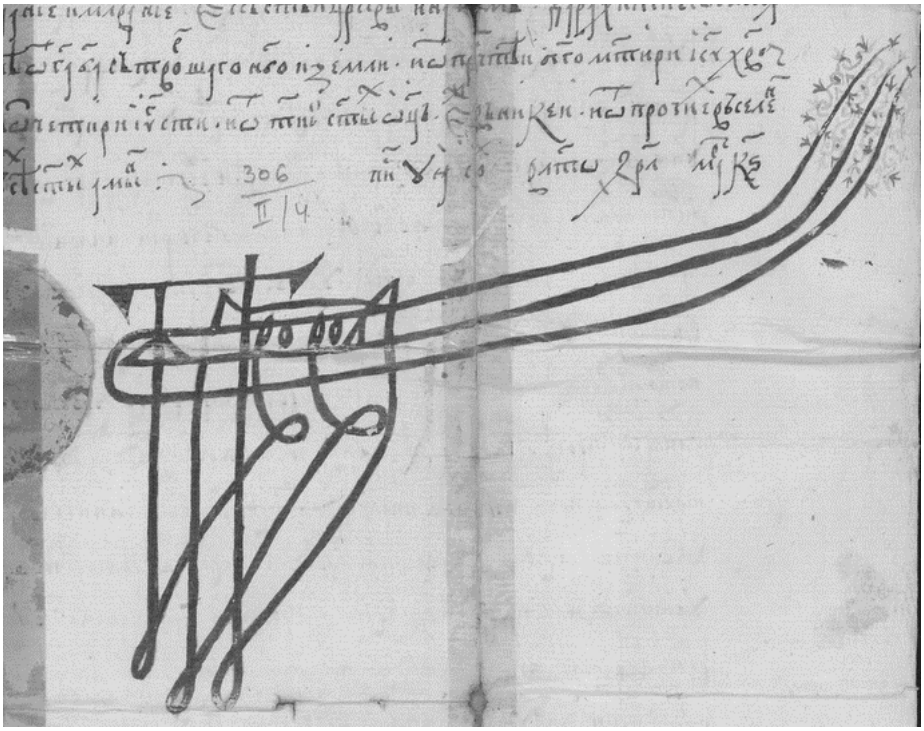

Figure 2. The Pseudo-*Tuğra* of Moldavian Voyvode Ștefan Tomșa II (1611-1615, 1621-1623), SJAN Iași. M-rea Galata ii/4. I would like to thank Mihai Mîrza for providing me with the copy of the document.