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OPOSDRU



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

32/2004.202

Proiect cofinanțat din Fondul Social European prin Programul Operațional Sectorial pentru Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane 2007 – 2013  
Axa prioritară 1 Educația și formarea profesională în sprijinul creșterii economice și dezvoltării societății  
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Titlul proiectului: Științele socio-umaniste în contextul evoluției globalizate – dezvoltarea și implementarea  
programului de studii și cercetare postdoctorală  
Contract: POSDRU 89/1.5/S/61104  
Beneficiar: Academia Română

Mentor/ expert științific  
Prof. univ. dr. Alexandru-Florin Platon

Instituția coordonatoare de tematică: Academia Română – Filiala Iași

Tematică:

*Discurs literar-artistic și construcție identitară în secolele XVI-XX*

Numele și prenumele cercetătorului postdoctoral:  
Ploscaru Nelu-Cristian

Tema individuală de cercetare:

*Limba și reprezentări identitare în scrierile de epocă din Moldova la începutul veacului al  
XIX-lea*

AICI TEXTUL STUDIULUI

*Language and representations of identity in Moldavia at the beginning of the XIX-th  
century*

In a book entitled *Language and symbolic power*, Pierre Bourdieu defined the relationship  
between identity, language, and representation as the fact that identity is the object of *mental  
representations*, that is, of acts of perception and appreciation, of cognition and recognition.

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People express them through a language that reflects their interests and presuppositions<sup>1</sup>. In other words, "the different classes and class fractions are engaged in a symbolic struggle, properly speaking, one aimed and imposing the definition of the social world that is best suited to their interests"<sup>2</sup>. This struggle within the Romanian ethno-national discourse, in its early days (beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century), this fight for legitimacy and symbolic power of the various groups within the Moldavian elite – nobility – is the essence of our project, inspired, among others, by the books of Pierre Bourdieu. Furthermore, it should examine the confrontation between representations, as mental images conveyed by various social actors, trying thereby to justify a position of power in society and state<sup>3</sup>.

In order to identify the valences of the identity discourse as territory of the struggle for legitimacy and symbolic power, we needed a preliminary approach to the history of words (native, foreign, homeland, country, nation, community, society, etc.). This approach had as purpose to examine – in the context – the way in which social and political actors within the Moldavian elite built competing legitimacies in the fight for power, by appealing to a language full of ethno-national representations, as the one below, belonging to the writings of the time (chronicles, memoirs, political texts, letters, literature, etc.). In this case, we started from the critical observation of Jacques Guilhaumou, according to which:

"Présentement, à distance d'une histoire narrative qui voudrait réduire le monde social à une construction discursive, ou d'une réécriture de l'histoire dans les catégories d'analyse du débat contemporain, l'histoire sociale des concepts accorde une place prépondérante à la question du contexte. En effet, elle s'intéresse de manière prioritaire à la connexion entre l'approche concrète, par l'archive, des doctrines et des itinéraires de sujets de la langue (le philosophe, l'administrateur, le législateur, l'écrivain patriote, l'homme du pouvoir, l'homme d'Etat, etc.) d'une part, la description de leurs manières de dire à travers des mots, des images, des usages, des traductions et de façon concomitante leurs manières de faire par la médiation d'une imagination créatrice, d'un style, d'une rhétorique, d'une symbolique d'autre part"<sup>4</sup>.

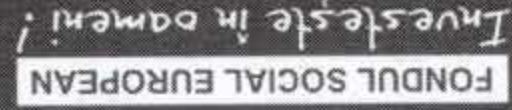
\* Research financed by the project **The socio-humanistic sciences in the context of global development - development and implementation of research studies and postdoctoral**, contract code POSDRU/89/1.5/S/61104. Project co-financed by European Social Fund through Operational Programme for Development of the Human Resources 2007 – 2013.

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and symbolic power*, edited and introduced by John B. Thompson, Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 220-221.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Roger Chartier, *Pouvoirs et limites de la représentation. Sur l'oeuvre de la Louis Marin*, in "Annales. Histoire. Sciences Sociales", volume 49, p. 409.

<sup>4</sup> Jacques Guilhaumou, Raymonde Monnier, *Des notions concepts en révolution. Autour de la liberté politique à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, 2003, p. 8.



Proiect cofinanțat din Fondul Social European prin Programul Operațional Sectorial pentru Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane 2007-2013







Doca, *Sirăni de-alături. Explorări în istoria minorităților și a comunicării interculturale*, Timișoara, 2006.

Muntean, *Imaginea românilor în Franța la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea*, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 207-241; Vasile  
 fost, Bucharest, 1998; Leonte Ivanov, *Imaginea rusului și a Rusiei în literatură română*, Kisinev, 2004; Ovidiu  
<sup>10</sup> Dumitru Hincu, "Noi" și germanii "noștri" 1800-1914. *Un studiu imagologic urmat de tablouri dintr-o lume care a*  
 2005, pp 181-185.

*d'aujourd'hui*, Volume coordonné seem Ionela Baluti et Constance Ghitulescu-Vintila, BS, New Europe College,  
*second Moita du XIXe siècle Roumain*, in *Bonnes et mauvaises moeurs dans la société Roumaine d'hier et*  
 1996, pp 158-177, Ionela Baluța, *Surveiller et punir: Les Médecins et la prostitution dans la réglementation the*  
 (*eighteenth and nineteenth centuries*), in *Identity/alterity in the Romanian cultural space*, Edited by Al. Zub, Iasi,  
<sup>9</sup> Florea Ioncioaia, *Foreign, pagan and apostate. The representation of foreign in the Romanian principalities*  
 edition, Oxford, Polity Press, 2004, p. 25).

Peace [...] in the pomp of Assizes and in the theatre of Tyburn" (cf. Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, second  
 mystifications of priesthood and the press, not even in coercion, but in the rituals of the study of the justices of the  
 hegemony of the eighteenth-century gentry and aristocracy was expressed, above all, not in military force, not in the  
<sup>8</sup> From this perspective, is relevant the statement of English historian, Edward Thompson according to which "the  
 functions, served as low clerks in order to be exonerated from taxes.

<sup>7</sup> Persons whose ascendants – grandparents and parents – had been noble, but who, not having received proper  
 administration were nominated among them.

<sup>6</sup> Rather old and prestigious noble families, whose members did not live in the capital, but in the province. The heads  
 of the regional administrative bodies (local administrative unit in Moldavia) and low clerks within the central  
 forming the majority of the Divan – a sort of princely council.

<sup>5</sup> "The great families" in Moldavia are a group of seven or eight noble families, the richest and the most influent,

investigated either the confessional and ethno-national otherness<sup>10</sup>, or the social and political  
 representations. The exception was that of "edgy people" and "outsiders"<sup>9</sup>, as the majority  
 centuries) periods – was not more concerned about the study of social, political or cultural identity  
 expressed in historical studies related to late medieval and transition to modernity (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>  
 representations, images, and stereotypes. The newer perspective, of the last decade – mainly  
 descriptions of the society, reflecting the reality *per se*, and less an image of it, comprising  
 in Romania, narrative testimonies were usually treated as more or less subjective documentary-like  
 identity representations, related to people's perceptions and images about each others, as they  
 circulated in the society. Both before and after Marxism strongly influenced the historical studies  
 Until recently, Romanian historiography has not been very concerned about the history of  
 interests of the nation".

of each social group to monopolize the attributes of patriotism and the representation of the "true  
 the traditional, pre-modern forms of social and political legitimacy, and, on the other, the tendency  
 country", the "patriot" boyar or the "newly-rich" low boyar<sup>8</sup>. This shows, on one side, the crisis of  
 an image of the self through competing identity representation (e.g., the great boyar "father of the  
 ("the great families" (*protipendada*); the boyars of the land<sup>7</sup>; the gentry<sup>7</sup>; the notables etc.) built  
 In other words, we intend to present the way in which each social category within the elite





imaginary, in its broad sense, related to the whole society<sup>11</sup>. On the other hand, some acquisitions within the mutual images field of different groups and social identities in the Romanian Principalities are scattered in studies of social history or in some others regarding the relation identity/otherness within the Romanian society<sup>12</sup>.

The main confrontation field between the nobility groups seeking new forms of legitimacy and symbolic power was the *patriotism discourse*. One of the methodologies preferred by the Romanian historians who have studied the subject was related to *patriotism*, expressing it conceptually in its modern and national acceptance. Afterwards, they tried to track down the origin down the origin or genesis of the term, as well as the sense of solidarity that it defined, building a kind of recurrent history of ideas and textual representations, linked to modern patriotism in the Principalities and to its genesis.

If we focus our research on the contexts in which the patriotism vocabulary was used in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (native country; patriot; compatriot; father of the country; son of the country, etc.), we notice, first of all, the term plural semantics and, secondly, their community-related and social significance in the traditional society. The lineage (family, origin) and place (birthplace, native land), as well as local community traditions (customs and privileges) or those related to a royal dynasty, are closer to the semantics of pre-modern *country* and *patriotism* than common language and a historical "mythology" of the common ethnic origin, even if they are not entirely absent. Anyhow, the social component plays a greater role than in the case of modern patriotism – mainly political –, even if it does have certain community-related and

<sup>11</sup> The few studies that fit in this typology (Ligiei Livada-Cadeschi, *De la mila la filantropie. Institutii de asistare a săracilor din Tara Românească și Moldova în secolul al XVIII-lea*, Bucharest, 2001, pp. 77-98, where poverty is treated from the perspective of social alterity; first volume *Identitate și alteritate. Studii de imagologie, coordonatori Nicolae Boșgan, Valeriu Leu, Reșița*, Editura Banatica, 1996 – confessional and ethnic imagologie, village-city alterity, crime rates –; second volume, coordonatori Nicolae Boșgan, Sorin Mitu, Toader Nicora, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1998 – political, ethnic, regional imagology –; third volume, *Studii de istorie politică și culturală. Omagiu profesorului Liviu Mator*, editors Nicolae Boșgan, Sorin Mitu, Toader Nicora, Cluj-Napoca, 2002 – symbolic geography, self-image, confessional and gender imagology) See also Lucian Boia, *Intre inger și fiară: Mitul omului diferit din Antichitate până astăzi*, Translation from French by Brîndușa Prelipceanu and Lucian Boia, Bucharest, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Dan Horia Mazilu, *Noi despre ceilalți. Fals tratat de imagologie*, Iași, 1999, *passim*; Constanța Vintilă-Ghiulescu, *Vecini, reputații și control social în societatea românească (secolul al XVIII-lea)*, in "Revista de istorie socială", VIII-IX, 2003-2004, Iași, 2006, pp. 144-172; Radu G. Păun, *Strategie de familie, strategii de putere: les Gréco-Levantins en Moldavie au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in *Social Behaviour and Family Strategies in the Balkans (16th-20th Centuries)*, Volume edited by Ionela Băluță, Constanța Ghiulescu-Vintilă, Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, Bucharest, New Europe College, 2008, pp. 15-38)



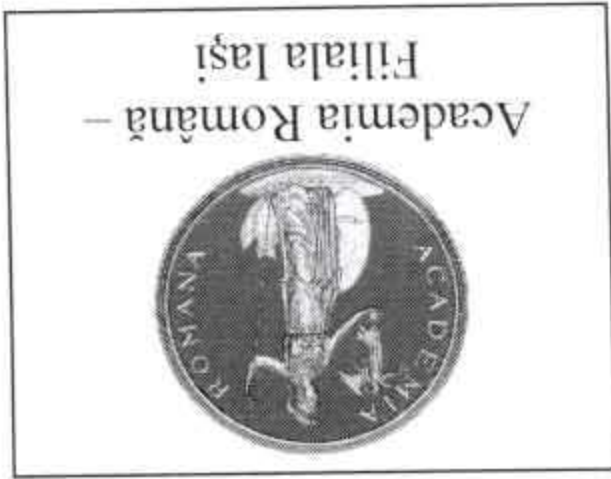


social connotations ("the Romanian nation is a nation of peasants", etc)<sup>13</sup>. First of all, being genuinely *patriotic* was synonymous, in the native traditional society, with being *born in the country*; it was a natural gift, all the inhabitants, by birth and origin of their family, "native patriots [...] the sons of this country"<sup>14</sup>.

