

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPALITIES OF WALLACHIA  
AND MOLDAVIA ON OTTOMAN FOREIGN POLICY  
AT THE TIME OF SELIM III (1789-1807)**

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**Abstract:** *The Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia had an important place in the relations of the Ottoman Empire with the Central and Eastern European States. From the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Greek families (Phanariot) from the Phanar area of Istanbul gained important function in the Ottoman foreign policy and diplomacy. The most important of these functions were the interpretation for the central administration and the Ottoman navy. Subsequently, they also carried out other interpreting services such as embassy translations. Instead of traditional Boyars, the Princes/Hospodars (Voivodes) of Wallachia and Moldavia were appointed by the Sultan from among these Greek families from 1711 onwards. The reign of these Greek families in Wallachia and Moldavia lasted about 110 years until the Greek Revolt of Mora in 1821. As source of information about Russia, Poland, Austria and Prussia, these princes played a key role for the Ottoman foreign policy. In this context, this paper will examine the role of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia on Ottoman foreign policy within the context of Europeanisation of Ottoman Diplomatic channels in the era of Selim III (1789-1807).*

**Keywords:** *Wallachia, Moldavia, Ottoman Foreign Policy, Selim III, the Phanariot.*

**Rezumat:** *Rolul Principatelor Țara Românească și Moldova în politica externă otomană din timpul lui Selim al III-lea (1789-1807). Principatele Țării Românești și ale Moldovei au avut un loc important în relațiile dintre Imperiul Otoman și statele din Europa Centrală și de Est. Din a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea, familiile grecești (fanarioții) din zona Fanar din Istanbul au câștigat o poziție importantă în politica externă și diplomația otomană. Cea mai importantă dintre aceste funcții a fost cea de traducători în slujba administrației centrale și a marinei otomane. Ulterior, ei au efectuat și alte servicii de interpretariat, cum ar fi traducerea pentru ambasadă. În locul boierilor tradiționali, principii din Țara Românească și Moldova au fost numiți de sultani din rândul acestor familii grecești, începând cu anul 1711. Domnia acestor familii grecești în Țara Românească și Moldova a durat aproximativ 110 ani până la Revolta Greacă de la Mora din 1821. Ca surse*

*de informație despre Rusia, Polonia, Austria și Prusia, acești principii au jucat un rol cheie în politica externă otomană. În acest context, lucrarea va examina rolul Principatelor Țării Românești și Moldovei asupra politicii externe otomane în contextul europenizării canalelor diplomatice otomane, în epoca lui Selim al III-lea (1789-1807).*

**Résumé : Le rôle des Principautés de Valachie et de Moldavie sur la politique étrangère ottoman dans la période de Selim III (1789-1807)** *Les Principautés de Valachie et de Moldavie occupent une place importante dans les relations de l'Empire ottoman avec les États d'Europe centrale et orientale. Dès la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle, les familles grecques (Phanariote) de la région de Phanar à Istanbul ont acquis une fonction importante dans la politique étrangère et la diplomatie ottomane. La plus importante de ces fonctions était l'interprétation pour l'administration centrale et la marine ottomane. Par la suite, ils ont également effectué d'autres services d'interprétation tels que des traductions d'ambassade. Au lieu des boyards traditionnels, les princes (voïvodes) de Valachie et de Moldavie ont été nommés par le sultan parmi ces familles grecques à partir de 1711. Le règne de ces familles en Valachie et Moldavie dura environ 110 ans jusqu'à la révolte grecque de Mora en 1821. Sources d'information sur la Russie, la Pologne, l'Autriche et la Prusse, ces princes jouèrent un rôle clé dans la politique étrangère ottomane. Dans ce contexte, cet article examinera le rôle des Principautés de Valachie et de Moldavie sur la politique étrangère ottomane dans le contexte de l'eupéanisation des canaux diplomatiques ottomans à l'époque de Selim III (1789-1807).*

## INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the role of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia on Ottoman foreign policy will be examined within the context of Europeanisation of Ottoman Diplomatic channels in the era of Selim III (1789-1807). Under Selim III's reign the Ottoman Empire initiated to reorganise some of its basic institutions along European lines. One of the vital reforms of the period concerned with diplomatic practise and the benefit of the Europeanisation of the permanent Ottoman diplomatic representation. Therefore reforms in Ottoman foreign policy and its organisations are very important in the time of Sultan Selim III. In this paper, we try to examine the role of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia on Ottoman foreign policy through some Ottoman and British archival sources.

Some of the questions to be asked in this paper are: What were Wallachian and Moldavian principalities and how did they becomes one of the channels for Ottoman foreign policies with European countries? We shall try to demonstrate the importance of the reports of the Principalities on European political, economic, commercial, cultural and diplomatic affairs and their communications

with border countries such as Russia and Austria at that time. The paper will also be dealing with the background of the Principalities, their education systems and services as scribes in the Ottoman bureaucracy. Thus we aim to examine the appointment of the Principalities, their functions as Principals/Hospodars, and their social, commercial and cultural activities.<sup>1</sup>

### AN OUTLINE OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND WALLACHIA AND MOLDAVIA

The Ottomans ruled their subject territories according to Islamic law. The interpretation of Islamic rule adopted by the Ottomans prompted the division of subject territories according to their relationship with the central authority. Vassal principalities were part of *dar-ül-ahd* (the House of Peace), an intermediary regime between that of *dar-ül-Islam* (the House of Islam) and *dar-ül-harb* (the House of War). The lands around the Black Sea did not all share the same status under Ottoman rule. Therefore, the territories mostly inhabited by the Muslims on this region such as Anatolia, Bulgaria and southern Georgia became parts of *dar-ül-Islam*, and were administrated as provinces of the Empire. Within the Empire, the *dar-ül-ahd* regime was applied to northern Georgia (Gürcistan), Wallachia (Eflak), Moldavia (Boğdan) and Transylvania (Erdel). In such situations a native ruler from a princely family occupied the throne, and the political, administrative, military, judicial, and ecclesiastic institutions were preserved. The boyars elected the prince (Dieta in Transylvania) and the Sultan confirmed this decision. After the consolidation of Ottoman power, the Sultan ceased consulting local landowners in the appointment of titular rules.<sup>2</sup>

From a political point of view, the Danubian principalities enjoyed a considerable measure of autonomy under the Ottoman rule; they were not colonised by immigrants from other parts of the Empire, land was not confiscated from existing owners, and Muslims were prohibited from owning and building mosques in these lands. The rulers of the principalities were obliged to have the same friends and enemies as the Ottoman Sultan, and to take part in all military

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<sup>1</sup> A general study on these Principalities' rulers and their backgrounds, lives, and activities in the Ottoman bureaucracy belongs to Zeynep Sözen, *Fenerli Beyler. 110 Yılın Öyküsü (1711-1821)* [Phanariot Princes. The Story of 110 Years (1711-1821), İstanbul, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Viorel Panaite, *The Re'ayas of Tributary-Protected Principalities (the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century)*, in "Romano-Turcica", İstanbul, 2003, Vol. I, p. 83-116.

campaigns organized by him.<sup>3</sup> Transylvania, which was to become an independent principality, enjoyed a superior status to compare to Wallachia and Moldavia, mainly because it was a neighbour of the Austrian Habsburg Empire.<sup>4</sup> Compared to Moldavia and Wallachia during the period of Ottoman rule, Transylvania possessed more independence in the election of their princes. The principal pressures imposed by the Ottoman Empire on the region were military and fiscal. Important defence posts, such as the fortress of Ackerman, were occupied by units of Janissaries. In some cases, such forts also became the headquarters of a territorial unit, such as the *sancaks* created around Tighina fort in 1538, put under the authority of a *bey* (local Turkish ruler), and the transformation of the fortress Hotin into a *rayah* in 1716, which included not just the territory of the fortress, but also some villages from the vicinity of Soroca, Iași, and Cernăuți. The Turkish authorities encouraged the movement of Muslim Tatars into Moldavia and Wallachia. The number of Tatars was gradually raised from 30.000 in the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century to 45.000 in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Moldavia. They were called the Tatars from Bucak or Nogay.<sup>5</sup>

The principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were obliged to pay *harac* (official tribute) and *peşkeş* (official gifts to the sultan and his magistrates). From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the principalities paid the Ottomans a new money tribute called “*mükerrer*”, which to start with was paid once every three years (the big *mucarer*), then annually (the small *mucarer*). The principalities were obliged to offer the Ottomans grain, cattle, wood for ship construction, and other commodities. The tribute for Moldavia was set at 10.000 florins, then increased to 15.000 in 1575, and by the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century, the *harac* paid by Moldavia had increased from 8.000 galbeni (gold money) to 65.000, while the tribute paid by Wallachia went up to 155.000. Meanwhile, the *peşkeş* were much reduced. The ownership of property was restricted. The property of princes, boyars, and

<sup>3</sup> Aurel Decei, *Boğdan* [Moldavia], in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* [I.A.], Vol. 2, p. 697-705; Idem, *Eflak* [Wallachia], in *İ. A.*, Vol. 4, p. 178-189; Kemal Karpat, *Eflak* [Wallachia], in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* [TDVİA], Vol. 10. p. 466-469; Abdülkadir Özcan, *Boğdan* [Moldavia], in *TDVİA*, Vol. 6. p. 266-271.

<sup>4</sup> The Ottoman legal sovereignty and the legal background of the Principalities are studied by Viorel Panaite in his article *Power Relationships in the Ottoman Empire: The Sultans and the Tribute-Paying Princes of Wallachia and Moldavia from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, in “International Journal of Turkish Studies”, 2001, Vol. 7, no. 1-2, p. 26-53.

<sup>5</sup> “15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries”. *The Black Sea: A History of Interactions*, Council of Europe, Gyldendal Publications, Norveç, 2004, p. 95.

monasteries was requisitioned by the Ottoman Empire, and divided among the military victors. New territorial divisions were created for fiscal purposes (*rayahs*). The local leaders of Christian Orthodox church answered directly to the Metropolitan Church in Istanbul.<sup>6</sup>

The principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia gained an important situation due to the change imbalance of powers at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After the Siege of Vienna in 1683 and the Peace of Carlowitz, the 17<sup>th</sup> century ended in the turmoil represented by a significant change in the patterns of power around the Southeast Europe and the Black Sea. The golden age of Poland as a great power, linked Baltic Sea and Black Sea, came to an end. Instead, the Ottoman Empire continued its wars with the Habsburgs on the Danube and the fringes of south Eastern Europe, and with Spain in the Mediterranean, although serious defeats at the end of the century checked further advances in that region. Two new powers appeared at the extremities of Europe. Hohenzollern Dynasty, the electors of Brandenburg, turned Prussia into secular fiefdom of the Polish kingdom, made the enlarged territory into an independent state in the middle of the century. Russia (Muscovy) expanded significantly, acquiring Kiev and Western Ukraine, as well as exploring eastwards into Siberia. Although the Russia of the new Romanov Dynasty had yet to assert itself on the shores of the Baltic Sea, it had an active role in the South Eastern Europe through its religious and cultural links with most of the peoples in the region.<sup>7</sup>

The principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia had to carve out a policy of their own between these growing states. They were subjects, albeit with a degree of international autonomy, of the Ottoman Empire. But these principalities were also Christian states with a long tradition of conflict with their sovereigns. In the leadership of Austria, Russia, Venice, Poland and Papal State set up a Holy Alliance against the Ottoman Empire after the Siege of Vienna in 1683. The Austrian offensive after the Siege of Vienna, and their seizure of Transylvania, represented an important message for the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia. Some of them even had secret contacts with them, although first of them was obliged to accompany the Ottoman army to the siege of Vienna. After the Peace of Carlowitz (1699), the orientation of some political groups in Wallachia and Moldavia

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95-96.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96. See also Michal Wasiucionek, *Placing the Danubian Principalities within the Composite Ottoman Empire*, in *Turkey & Romania, A History of Partnership and Collaborations in the Balkans*, Istanbul, 2016, p. 167-180.

towards an alliance with Austria and Russia grew stronger.<sup>8</sup>

This period was also one of significant cultural development. The last echoes of the Renaissances, and the first signs of the Baroque, were observed in the architecture of the period. Printing activity increased. Great personalities were in active in this period, and the princes were sponsoring cultural activities such as printing, the opening of new schools, and the bestowal of promising young people to study abroad, invitations to illustrious teachers to visit the country. Some of them, like Dimitrie Cantemir, were in contact with other important European intellectuals and had a thorough knowledge of the region. But all of them were also involved in politics. Constantine Cantacuzino, the brother of Serban Cantacuzino and the uncle of the Hospodar Constantine Brâncoveanu, was even beheaded for his involvement in politics, while Dimitrie Cantemir, winner of a Berlin Academy prize, ended his years in exile, in Russia, as a close friend of Czar Peter I, and Chancellor of the Russian Empire. This developing intellectual life of principalities ended with Russian aggrandizement against the Ottomans. The ambiguous attitude to the imperial government of Constantin Brâncoveanu, who was executed for having alleged treachery against the Ottoman Empire, and the outright alliance of Dimitrie Cantemir, the prince of Moldavia in 1710-1711, with Peter I against the Ottomans, persuaded the Ottoman authorities to change their attitude towards the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. From 1711 onwards in Moldavia and from 1715 in Wallachia, the princes were no longer to be elected in the traditional way by the boyars. Instead, they were selected and appointed by the Sultan from among the Greek families from the Phanariot area of Istanbul. Some of them, at least those who enjoyed a longer reign, proved to be rulers with a special interest in the cultural development of the Principalities, promoting activities such as the translation and printing of new books; the development of the school system; increasing the number of principalities students abroad, and the encouragement of foreign teachers to the principalities, the construction of monasteries, which acted as cultural centres. These were the main areas of cultural evolution during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Principalities involvement in regional politics had to be restricted and closely watched by the Sultans. These princes were valued by the Ottoman authorities not for their culture, but their fidelity and loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, which could not be taken for granted, particularly in view of the fact that Austria was beginning to expand her own Empire towards South-eastern Europe. Such as, in 1716, Austrian troops enter Walachia, with the aim

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<sup>8</sup> "15th-18th Centuries". *The Black Sea...*, p. 96.

