

FOREWORD

MATERIAL CULTURE, MEDICAL CONSUMPTION AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE. AN INTRODUCTION*

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Luxury and consumption are multifaceted concepts which have been constantly re-evaluated over time. Today, thanks to new trends in historiography, these concepts have become important analytical tools in global history research. Luxury, novelties, consumption, merchants, elites, artisans, advertising, goods, networks, long distance global connections are some of the research topics proposed by recent studies in global history. Maxine Berg argues the term luxury gained positive connotations during the 18th century, being associated with the development of trade and of the economy in general.¹ However, it was only in the last two decades that consumption and luxury have inspired a whole range of research and researchers.² For instance, in her projects, Berg uses these concepts to analyse how the East India Company stimulated luxury consumption via trade exchanges among Great Britain, India and China. *Luxury and Pleasure* is the title of one of her books in which Berg highlights, from the very beginning, the convenient relationship between luxury and delight.³ Starting with the 18th century, luxury and consumption define a new

* This study was supported by the ERC-2014-CoG no. 646489 grant, *Luxury, Fashion and Social Status in Early Modern South-Eastern Europe (LuxFaSS)*, financed by the European Research Council and hosted by the New Europe College-Institute for Advanced Study, Bucharest. My special thanks for the English translation of this study are addressed to Dr. Iuliu Rațiu.

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¹ Maxine Berg, Elizabeth Eger, *The Rise and Fall of Luxury Debates*, in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century. Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, ed. by Maxine Berg et al., New York, 2003, pp. 7–11.

² I mention here only some of the research studies focusing on luxury and consumption. Other studies will be mentioned throughout this introduction. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai, Cambridge, 1986; *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. by John Brewer, Robert Porter, London, 1993; *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Victoria de Grazia, Ellen Furlough, Berkeley, 1996; *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe, 1650–1850*, ed. by Maxine Berg, Hellen Clifford, Manchester, 1999; Haris Exertzoglou, *The Cultural Uses of Consumption: Negotiating Class, Gender, and Nation in the Ottoman Urban Centers during the 19th Century*, in “International Journal of Middle East Studies,” 35, 2003, pp. 77–101; Amanda Vickery, *His and Hers: Gender, Consumption and Household Accounting in Eighteenth-Century England*, in “Past and Present,” Supplement 1, 2006, pp. 12–38.

³ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Oxford, 2007, p. 21.

community, the “new consumers,” interested in novelty and emulation. In another research project, Berg argues that: “Luxury is central to the global history of consumption.”⁴ Furthermore, as Bart Lambert and Katherine Anne Wilson show, luxury seems to be an all-encompassing concept capable to “evolve over the time” in order to accommodate multiple connotations according to various research projects whose main points it needs to prove.⁵ Researchers use the term today even though it was not mentioned as such in the archives of the past. In Transylvania, luxury appears for the first time in a sumptuary law from Cluj (1593) with reference to luxury displayed by the local community when choosing their clothes,⁶ while in Walachia and Moldavia, the term is used much later towards the end of the 18th century, in the context of drafting sumptuary legislation.⁷ Nonetheless, even though the term was not in use at the time, researchers were indeed able to identify and operate with a number of other words describing wealth, extravagance and excess. Because it is a concept difficult to define, luxury should be analysed in the context of the time to which it belongs by relying on the consumer’s interpretation of certain objects as luxury artefacts according to their social, political or symbolic value.⁸

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Maxine Berg argues, global and long-distance trade is transforming Europe by stimulating innovation in order to not only “imitate” but also improve imported luxury goods.⁹ By imitation, Europeans create their own luxury products, much more attuned to local tastes, thus promoting new styles and fashion trends. However, if global trade contributes significantly to the development of industrial Europe,¹⁰ South-Eastern Europe still imports goods from various regions of Europe, Russia or the Ottoman Empire, and only succeeds negligibly to develop (or imitate) its local production.¹¹ For instance, Marseille is connected to Crete and dependent on its olive oil to supply its soap manufacturers. As David Celetti shows, in turn, Crete prefers to ship its olive oil because trade is more profitable than investing into soap manufacturing. The Romanian Principalities follow the same pattern. Demand for luxury goods, for example, is on the rise. “Greek,” Armenian

⁴ Eadem, *In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century*, in “Past and Present,” 182, 2004, p. 96.