The type of patriotism referenced by the nobility texts at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a predominantly social (community-related) character, could be named *homeland patriotism*, with a different configuration and other specific representations and stereotype images in comparison to modern patriotism, according to the type of society it defined and to what people of the time meant by tradition, historical memory, and family<sup>15</sup>. This type of patriotism was integrated in certain forms of the "love for the country", strictly related to the social behaviours considered legitimate and moral in the traditional society, to the love for the community and the "native land". It was far less related to *claiming the ethnic identity* of the community, to the devotion towards an *exclusively politically* defined country – as specific ethno-national sovereignty<sup>16</sup>. The national patriotism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was primarily a *civic political activism*, which expressed the citizens' attachment to their national interests, as they were *presented and represented in the cultural-national discourse of the elite*, through history, literature, and modern political oratory<sup>17</sup>.

The *homeland patriotism* was related to another type of society and politics, to another legitimacy model of the power. In its horizons of ideas and actions, the features of the ideal "patriot" were imagined according to his social status and role, in a society where not even the word "brother" was used to designate two equals; the social relations permanently reflected the social hierarchy and order. The typologies and images corresponding to the *homeland patriot* within the traditional society were differentiated depending on the social position: the great "patriot" boyar and "father of the country"; the "compatriot" and "well-behaved" region boyar; the

<sup>13</sup> See more examples at E. J. Hobsbawm, *Națiuni și naționalism din 1780 până în prezent. Program, mit, realitate*, Translated by Diana Stanciu, Chișinău, 1997, pp. 16-23.  
<sup>14</sup> The text excerpt belongs to Alecu Beldiman, cf. I. Tanovicanu, *Traducătorul din 1803 al Menechmor: Vornicul Alexandru Beldiman*, in "Arhiva. Organul Societății Științifice și Literare din Iași", IX, 1898, no. 3-4, p. 176.  
<sup>15</sup> The case is not singular. In Spanish, as E. J. Hobsbawm noticed, the word *patria*, "the place, city, or region where someone was born" or "native country," with a similar sense and equally "community-related" as that found in a French dictionary of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: "naissance, extraction, rang" (E. J. Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, p. 17).  
<sup>16</sup> To underline the difference, David A. Bell wrote about the "politics of patriotism" as being specific to modernity and "nationalism" (David A. Bell, *The Cult of Nation in France, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts*, London, 2001, pp. 50-54), but absent in the previous period, when "patriotism" was seen as a "feeling".  
<sup>17</sup> About the construction of this type of patriotism and the re-generation of discursive practices related to the "patriotic" rights and obligations of the "citizens" in the decade prior to the French Revolution, see Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution. Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, 382 pp. 128-152.







Moldavaa [...] as that was my *country* and my family was Beldiman, and then I just came to Walachia [...] I liked the brother of Alecu Beldiman, who, settled in Walachia in 1813, says that "since I was very little, I had been *serving* in integration in its "body," in the "community," is underlined in a text fragment of monk Filaret Apamîs Beldiman. This autochthonous perception of the homeland, which one can assimilate to the birthplace and social relations of Bucharest, 1972, p. 498-509.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc. Spiritul public, mișcarea ideilor și literatura între 1780-1840*, "Revista de Istorie Socială", VIII-IX, Iași, 2003-2004 (2006), pp. 155-165.

<sup>18</sup> Constanța Vintilă-Ghiulescu, *Vecini, reputații și control social în societatea românească (secolul al XVIII-lea)*, in

Romanian, but became "Grek" through daily behaviours<sup>20</sup> – does not disappear. Nevertheless, it origin and excluding the "foreigner", even though, is some cases, the person had been originally otherness proper to traditional society, integrating the native inhabitant regardless of his ethnic particular behaviour and ethnic features, mixing the *social* and *ethnic*, building images of the the ethnic origin represented a natural gift. *The autochthonous character* – being seen as having The old forms of identity – related to security and social hierarchy, to social patterns where others, by the interest to get the folklore back, as authentic cultural mark of ethnicity<sup>19</sup>.

of the *ethnicity* and a *statement for the characteristics of the Romanian ethnic*, illustrated, among representations which define them. The modern national identity is, by excellence, a manifestation language of the "foreigner" are essential in configuring an attitude towards him and in the also, the ethnic belonging and native language were a subsidiary factor of identities in the plans of representations<sup>18</sup>. From the perspective of a modern national discourse, the ethnic origin and native and "did not belong to the place", had no "relations with the land"; he had no social reputation; rather late, after the Revolution of 1821. Until then, the "foreigner" was "breaking the customs" of national, dominant, comprehensive identity, generically validated by the whole community valences. Nonetheless, the modern ethnicity was configured in the *society* with difficulty in a form where most pre-modern identity forms (social, confessional, regional, etc.) also had ethnic depending upon ethno-national criteria of the modernity, in an attitudinal and mental climate administration became more and more ethnic. The "patriots" were delimited from the "foreigners" within the boyars by lineage and between them and the foreigners accepted within the country's decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We may say that the traditional social vicinities and differentiations Greeks, first of all) illustrate the absence of a disjunction between *social* and *ethnic* during the first sources regarding the patriotism and the relations of the country's elite with the foreigners (the The multiple attitudes, reactions, representations, and mental images identified in the status, of the *patriot*.

peasant – "poor inhabitant" and "country's sole". Nonetheless, they did not merge into a unitary, homogeneous cultural and political model, comparable with the typology of the *ideal patriot*, characteristic to modern nation. The difference was due, among others, to the *absence of a modern cultural discourse*, to define the generally valid representative features, regardless of the social





alters gradually the traditional contents, enriching it with new representations of the ethnic. In this context we assist, according to the texts of the time, at the rather confused preliminaries of *making collective identities ethnic*. In their turn, the social solidarities within the autochthonous nobility are strengthened; they tend to become somehow exclusivist, in an apparently paradoxical manner; the representations and images of the native inhabitants about each other show the persistence of a fissure in the society. Reflex of a confused identity reaction for the modern observer, the autochthonous nobility attaches the ethnic character to the *themes of social legitimacy*, and the terminology of the time reflects unexpected and suggestive antinomies (autochthonous/phanario; patriot/vulgarian; family/foreigner), socially and ethnically validated, in a rather theatrical manner. The origins of the modern concept of "motherland," essential in the ideological configuration of a national community, relate to the concept of structuring the modern cultural-political discourse. It also relates to the elaboration of a concept and to the outline of a national perception on the *motherland*, including representations and images with an important ideological function, also stimulating the community's solidarity.<sup>21</sup> Older than modernity, as lexical element, the motherland did not express itself as an objective reality, like the State; it is not a legally and institutionally defined entity, but it represents the complex expression of a community's *identity*.<sup>22</sup> This is why we find the question whether the patriotism is the expression of a *feeling*, of an *attitude*, or of a *conception* secondary for understanding the notion of "motherland," as long as it is seen as an identity-specific representation of the State. On one side, the history of the word as such may be relevant to follow the way in which the elite of a community assumes and uses a certain terminology, an identity-related vocabulary.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, placed in a larger context, this history may serve to decrypt certain forms of loyalty within the society and the manner in which people see identity.

The semantic reconstruction of the notion of *motherland* in the Romanian Principalities at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, essential in the configuration of a modern national discourse,

country and the patriots. And, this way, [...] I also became a patriot of this country" (a.u.) (cf. Ștefan Lemny, *Origine și cristalizarea ideii de patrie în cultura română*, Bucharest, 1986, pp. 99-100).

<sup>21</sup> From this perspective, the observations of Ștefan Lemny on the terminology and method issues of an analytic historical introspection on the "fatherland" are very much valid even today. See Ștefan Lemny, *Originea și cristalizarea ideii de patrie în cultura română* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1986), 28-29.

<sup>22</sup> Annie Jourdan, *Une nouvelle mémoire collective: Le culte des grandes hommes sous la Révolution*, in *National Identity: symbol and representation*, edited by J. Th. Leerssen and M. Spiering (Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1991), 69.

<sup>23</sup> For a history of the word "motherland" for the French case, there is a very suggestive inventory by Jacques Godechot, *Nation, patrie, nationalisme et patriotisme en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in *Annales historiques de la révolution française* 206 (October-December 1971), 481-499. In the Romanian historiography, Ștefan Lemny carried on a similar project, *op. cit.*, 28-48, the chapter *De la patriotismul medieval la patriotismul modern*.

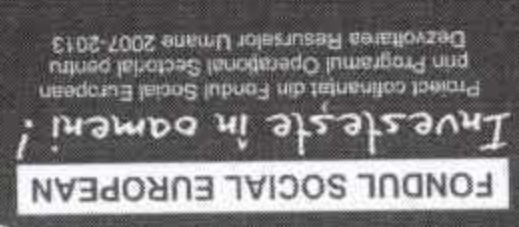
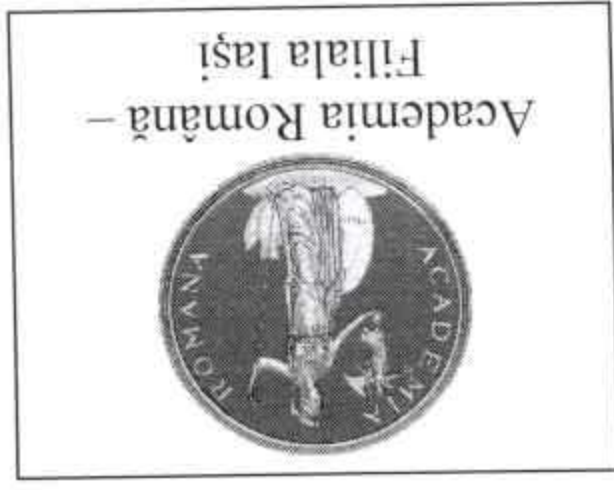




represents, at the same time, a cultural phenomenon and a product of the interaction between the images and the representations related to identity-alterity.<sup>24</sup> In the plan of the social and political representations, the issue of the *motherland* and of the *patriotism* played a special role, becoming, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and mostly after the Revolution of 1821, an essential criterion of the mutual perceptions within the nobility, a true evaluation scale of social identities. On the other side, patriotism allowed transcending the social frontiers and it contributed to social homogenisation, legitimating the political association of people belonging to different social classes; tradition made them have hierarchical social and power relations. At the confluence between the phenomenon of structuring the ethno-national cultural discourse and that of its reception in the society, the *resemantization* of the *motherland*, *patriotism*, *patriot* notions would alter the overall perception of the Romanians about themselves. It would also alter the perception on their society and it would contribute to legitimizing a civic attitude where the attachment for a patrimony of "patriotic ideas" and the *political activism* prevailed over the traditional social-political hierarchies and loyalties.<sup>25</sup>

The model of the patriotism related to the 1848 Revolution – which that generation included in the discourse –, liberal, and militant, romantic, according to the typology of the European nationalism during the "century of nationalities," was not the only type of patriotism to which the Romanians in the Principalities adhered. One of the favourite methodologies of the historians who studied the subject related to *patriotism* was to enunciate it conceptually in its modern and national acceptance. Then, they followed recurrently the origin or genesis of the term and of the felling of communitarian solidarity that it defined, thus constructing a kind of recurrent history of the textual ideas and representations, related to modern patriotism in the Principalities and to its genesis. If we go backwards, first, the plural semantics of the terms (*motherland*, patriotism) and, second, their high communitarian-social significance in the traditional society, become apparent. The lineage (bloodline, ancestry) and place (birthplace, autochthonous land), and the local traditions of the community (customs and privileges) or the royal dynasty-related ones are closer to the semantics of the pre-modern *motherland* and *patriotism* than the common language and a historical "mythology" of the common ethnic origin, even though they are not completely absent. Anyway, the social component plays a much bigger role than in the case of the modern patriotism – mainly political –, even if it does have certain community-related and social

<sup>24</sup> Ernst van Alphen, *The Other Within, in Alterity, Identity, Image, Selves and Others in Society and Scholarship*, edited by R. Corbey and J. Th Leerssen, (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1991), 4-5.  
<sup>25</sup> See, for the case of the Greek patriotism, Robert Shannan Peckham, *National Histories, Natural States, Nationalism and the Politics of Place in Greece*, (London, New York: 2001), 1-17, a paper we used for methodological orientation.





connotations ("Romanians are farmers," "the Romanian nation is a nation of peasants," etc).<sup>26</sup> First, being genuinely "patriotic" was synonymous, in the traditional society, with being *born in the country*. It was a natural gift, all the inhabitants, by birth and lineage, were "autochthonous patriots [...] the sons of this motherland"<sup>27</sup>.