of occupying it. The then Prince of Wallachia, Nicola Mavrocordat, father of Constantine, decided to retreat towards the Danube, hoping for a swift response from the Ottomans. Not only the prince but also the entire court including metropolitan Antim retreated. But later on Antim left Bucharest, probably wanted to reach an agreement with Austrians. As legal representative of the prince, during a possible vacancy of the throne, he would have had a major role to play. Prince Mavrocordat decided that Antim had acted as an enemy, and deposed him. Later, Antim was confined to a monastery, thus the ruler decided on a drastic way of getting rid of a troublesome cleric.<sup>9</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century antagonism between Russia and the Ottoman Empire continued to develop. The Ottomans generally tried not only to preserve their territories on the northern coast of the Black Sea, but to expand them. In Russia, Peter I made an access to the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea the main goal of his foreign policy. After Peter I this policy became Russians traditional foreign policy to expand against the Ottoman territories. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the absence of any compromise in the situation caused four wars starting from 1710-1711, 1736-1739, 1768-1774 and lastly 1787-1792. The result of the Russo-Turkish wars of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the annexation of the northern coast of the Black Sea, from the Dniester to Kuban including Crimea, to Russia. Thus, active economic and cultural development began soon afterwards in this annexed territories. The Black Sea coastal steppes were colonized by Russian settlers and opened to the spread of Russian culture at the expense of Muslim Turkish and Tatar people. Russians built a number of new towns, including Odessa, Sevastopol, Nikolaev, Ekaterinoslav and Kherson, appeared on the coast. Since the consolidation of Russia's power in the Azov Sea and on the northern coast of the Black Sea, foreign trade began to develop via southern ports especially Taganrog, Odessa, Sevastopol and Kherson. The proportion of the Black sea trade was not large, because the Ottoman Empire did not let any foreign ships pass through the straits, but later wheat export in the Black Sea became very important. Since 1774 Russian trade ships got the right of free navigation in the Black Sea, and it led to the growth of Russian Black Sea trade. For the next 20 years, to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, its turnover grew from 400.000 to 2.000.000 roubles.<sup>10</sup> Especially the port of Odessa, which was founded in 1794, and had an advantageous geographical position, was closely connected with the

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97-99.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104-105.

agricultural development of the northern coast of the Black Sea.<sup>11</sup>

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russian-Turkish relations grew very complicated. The main reason for this was annexation of Crimea, Bessarabia, and Kuban by Russia. The Crimea was an object of the Ottoman Empire's recover of the plans. The first war of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century between Russia and the Ottomans began, in 1768, with the invasion of Poland by Russians. It ended in 1774 with the signing of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, under which the Ottomans acknowledged the ceding of Bessarabia, Kuban and Crimea. After Küçük Kaynarca Russia made favourite trade treaty in 1783 and declared annexation of the Crimea in 1784. In 1780, Russian Czarina Catherine II signed a 'secret treaty' with and Austrian Emperor Francis I and that act obliged it to become a member of anti-Ottoman coalition. Carrying out its obligations, Russia organised political campaigns against the Ottomans in the European capitals. The origins of the war were the expulsion of the Ottoman Turks from Europe and division of the spoils among the secret treaty signatories in a mutually satisfying way. According to this agreement Wallachia, Moldavia and Bessarabia would be united in a new independent Orthodox state to be called Dacia. Russian influence over it would be assured by the appointment, as the first prince, of the Count Potemkin, Catherine II's old favourite and commander of his southern armies. Russian annexation continued towards the great fortress of Hotin on the Dniester as well as the area lying between the Dnieper and the Bug. In addition, the Great Greek Project and the Russian presence in the East Mediterranean would be established by the occupation of a few strategic Ottoman islands. Austria would take over the western part of the Balkans – Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and the strips of land along the Dalmatian coast still under the control of the dying Venetian Republic, which in compensation would receive the Morea and the strategic island of Crete and Cyprus. The Ottoman Empire responded to this harmful initiation by declaring war against Russia in 1787.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> After the treaty of of Küçük Kaynarca, the Black Sea was firstly opened to Russians merchant ships, later to the other European countries. A. Üner Turgay, *Trade and Merchants in the Nineteenth-Century Trabzon: Elements of Ethnic Conflict*, in B. Braude, B. Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, New York, 1982, Vol. I, p. 287-318.

<sup>12</sup> Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden Bir Padişahın Portresi. Sultan I. Abdülhamid (1774-1789)* [Portrayal of a Sultan from his own Pen. Sultan Abdülhamid I (1774-1789)], İstanbul, 2001, p. 201-233; K. Beydilli, *Büyük Friedrich ve Osmanlılar –XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı – Prusya Münasebetleri* [The Great Friedrich and the Ottomans – The Ottoman-Prussian Relations in the XVIIIth Century], İstanbul, 1985, p. 97-169.



## THE BACKGROUND OF THE HOSPODARS OF THE PRINCIPALITIES ON OTTOMAN FOREIGN POLICY

The result of the Ottoman-Russian and Austrian War of 1787-1791 was the annexation of the Moldavia, Wallachia and Bessarabia to Russia. When Selim III came to throne on 7 April 1789, the Ottoman Empire embroiled in a disastrous war with Russia and Austria for more than over a year. At the beginning of the Ottoman and Russian-Austrian war, in April 1788 Austrian force captured Jassy without resistance as the result of the help of Alexander Ipsilanti, who deserted the Grand Vizier at a crucial moment in the campaign. Therefore, Ottoman rule in northern Moldavia came to an end, and the way was opened for the Austrian Armies and Russian armies to Bessarabia and Wallachia. Russia and Austria had an advantageous situation in that area; during the rest of the war, most of these territories were occupied by Russia. Russian occupation ceased with the conclusion of peace treaties with Austria Sistova and with Russia Jassy. At the beginning of the reign of Selim III these principalities were mostly under the control of Russian occupation and thus there was not any role of these principalities on Ottoman foreign policy. After the conclusion of mentioned peace treaties with Russia and Austria, the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were in action again in their posts Bucharest and Jassy. During this war, the prince of Walachia was Nicola Mavroyeni 1786-1790 and Michael Sutzo I 1791-1793. After Alexander Ipsilanti's desertion, in April 1788, the Moldavian Principality was vacant until the appointment of Aleksander Morusi in 1792.<sup>13</sup>

Especially with the conclusion of Jassy Peace Treaty, the principalities of Walachia and Moldavia had taken their duties on internal and external affairs of their territories. Out of the six Phanariot families ruled in Wallachia and Moldavia in the time of Selim III (1789-1807). Mavroyeni, Sutzo, Mourisi, Ipsilanti, Hançerli and Kalimaki's were remarkable for their representatives to occupy the principalities' throne.<sup>14</sup> Before coming to the Prince of Principalities, these Phanariot families were mostly served as a dragoman or chief interpreter of the

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<sup>13</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New. The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971, p. 21-68; Filiz Bayram, *A Wallachian Lord in 1787-1792 Ottoman-Russian-Austrian War in Ottoman Sources: Nikola Mayroyani, in Turkey & Romania. A History of Partnership and Collaborations in the Balkans*, Istanbul 2016, p. 297-308.

<sup>14</sup> Zeynep Sözen, *Fenerli Beyler...*, p. 117-175.

Sublime Porte communicating with foreign countries. The Secretary of Ottoman Foreign Office, Reis Efendis, were rarely ever well-informed regarding European politics, or even frequently, the location of European states, thus, they were forced to rely on the Phanariot dragomans of the Porte dealing with western diplomats. The position of dragoman of the Porte was a very minor functionary who spent much of his time in the ante-chambers of the Ottoman officials whom he served. However, gradually, as Ottoman foreign relations and policy became more complex and the dragomans came to be indispensable in the conduct of diplomacy. So their lot improved radically; they acquired honours, titles, authority, influence, fame and wealth. Before the Phanariot families, up to the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the dragomans were usually Jews or Europeans converted to Islam. After that period, however, leading Greek Orthodox Families of Phanar of Istanbul began to Europeanise themselves by educating their sons in Italian universities, such as Padua, Rome, Venice, Florence and Milan. They were able to provide the requisite talents. Some of the earliest Phanariot dragomans served as interpreters for both the Ottomans and European embassies. At the same time, the Ottoman ruling elite probably became aware of the full worth of their talents as a result of skilful performance of Alexander Mavrocordat at the negotiations for the Treaty of Carlowitz. They also became prepared linguistically and intellectually to receive the new western ideas which penetrated the Empire during Selim III's reign. As we already mentioned above that starting from 1711 onwards in Moldavia and from 1715 in Wallachia, the Porte began to appoint the Phanariot dragomans regularly as Hospodars/Princes/Voivodas of the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. The posts of dragoman and Hospodar were monopolized by a half -dozen or so Greek families.<sup>15</sup>