⁵ Bart Lambert, Katherine Anne Wilson, *Introduction*, in *Europe’s Rich Fabrics. The Consumption, Commercialisation and Production of Luxury Textiles in Italy, the Low Countries and Neighbouring Territories (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)*, ed. by Bart Lambert, Katherine Anne Wilson, Farnham, 2016, p. 1.

⁶ Mária Pakucs: *Transylvanian Civic Sumptuary Laws in The Early Modern Period: Preliminary Observations*, in this special issue.

⁷ Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, *Shawls and Sable Furs: How to Be a Boyar under the Phanariot Regime (1710–1821)*, in “European History Yearbook,” 20, 2019, pp. 137–158.

⁸ Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 4–5, 32.

⁹ Maxine Berg, *In Pursuit of Luxury*, p. 86.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 86–87.

¹¹ For “disparities” between the West and the East, see Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500–2010)*, Iași, 2010.

and Jewish merchants dominate the marketplace and trade actively to meet the demand of the local growing population in a region that is increasingly stable.¹² However, growing demand did not lead to local production simply because dominant and omnipresent aggressive trade networks undermined the development of a local manufacturing sector.

Until recently, South-Eastern Europe has not been the focus of this type of research, with only a few studies dedicated to consumption and everyday life.¹³ Regarding the Ottoman Empire, Suraiya Faroqhi's research analyses the relationship between material culture and consumption.¹⁴ But if the Ottoman Empire benefited from an important historiographical attention in the last decades, its former territories in South-Eastern Europe did not. Limited access to primary sources and the communist regimes' predilection for political history kept researchers away from the history of consumption. Moreover, it would have been quite an adventure for researchers to study consumption during a so-called 'egalitarian period.' Without a doubt, communist regimes viewed both consumption and luxury through a negative lens.¹⁵ However, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the history of everyday life, the history of fashion and social history became important research subjects. Compared to Western Europe, archives in this region include fewer collections, and surviving luxury goods are in limited numbers. Visitors to museums in Belgrade or Sofia, in Bucharest or Athens, in Istanbul or Ioannina can hardly find material sources older

¹² Mária Pakucs, 'This Is Their Profession.' *Greek Merchants in Transylvania and Their Networks at the End of the 17th century*, in "Cromohs," 21, 2017–2018, pp. 36–54; Michał Wasiucioneck, *Greek as Ottoman? Language, Identity and Mediation of Ottoman Culture in the Early Modern Period*, in "Cromohs," 21, 2017–2018, pp. 70–89; Lidia Cotovanu, "Chasing Away the Greeks": *The Prince-State and the Undesired Foreigners (Wallachia and Moldavia between the 16th and 18th Centuries)*, in *Across the Danube. Southeastern Europeans and Their Travelling Identities (17th–19th C.)*, ed. by Olga Katsiardi-Hering, Maria A. Stassinopoulou, Leiden, 2017, pp. 215–253; Alexandr Osipian, *Trans-Cultural Trade in the Black Sea Region, 1250–1700: Integration of Armenian Trading Diaspora in Moldavian Principality*, in "New Europe College Black Sea Link Yearbook," 2012–2013, pp. 113–158; Gheorghe Lazăr, *Les marchands en Valachie, XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles*, Bucharest, 2007; Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Les Levantins. Cadres de vie et identités d'un groupe ethno-confessionnel de l'Empire Ottoman au "long" 19^e siècle*, Istanbul, 2007.

¹³ *Earthly Delights: Economies and Cultures of Food in Ottoman and Danubian Europe, c. 1500–1900*, ed. by Angela Jianu, Violeta Barbu, Leiden, 2018; Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, *Patimă și desfătare. Despre lucrurile mărunte ale vieții cotidiene în societatea românească: 1750–1860*, Bucharest, 2015; Ana-Maria Gruia, *The Gift of Vice. Pipes and the Habit of Smoking in Early Modern Transylvania*, Cluj, 2013; Nicoleta Roman, *Iordache Filipescu, the 'Last Great Boyar' of Wallachia and His Heritage: A World of Power, Influence and Goods*, in "Cromohs," 21, 2017–2018, pp. 106–122.

¹⁴ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Moving Goods Around, and Ottomanists Too: Surveying Research on the Transfer of Material Goods in the Ottoman Empire*, in "Turcica," 32, 2000, pp. 435–466; Rossitsa Gradeva, *On "Frenk" Objects in Everyday Life in Ottoman Balkans: The Case of Sofia, Mid-17th – Mid-18th Centuries*, in *Europe's Economic Relations with the Islamic World 13th–18th Centuries*, ed. by Simonetta Cavaciocchi, Firenze, 2007, pp. 769–799; *Living the Good Life. Consumption in the Qing and Ottoman Empires of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Elif Akçetin, Suraiya Faroqhi, Leiden, 2017.