The type of patriotism referenced by the nobility texts at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with predominantly social (community-related) accents, could be named *homeland patriotism*, with a different configuration and other specific representations and stereotype images in comparison to modern patriotism. That kind of patriotism was adequate for the type of society it defined and to what the people of that time meant by tradition, historical memory, and kinship.<sup>28</sup> This type of "patriotism" was integrated in certain forms of "love for the country," strictly related to the social behaviours seen as legitimate and moral in the traditional society, to the love for the "community" and the "autochthonous land." It was far less related to *stating the ethnic identity* of the community, to the devotion for an *exclusively politically* defined country – as specific ethno-national sovereignty.<sup>29</sup> The national patriotism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century would become primarily a *civic political activism*, which expressed the citizens' attachment to their national interests, as they were *presented and represented in the cultural-national discourse of the elite*, through history, literature, and modern political oratory.<sup>30</sup>

For the autochthonous boyar, living at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, "the motherland" had a familiar configuration – of "house," of maternal home, of "those places which gave birth to me", often transposing in a paradise, with "sweet, clear, and smooth waters," and "plains" full of "sweet perfumes" in spring, "zephyrs" and "clouds."<sup>31</sup> Beyond the poetic language, "the motherland" appears generally as a place to "relax" and "to feel good," a place for natural bonding between people. From a community-related perspective, its idyllic and natural image has as

<sup>26</sup> See more examples at E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nationi și naționalism din 1780 până în prezent. Program, mit, realitate*, translated by Diana Stanciu, Chișinău, 1997, pp. 16-23.  
<sup>27</sup> The text excerpt belongs to Alecu Beldiman, cf. I. Tanoviceanu, *Traducătorul din 1803 al Menechmor: Vornicul Alexandru Beldiman*, in "Arhiva. Organul Societății Științifice și Literare din Iași," IX, 1898, no. 3-4, p. 176.  
<sup>28</sup> The case is not singular. In Spanish, as E. J. Hobsbawm noticed, the word *patria* "the place, city, or region where someone was born" or "native country," with a similar sense and equally "community-related" as that found in a French dictionary of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: "naissance, extraction, rang" (E. J. Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, p. 17).  
<sup>29</sup> To underline the difference, David Bell wrote about the "politics of patriotism" as being specific to modernity and "nationalism" (David Bell, *The Cult of Nation in France*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2001, pp. 50-54), but absent in the previous period, when "patriotism" was seen as a "feeling."  
<sup>30</sup> About the construction of this type of patriotism and the re-generation of discursive practices related to the "patriotic" rights and obligations of the "citizens" in the decade prior to the French Revolution, see Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution. Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, 382 pp. 128-152.  
<sup>31</sup> See C. Conachi, *Dintr-a dulcii patriei sămuri*, in idem, *Scriseri alese*, pp. 106-107.





grounds a non-historical feeling of "eternity," "the motherland" being an origin myth and, at the same time, a "lost paradise": "Moldavia so loved, / Oh, happiness so desired, / By the heart never deserted, / And forever awaited!" (our italics).<sup>33</sup> "The motherland" is also a symbol of virtue and harmony, of a Christian moral perfection, which stimulates the permanent – nostalgic and elegiac – return to its spiritual place, conserved in the collective memory. From this perspective, "the motherland" appears as the perfect model, existent in an immemorial time – of the specific community –, that the boyars sought to get back by recuperating traditions and a lifestyle attributed to the ancestors by the collective memory, "living the life of our parents and of our forefathers" (our italics)<sup>34</sup>. Around 1793, Grigore Brâncoveanu pathetically "sighed" of joy when hearing that the autochthonous bishop Filaret II had been "elected" metropolitan, as he considered it as the "sign" of the "past happiness" return for the "unfortunate motherland," as it had been in the time of the "ancestors," "an iron nation," who had never allowed the "foreigners" to conquer them.<sup>35</sup>

In the elegies and meditations of the boyars at the beginning of the century, "the motherland" appears as a predominantly spiritual and community-related entity, and then political, with an assigned personality transcending the common will of its members. The motherland had its own "will" and "power," bearing the mark of the "community's" destiny related to the transcendent, as the rebirth "of the motherland" conserved the significance of a redemption, close to the religious meaning of the term. This is why the representations personalizing "the motherland" were strictly related to the cult of the "ancestors" belonging to the autochthonous families and to the founding "fathers" of the rural communities – the village "elders." The most encountered personalized image of "the motherland" is that of "mother," the autochthonous boyar being raised "at the motherland's sweet breasts" and "awakened by its sigh."<sup>36</sup> In the virtue of this identity metaphor, deeply implanted in the mindset, the political and social rebirth of "the motherland" took over, as previously stated, the attributes of "redemption." Close to the image of a protecting "mother,"<sup>37</sup> "the motherland" is the one "saving" and "punishing," as "the sweet motherland gathers us all," – "the co-nationals," but, concomitantly, the same "motherland"

<sup>32</sup> In several texts of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the image of France as earthly heaven – "le jardin de France" – finds a place among the dominant representations of "the motherland" (Suzanne Citron, *Le mythe national: l'histoire de France en question* (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1987), 136.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 106.

<sup>34</sup> *Uricariul*, I, p. 241 (*Arzul ce s-a făcut cătră pre Marele Vizir*).

<sup>35</sup> N. Iorga, *Viața unui mitropolit de altă dată: Filaret al II-lea*, in *CL, XXXV*, 1901, p. 1007.

<sup>36</sup> C. Conachi, *Dintr-a dulcii patriei sămuri*, p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> In the French case – with interesting similarities, which turned to be useful to the methodological orientation of our investigation – *the motherland* appears as a beautiful woman – "Dame France" – wearing clothes decorated with lilies (*fleur de lys*). See Suzanne Citron, *op. cit.*, 135-136.

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“banishes the enemies and angrily destroys” the foreigners.<sup>38</sup> In the plan of mental representations and poetic expressions, but also of the rhetoric with political reverberations, the image of “the motherland” as “mother” takes representations from the repertory of gestures and symbols associated to the cult of Virgin Mary, “the mother” of all the Orthodox (as in right believers). In this case, also, we assist to the transposition of stereotype textual representations – referring to the worldly setting of the traditional religious message (keeping its symbolic value intact) – of the *salvation* and *rebirth* imaginary, founding myth omnipresent in the mental conformation of any given collective.<sup>39</sup>

This spiritualized and mythological image of “the motherland” survived the ideological attacks of early modernity, finding a new rhetoric support of representations and symbols in the ancient references of the neo-classicism professed by the literates during the first three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The persistence of a language “eternalizing” the motherland and integrating it in the myth of the “eternal return” to the “origins” was also due to the force of the Orthodox Christian ethical model. This model did not cherish the “praise of the motherland and of the ancestors” nobility” (a discourse celebrating the motherland, essential for its resemantization in a modern sense). Instead, it preached the faith in God, “the good deeds and, mostly, the measured thoughts,” without which “*the glory, [...] the parents, the ancestors, and the motherland are not truly useful to a man*” (our italics)<sup>40</sup>.

The historicity of “the motherland” expresses itself in another registry, in relation to a new sense of the history, which the scholars and the authors of political texts accommodated, according to the Enlightenment, to the representations of the historical tradition within the Principalities. These representations had been kept in the orality patrimony of images, in the family histories and legends, in *commemorating* a past still marked by biblical models and by a collective sensitivity of

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 107. In the preface to *Psalmire of Iași*, in 1743, “the motherland” was represented as a superior, “maternal” entity, which “is useful to and feeds, cherishes and guards each” mortal (Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodos, *Bibliografia Românească Veche*, II, 1717-1809, Bucharest, 1910, 78).

<sup>39</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the recurrence of the idea regarding the autonomy of the Moldavian Orthodox Church and of the country appears in texts related to the Byzantine emperor John Palaeologus giving a miracle-making icon of the Mother of God to Alexander the Good. It was associated in the Romanian miscellaneous manuscripts with excerpts of “Mântuirea păcătoșilor,” a compilation with “miracles” of Virgin Mary (see Ștefan Ciobanu, *Din legăturile culturale romano-ucrainiene. Ioanichie Galatiowski și literatura românească veche*, Bucharest, 1938, pp. 70-71).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Ștefan Lemny, *Sensibilitate și istorie*, p. 187. In 1814, Dionysius the Ecclesiarch started “to tell the story of what happened to the nation” and to “his motherland,” integrating the historicity “according to the will of God Almighty, [...] some with him setting us free, others by going away from him, for our wrong deeds” (our italics) (*Hronograf (1764-1815)*). Transcription, index, and glossary by Dumitru Balașa, introductory study by Dumitru Balașa and Nicolae Stoicescu, Bucharest, 1987, p. 32).