The dragoman's function was to translate notes exchanged between foreign representatives and the Sublime Porte, and to interpret for the Reis Effendi during

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Naff, *Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789-1807*, in "Journal of the American Oriental Society", 1963, no. 83 (3), p. 295-315. Of 31 princes from 11 different families who ruled in Wallachia and Moldavia during the Phanariot period, seven sentenced to death, and a few were executed at their own courts of Bucharest or Iasi. The first deposed Wallachian Phanariot Hospodar was famous Alexander Mavrocordat's son, Nicola, in 1709. From the same family Constantin Movrocordat six times appointed to this post after five times deposed and exiled to Limnos. For detailed information see, Cafer Çiftçi, *Bâb-ı Ali'nin Avrupa'ya Çevrilmiş İki Gözü: Eflak ve Boğdan'da Fenerli Voyvodalar (1711-1821)* [Two Eyes of the Sublime Porte in Europe. The Phanariot Hospodars in Wallachia and Moldavia (1711-1821)], in "Uluslararası İlişkiler", 2010, no. 26, p. 27-48.

negotiations and whenever the latter, The Grand Vizier, or the Sultan received European emissaries. When the Reis and the Grand Vizier accompanied the army on campaign, he or one of his chief subordinates went with them. Starting from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 18<sup>th</sup> and a part of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, dragomans used often to conduct negotiations under their own direction, but not on their own initiative; generally, they were accompanied by an Ottoman official who observed their work. Most of the diplomatic exchanges which took place at the Sublime Porte were between the dragoman of the Porte and the interpreters of the various embassies; minutes were taken by a chancery scribe and/or an embassy secretary or second interpreter. Also he was occasionally sent for by an envoy for talks, or he might go to an embassy charged by the Reis, with a particular mission. The dragoman of the Porte had his own small staff and subordinate interpreters to assist him in his duties, the latter usually being younger members of the leading Phanariot families training for the post.<sup>16</sup>

Thus the dragomans were persons of some importance in the hierarchy of the Sublime Porte and were treated accordingly by the diplomatic corps. Moreover, because their duties brought them into frequent contact in both an official and an unofficial capacity with the resident envoys in Istanbul, the interpreters became vital channels of the information for Ottoman officials. However, while the dragomans for the most part served the Ottoman government well and loyally, there were some who amassed large fortunes through divulging state secrets to foreign representatives. In some cases revealing government secrets by a dragoman occurred during the time of Selim III and this kind of incident caused the Sultan to issue an edict ordering all officials to take an oath of silence about affairs of state. But similar problems persisted into this period and also manifested themselves among the interpreters who served Ottoman Embassies in their new posts in European capitals. After the establishment of the permanent embassies in major European capitals, some of the interpreter's treachery came to light such as the first permanent ambassador to Paris, 1797-1800, Morali Esseyid Ali Effendi, had a Greek interpreter named Codrika, who had been subverted by French Foreign Secretary Talleyrand; Codrika had passed on to him all communications arriving from the Porte to the embassy. Thus, some of the Ottoman ambassadors like Halet Effendi, Ottoman ambassador in Paris, 1802-1806, disliked and were suspicious of Greek interpreters.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas Naff, *Ottoman Diplomacy and the Great European Powers, 1789-802*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, 1961, p. 66-67.

<sup>17</sup> Idem, *Reform and the Conduct...*, p. 300-301.

However, the dragomans and the Hospodars were the primary source of information on Ottoman Foreign Office prior to the establishment of permanent Ottoman Embassies in the major European capitals until Selim's reign. Actually, before this date, the Ottomans depended primarily upon two sources for information about events in Europe. One was the Hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia, the other was the dragomans of the Porte. The Hospodars maintained agents in the capitals of the central and Eastern Europe who provided them with unsifted and often inaccurate reports which they in turn transmitted to Istanbul.<sup>18</sup> After the treaty of Küçük Kainarca, during the reign of Abdülhamid I and Selim III, communications between the Principalities and the capital were unreliable and at times even impossible, owing to the breakdown of central authority and resultant disorders and brigandage. Petty brigands and powerful rebels like Pasvaoglu Osman Pasha of Vidin, Yillikzade Süleyman Ağa, Tirsiniklioglu İsmail Ağa controlled nearly all the major routes in the Balkans and at times cut off the capital by land for weeks. When they were isolated, the Porte had to rely for news on the dragomans and on a secondary source, which was often, useful although biased—the European envoys. The Reis Effendi might tap them directly or, frequently, the envoys themselves volunteered information, which was usually shaded to suit their political objectives. When the Ottomans felt strong enough or so long as the Empire had little fear from European powers, these arteries of diplomatic communication sufficed to furnish Ottoman officials with all they cared to know about west. However, even before Selim III's reign, this system had become lambently inadequate, and after 1789, with crisis mounting upon crisis, its retention was intolerable to the security of the Empire. Thus, the problem of communications bulked large in generally program of reforms and specifically diplomatic reforms of Selim III.<sup>19</sup>

The main stone of diplomatic reforms was based on establishing of the permanent embassies at the capitals of European countries. Selim III set out to renovate the diplomatic machinery of the Empire at the start of his reform program. He realised that keeping abreast of events in Europe was indispensable

<sup>18</sup> Mehmet Alaaddin Yalçinkaya, *The Meeting of the Foreign Envoys by the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in the second Half of the 18th Century: The Case of the Embassy of Reprin to Istanbul (1775-1776)*, in *Turkey & Romania. A History of Partnership....*, p. 237-258; Hacer Topaktaş, *What Happened Beyond the Border: Some Reports of Moldavian and Wallachian Voivods Related to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1764-1795)*, in *Turkey & Romania. A History of Partnership....*, p. 271-286.

<sup>19</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New....*, p. 338; Thomas Naff, *Reform and the Conduct....*, p. 302-303.

to the security of his state. His first major move constituted a break with unilateralism. In 1792 he began modernizing diplomatic communications and techniques by assigning the first of several resident missions to the major European capitals. The first permanent Ottoman ambassador Yusuf Agah Effendi was appointed on 13<sup>th</sup> July and arrived to London on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1793. Following Yusuf Agah's missions in London, the new Ottoman embassies opened in Paris, Berlin and Vienna in 1797. Apart from the establishment of the embassies, the Porte had adopted other diplomatic rules and machinery of Europe. Despite all these diplomatic changes, the accounts of permanent Ottoman ambassadors in general reflected their incompetence as observers and information as gathers. These deficiencies, combined with the Porte's failure to create effective lines of postal communication on both land and sea routes, thus beggared the Ottoman government of new.<sup>20</sup>

The activities of the Ottoman Foreign Department and their replacements were taken into consideration by diplomatic missions of European countries. Such replacements were reported by British ambassador Sir Robert Liston on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1794 and on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1795. In his first report he notes that Mehmed Dürri Effendi replaced Mehmed Raşid Effendi as the Reis Effendi and Prince Callimachi replaced as the Dragoman of the Porte on 20 August 1794. Dürri Effendi was third Plenipotentiary at the congress of Sistova and of Jassy. Callimachi worked in the Chancery office before the Russian war. In his report of 26 August 1794 Liston states that "They are neither of them esteemed to be men of ability; but they have high character for integrity, and have a sincere regard for religion, circumstances which in the present moment may possibly operate in our favour".<sup>21</sup> Another report of Liston dated on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1795 notes that the Dragoman of the Porte