¹⁵ Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Material Culture of Global Connections: A Report on Current Research*, in "Turcica," 41, 2009, pp. 406–411.

than the 18th century.¹⁶ Written sources, a bit more numerous, are also lacking and detailed information about consumption becomes available only starting with the middle of the 17th century. Archaeological discoveries from various medieval cities and towns supplement the data we have about consumption.¹⁷ Textiles, spices, food, books, drugs are all material sources defining both luxury and regular consumption based on their economic and social value. The quality and the social value attached to an object temporarily transform it into a luxury product. For instance, as Ovidiu Cristea shows in his study, velvet and silk offered by the Venetian diplomats acquire not only economic but also political significance when part of diplomatic protocol. Thus, Cristea analyses textiles from a symbolical point of view: as important social and political markers within a given context.¹⁸ Not everybody could afford to buy or wear velvet, brocade or silk, therefore these luxury textiles should be looked for in the expense registers of diplomats and of the elites.¹⁹

Some goods, which today are considered commonplace, were too expensive at the time and consequently were not part of everyday consumption. David Celetti talks about anxieties provoked by olive oil or wine imports during periods of crisis when consuls and merchants corresponded assiduously in order to ameliorate the situation. At the same time, trade brings together people from different regions, of different faiths and linguistic abilities, who thus succeed in connecting different cultures all over the world. Merchants or diplomats, artisans or medical doctors did more than simply practice their professions and interacted with local populations on a daily basis. Taking Crete as an example, Celetti underlines the interaction between the French and the local community, preferably with Christians and, if need be, with Muslims or Jews. Similar findings are presented in other articles collected in this special issue: Mária Pakucs focuses on the well-known “Greek

¹⁶ See <http://luxfass.nec.ro/memorabilia> for South-Eastern European visual sources assembled by the members of the LuxFass project during their various research stays.

¹⁷ Daniela Marcu Istrati, Mihai Constantinescu, Andrei Soficaru, *The Medieval Cemetery from Sibiu (Hermannstadt). Huet Square. Archaeology, Anthropology, History*, Erlangen, 2015; Daniela Marcu Istrati, *Cahle din Transilvania și Banat de la începuturi până la 1700*, Bistrița-Năsăud, 2004; Verena Han, *Les courants des styles dans les métiers d'art des artisans chrétiens au XVI^e et durant les premières décennies du XVII^e siècle dans les régions centrales des Balkans*, in “Balcanica,” 1, 1970, pp. 239–275.

¹⁸ Luca Molà, *Material Diplomacy Venetian Luxury Gifts for the Ottoman Empire in the Late Renaissance*, in *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, ed. by Zoltán Biedermann, Giorgio Riello, Anne Gerritsen, Cambridge, 2017, pp. 56–87; Hedda Reindl-Kiel, *East is East and West is West, and Sometimes the Twain Did Meet: Diplomatic Gift Exchange in the Ottoman Empire*, in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies*, vol. II, ed. by Rhoads Murphey, Keiko Kiyotaki, Colin Imber, London, New York, 2005, pp. 113–123.

¹⁹ Hedda Reindl-Kiel, *The Empire of Fabrics: The Range of Fabrics in the Ottoman Gift Traffic (16th–18th Centuries)*, in *Inventories of Textiles – Textiles in Inventories: Interdisciplinary Studies on Late Medieval and Early Modern Sources and Material Culture*, ed. by Barbara Karl, Thomas Ertl, Göttingen, 2017, pp. 143–164; Amanda Phillips, *The Historiography of Ottoman Velvets, 2011–1572: Scholars, Craftsmen, Consumers*, in “Journal of Art Historiography,” 6, 2012, pp. 1–26.

merchants” in Transylvania during the 17th and 18th centuries; Sorin Grigoruță analyses the presence of foreign medical doctors (Greeks, Germans, Dalmatians, French) and their interactions with and integration into the Moldovan society; Constantin Ardeleanu showcases the network of leech merchants, comprising French, Venetian, Jewish, Greek and Walachian merchants.