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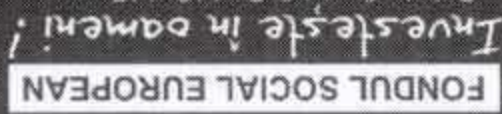




<sup>41</sup> The Christian redemption. The historical temporality of the past differentiated gradually from the biblical time<sup>42</sup>, being stimulated by the cultural insertions of the European Illuminist historicism in the Romanian culture at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>43</sup>, by the interrogations and judgments made regarding the moral values of the community<sup>44</sup>, by invoking exemplary historical figures and historical turning points<sup>45</sup>. The history of the Principality is thus recovered in a time of the chronicles, adding to it a time of "institutions since the ancient times," remembered in texts with a great political importance, such as the "capitulations" and certain princely records.<sup>46</sup>

The approach to history, as a cultural act, remains rather clumsy and submitted to the great paradigms of religion, finding it hard to achieve an epistemological autonomy and finality. In exchange and somewhat paradoxically, it proves more persistent as reflex of the elite's collective memory, stimulated by political objectives targeting the autonomy and restoration of the ancient State institutions.<sup>47</sup> The phenomenon *per se* is not ideological in a modern sense; it does not relate to "dominating the historicity," as later during the 1848 Revolution, but to the *retrospective character of the political act in the traditional society*. It does not innovate – "the new innovation" having the sense of a deviation from the political and social normality, – but it proposes to restore a previous political and social state, founded on "old privileges and institutions."<sup>48</sup> Getting back the historical temporality of these "institutions" of "the motherland" interferes with the wish to restore what the boyars saw as *the political state "of the old times" within the Principality*: "commended countries," "not conquered by sword," benefiting from internal independence. Through the "capitulations," as historical (and political) texts, being very famous toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the essential temporal reference points of the "commendation" toward the Porte were recovered and inserted in the collective memory, through the insistent reiteration of their contents. After 1772, *the commendation issue "evades" from the "closed" space of chronicles and memoirs addressed by the high nobility to Austria and Russia*. It extends to the "social field" of the

<sup>41</sup> See Toader Nicora, *Transilvania la inceputurile timpurilor moderne (1680-1800). Societate rurala și mentalități colective*, Cluj-Napoca, 1997, pp. 77-79.  
<sup>42</sup> Daniel Barbu, *Bizanz contra Bizanz*, pp. 136-156.  
<sup>43</sup> Al. Duțu, *Coordonate ale culturii românești în secolul XVIII (1700-1821). Studii și texte*, Bucharest, 1968, pp. 353-377.  
<sup>44</sup> Idem, *Cărțile de înțelepciune în cultura română*, Bucharest, 1972, pp. 105-124.  
<sup>45</sup> Ștefan Lemny, *Inițieri cu istoria în secolul XVIII. Teme și figuri din spațiul românesc*, Iași, 2003, pp. 100-105.  
<sup>46</sup> Idem, *Sensibilitate și istorie*, p. 157.  
<sup>47</sup> Alexandru Zub, *Political Attitudes and Literary Expressions Illustrative of the Romanians Fight for National Dignity*, in "Synthesis," IV, 1977, pp. 19-23.  
<sup>48</sup> Cristian Ploscaru, "Cărunarii" și primele manifestări ale cugetării liberale în Moldova, pp. 85-86. According to the author of a text named *Autonomia Moldovei*, the history of the Moldo-Ottoman relations was seen as one of respecting and violating the "diploma" given by Bayezid II to Moldavia and renewed by Mehmed IV (*Autonomia Moldovei după un scriitor pământean din al 18-lea veac*, in *Utricularul*, IV, pp. 225-243).



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entire nobility, producing a veritable "cult of the capitulations" for the "autochthonous nobility," identified in their citation with symbolic and historical value in numerous texts, with various profiles.<sup>49</sup>

In this cultural-political context and given the revival of the collective historical memory, "the motherland," in its specific community-related conformation, only included the autochthonous, those belonging to a nation which had roots in the "country's land." As political structure, this land, being unconquered, untamed by sword, but commended and only under the protection of the Porte – "the motherland" – founded its political personality on the legitimate "institutions" of the past, guaranteed by the capitulations concluded with the Porte.<sup>50</sup> We find the historical reference points constituting "the political motherland," in Moldavia's case, in a "succinct exposition of Moldavia's history," written by several autochthonous boyars to be handed to the Russian consul V. F. Malinovski. The political state of "the motherland," which the boyars extract from the past, always using it to support the legitimacy of their claims, relates to the moment Bogdan III commended the country, "following the advice of Prince Stephen."<sup>51</sup> The former, "with the inhabitants' consent," sent to Constantinople "chancellor Teuula [Tăutu – author's note] for the country to pass under the Turks' protection, but without naming it their vassal" (our italics). The Turks acknowledged the "Orthodox faith," essential spiritual reference point of the political identity in the case of "the motherland." Besides Wallachia, it was the only Christian country dominated by the Turks.<sup>52</sup> The latter accepted for "the prince, chosen by the

<sup>49</sup> In Wallachia, friar Pandelei, "hegumen Sadoveanu," wrote on a *Triode*, at the Sadova monastery, "as Wallachia was not really a vassal to anyone, it was commended to the Ottoman Porte, because of useful articles of the treaty, through a manuscript order of the Sultan" by Matei Basarab, "to Sultan Mehmed IV. These articles, now that the peace was concluded" between Russia and Turkey (1774) "the same bounds followed." (Ilie Cortus, *Insemnari de pe manuscrise si carti de cult privind istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Romane*, in *BOR*, XCIV, 1976, no. 7-8, p. 805; 1774) The theme of the "Greek" complot – having as purpose hiding them, for the Porte to go on with its abuses – sometimes accompanied the appeal to capitulations. Naum Rămniceanu accused metropolitan Nectarie Moraitul of not having appointed "a Romanian treasurer [at the Metropolis – author's note] in order for the Metropolis' secrets not to be revealed, as this Metropolis keeps all the ancient princely records – concerning our unsettlement, that of the Greeks, and the relations of Wallachia with the Ottoman Porte – and the imperial decrees on strengthening the country's privileges" (our italics) (Cf. Mihai Maxim, *Din istoria relatiilor romano-otomane. "Capitulatiile," in ASUL*, XXVIII, 1982, no. 6, p. 67).

<sup>50</sup> *Autonomia Moldovei*, pp. 228-229. See *Firmanele care intăreau privileghiurile țerei*, in *Genealogia Cantacuzinilor*, pp. 499-500.

<sup>51</sup> In the text *Autonomia Moldovei*, the author justifies "the commendation" through the fact that Moldavia, "weakened by the wars it was forced to carry on with the surrounding powers [...], decided to look for defenders." Then, "Prince Bogdan [the third – author's note], with the consent of the entire community" decided "to commend the land to the High Porte" (*ibidem*, p. 226).

<sup>52</sup> This idea was explicit at Zilot Romanul, who states "the Moldovan princes," taking "example" from the Wallachia princes, "established relations with Turkey, and, this way, of all the families and eparchies, all commended to the

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people for life, not to be changed, to be free, and almighty," element of the internal political independence of "the motherland." In addition, the Turks confirmed "the laws, traditions, and customs," conferring to "the motherland" a political identity and distinguishing it from the rest of the Ottoman territory.<sup>53</sup> Among these reference points, which built the pattern of the political identity of "the motherland" as State, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the historical memory focused upon the Turks acknowledging the "Orthodox faith" – they did that by forbidding the Muslims "from entering and staying in the Moldavian voivodship." It also focused upon acknowledging the "laws, traditions, and customs" now also confirmed by treaties, the Turks taking the engagement of "conserving them as such."<sup>54</sup> The reign issue became secondary, mostly in Moldavia, except for certain moments of crisis, when the boyars really hoped for a complete restoration of the "autochthonous reign."<sup>55</sup> Given the degradation of the external status and of the internal political position of the

*Turks, except for these two eparchies* (our italics) (Zilort Românul (Ștefan Fănuță), *Opere complete*, Edition by Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă, Bucharest, 1996, p. 95, note c).

<sup>53</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, our italics, IV, p. 274 (Iași, May 14, 1802, Appendix I, *Expunere succintă a istoriei Moldovei*), 9

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, IV, loc. cit; *Autonomia Moldovei*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>55</sup> In his well-known synthesis, Vlad Georgescu mentions "the whole national movement in the period 1769-1774 focuses on the independence idea and on the right to elect Romanian princes" (our italics) (Vlad Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 102). A first element refers to the confusion of relating the 1769-1774 "episode" to the modern "national movement," the same cannot be said about Dimitrie Cantemir's politics or about the Șerban Cantacuzino and Ștefan Petriceicu "moments." One can go back on this "national line" to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, maybe at Michael the Brave or John the Terrible, etc., the features of the political expressions enumerated being much alike, with the only notable difference that the boyars of 1769-1774 had as head the metropolitan, and not a prince, but they wanted it. At 1769-1774, the boyars hoped for the country's "redemption" from the Turks, under the "Christian" protection, just like their predecessors. The above-mentioned princes (and others), too, if the country remained under Ottoman "commendation," wanted to review the interdictions related to the presence of the Turks in the country, to the frontier fortified cities, and to the Islamic law – issues present in the previous period, too. The boyars had "whined" to the Porte about this "injustices" (see N. Iorga, *Basarabia noastră*, Chișinău, 1993, pp. 75-84, on the rapports between the landowning boyars and the Tatars of Bessarabia). As regards the memoirs of 1769-1774, Parvu Cantacuzino wrote to the Tsarina, in 1769, that he hoped for the "liberation of the Christian peoples [...] running after God and begging for the high protection and defence" of Catherine II, which would have been "from the start our ancestors' wish," without formulating any claim. The victories of the Russian army are a reason "for joy [...] for all the hearts of the Orthodox who groan under the yoke of the [Turkish] enemy," waiting "for my redemption together with the other Christian inhabitants of the country." Only when the Wallachian boyars found out that the country would remain under Turkish domination, during the negotiations of Focșani, the reign issue was opened, too. First, they asked for "the privilege to have, fro the high justice of the Russian Emperor, a Prince with the same faith as ours," reiterating "in a strong manner" the interdictions regarding the Turks entering the country (August 6, 1772). The document that the Wallachian boyars handed to count Orlov on August 30, 1772 mentioned as country privilege since the oldest times – acknowledged as such by the Turks, by whose "power" the boyars were sure to be dominated again – for "the princes

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to be *native believers*, chosen by the Metropolitan, the bishops, and the boyars of the country." (*Genealogia Cantacuzinilor*, pp. 427, 435-436, 494, and 498) In 1773, as the war started again, the Wallachian boyars asked again, in the name of "all our people," to "to be under the happy protection of Russia," without mentioning the reign issue (*ibidem*, pp. 510, 517, 519, 522, and 530), to return to July 22, 1774. Then, it was sure that the Turkish domination would continue, with "a report written by the community," in which the bishops and the boyars requested "to elect our prince among a native, strengthened by the Porte [...] for life" (*ibidem*, p. 537).

<sup>56</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, our italics, IV, pp. 374-375; *Autonomia Moldovei*, pp. 229-230.

<sup>57</sup> Georges Balandier, *Antropologie politică*, translated by Doina Liță, Timișoara, 1998, p. 123.

<sup>58</sup> Related to this conception, coming from a specific, pre-modern mindset, Metropolitan Gavril Callimachi enumerated among "numerous acts of goodness, done for [...] our motherland," Moldavia "during the war" (The Russo-Turkish war – 1769-1774) the "calmness, rest, and peace for the entire community." They could not belong to "the state of war," but they were seen as such because, after the war, "the motherland" had acquired the confirmation of its "rights" and of those for the "community" through the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji. See Ioan C. Bianu, Nerva Hodoș, *Bibliografia Românească Veche*, II, 1717-1809, București, 1910, p. 202.

Before the great boyars started using the honouring term "patriots" for them, the political motherland was perceived as "country," as a State founded by autochthonous and whom the latter decree" (the capitulation), were going to re-establish the political state.<sup>58</sup>

Turkish treaties, by repeatedly confirming "the country's rights," on the grounds of the "old territorial losses and degradation in the political state of "the motherland" as country. The Russo-symbolically correlated to explain the fact that the Turks violated the old agreements, leading to transmitted. As consequence, losing the "Sultan's decree" and introducing the Phanariot reign boys could operate with such disjunctions, without altering the substance of the political message power is updated."<sup>57</sup> Lacking an ideological unity in its modern sense, the political thinking of the fundamental interdictions, ensuring the protection of the main social rapports [...] the legitimate [of the Phanariot prince and 'of the Greek ministers,' in our case – author's note] violate the political context marked by a strong feeling of insecurity, "from the moment the social behaviours the Phanariot prince, completely submitted to the Porte, should not be surprising. In a social- autonomy and "the rebirth of the motherland"; on the other side, the image of "Christian pasha" of reign, on one side, politically and symbolically related, as traditional institution, to reacquiring the Christians by the Porte. The ambivalence in the perception of the autochthonous boyars upon the in rapport to the Ottoman suzerain, as being an administrative dignity, among those reserved to the degradation of the princely image, which even the autochthonous boyars got to notice sometimes, Turkish domination" (our italics).<sup>56</sup> The very phrase "princely title" underlined an unprecedented and burnt it, saying that, this way, he was freeing [the Moldavians – author's note] from the arrival of the Polish king Jan Sobieski, who [...], finding out about the Sultan's decree, required [...]the Turks – author's note] started appointing *as princes* Greeks from Constantinople" to "the princely chair during the Phanariots, the historical memory provided the necessary explanations for pulling down the reign issue. This was possible by symbolically relating the moment "when



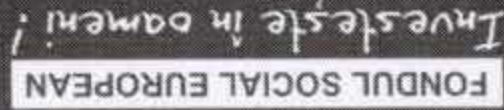
should rule. If "the poor country" expressed the degrading state of the state under the domination of the Phanariot prince, "the motherland," in its first uses as a word (the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century), represented more of an aspiration. It was also more of a wish than a reality, aiming at the "rebirth" of the State and of its original institutions, under the Russian protection and in the light of the stipulations within the Russo-Turkish treaties, which had brought to life the old "capitulations."