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<sup>20</sup> Mehmet Alaaddin Yalçınkaya, *The First Permanent Ottoman Embassy in Europe: The Embassy of Yusuf Agah Efendi to London (1793-1797)*, Istanbul, 2010; Idem, *Mahmud Raif Efendi as the Chief Secretary of Yusuf Agah Efendi, The First Permanent Ottoman-Turkish Ambassador to London (1793-1797)*, in "OTAM 5", 1994, p. 385-434; *Bir Avrupa Diploması Merkezi Olarak İstanbul, 1792-1798. Dönemi İngiliz Kaynaklarına Göre* [Istanbul as an Important Centre of European Diplomacy. According to British Sources During the Period, 1792-1798]; Kemal Çiçek-Cem Oğuz, *Osmanlı I: Siyaset*, Ankara, 1999, p. 660-675; Idem, *Pax-Ottomana: Studies in Memoriam Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç*, Haarlem-Ankara, 2001, p. 381-407; *Türk Diplomasininin Modernleşmesinde Reisül-küttab Mehmed Raşid Efendi'nin Rolü* [The Role of the Foreign Minister Mehmet Raşid Efendi in the Modernisation of Turkish Diplomacy], in "The Journal of Ottoman Studies-Osmanlı Araştırmaları", 2001, Vol. XXI, p. 109-134.

<sup>21</sup> PRO Liston to Grenville, FO 78/15 no. 16, 26 August 1794.

Callimachi was promoted to Prince of Moldavia in the place of Michael Sutzo, who retired. It also informs us that M. George Morusi, who was the previous Dragoman of the Porte, resumed his place on the same day. Liston describes Morusi as “a man of uncommon abilities and information”.<sup>22</sup> In general in this period when the Reis Effendis were replaced with new one, the dragomans also were replaced with the new ones. Mustafa Rasih Effendi replaced Ebubekir Ratib Effendi as the Reis Effendi and Constantine Ipsianti replaced Morusi as the Dragoman of the Porte on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1796. British charge de’affaires Spencer Smith’s report dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 1796, informs us that he had good character and a good education.<sup>23</sup>

During the whole period of Selim III, both Danubian principalities had no major influence on Ottoman foreign policy. They still sent some reports dealing with Austrian Habsburg domains, Russians and Poles to the Grand Vizier. One of these reports was dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 1794, Wallachian Hospodar Alexander Morusi wrote to the Grand Vizier Damat Melek Mehmed Pasha, in general dealt with Russian forces and their activities in Poland and naval activities of Russian fleet in various Black Sea ports. In another report of Morusi to the Grand Vizier dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 1794, gave information about Russian, Prussian and Austrian forces activities in Polish border and in the palatinates of Galicia and Krakow the victory of the Poles over the Russians. This report also gives the influence of French revolutionary activities in Poland such as the Poles were propagating the Jacobin sect and they carried the markings of this sect on their cockades.<sup>24</sup> Morusi also reported to the Porte that the Russian Empress Catherine II was greedy as regards the throne, and of late her relations with her son, the heir Paul I, had been strained. On this matter the State Officials had tried to reconcile mother and son. In this report Morusi, the Russian General Potocki had pretensions, according to some sources, to the Polish throne and at the first opportunity to crown himself King. In order to achieve this, he managed to convince the Empress to have Russian forces stationed permanently in Poland. In the same report he also gave information about derogating relations between Russia and Iran after some Russian tradesmen were killed at a site near the Caspian Sea. Hence Russian troops were sent to Iran.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> PRO Liston to Grenville, FO 78/16 no. 16, 9 May 1795.

<sup>23</sup> PRO Smith to Grenville, FO 78/17 no. 17, 25 August 1796.

<sup>24</sup> Nigar Anafarta, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile Lehistan (Polonya) Arasındaki Münasebetlerle İlgili Tarihi Belgeler* [Historical Documents Concerning Relations Between the Ottoman Empire and Lehistan/Poland], İstanbul, 1979, case 231, p. 91-92.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, case 232, p. 92.

Moldavian Hospodar Michael Sutzko's report dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 1794, deals with the annexation of Poland by Russian, Prussian and Austrians. This report gave information about under the General Suvorov Russian forces how bloodily the capital city of Poles was annexed and about the crushes of Russians and Polish in Warsaw. At the end Poles surrendered themselves to Warsaw and six members of high rank Polish officers left the country, but they could not persuade the King to leave with them. The King refused to leave. General Suvorov had informed the King of Poland that he was expecting orders from St. Petersburg on how to act as regards Poland. As is seen, most reports are concerned with Poland's occupation by Russia and her allies Prussia and Austria.<sup>26</sup> Another report dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1795 of Wallachian Hospodar Aleksander Morusi dealt with the situation of Poland after the occupation. According to this report the Swedish Attaché will continue to be at his post in Warsaw, and this has been made known to the other envoys in Warsaw. The King of Poland is still in the city of Gradnova as a prisoner and is being very ill-treated by the Russians. The Russians have again commenced to organize and arrange their forces along the Dniester River, Lithuania, Ukraine and occupied Poland, there are more than 200.000 Russian forces. It is also stated in this report that recent development of European politics on news has been received to the effect that Russia and England have initiated discussions for an alliance.<sup>27</sup>

The Wallachian and Moldavian Hospodars' role became very important after the occupation of Ottoman Egypt by the French forces under the command of Napoleon Bonaparte. Following the occupation of Egypt by the French forces in July 1798, some big European countries reacted quickly to support the Ottoman Empire and thus modern term of the Eastern Question had been started. Especially at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the context of the Eastern Question, the stance of and role played by Ipsilanti family in Russia's policy in South-eastern Europe is a great interest. When Alexander Ipsilanti was the Hospodar of Walachia 1796-1797, his son Constantine Ipsilanti was First Dragoman of the Porte (1796-197). English charge d'affaires Spencer Smith's report to Lord Grenville, dated 25 August 1796, gives the first information about the appointment. According to Smith's report he had good character and a good education. Smith also noted that "he is at least less tempted by predilection for the

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, case 233, p. 92-93.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, case 235, p. 93; Valeriu Veliman, *Relațiile Româno-Otomane (1711-1821). Documente Turcești* [Romanian-Ottoman Relations (1711-1821). Turkish Documents], București, 1984.

destructive principles of French politics than his predecessor".<sup>28</sup>

The Ipsilantis were highly educated in general and knew many foreign languages. Father Alexander Ipsilanti and son Constantine Ipsilanti were known pro-Russian orientation and had already become a universally acknowledged truth. Despite this, it cannot be said that Russia had promptly occupied a special place in their political activity. Thus the Ipsilantis were oriented at the great powers whose policy at that stage of international relations much more corresponded to their own interests. Sometimes Alexander Ipsilanti, the Hospodar of Wallachia, was an Austrian spy and his sympathies and obedience to Austrian government. Therefore Alexander Ipsilanti ascended the Moldovan throne on 15 January 1787, with the assistance from the Habsburgs and further on, during the 1787-1791 Russian-Austrian- Ottoman War he moved to Austria with the whole of his family staying in Moravia until the very end of the war. In this context, it should be noted that at the very beginning of his last reign Alexander Ipsilanti seemed to seek a new source of support in the autumn of 1796, taking into account the new balance of forces on the international arena. How could he otherwise explain his declarations of loyalty and affection towards the French Republic made to French diplomats in Istanbul in October 1796. However, this fact also attests to the resourcefulness characteristic of the Ipsilanti diplomats. Alexander Ipsilanti asked for French protection in the most unambiguous manner; however, the political situation and the rise of Russian influence in South-eastern Europe later determined his choice in favour of the eastern neighbour. Probably since 1797, when Constantine Ipsilanti served as the Dragoman of the Porte, he started his secret collaboration with Russian court. Diplomatic sources of the period attest to the fact that Constantine Ipsilanti's aim was to re-orient the Ottomans towards the Russian court and London. Although the Ottomans had always considered France its "old and faithful friend", the situation changed following Napoleon's campaign in Egypt. Thus, French occupation of Egypt gave Russia an opportunity with the help of Constantine Ipsilanti who both gained Russian support and rendered valuable services to Russia. He was considered one of the principal "architects" of the Ottoman-Russian treaty concluded on 3 January 1799, which for the first time united the two empires. This union treaty was qualified by contemporary diplomats as an unprecedented striking event in the context of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russian-Turkish relations. Followed by the union treaty between the Porte and Britain, concluded on 5 January 1799, the document dealt a heavy blow to France. It's worth