Dowry contracts, wealth inventories, wills, lists of expenses and price lists help us identify both luxury and domestic consumption.²⁰ Based on these sources, one can trace the shift in taste from the so-called “Oriental” products to the so-called “Occidental” ones. Even so, this type of inquiry may be misleading since at times many of the “Oriental” products brought to Bucharest or Iași via Constantinople or Brusa are imported from English, Venetian or French manufacturers. Moreover, some of the foreign observers, be they consuls or simple missionaries, point out the verbal ‘orientalising’ of some European products, transcribed in documents with corrupt versions of their original name.²¹

The consumer’s taste plays an important role both in the growth of local manufacturers and in the trade routes luxury goods travel from one place to another. In fact, the newspapers of the time record in detail the provenance of these goods, even though there is a consistent lag between Central and Western Europe and South-Eastern Europe. Here, where there is a viable press only starting with the 19th century, advertisements promote luxury and everyday consumption products shipped to Bucharest, Iași, Athens, Belgrade or even Istanbul from various corners of Europe.²² This does not mean that South-Eastern European elites did not consume information at all. On the contrary, they would get journals and magazines detailing the latest fashion trends, interior decorations, gardening tips and even the building of new houses from Vienna, Paris, Leipzig or Stuttgart. Important urban centres, boasting wealthy elites, are therefore connected to fashion tastes via various fashion journals, magazines and even calendars. Some of the elites subscribe directly to these journals and magazines in order to receive them on a regular basis, others

²⁰ Benjamin Braude, *International Competition and Domestic Cloth in the Ottoman Empire: A Study in Underdevelopment*, in “Review,” 3, 1979, pp. 437–454.

²¹ Claude-Charles de Peyssonnel, *Traité sur le commerce de la Mer Noire*, Paris, 1787; Alexandre Maurice Blanc de Lanautte comte d’Hauterive, *Mémoire sur l’état ancien et actuel de la Moldavie (1787)*. Bucharest, 1902; Ignatius Stefan Raicevich, *Observazioni storiche, naturali e politiche intorno la Valachia et la Moldavia*, Naples, 1788; Franz Joseph Sulzer, *Geschichte des transalpinischen Daciens, das ist der Walachey, Moldau und Bessarabiens. Im Zusammenhange mit der Geschichte des übrigen Daciens als ein Versuch einer allgemeinen dacischen Geschichte mit kritischer Freyheit entworfen*, Vienna, 1781; William Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia: With Various Political Observations Relating to Them*, London, 1820; M. le Comte de Salaberry, *Essais sur la Valachie et la Moldavie, théâtre de l’insurrection dite Ypsilanti*, Paris, 1821.

²² Anastasia Falierou, *European Fashion, Consumption Patterns, and Intercommunal Relations in 19th-Century Ottoman Istanbul*, in *Women, Consumption, and the Circulation of Ideas in South-Eastern Europe, 17th–19th Century*, ed. by Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, Leiden, 2017, pp. 150–168; Alex Drace-Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture. Literacy and the Development of National Identity*, London, 2006.

include them on their shopping lists, while still others get them via their friends. Among the magazines we find “Journal des Dames et des Modes,” “Costumes Parisiens” coming directly from Paris and “Lady’s Magazine” and “The Spectator” brought from London. Moreover, merchants help popularize a number of other magazines within the South-Eastern European area directly from Leipzig, a testament to the major role played by this city in the commercial network from the Balkans. Thus, diverse German journals helped fashion via text, recommendations, images and even textile samples the tastes of the elites reading: “Damen journal von Einer Damen-Gesellschaft,” “Journal für Fabrik, Manufaktur, Handlung, Kunst und Mode,” “Charis. Ein Magazin für das Neueste in Kunst, Geschmack und Mode, Lebensgenuß und Lebensglück,” “Zeitung für die Elegante Welt.”²³

Consumption can also be studied by analysing sumptuary laws which single out through sanctioning – and therefore call by name – certain luxury products.²⁴ Sumptuary laws, which still need to be thoroughly researched by historians, regulate consumption of given items and reflect the ways in which political (and religious) authorities impose their control over the society at large. Mária Pakucs shows in great detail the evolution of sumptuary legislation in Transylvania, analysing not only clothing and other luxury products but also the organization and functioning of a community. Weddings, christenings, funerals and other festivities are strictly regulated in Sibiu, Cluj or Braşov, thus emphasising the role that regional vicinity played in exercising control and imposing order among city dwellers. Similar laws were missing from Walachia and Moldavia or were implemented much later, by the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, when they resembled more the sumptuary laws of the Ottoman Empire.²⁵

In his study from this special issue, Michał Wasiucionek argues that Moldavia and Walachia start (in the 19th century) a process of “de-ottomanization” in order to

²³ I analysed the contents of these 18th-century fashion magazines during a research stay within the LuxFass project, between June and July 2018 at the Lipperheidesche Kostümbibliothek, Berlin.