Out of these reasons, observing "the old privileges and institutions," the "internal laws, traditions, and customs" appeared as the essential condition for re-establishing the autonomy political status of "the motherland," being more important and, mostly, stringent for restoring the autochthonous reign. The power political position of the prince had lowered so much in the eyes of the great boyars that they did not imagine for one of them to become prince "without observing the boys' advice,"<sup>59</sup> contesting – out of pride and ambition – the others' science of the political administrators. As consequence, strong legitimacy relations appeared between the "country's rights," violated by the Turks, and "the privileges" of the autochthonous classes, first those of the "nobility class" or of the "politicians," which the Phanariots had "despised" and "ruined." Thus, the Phanariot reign was no longer considered "justified," or capable of defending them, and the true political "representation" of "the motherland" would be the responsibility of the autochthonous boyars. This is how Vasile F. Malinowski saw the sense of the "historical exposition" handed to him by the Moldavian boyars. In his words, "allowing me to understand the conditions in which this voivodship subjected itself to the Turkish Empire and the impertinence with which the latter violated the agreements, turning it into a three-year lease for the greedy

Phanariots" (our italics), meaning for the country's princes.<sup>60</sup>

Combining "the motherland" with the autochthonous "classes"/"states" (boyars, servants, bourgeois, and villagers) – excluding the "foreigners" and, first of all, the "Greeks" – brought historical legitimacy. In fact, this way, the political position of the Phanariot reign was weakened, being excluded from the right to represent "the motherland," as it was "foreign to the country" and directly responsible for the degradation of its political state. The boyars refused to collaborate with the Phanariot prince to write memoirs to be sent to Russia or to the Porte and the subsequent denouncement of certain requests advanced by the Phanariot princes "as coming from us," the great boyars. The latter would have been forced to sign them and their refusal clearly illustrates that the prince does not legitimately represent "the motherland" and the autochthonous "patriots."<sup>61</sup> In

<sup>59</sup> This is what Ienăchită Văcărescu did, hearing about the wish of Parvu Cantacuzino to "become a prince" through the Russians and without the consent of all great boyars. Of course, he did this because he did not want to see a "lower" boyar than him on the country's throne (Ienăchită Văcărescu, *Istorie a prea puternicilor împărați othomani*, in Poetii Văcărești, *Opere*, Bucharest, 1982, p. 261).  
<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, our italics, IV, p. 374 (Iași, 14 mai 1802, V. F. Malinowski către V. P. Kociubei).  
<sup>61</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, our italics, IV, p. 631 (Iași, iunie-iulie 1806, *Jalba mitropolitului, a episcopului de Roman și a unor mari boieri adresată lui Alexandru I*).



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fact, the autochthonous boyars did not contest the prince's right to make requests in the country's name, but they accused him of hiding the truth on the real state of the country and they insisted that only their requests were "genuine" and disinterested. They claimed the requests were written with "care" and "pain" for "the motherland," taking many risks, and that those of the Phanariot princes and of their acolytes were "deceiving," the expression of the "hypocrisy" and of the intentions to "steal from" the country. The boyars also named them means to "tyrannise" them and the indebted villagers through their lies and their "false" preoccupation for "the peace of the inhabitants."<sup>62</sup>

Part of the historical and political conception on the "motherland," the memoirs written at the beginning of the 19th century always came back to the issue of restoring the original institutions, active before "the Greek reign." They prudently harmonized the Illuminist thought with arguments within the historical past and interpreted according to the priorities and realities of the era. Several reigns were mainly invoked. One was that of Alexander the Good, who "established a solid foundation for the civil rights of his subjects."<sup>63</sup> Another one was that of Stephen the Great, who gave high functions to the old noble families for their military merits.<sup>64</sup> Finally, there was the reign of Lupu, who "restored the power," ousting the Greeks, "the distinguished faces" of the autochthonous nobility<sup>65</sup> and made laws in country's language, "according to the true ancient customs."<sup>66</sup> In the community-related expression, "the motherland" appeared, at the end of the 18th century, as a "mother" who "takes care" of "her sons," the natives, and "renegades" the "foreigners." Nonetheless, historically and politically, "the motherland" was "the country" itself, but projected in a future time – of its political "rebirth," by "reviving" "the capitulations" and, with them, the "rights" of the country and of the old "institutions", – not in the present of "the poor country," burdened by Phanariots and by Turks. Maybe this is why, around the time of the 1821 Revolution, the appeal to the "rebirth of the motherland" did not turn into an emancipating modern political project at a "national level," inspired by the nationalist historicism of the Enlightenment (whose ideas circulated in the Principalities), to glorify the "independent" past of the 15th century of Michael the Brave and to impose it as historical and political model for the present. In exchange, it related to the rhetoric of legitimizing "the institutions" that the boyars wished to "restore." The political message comprised the idea that "the motherland" was very



<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, our italics, IV, pp. 631-632.  
<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, suppl. 14, 1802-1849, Bucharest, 1891, p. 63 (*Considerations sur la Moldavie et la Valachie au commencement de 1825*).  
<sup>64</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *Mémoires et projets de réforme*, appendix 13, p. 90 (*Mémoire exposant la situation de la Moldavie*).  
<sup>65</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, suppl. 14, p. 11 (1823, *Material pentru un memoriu asupra țerei Moldovei*). The same idea  
<sup>66</sup> Ionica Tăutu, *op. cit.*, p. 83 (*Strigare norodului Moldavii către boierii pribegii și către Mitropolitul*). The same idea appeared also in *Material pentru un memoriu asupra țerei Moldovei* (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, 14, p. 11-12).





close in meaning to the word "country" during the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and still related to

pre-modern historical and political conception.

From a social perspective, history was the one to delimit those who were part of the "motherland," being autochthonous, from the alleged "foreigners," "strangers" and to provide the legitimizing historical reference points for the community-specific social relations. History also delimited "the spousal relations" and the traditional institutions of the country, the internal "laws and institutions."<sup>67</sup> There was not yet an outline of a political language ("collier") to define as such the social conformation of "the motherland," through the "spousal relations" and those of the "laws" seen as traditional, altered by the Phanariot domination. Until then, associating "the motherland" to "the country" provided, within the representations of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the connection between the ethnical and national identity of the community and the social solidarity. "The motherland" related to the ethnic and national identity – in a symbiotic relation ("the motherland" comprised only the native Moldavian or Wallachian families). It brought together multiple references concerning "the Christian law" and the local religious practices, the ethnic origin and the family genealogies, very important for those claiming to originate from "the ancestors' place." The "Moldavian" or "Wallachian" identity was not defined through a differentiation from that of "Romanian," but it expressed, within it, the right of the autochthonous character, only for those born "in the country's territory," "with Moldavian parents" or Wallachian, respectively. The denominations of "country" and "motherland," when they did not substitute that of the State (the Moldavian Country or the Wallachian country), they enounced the specific community, including all native "inhabitants," all the "classes" belonging to the "country's land" and being "the sons of this country." On this land of the representations and of the images within the traditional society, which brought closer "the motherland" to the "native character," the nobility referring to the "co-nationals," as inhabitants and "sons of this motherland" "engrafted." This generated a "theory" of the autochthonous character in the Romanian Principalities, related more to the native character, than to an ethnic group and to a political "ideology" representing "the motherland" as State and as community-related structure of the native "co-nationals," each being a "patriot" only because he was native. This way, until the period of the autochthonous reigns, being "patriot" meant less cumulating a set of "patriotic" qualities and more being a "genuine" native inhabitant, from a "good family," "native."

In order to understand the significations of combining the terms "country" and "motherland," the representations of the community-related solidarity forms consecrated by tradition were very important. They related to the legitimate social order and hierarchy and to the loyalty for the social institutions, customs, and manners, founded on the historical experience and inheritance. One of the traditional images persistent in the mindset of the native boyars was the

<sup>67</sup> A. D. Xenopol, *Primum proiect de constituțiune a Moldovei*, p. 133, art. 75.



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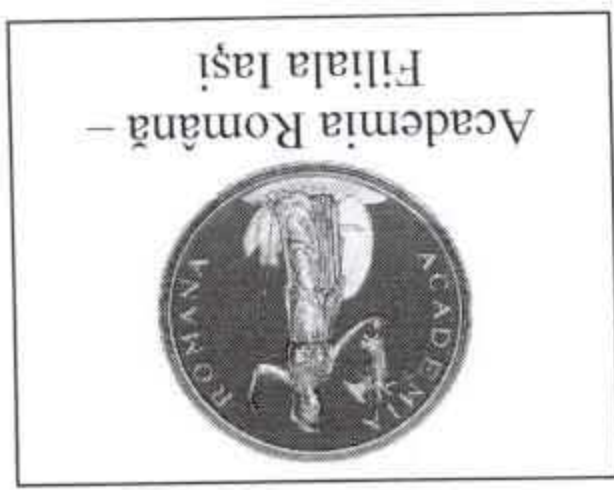




representation "of the country" and of "the motherland" as "property," as land ruled by the specific community, of the "classes"/"states" of the "native inhabitants." A series of qualitative differences delimited the sense attributed to the right to rule the country as "property," compared to the right on the territory, sourced in the modern legal concept of State sovereignty, already familiar to the Western political culture for more than a century and founded as such legally. The representation "of the country" and of "the motherland" as "property" reproduced at the level of the community-related ensemble, of "the entire country" the type of administration within the villages of the Principalties, deeply connecting the "community," the native inhabitants of that land, to the territory occupied by the families comprising the specific community, "the country" and the village, respectively. Naturally, the lord "of the country" was the prince, "out of God's mercy" and "sole ruler." Nevertheless, by also ruling over the people, not only over the territorial patrimony, *the ruler* had to ensure "the wealth" (prosperity), the security of life, of the inhabitants' fortune and, of course, the territorial integrity of his reign. In a cause related to the income of a bridge over the Prut, the Moldavian Divan, presided by Metropolitan Iacov Stamati, emitted a document stating that the bridge "belonged to the prince since the country was given" by the prince to the native inhabitants. The same way, the village "elders" had shared *the parts* of property when the village was founded.<sup>68</sup>

The representation "of the country" as "property" appears in a text that several great Moldavian boyars wrote in 1802, telling to the Russian consul Malimovski about the unsolved issue of the boyar and monastery villages, situated near the frontier fortified cities of Braila, Hotin, and Bender, conquered by the Turks and abusively included in the vilayet "hinterland." Claiming the retrocession of these villages based on art. 16 of the Kuchuk Kainarji Treaty, as well as on art. 6 of the convention of Ainali Kavak<sup>69</sup>, the boyars did not insist on them being the owners of the villages, but on the fact that they were part of the "country's property." They also brought evidence attesting that "both voivodships" (Moldavia and Wallachia) had to remain "untouched, being *the properties of the ancestors*" since "the oldest times" (our italics)<sup>70</sup>. The evidence did not refer to purchase or donation acts for the villages near the "frontier fortifications," but to the interdiction – established through the "capitulations" – for the Turks to "chop" the territory of the country; the "properties" of which the boyars spoke in the abovementioned citation were not the villages, but the "voivodships." The most serious and complex proof handed to the Russian consul was a "Moldavian history written [...] by scholars among the boyars," comprising "the conditions

<sup>68</sup> *Documente*, in "Ion Neculce," V, 1925, fascicule 5, pp. 224-225 (Iasi, February 20, 1798, *Podul imblator pe Prut la Falcu*).  
<sup>69</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, our italics, IV, p. 373 (Iasi, May 14, 1802, V. F. Malimovski to V. P. Kocubel).  
<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*.