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<sup>28</sup>PRO Smith to Grenville, FO 78/17 no. 17, 25 August 1796.



mentioning that French diplomats themselves considered Constantine Ipsilanti “instigator and author” of these treaties.<sup>29</sup>

Constantine Ipsilanti as the first dragoman of the Porte maintained close contacts with Russia’s diplomatic representatives in Istanbul. As for the other dragomans, he promoted to the Moldovan throne (1799-1801). Although his bias towards Russia became evident as early as in the period of ‘allied’ relations between the empires, however, certain precautions were still necessary. The demise of the Wallachian Hospodar Constantine Hançerli, on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1799, served as a confirmation of this necessity, as in his decree Selim III openly warned the Phanariot from both Principalities against spreading rumours and disloyal behaviour detrimental to the Ottoman Empire, as otherwise “all of them would be mercilessly killed”.<sup>30</sup> This warning did not stop Constantine Ipsilanti and some others. Constantine Ipsilanti during his two and a half years reign in Moldavia, maintained tight ties with Russian diplomats and did his utmost to serve the interests of Russia. Especially his residence became a meeting place for Russian agents and he himself ignored any precaution referring to himself as “partisan of Russia”.<sup>31</sup>

### INCREASE OF RUSSIAN INFLUENCE ON THE PRINCIPALITIES AFTER THE EASTERN QUESTION

Nevertheless, Constantine Ipsilanti seemed to ultimately prove his diplomatic and political talents, having become the most prominent figure in Russia’s Eastern policy during his last reign in Walachia firstly 1802-1806 and secondly 1806-1807. It should be noted that the 1802 hatt-ı şerif was a major interstate agreement between the Russian and Ottoman Empires regulating the position and status of the Principalities of Walachia and Moldavia. The fact that the Russian protectionist policy as regards the Principalities was gaining momentum in the period is explained by Russian’s aspiration towards retaining its domineering influence in the region by diplomatic means, taking advantage of the hardships survived by the population and political situation there.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Vladimir Mischevca, Periklis Zavitsanos, *Principele Constantin Ipsilanti, 1760-1816* [Prince Constantin Ipsilanti, 1760-1816], Chişinău, 1999, p. 141-143.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

Between 1802 and 1807, the progress of the great powers' international relations was observed against the background of the growing influence of France in the Ottoman Empire. Having concluded a peace treaty with Istanbul in 1802, Napoleon spared no effort to break the Russian-Ottoman union and undermine Russia's influence in the Balkans. French diplomacy was trying to prevent the signing of the 1802 hatt-ı şerif and later sought to annual it. In order to stop the advancement of Russia and Austria to the Lower Danube and fearing lest Britain took the advantage of the partition of the Ottoman Empire, in 1802-1807, Napoleon abandoned the idea of the partition. Until the autumn of 1806, the Petersburg court also considered it necessary "to postpone drastic measures as regards the Ottoman Empire", while political balance was kept and the Russian-Ottoman agreements were observed.<sup>33</sup>

In spite of growing influence of France, Russia insisted on the appointment of Constantine Ipsilanti and Alexander Morusi to the thrones of Wallachia and Moldavia. The former was widely referred to as the leader of the Russian party in the Principalities. The latter was insistently recommended by Constantine Ipsilanti who guaranteed a change in the system previously adhered to by this family as a partisan of France in favour of a constant devotion to the Imperial court of Russia. Russian ambassador V. S. Tamara to Istanbul reported that the new Hospodar of Moldavia, Alexander Morusi is no less devoted a partisan of Russia than any of his compatriots. Russian Foreign ministry ordered A. Ya. Italinski, the new ambassador to Istanbul who had replaced V. S. Tamara in 1802 to "to outwardly show A. Morusi the same preference as enjoys Prince Ipsilanti, but beware to extend your trust in him and try to be well informed about all his secret relations". Actually the candidacy of Constantine Ipsilanti to the throne of Wallachia supported by Russia and the King of Prussia was naturally opposed by French diplomats who tried to lobby their "own favourite" – Prince Callimachi. Thus Russian diplomacy insistently demanded from the Porte that Constantine Ipsilanti should be appointed Hospodar in one of the Principalities. Due to external support, on 29 August 1802, Constantine Ipsilanti was appointed Hospodar of Wallachia for a 7 year term. The prescribed term longevity was an unheard of thing for the Phanariot epoch. It should be noted, however, that his father Alexander Ipsilanti had occupied the throne for more than 7 years (1774-1782).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145-146.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 146.

Constantine Ipsilanti's activity served as an important factor also in Russian court's policy as regards the First Serbian Uprising of 1804-1813. Wallachian Hospodar maintained with the Serbians from the very start of the uprising permit to elucidate his special role in the insurgents' contacts with Russia in 1804-1807. Thus he helped the policy of the Russian government as regards the national liberation struggle in the Balkans. Being the Hospodar of Wallachia, a country adjacent to Serbia, was closely watching the progress of the 1804 Serbian Uprising. Russian diplomacy tried to make the most of the Wallachian Hospodars' competence, as he was well informed about all the events taking place in South-eastern Europe. So he was given support in every possible way. However, support was rendered to him only as far as it suited the interests of the Russian Empire. The insurgent Serbians wished to reach a situation under which their homeland could become a Serbian Principality like Moldavia and Wallachia and have Hospodars chosen from among local knezes, under protection and safeguard of the Russian imperial court, as every Serbian regards Russia as his saviour. Ipsilanti's secret relations with the Russian government and Serbian insurgents, as well as the military preparations were conducted by the Wallachian Hospodar could not but be long neglected by the Porte. Bearing in mind a possibility of Ipsilanti's dethronement, the Russian governing elite were taking preliminary measures aimed at his security and a possible emigration to Russia. At the beginning of January 1806, Russian Foreign minister Adam Jerzy Czartoryski secretly ordered to issue passports to Ipsilanti and his family in case he would be compelled to leave Wallachia for Russia or Austria. The Hospodar Constantine Ipsilanti himself also conducted secret preparations for a possible emigration. Therefore, Wallachian Hospodar had transferred to deposit a sum of money to banks of Petersburg and Vienna.<sup>35</sup>

On the eve of the 1806-1812 Ottoman-Russian War, Constantine Ipsilanti became extremely active as a political figure and diplomat. He concentrated in Bucharest on all kinds of information from Turkey, Russia, Moldavia, Serbia and other European countries. During the same period he regularly and efficiently informed Russia about the Porte's military plans, the situation in the Balkans, the actions of Kara George, Pashas of Rumelia and Bosnia. The role he played in the Serbian Uprising was especially important. Wallachian Hospodar assisted the Serbians not only materially, but diplomatically as well, and was their adviser in political and military-strategically matters. At the same time, Constantine Ipsilanti