²⁴ Claire Sponsler, *Narrating the Social Order: Medieval Clothing Laws*, in “Clio,” 21, 1992, 3, pp. 265–283; Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*, New York, 1996; idem, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation*, Cambridge, 1999; Graeme Murdock, *Dressed to Repress?: Protestant Clergy Dress and the Regulation of Morality in Early Modern Europe*, in “Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture,” 2, 2000, pp. 179–199; Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, *Reconciling the Privilege of the Few with the Common Good: Sumptuary Laws in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, in “Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies,” 39, 2009, 3, pp. 597–617; Catherine Kovesi Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200–1500*, Oxford, 2002; *Dressing the Part: Textiles as Propaganda in the Middle Ages*, ed. by K. Dimitrova, M. Goehring, Turnhout, 2014; Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up. Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe*, Oxford, 2010.

²⁵ Donald Quataert, *Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720–1829*, in “International Journal of Middle East Studies,” 29, 1997, 3, pp. 403–425; Matthew Elliot, *Dress Codes in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of the Franks*, in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, ed. by Suraiya Faroqhi, Christoph K. Neumann, Istanbul, 2004, pp. 103–123; Madeline Zilfi, *Whose Laws? Gendering the Ottoman Sumptuary Regime*, *ibidem*, pp. 125–141.

acquire the “European” legitimacy of a nation fighting for independence. Then, Wasiucioneck goes back in time to the 17th and 18th centuries when the Ottoman architecture represented a model for the Walachian and Moldavian provinces. As Wasiucioneck points out, silk and stone intersect in the rendering of a pattern already widely spread throughout the Ottoman Empire. Floral decorations adorn the frontispieces of places of worship, but also some of the most important items of clothing, the kaftans. Used in political and diplomatic ceremonies, the kaftans are gifted by the sultan to princes in Walachia and Moldavia; in turn, princes give them to boyars once they are sworn in for office. Kaftans are also valued both at the Polish court and at the Russian tsar’s court.²⁶ Kaftans travel through a large space, contributing to the global connection of various cultures and their intermediaries.

In a study from 2000 analysing consumption in the Ottoman Empire, Donald Quataert shows that “the ownership of Western goods – whether guns or clocks or cloth – does not mean the westernization of their users.”²⁷ Similarly, in a more recent study, Amanda Phillips argues that the search for signs of “westernization” seems to be the “bogeyman” of the Ottoman Empire. Phillips analyses the baroque influences in art and architecture and concludes they do not necessarily represent a “Western” influence.²⁸ However, while the two authors research much earlier periods, Nicoleta Roman and Anastasia Falierou apply the term “westernization” to analyses of the 19th century, when the concept gains new meaning throughout South-Eastern Europe. The abundance of products imported from all over Europe contributes to a certain extent to changes taking place in this region, be they political or social. Using dowry contracts from Oltenia, an important Walachian province, with a special focus on the city of Craiova, Roman analyses the value of “Oriental” and “European” goods in shaping social status in an internal competition. Local boyars choose to invest in “foreign” goods both for their social status and in the absence of local products capable to satisfy taste and fashion. Dowry contracts offer the opportunity to assess the composition of trousseaus, including clothing, jewellery and items for domestic consumption (tableware, silverware, linen and bedding), but they do not provide many clues regarding the position of women vis-à-vis the market of these products, nor do they explain whether women (daughters and their mothers) were directly engaged in buying these products from the open market according to their own tastes. We do not have a clear answer to this question and future research is needed to establish the relationship between women and trade. Nonetheless, it is obvious that 19th-century women are important consumers of luxury products and that they are involved in domestic consumption. As Roman further shows, some of the items of domestic consumption are homemade with the help of Gipsy slaves.

²⁶ Victoria Ivleva, *The Social Life of the Kaftan in Eighteenth-Century Russia*, in “Clothing Cultures,” 3, 2016, pp. 171–189.

²⁷ *Consumption Studies and the Ottoman Empire, 1550–1922. An Introduction*, ed. by Donald Quataert, New York, 2000, p. 5.