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“representative” political elite of “the motherland” occurred rather difficult. Moreover, it did not explicitly contest the princely authority at the internal level, but on the territory of the political representations of the “motherland,” as State, in front of the suzerain and of the Christian powers – Russia and Austria. Assuming the political “representation” of “the motherland,” the great boyars implicitly defined the natives’ type of solidarity, that of the “sons of the motherland,” of the “co-nationals” on behalf of whom they acted. The usual image of the political solidarity of the native boyars, of the “political class” is that of a “body” for the older period and of “*corps d’Etat*” starting with the 1821 Revolution and with the native reigns. It was accompanied by a new political language brought to the Principalities on a French “route” and through the multiple contacts with the tsarist Russia.

Usually, toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the native boyars within the Divan, “the fathers of the motherland” and “patriot boyars,” legitimately assumed, from their viewpoint and in the name of tradition, the right to “whine on behalf of all the boyars and the entire country” (our italics). This way, they visibly challenged the prince’s right to represent politically the country.<sup>74</sup> In 1793, the Divan members of Wallachia (Nicolaie Brâncoveanu, Dimitrie Ghica, Dimitrie Racoviță, Ștefan Pașcovanu, Nicolae Filipescu, Ienăchiță Văcărescu, and Șcarlat Greceanu) wrote a memoir to the Porte. Only they signed it, but they wrote it on behalf of all the native inhabitants. “We [...] the metropolitan and the bishops and the archimandrites and the managers of the monasteries, the low and great boyars, the captains and the village administrators of the country, and the entire people” – thus, they enumerated as such the structure on “states” of the “country community.”<sup>75</sup> Both formulations, “obsessively” encountered in the texts prior to the Organic Regulations, appear in the political memoirs addressed to the Porte and to the Christian powers, as well as in stories of the foreign correspondents. They described various conflicts between the prince and the great boyars who, gathered at the princely court and led by the metropolitan, transmitted to the prince a message on behalf “of the country” through the mouth of the archbishop or of a great boyar.

The political legitimacy, the “right” of the boyars to speak and act on behalf of “the motherland” was constructed with a lot of pain, related to the protecting politics of Russia and to concrete political themes. These themes gave them an advantage compared to the prince. The boyars within both Principalities tried to separate the initial political legitimacy of the Porte as suzerain and of the prince as “sole ruler” in two *conflictual legitimacies*. They had a rather confusing formulation in the eyes of modernity, but they were intelligible in the horizon of

<sup>74</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, our italics, IV, p. 93 (Iași, August 8, 1797, *Nota informatorului secret despre evenimentele din Iași*).  
<sup>75</sup> *Arz obștească către puterile împărătești pentru rămânerea Domnului* (February 1793, Wallachia), in N. Iorga, *op. cit.*, p. 1117.



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traditional mindset and very useful to the political purposes of the native boyars. They were profoundly utilitarian, having certain rationalist attributes, but they lacked any ideological and modern discursive qualities, as the boyars did not have the "political culture" necessary or the intention to challenge the ideological foundation of power in the State, *from a theocratic perspective*. The main reason was that they were very much attached mentally to the traditional, princely model of power.

Moreover, as regards the *social legitimacies*, until the years after the fall of the Phanariot regime (1821), the complicated social and political practices to preserve the best position possible, to be different from other nobility categories have strictly followed the horizon of *family structures*, and the sources do not reflect the existence or even the idea of social class identities. In Moldavia, the political struggle for legitimacy and symbolic power was not between a great nobility of the Ancient Regime and a smaller boyarship, with "bourgeois" tendencies and behaviours. Our research does not confirm, socially speaking, the existence of two great social categories, named by many Romanian historians the "great boyarship" and the "secondary boyarship." Such a division into social classes was not familiar at all to the mentality of the time and to the *traditional social system*; the rise to nobility of lower boyar families did not imply the equality of privileges and prestige. It was not the expression of an equality spirit, but it meant exactly the opposite – a differentiation, climbing the social hierarchy, the essential stake being the *prestige, the acknowledgment*, which, inherited by the children, integrated the whole family into another social and power horizon.

In the traditional Romanian society, the lineage, origin and longevity of the family were of great importance, conferring the "right" and "primacy" for nobility, higher social acceptance and chances for an easier and faster integration within the "nobility class" and, in time, even within the country's "noblesse." For those who were named boyars, "the origin of their family" was very important as concerns the community's perception regarding the social status of the new boyar and his family, legitimizing the ascension of those originating from "old Moldavians, *mazili*"<sup>76</sup>, meaning from ruined boyars<sup>77</sup> or from "old *mazili* and captains, free, land-owning peasants

<sup>76</sup> Translator's note: the *mazili* were low boyars or low boyars' descendants, with no public functions.

<sup>77</sup> For example, Gherghelești, "ancient Moldavians, *mazili* from the region of Dorohoi" (Costandin Sion, *Arhondologia Moldovei. Amintiri și note contemporane. Boierii moldoveni*, Text ales și stabilit, glosar și indice de Rodica Rotaru, Prefața de Mircea Angheliescu, Postfața, note și comentarii de Ștefan S. Gorovei, Bucharest, Minerva, 1973, p. 55) or the Caracaș family, "ancient Moldavians, *mazili* from the region of Vaslui" (*ibidem*, p. 121). A certain Ștefanache Gherghel was a *mazil* and had an "immobile fortune" at Călinești (the region of Suceava) around 1803 (Uricariul cuprinzătoriu de hrisoave, anaforale și alte acte ale Moldovei din suta XIV-a până la XIX-a, VII, Iasi, 1886, p. 242; *Condica Iuzilor*), later rose as boyar, tax gatherer, "for Prince Calimah" (Scarlat Callimachi) (Costandin Sion, *op. cit.*, p. 56).



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(*trăzești*), "meaning old families, belonging to an autochthonous lineage, even though they did not have boyars among their ancestors".<sup>78</sup> In exchange, the new boyars "who rose from the mass to lose their origin" or who came from "strangers," "foreigners by lineage and by place," were included among the "upstarts" and the "artivistes" by most of the boyars by lineage, regardless of the rank they managed to acquire.<sup>79</sup> The "low-class" descent did not include many of the land-owning peasants who were the noblest of the peasants, but at the same time the least noble of the boyars.<sup>80</sup> Free peasants' "nobility," who claimed the existence of noble ancestors, often with attested genealogic documents, elaborated to protect their lands and to reduce the taxes,<sup>81</sup> and sometimes only with the support of oral, local traditions,<sup>82</sup> gave the land-owning peasant the chance to take advantage of life circumstances in order to "rise to nobility," provided that he were the individual owner of a "chosen part" of the land, of "immobile fortune" and the "protégée" ("the man") of a boyar within the Divan. Iordache Murguleț, although a boyar, he was proud to "have a good time in the peasant style," reproaching to his sister-in-law Anita that she and her husband Constantin Murguleț got used to "nobility leisure and could not give it up."<sup>83</sup>

The only ones who did not serve a "master," still a boyar, when they did not work within the Principality's administration (officials changed every year, and many boyars were "left outside" for one year or more), were the boyars within the regional and departmental

<sup>78</sup> The Codreni, according to Costandin Sion, originated in "ancient *mazili* and captains, land-owning peasants from Boțești, the region of Fălciu" (*ibidem*, p. 103).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>80</sup> Valentin Al. Georgescu, *Premiunea în istoria dreptului român. Drepturi de protimis în Tara Românească și Moldova*, Bucharest, 1965, p. 34.

<sup>81</sup> George-Felix Tașcă, *Paharnicul Pană de la Galati și descendența sa până azi*, in "Arhiva Genealogică", V (X), 1998, no. 3-4, p. 109. The pertinent observations of Ion T. Sion regarding the historical value of the land-owning peasants' lineages elaborated during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ca. as well as any family lineage, fluctuant according to the documentary evidence (Ion T. Sion, *Considerații cu privire la spițele de neam trăzești*, in "Arhiva Genealogică", V (X), 1998, no. 3-4, pp. 119-120, 124), compulsory for any genealogical study, cannot be fully compared for this study, as the authenticity of the lineages through which a person supported at a certain point his nobility claims does not influence the utility of the source for a research having as purpose the ascensions to nobility, not the historical solidity of the evidence shown to get it. Also, we are interested in the society's perception regarding the authenticity of these nobility ascensions and not their historical validity *per se*. In other words, the historical truthfulness of Iordache Drăghici's claims of originating from the Walachian Cantacuzins is far less important than whether this lineage was seen as true or false by the contemporaries.

<sup>82</sup> Ion T. Sion identified similar oral traditions in the case of two villages (Umbrărești, the region of Tecuci, and Surata, the region of Putna) "far away from each other", but which had the same manner of talking about their origin (*ibidem*, p. 125).

<sup>83</sup> *Acte botoșane și dorohoiene*, in "Revista istorică", X, 1924, no. 4-6, p. 199 (July 20, 1820, Iordache Murguleț to his sister-in-law Anica). The fact that Iordache and Constantin were brothers results from *Acte de întărire al lui Ionțu Sandu Sturza* (Gh. Ghibănescu, *Documente*, in "Ion Neculce", I, 1921, fascicule 1, pp. 94-95).



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<sup>85</sup> Nicolae Krețulescu, *Amintiri istorice*, București, Editura ziarului „Universul”, 1940, p. 24.

<sup>84</sup> We do not include here the various services of a boyar towards another boyar, also called “services”, but having another status, related to the particular and family relationships among the boyars. When a boyar gave to another boyar an “empowerment” to sell his land or when he asked another boyar to set the borders of a “parcel”, he did not ask for a “service” in the sense of a command from the “master” to the “servant”, but he solicited a service from him. Even though, in order to get the service, he did sometimes appeal to his superior rank, he “asked” the another boyar for his “service”, he did not command him, and called him “brother”, “nephew” or “cousin”, even if they were not related. That is why borders were set of princely order, and the “empowerment”, if the land was sold, was financially rewarded, like a mediation service, a favor. It was the same with the “service” of recuperating a debt from a third party, on the basis of a document handed over to the intermediary, who, in case the matter got to the courthouse, represented the creditor boyar as “bailiff”, without implying that he was the “servant” or that the boyar was the “master”. Also, in trials for lands, the boyars constituting a party in the trial sent their “bailiffs” to represent them, but not always among the land’s administrators, also called “bailiffs”, but sometimes among the boyars who were good at legislation or those who had “taken over” the land. In “the great trial of Vrancea”, Iordache Roset Roznovanu chose as “bailiff” for the trial of 1814 the oldest of his father-in-law’s sons – of his first wife (Constantin Balș Ciuntu), meaning Iordache Balș Bălșucă, who of course, did not do a “service” for a “master”, but a favour according to family and power interests (*Uricariul*, II, Iasi, 1852, p. 1; December 1814, *Hrisovul Domnului Scarlat A. Calimah pentru procesul dintre vizitiernicul Iordache Roset cu răzeșii vrănceni*).

administration, belonging to families who had continuous great “princely services”, sometimes even in the Divan, and whose lineage and “nobility status” seniority inherited from the parents did not allow them to take the service and the protection of a “master”, a boyar like them<sup>84</sup>. The number of families whose members did regular services for a “master” was rather great in each principality, meaning several dozens, some of which included, according to the formal criterion of the high office, within the “first class”, and others, the majority, incorporated in “the second class”, temporarily or on a long-term basis, as the boyars didn’t have access anymore to the functions within the Divan, from *vel ban* and *vel agă* (Moldavia), and *vel clucer* and *vel paharnic* (Wallachia) upwards. Often, these families, “the great families” within the social elite were generically called “the privileged class”, excluding the low or newer boyars, the *mazili* and the *privilegheți*, exactly because the members of the “privileged class” did not have another “master” besides the prince, doing only “princely services”, regardless of them belonging to the “first class” or to the “second class.” While talking about the abuses committed in the administration of the Principalities while he was a child, during the reign of Grigore IV Ghica, Nicolae Crețulescu talked about “the self will and arbitrariness of lower and higher authorities” within the departments (*ispravnic, sameși, zapci, zlotși*, etc.), but “likewise in the case of the *privileged class*”, meaning the families within the social elite, and the “nobility” by lineage within the departments<sup>85</sup>.