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147-148.

warned them about Turkish military actions and acted as an intermediary link between them and Russia.<sup>36</sup>

Apart from Wallachian Hospodar Constantine Ipsilanti, now we can look at the activities of Moldavian Hospodar Alexander Morusi and his role on Ottoman foreign policy. When Alexander Morusi was appointed as Hospodar of Moldavia, the Sublime Porte circles assumed he was a French sympathiser. His appointment was meant to counterbalance the presence of Constantine Ipsilanti, an admirer of the Russian Tsar, on Wallachian throne. Russians were suspicious about Alexander Morusi's appointment. The Russian Chancellor Alexander Vorontsoff's instruction, dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 1802, to Andrei I. Italinsky, the new ambassador to Istanbul reveals Alexander Morusi as "wholly French-leaning" and Italinsky was told not to trust him and to try "to learn about all his secret liaisons".<sup>37</sup> In September-October 1802, under Russian pressures, the Ottoman Empire had approved the so-called hatt-ı şeriffs- statute-codes which acknowledged several older privileges Moldavia and Wallachia had. But they also introduced a few fresh provisions, which meant the Hospodars of two principalities were now dependent on both the Ottoman Empire and Russia. They could rule for only seven years and could be punished only if found guilty to both parties. Petersburg's suspicion towards Alexander Morusi could be lethal since the very moment he took on the throne.<sup>38</sup>

The first letter of the Russian consul in Jassy, V. F. Malinovsky, dated 14 September 1802, sent to Morusi caused a diplomatic scandal. In this letter, after congratulating him for the job, Malinovsky reminded the Hospodar that he had to respect the new hatt-ı şeriffs and to stop the administration's abuses. The conflict that started between Alexander Morusi and the Moldavian boyars also triggered by the abuses made the tax collectors (caimakam), which he sent to Jassy in order to raise to taxes. According to the new hatt-ı şeriffs were trying to regulate taxes, they had to be fixed "together with the Council boyars". Thus boyars asked for help from Russia, the only one who could force the Hospodar to respect the new regulations. For the political elite, appealing for Russian intervention, in order to make law respected in the principalities, became a political behavioural norm. Therefore, Russian diplomacy was very shrewd in

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148-149.

<sup>37</sup> Armand Goşu, *The Political Elite in the Danubian Principalities and Russia at the Beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. A Case Study: The Moruzi Brothers*, in "Romano-Turcica", İstanbul, 2003, p. 169-185.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

using these circumstances for extending its influence and imposing its control over the Danubian principalities. For some times, Petersburg itself originated such crises, building opportune for a new intervention. Thus, Russia was not anxious about the law not being respected, but it kept a close interest in maintaining a solid influence over the Hospodars of the two principalities. As a sign of Russian diplomatic manoeuvres, right after the incident Malinovsky was dismissed. Alexander Murusi's brother Demetrius Murusi had an important role in getting his conflict settled with Russian side.<sup>39</sup> British ambassador Robert Liston's observation on D. Murusi of particular interest:<sup>40</sup>

... the Interpreter of the Porte, George D. Morusy, who may fairly be numbered among the effective Ministers of this country.- He is the son of the late Interpreter of the Porte (who came afterwards to be Prince of Moldavia) and brother to the present Prince of Wallachia. The father was a man of ability, and gave his sons (four in number) a distinguished education ...

... His father was the Clerk in the Chancery (or Foreign Department) who was charged with the affairs of France: He himself was bred up in the same office, and in the same division of political business; and he had great influence with the successive Reis Efendi, who come to power at the head of the department ...

While Demetrius Morusi was in Istanbul, he intervened several times to both Tamara and Italinsky, trying to convince Russian envoys that Morusi family was deeply attached to Russia and his brother was determined to respect the new regulations with regard to the Principalities. At the same time Demetrius Morusi had several contacts with the Fantons, the interpreter of the Russian Embassy to Istanbul, and who had worked, not long before, for France.<sup>41</sup>

Alexander Morusi had also a wide support from Wallachian Hospodar Constantine Ipsilanti, who was held in high esteem in Petersburg. As one of Russian ambassador Italinsky's letters dated 28 December 1802 to Constantine Ipsilanti reveals that Russia had approved of Morusi's appointment was the assurances made by Wallachian Hospodar. Indeed, Some of Constantine Ipsilanti's letters to Russians informs us that he defended Alexander Morusi trying to calm Russia's suspicions. When Alexander Morusi asked the French government to send a diplomatic agent in Moldavia in spring 1803, this move went on provoking

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170-171.

<sup>40</sup> PRO Liston to Grenville, FO 78/15 no. 16, 26 August 1794.

<sup>41</sup> Armand Goşu, *The Political Elite...*, p. 171.

new crisis in his relations with Russia. He had used the French embassy in Istanbul, and even sent his own directly to Paris. Therefore, the Russian government often reminded his ambassador in Istanbul that in the past Morusi's had very good relations with France. Observations of Russian ambassador Italinsky on Alexander Morusi is very interesting that he never was in his inner self an enemy of Russia and he tried to present himself as a friend who deserved Russia's protection, without which the intrigues of the Phanariot Greeks could easily make him lose his reigning position.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, the Russian representatives in the Porte were very familiar with the intrigues that were made by the Phanariot families against each other when they were rulers of the principalities, especially Constantine Ipsilanti and Alexander Morusi. Russian ambassador Italinsky stated that French diplomats were behind this manoeuvre. On the other hand, Russia's support was one of the most important conditions to get somebody appointed on the thrones of the two principalities or to keep them. The competition between the Phanariot families to get Russia's sympathy for one of theirs was very harsh. In this period, Russia's influence was much higher than other European embassies in Istanbul, which could somehow equal, even go beyond the Porte's influence. It is most probably the reason for the action Demetrius Morusi took in order to prove his family's attachment towards Russia. By way of consequence he could have Petersburg's support for his brother ruling in Jassy. At that time, the most important thing D. Morusi could offer the Russian embassy, was intelligence – details about the often secret discussions in the Moldavian Council and government, about the relations between the Porte and Western Powers. And in a short while after his brother was installed in Jassy, Demetrius Morusi became one of the main intelligence resources the Russians had in Istanbul. Actually, he could easily access state information, because the Ottomans, who believed he was close to France trusted him, and because he was the advisor of the Reis Efendi.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand the most important fraction of the information dragomans, those which Hospodars and their families delivered were not really secret, while some other pieces could be acquired, most probably, from other sources. What is more, sometimes the Porte itself was interested in sending certain information to the European embassies in Istanbul, through non-diplomatic channels. The Sublime Porte also used the Phanariot families as non-diplomatic channels. Anyhow, the Porte did not encourage the great families to

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171-172.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172-173.

approach Russia, but none of them stopped their tendencies. During those times of weakness, the Porte had chosen a similar double play, balancing between the great powers. It was the kind of play that the Phanariot Greeks did too, on another level, and the Ottomans tried to use them to their own goals.<sup>44</sup> In general Moldavian Hospodar Alexander Morusi was balancing the powers of the Porte and Russia and sometimes inclined to France. So he had good relations with the Porte comparing to Constantine Ipsilanti.