²⁸ Amanda Phillips, *Everyday Luxuries. Art and Objects in Ottoman Constantinople, 1600–1800*, Dortmund, 2016, p. 35.

However, taste and fashion do influence local production to be in line with the new trends. If until the 1840s, Craiova elites would wear muslin, silk, velvet or satin, afterwards the market is dominated by cheap and easy to maintain cotton. Accessible to several social categories, cotton is now everywhere and loses its luxury status. Roman points out that pocket watches, still very expensive at the time so only a few could afford them, are among the luxury products which mark a social (and economic) position within the community. Umbrellas, represented until recently in various paintings as markers of modernity, are lost now in the multitude of indispensable objects of everyday life. In the end, the objects in dowry contracts shape up a feminine world and demarcate the sphere of womanhood, with women from the social elites (boyars, merchants, urban patricians) as primary consumers, preponderantly mentioned in sources. Anastasia Falierou's study is relevant in this matter. Analysing correspondence between Myrsinio Kourtzis and her mother (Efthimia Vasileiou) and her sisters (Harikleia and Penelope), Falierou emphasises these women's interest in luxury and fashionable products. From Istanbul, Myrsinio dispatches information about fashion and style, acting as a true agent, providing samples of trendy textiles and bargaining for hats, clothes or umbrellas for her mother and her sisters, who remained in Mytilene. Educated and well-informed, Myrsinio offers essential details about luxury consumption at the end of 19th-century Istanbul and, at the same time, sheds light on the tastes of the Greek bourgeoisie from Mytilene, whom she tries to model, with the help of her relatives, by providing information, goods, fashion tips and even value judgements.

The human body and its needs also encourage consumption. Up to a point, the medical market proves to be a luxury market only offering medical care and treatment to the members of a small elite.²⁹ Analysing 18th-century Moldova, Sorin Grigoruță shows very well that health (and implicitly its care) is costly. Only rulers and boyars could afford the services of the few doctors, many of them foreign. Moreover, this medical market is very diverse and we can only see the appearance of a well-established medical field late into the second half of the 19th century.³⁰ Not only is the market still dominated by charlatans, midwives and itinerant healers,³¹ but it also mainly relies on natural remedies and empirical practice. Constantin Ardeleanu demonstrates how a medical practice prevailing all over Europe – the use of leeches for medical purposes – leads to the development of an entire profitable economic network which satisfies the tastes of consumers anxious about their wellbeing. The leech trade, which reached its peak between the 1830s and 1850s, connects South-Eastern European provinces of the Ottoman Empire to France via a network of very active merchants. While it contributes to the creation

²⁹ Giulia Calvi, *Healing, Translating, Collecting. Doctor Michelangelo Tilli across the Ottoman Empire (1683–1685)*, in "Cromohs," 21, 2017–2018, pp. 55–69.

³⁰ Ionela Băluță, *La bourgeoisie respectable. Réflexion sur la construction d'une nouvelle identité féminine dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle roumain*, Bucharest, 2008; Georges Vigarello, *Histoire des pratiques de santé: le sain et le malsain depuis le Moyen Âge*, Paris, 1999.

³¹ David Gentilcore, *Medical Charlatanism in Early Modern Italy*, Oxford, 2006.

of regulations controlling the use of leeches for medical practice, the marketing of this “valuable product” also gives ideas and people the opportunity to travel between the West and the South-East.

Everyday life changes significantly within the timeframe of this special issue, that is, roughly between the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century. In turn, consumption patterns also change how social categories, tastes, time periods and regimes are defined and redefined. In addition to local products, people from South-Eastern Europe consume a vast array of “foreign” products, which attain social significance depending on the timeframe, historical context and the social status of the consumer. Historical research, particularly economic and social history, will no doubt benefit from further research on consumption. As Suraiya Faruqi argues, consumption gains important social and cultural status, thus contributing to the better understanding of society.³²

This special issue originates from a workshop organized in the frame of the ERC project (ERC-2014-CoG no. 646489–LuxFaSS): *Luxury, Fashion and Social Status in Early Modern South-Eastern Europe*, on 5–6 October 2017, New Europe College, Bucharest.

³² Suraiya Faruqi, *Research on the History of Ottoman Consumption: A Preliminary Exploration of Sources and Models*, in *Consumption Studies and the Ottoman Empire*, ed. by Donald Quataert, p. 23.