On the basis of this difference, observable in the daily attitude of the boyars towards one another, V.F. Malinovski, the Russian consul at Iași, made a distinction between the “local boyars” (in other words, “boyars by lineage”) and “other ranks or functions”, introducing within the last



category those who had local functions (not "the Greeks"), but who were not acknowledged as true "nobles" by the nobility orders.<sup>86</sup> In Bessarabia, Filip F. Wiegell made the same clear differentiation between only "seven or eight families – Sturdza, Bals, Rosetti, Donici, Krupenski, Paladi, Catargi and Rașcanu, "who "descend from Moldavian boyars" and "the rest of around 80 so-called noble families," who "were the servants [in fact, clerks – o.n.] of boyars".<sup>87</sup> Among the eight families above-mentioned, Sturdza, Bals, Roset, Paladi and Catargiu had belonged to the "first class" Moldavian boyars, but the members of the Donici, Crupenschi and Rașcanu families were constantly included in the "second class" category,<sup>88</sup> and only seldom a boyar within the family managed to have his way into the "first class".<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, Wiegell identified a veritable social rupture between the three families of "genuine" boyars and the rest of the boyars in Bessarabia acknowledged by the Russian in the new province, the latter descending from "boyars' clerks," from "delegates, entrepreneurs and [...] administrators" of the lands belonging to genuinely "noble" and society-acknowledged nobility lineage Moldavian boyars.<sup>90</sup>

For example, younger or older boyars within the Cuza, Vârnava, Miclescu, Greceanu, Crupenschi, Donici, Camanau, Basoia, Buhus families (Moldavia), almost completely excluded from the functions within the Divan towards the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, given the history and the tradition of high "princely services" of their "parents" and their "ancestors," were not allowed to trespass their inherited social condition, becoming "clerks" for the boyars within the Divan. The social status and condition of these boyar families within the regional administration (*limbaze*) were generally considered by the social history papers as rather close to the new boyars and to the low boyars (*boiernași*), to the *mazili* and the lineages, forming together the so-called "secondary boyarship" of the Principalities. Nevertheless, the low boyars, the *mazili* and the lineages, together with the *privilegheți*, traditionally performed services of "clerks" also on the lands of these "boyars by lineage" of within the regional administration, not only for the boyars within the Divan, belonging to the social elite.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>86</sup> *Documente privitoare la Istoria României, colecția Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, serie nouă, IV, Rapoarte diplomatice ruse (1797-1806)*, sub îngrijirea acad. Andrei Ojetea, București, 974, p. 416 (Iași, July 28, 1802, V. F. Malinovski to V. P. Kociubei).

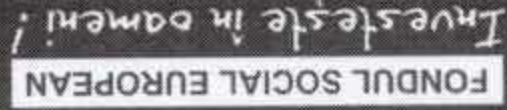
<sup>87</sup> Filip F. Wiegell, *Observații asupra stării actuale a Basarabiei*, apud Ștefan Ciobanu, *Cultura românească în Basarabia sub stăpânirea rusă*, Chișinău, 1923, p. 19.

<sup>88</sup> Vezi Costandiu Sion, *op. cit.*, pp. 66, 101, 227 and Gh. Bezviconi, *Familia Krupenski*, in "Din Trecutul Nostru", VII, 1939, pp. 5-54.

<sup>89</sup> In 1727, Darie Donici was country *vel vornic* in the Divan of Grigore II Ghica (Ion Neculce, *op. cit.*, p. 364). Costache Crupenschi, the father of Iordache Crupenschi (spatharus in 1810), had been *vel vornic* (Gh. Bezviconi, *op. cit.*, p. 7).

<sup>90</sup> Filip F. Wiegell, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>91</sup> About Theodor Vârnava, landowner at Petia (Suceava), Dimitrie Ghițescu said that "he was a man with no culture, with a faculty of great family, empty on the inside" (my italics), claiming to be "a great noble", in comparison to low



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boyars and mazili (A. D. Xenopol, *Din amintirile unui boier manciencovean din jumătatea întâi a veacului XIX*, Bucharest, 1910, p. 1008).  
<sup>92</sup> *Utricularul*, VII, pp. 241-254 (*Condica Iuzilor*).  
<sup>93</sup> *Epistola adresată lui Edgar Quinet, în 1856, de A. Cantacuzin*, in „Convorbiri literare”, XVIII, Iași, 1885-1886, p. 444.

The boyarship within the regional administration who only had “princely services” had a clearly higher social status and condition than the newer and the low boyarship, even though, in numerous cases, the high office criterion said “otherwise,” the nobility ranks of certain boyars within the second category having similar or even higher ranks in some cases. In 1803, Vasile Hermeziu, Ionîță Gane and Constantin Adam, descending from low boyars from the region of Suceava, advanced and became while Iordache Cananau, Iordache Bals and Ionîță Varnav were only *pitari*, collector of duties on spirits (*căminari*), and steward (*stolnic*),<sup>92</sup> respectively, very close or inferior ranks to the abovementioned ones, the social status difference being dictated by the family lineage, ensuring to the last a higher position, of genuine “nobility,” despite the rather low rank, applicable because they were young. This situation, specific to the internal hierarchy of the boyarship, according to the social tradition reference points, was still alive in the memory of Alecu Cantacuzino, descendant of the Moldavian Deleu, who recalled that “the sons of those families of patricians [the great families – o.n.] when they had to start the public service school,” while they were young, their “rank was taken for that of their clients,” meaning of the boyars within “lower” families, but older, and with a publicly-acknowledged inferior status.<sup>93</sup>

In these circumstances, incorporating the two categories – noble families by lineage, within the regional administration, on one hand, and newer, as well as low boyars, on the other – within the structure of a relatively unitary, so-called “secondary boyarship,” by taking into account only the high office criterion, does not respect at all the particularities of the social order and organization of the Romanian Principalities, and the characteristics of the hierarchical conception specific to the autochthonous boyarship. While disrespecting the formal criterion of the high office, social reality turned out to be far more complex, reordering the boyars within the “first class” and those within “the second class” into another social and order of power. But, even more importantly, according to other criteria, such as family tradition, including the continuity of “great princely services,” the acknowledged longevity of the “lineage” also played a crucial role.

Between the families of the “boyarship by lineage, within the regional administration” and those of the social elite, the preoccupation for the lineage, for the longevity of the families and the continuity of high functions generated a true *legitimacy competition*, of “justifying,” placing the *criterion of longevity* and that of *the origin*, the “nobility,” above the formal and often contested, but institutionalized criterion of the high office. Within these disputes, more and more visible

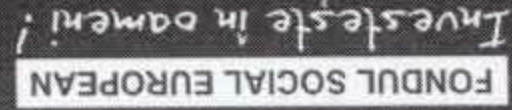




starting with 1790, accentuated after the changes introduced by the Russians in Bessarabia offered a model in this matter, the boyarship by lineage, within the regional administration, tries to assert its legitimacy of noble origin in comparison with the boyars by birth of the social elite, contesting papers and written proofs of "nobility" from the ruling Divan, on the basis of certain "noble lineages" and ancient "documents" belonging to the family. Far from being "a brood of new riches," as many of the low boyars, this boyarship by lineage, within the regional administration, by combining members within the two first steps of "nobility," proud of its longevity, was, on one side, hostile to the "new riches" boyarship, recently risen to "nobility," and, on the other hand, it contested the monopoly of the "country's pillars" over the "nobility" and the power within the State.<sup>94</sup>

These families had cultivated, starting with the last years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the image of *great boyarship by lineage*, noble by birth, as the "country's pillars." The increasing number of solicitations regarding this kind of "documents" and "written proofs," claimed by various boyars within this category from the ruling Divan is the result of these preoccupations, but also of the Russian influence, who had suggested them an efficient method of getting a document-attested "nobility" comparable to that of "great families." The authorities of the Empire had asked for the validation papers concerning the nobility from most of the Moldavian and Wallachia boyars in Russia immediately after the Peace of Iași (1792), and, at least in Moldavia, there was an increase in the number of princely documents and books on the subject. Following the example of the boyars who had "emigrated" to Russia, the noble families by lineage, within the regional administration, started to see these documents and written papers as means to fight the attempts of

<sup>94</sup> In fact, not been integrated within the "secondary boyarship", or within the "great families" of the social elite, it provided the authors and supporters of the political idea called "constitutional", din of the period preceding the Organic Regulation. It believed to have its origins in the "Movilești, Dabijaști [...] Racovițaști, Tomsaști [...] and Costinești, Erstrătești, Stroicești, the descendants of magistrate Buzum, Moțotești, the descendants of chancellor Dubău, chancellor Chenghi, magistrate Urech, Necoraști, the descendants of hetman Balica and hundreds others", who had also been part of the "loyal and submitted family", entitled to the great functions of the country's Divan (Ionica Tăutu, *Scripta social-politice*, foreword, introductory study, notes by Emil Vărtosu, Bucharest, 1974, p. 112; March 2, 1824, *Copie de pe o scrisoare ce au trimis un boieriu din Moldavia cătră dummnealui logofătul Grigorași Sturza, la Cernăuți*). In 1819, when a couple of boyars from the "great families" of Wallachia claimed a monopoly of the functions within the Divan, arguing that only they have "the genuine noble lineage" and "the true nobility", "other very important boyars did not agree with this claimed origin", stating that "us, those who call ourselves as having noble origins, if our lineage were researched, wouldn't we be put to shame in front of lower boyars, within the second and the third class?", "holding in their hands attesting papers and other documents, proving that they come from great princes and boyars, meaning *bani*, magistrates, chancellors, spatharuses and others [...] Buzesții, Căpleștii, Calofereștii, Prisciceni, Stăneștii, Popeștii and others" (Ziloi Românul (Ștefan Fănuță), *Opere complete*, foreword, introductory study, notes by Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă, București, 1996, p. 115).