Simultaneously, Constantine Ipsilanti remained the leading political agent in the Principalities, reporting the Sublime Porte about international events in Europe. He used to interpret the news from the European political scene to his own benefit, sometimes even misinforming the Porte. Thus the French diplomats in Istanbul claimed that the ties the Ipsilanti and Morusi families maintained not only with Russia, but with Prussia, too. By the summer of 1806, the situation in the Balkans grew considerably less favourable for Russia. General Sebastiani, French ambassador in Istanbul, instead on a treaty with the Porte aimed against Russia. He tried to persuade Selim III that after the defeat at Austerlitz on 1 December 1805, the might of Russia had been finally undermined. The change of balance in Europe was a favourable moment for the Ottoman Empire to drive the Russians out of the Crimea. Napoleon's letter dated 20 June 1806 forwarded to Selim III through Sebastiani, *inter alia*, called upon the dethronement of the Hospodars Alexander Morusi and Constantine Ipsilanti of the Principalities describing them as "Russian agent". French diplomacy's actions were successful on the Porte's decision and on 24th August 1806 the Russian-oriented Hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia were deposed. Selim III declared that these two Hospodars on the grounds of treasonable complicity with Serbians and Russians. Constantine Ipsilanti joined openly the Russians, but Alexander Morusi, Moldavian Hospodar, chose the other option and remained a humble servant of the Porte. Ipsilanti's properties were confiscated and his father Alexander Ipsilanti executed. Morusi fled to Alemdar Mustafa Pasha at Ruscuk and joined entourage. But that was not enough to save the Alexander and Demetrius Morusi, which in April 1807 had to face the Ottomans' punishment. Alexander was arrested and thrown into jail, while Demetrius was only sent into exile. They were replaced by their long-standing rivals – Scarlet Callimachi in Moldavia and Alexander Sutzo in Wallachia, both of them loyal to the Ottomans and considered French partisans. These dismissals were clear violation of the Ottoman-Russian convention of 1802. Then the Ottomans decided to close the Straits of Bosphorus

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

and Dardanelles for the Russian Navy, thus cutting the shortest communication line between Black Sea ports and the Mediterranean.<sup>45</sup>

The Ottoman's French oriented policy and dethronement of the Russian oriented Hospodars were protested by Russia with support of England. Russia's protests were against such an obvious violation of the 1802 Treaty by the Ottomans and demanded the restoration of Constantine Ipsilanti and Alexander Morusi on their thrones. Under this pressure Selim III restored the Hospodars' rule in the Principalities on 15 October 1806. However, Russia was not satisfied, as the Ottoman Empire had not fulfilled a number of other demands. As a result, on 23 November 1806, the Russian troops crossed the Dniester with no formal declaration of war. Thus, in the autumn of 1806 the complicated diplomatic struggle revealed all the intentions of the acting parties to the first stage of the Russian-Ottoman-French antagonism in the Eastern Question on the eve of the 1806-1812 the Russian-Ottoman War. Constantine Ipsilanti was closely connected with both the unleashing and further progress of the war. Especially the dethronement of the Hospodars of the Principalities in the summer of 1806 served as a mere pretext for the Russian government to enter Wallachia and Moldavia. The official ceremony of restoration of the Hospodars was held in Istanbul on 16 and 17 October 1806, in the presence of Alexander Morusi and in the absence of Constantine Ipsilanti who had already left for Russia. Constantine Ipsilanti accelerated the Russian policy of Occupation of Danubian Principalities during his trip to Petersburg in the autumn of 1806. During his visit to Russian capital, he had long conversations with Alexander I, trying to convince the latter of the existence of a favourable situation for the occupation of Principalities and even subjugation of all the European possessions of the Ottoman Empire. He insisted upon a lack of money and strength with the Ottomans who thus "would be unable to resist". Constantine Ipsilanti was evidently trying to achieve his own goal at a decisive stage of his career. Adherent to the traditional policy, he sought to simultaneously secure Russian protection against the Turkish domination and to consolidate his own rule by exploiting the solvation of the Eastern Question.<sup>46</sup>

Russian Czar Alexander I decided to invade the Principalities and ordered his General Michelson to cross the Dniester as soon as he was ready. On 24 November 1806, the Russian army began to move in two divisions. A force under General Meyendorff crossed directly into Bessarabia and moved down Dniester, taking Hotin and Bender on 8 December, then completing its occupation of the

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<sup>45</sup> Vladimir Mischevca, Periklis Zavitsanos, *Principele Constantin Ipsilanti...*, p. 149.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149-151.



province by capturing Ackerman on 16 December and Kilya on 18 December without meeting any serious opposition. Michelson led the main Russian force through Bessarabia and across the Pruth into Moldavia, and by 30 November 1806, Jassy and the northern part of the Principality were entirely under his control. He then issued a proclamation which was sent to Alemdar Mustafa Paşa at Ruscuk in the hope of securing his support, but Alemdar Mustafa Pasha had his own plans for Wallachia. He informed the Sultan of the Russian action and he himself crossed the Danube into Wallachia to defend it against Russian attack. His lieutenant Pehlivan İbrahim Agha, rode with a large force through the Dobrudja and reached Ismail just in time to save it from Meyendorff's attack; Ismail thus remained the only part of Moldavia not in Russian hands.<sup>47</sup>

Constantine Ipsilanti came to Moldavia with the Russian army, and Michelson appointed him Russian governor of both Principalities, with the duty of getting the cooperation and assistance of the local boyars and notables. But Alemdar Mustafa Paşa moved quickly to organize resistance. Morusi had fled to Ruscuk after his deposition. Alemdar Mustafa Paşa now used him and Reichard, French consul in Bucharest, to get the cooperation of a large number of the boyars against the Russians. All Balkan ayans' forces and the central Ottoman army was no match for Russians in an open conflict. In a six week campaign, the Russians conquered most of Moldavia, Wallachia and Bessarabia and they were able to go into winter quarters with the assurances that victory would be theirs in the spring. After Russian invasion of these lands, on 22 December 1806, the Porte declared the war against Russia and circulated to the foreign embassies in Istanbul. Constantine Ipsilanti and Alexander Morusi were dethroned once again, and Alexander Sutzko was appointed to rule both Principalities, both dismisses were received with great popular enthusiasm.<sup>48</sup> After Wallachia and Moldavia had been occupied by the Russian forces, Hospodar Constantine Ipsilanti returned to Bucharest in mid-December 1807 bearing a new title of "Hospodar of Wallachia and Moldavia". In January 1807, he demanded that the local population take an oath of allegiance to Russian Emperor and himself. At the initial stage of the Ottoman-Russian War Constantine Ipsilanti organized a local army; however, further on, there arose a growing irritation between him and Russian army command.<sup>49</sup> Therefore the Ottoman rule had ceased from December 1806 till the end of the Ottoman-Russian War, had concluded by

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<sup>47</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New...*, p. 353.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 354.

<sup>49</sup> Vladimir Mischevca, Periklis Zavitsanos, *Principele Constantin Ipsilanti...*, p. 151.

Bucharest Peace treaty on 28 May 1812. According to this treaty, Wallachia and Moldavia returned to the Ottoman Empire.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The Danubian Principalities had an important place in the relations of the Ottoman Empire with the Central and Eastern European States during the reign of Selim III. Especially Greek families (Phanariot) from the Phanar area of Istanbul had important function in the Ottoman foreign policy and diplomacy in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in this reforming period. They were served as an intermediary between the Porte and the European countries especially Russia, Poland and Austria. Also the Danubian Principalities had very important role on Ottoman foreign policy gathering information from the European countries as well as with border countries such as Russia. They were also in charge of arrangements for the Ottoman missions and European missions from their capital seats to the border lines including the quarantine and reception. All in all, the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia played an important role on Ottoman foreign policy within the context of Europeanisation of Ottoman Diplomatic channels in the era of Selim III (1789-1807).