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the social elite to self-nominate as unique "nobility" of the country, with the right of nobility, given the continuity of the "great lineages" in the functions of the Divan. Costandin Tăutu, "the son of Toader Tăutu," belonging to a family of great lineage, much envied at the time,<sup>95</sup> but deposed and having only low services, "barely known among the low boyars"<sup>96</sup>, got in 1793 from Prince Mihail Sutu an "exemption paper," on the basis of old "princely books and proofs," confirming that his "lineage goes back to Ioan Tăutu, who was High Chancellor, being related to great boyars and distinguished families"<sup>97</sup>. He elaborated that "old genealogical tree" that Ioan Murariu discovered at the State Archives in Botoșani, without being able to date it. That "lineage," with around 100 persons, ends with Costandin, the son of Toader Tăutu and had among the ascendants relatives of "great boyars and distinguished families": Boul, Moțoc, Paladi, Cantacuzino, Sturza, and Turculeț.<sup>98</sup>

In 1815, the Racovița boyars, with only low functions at the time, got a document attesting that "their lineage [...] is of Moldavian boyars by birth [...] proven to be great patriots"<sup>99</sup>, and Alecu Callimach (autochthonous) received a diploma acknowledging him "all the privileges of the nobility"<sup>100</sup>. In a *Tridion* offered by Costandin Varnav to the church of Bârzești there was a note regarding the family of Varnav, "originating in Moldavia, two hundred years ago"<sup>101</sup>. Toma and Sandulache Stamatin claimed to be descendants of the great family of the Movilești<sup>102</sup>, Iordache Drăghici of the Walachia family Drăghici, related to the Cantacuzinos<sup>103</sup>, and the Sionestî "fabricated" a glorious, but fantasist genealogy<sup>104</sup>. This practice, which became a habit, did not disappear during the regulatory period. In 1833, Dimitrie Duca received an "authenticating notice,"

<sup>95</sup> Costandin Sion, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-275. They said of the Tăutești that they would have been related to the family of prince Dragoș, who dismounted (*ibidem*, p. 274).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 275. In this case, too, Costandin Sion proves to be remarkably accurate, as shown by the document of Mihail Sutu since 1793, acknowledging to Costandin Tăutu the right "to be included within the lineage [my italics]", as his father, Toader Tăutu, both deposed from the rank of boyar to that of "boyar servants", with no rank or document to attest their nobility (*Uricariul*, VII, p. 55).

<sup>97</sup> *Uricariul*, VII, p. 55.

<sup>98</sup> Ioan Murariu, *Un vechi arbore genealogic al familiei Tăutu*, in "Arhiva Genealogică", 1 (VI), 1994, no. 1-2, pp. 161-162.

<sup>99</sup> Gh. Ghibănescu, *Surete și izvoade*, VIII, *Documente racovițești*, Iași, 1914, p. 214.

<sup>100</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Documente privitoare la familia Callimachi*, II, Bucharest, 1903, p. XXVI, n. 2.

<sup>101</sup> Gh. Ghibănescu, *Cuzești (monografie istorică)*, Bucharest, 1912, p. 105.

<sup>102</sup> Costandin Sion, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 69.

<sup>104</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Postfață*, in Costandin Sion, *op. cit.*, p. 329.



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not from the State, but from various boyars, attesting that he is the son of the deceased *ban* Paval Duca, and nephew of Gheorghe Duca, nobleman from Bessarabia.<sup>105</sup>

As far as they are concerned, "the great noble families" by birth attempted at also assimilating a "nobility" that was not accessible to other families, claiming princely ascendances, Romanian or foreign, and the ongoing continuity in "making sacrifices" and in "services" of the land, mostly concerning the high functions of the Divan belonging to "our fathers and forefathers." The claims of the social elite within both Principalities had a relative historical basis and, maybe even more importantly, they are acknowledged in this way by the traditional Romanian society of the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>106</sup> Besides the continuity, the "stirada" of great families, "related to the princes at involved in the ruling process," as distinctive element of "nobility," we also had the idea that the nobility of these ruling lineages would be validated by the "sacrifices" of their ancestors.<sup>107</sup>

On the other hand, the great noble families by birth insisted upon being differentiated from the boyarship by lineage outside the social elite, appealing to those reference points of the autochthonous traditions and administration practices meant to certify their superior "nobility" and to confer a historical "justification" of their claimed monopoly over the great functions within the Divan, using their influence at the court and their power over the ruling prince. As regards them having almost all great functions within the Divan, it is true that "we are maybe one of the sole [of the few – o.n.] countries in Europe, where from father to son (e.g. at Balși, at Băleni, etc.) there have been the same functions for over seven generations (vel magistrats, vel chancellor, etc.)"<sup>108</sup>,

<sup>105</sup> They signed as chamberlain Iordache Jurje, chamberlain Ioan Jora, spatharus Ion Codreanu, *aga* Iordachi Mannu, spatharus Alecu Sturdza, *aga* Gheorghe Bogdan, a certain spatharus Iamandi, *aga* I. Iamandi and a *ban* Miculescu (Iacov Antonovici, *Documente bărlădene*, IV, *Acte de la mulți șoluzi și dregători ai Bărlădului*, Bărlad, 1924, p. 308; May 8, 1833).

<sup>106</sup> Neagu Djuvara, *Les Grands Boiars ont-ils constitué dans les principautés roumaines une véritable oligarchie institutionnelle et héréditaire?*, in "Südost-Forschungen", XLVI Band, München, 1987, pp. 34-41.

<sup>107</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu, *Clanuri, familii, autorități, puteri (Tara Românească, secolele XV-XVII)*, in "Arhiva genealogică", I(VI), 1994, no. 1-2, p. 86. "The sacrifices" of the great boyars referred to dangerous tasks, that the "country" expected them to accomplish, facing "the danger" in order to protect the other "inhabitants", "poor" and powerless. In 1801, confronted with the danger of becoming "the enemy of the Russians" and menaced with the "invasion of the Russian troops" in Vidin, pasha Pazvantoglu asked the Russian delegate at Vidin, a certain Constantin, the mediation of the Walachian Divan and "especially that of *ban* Ghica [ban Dimitrie Ghica – n.n.]" in his conflict with Prince Alexandru Moruzi (*Documente privitoare la Istoria României, Colecția Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, serie nouă*, IV, pp. 308-309; Bucharest, January 14, 1801, *Declarațiile curierului rus, Constantin, cu privire la conversația sa cu Pazvantoglu și la amenințările lui Kara Mustafa*). Seeing how much the pasha trusted the Walachian *ban*, the Divan asked him, "in the name of the country", to "sacrifice himself" (my italics), going to Pazvantoglu's house, hoping that his involvement would put a stop to the "games" of the soldiers of Pazvantoglu in Othenia and in the Danube plain, and the old boyar was really risking his life (*ibidem*, IV, p. 309).

<sup>108</sup> Alexandru Perietzianu-Buzău, *Genealogiile țărănești*, in "Arhiva Genealogică", V (X), 1998, no. 1-2, p. 235.



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but, in comparison to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, only at the end of it and at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did the great autochthonous „noble families” by birth (Balșești, Rosești, Sturdești, Cantacuzinii, Ghiculești, Palădești and Catargii in Moldavia, Brâncovenii, Balăcenii, Balenii, Golești, Ghiculești, Filipești, Văcărești and Crețulești in Walachia) manage to impose a true “oligarchic” monopole over the high functions within the Divan (*ban*, chancellor, High Steward, treasurer, hetman and *aga*), repeatedly and significantly called “*services of the land*”<sup>109</sup>. While enumerating the “great families,” Ion Tanoviceanu righteously asserted that “in order to play a [political – o.n.] role in Moldavia at the end of the previous century [the 18<sup>th</sup> – o.n.] and at the beginning of this century one had to be a Rosetti, Balș, Cantacuzino, Sturza, Ghica, Paladi or Catargi,” forming the veritable social elite of the country, regarding of the services provided at a certain point<sup>110</sup>.

In these conditions, marked by the erosion of the social distinction ensured by their ranks, the “great autochthonous families” tried to acquire a legitimacy based upon the representations of the tradition regarding its “oligarchic” political primacy and the outstanding power in the State and the society. The difference from the previous period was that, since the reforms of Constantin Mavrocordat and the practices related to the process of becoming a boyar, instituted by the Fanariot princes, one could not have the title of boyar without a princely decree, even though he was a landowner and that the “community” acknowledged his inherited “nobility. There was an exception for the sons of the great noble families whose lineage was highly renown, and they had continuity regarding the functions within the Divan, with the honorific title of chancellor or chamberlain even since they were very young, “from their birth,” without a confirmatory decree from the chancellery of the prince. In a study which started the discussion on this social history and genealogy matter, Alexandru Peretzianu-Buzău came to the conclusion that “the so-called low chancellor [s.a.] was [...] was given at birth to all the sons of low chamberlains, meaning to all the

<sup>109</sup> Neagu Djuva, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-43. In his study, historian Neagu Djuvara insisted upon a phenomenon of conserving the “power” observed in case of ten “great families” in each Principality, investigating the presence of the members of various autochthonous families in the Divan, during 1771-1821. The conclusions generally coincide with the results of this investigation, but I do not agree with the opinion of the great historian regarding the fact that the “oligarchic character” of the “great families” is foremost proven by their presence in the Divan, as there are situations when the presence of only four of five families in the Divan (Balș, Ghica, Roset and Sturza in Moldavia, Ghica, Văcărescu, Brâncoveanu and Filipescu in Walachia) indicates a “balance of power” between these families, but there are also numerous situations when we have the presence of seven or eight families and “the power” was *actually* more “concentrated”, many of the officials within the Divan with the ranks of magistrate or with lower ranks being the sons-in-law or nephews of the two Grand Chancellors, having other names (in Moldavia), cumulating “the power” at the level of only two “great families”.

<sup>110</sup> I. Tanoviceanu, *Traducătorul din 1803 al Menechmor: Voronicul Alexandru Belidman*, in “Arhiva. Organul Societații Științifice și Literare din Iași”, IX, 1898, nr. 3-4, p. 173.





nephews of a boyar, without a confirmation from the chancellery of the prince"<sup>111</sup>. We can easily see that, in order to get this honorific title, the son of a boyar had to be at least the third generation of boyars in his family – a minimal condition confirmed by the society in the light of a tradition to be integrated in the "boyarship by lineage"<sup>112</sup>.

In order to maintain their supremacy and, at the same time, to build a political legitimacy with ethno-national valences, for a true Romanian aristocracy, the "great noble houses" (*proipendava*) did not promote a legitimist discourse referring to the origins of the Romanian people and language, as the Greek-Catholic Romanian elite of Transylvania, but referring to their past as alleged "nobility by blood", with a duration and continuity in functions comparable to those of the State. The right "by blood" through which the family tradition of the great noble houses was combined with the historical tradition of the State, became more important in the aristocratic perception of the time, within the French, German or Russian space, in comparison to other state criteria, conferring to the great court or imperial nobility a status with ethno-national valences and the supremacy within the social-political order of the Ancient Regime<sup>113</sup>. The blood descent was not that much related anymore to conserving the territorial patrimony or the knightly mindset, as now the essential aspects were family genealogies, titles, aristocratic manners and blazons, in order to determine the identity of the great Occidental nobility who claimed their noble longevity and the fact that they had conserved the ethnicity of their own nation<sup>114</sup>. On the other side, the Austrian and Russian pressure upon the Ottoman Empire made the Romanian and other Balkan noble elites to have their hopes high again regarding the liberation from the Ottoman domination. Besides the religious connotations, related to old Byzantine orders of the "crusades"<sup>115</sup>, these elites have

<sup>111</sup> Alexandru Peretzianu-Buzău, *Postelnici și logofeți prin drept de naștere?*, in "Arhiva Genealogică", 1 (VI), 1994, no. 3-4, p. 166.


<sup>112</sup> In Walachia, Stoica Năsturel, grandson of *ban* Constantin Năsturel (who died in 1765), belonging to a great family, is registered in a document of 1814 as chamberlain, even though his age could not allow him to have this function, thus possessing it "since birth", and his son, Ion Năsturel, appears as chancellor, still "since birth" (Petre Ș. Năsturel, *Postelnic din naștere, postelnic "din fașă"*, in "Arhiva Genealogică", V (X), 1998, no. 3-4, p. 23).

<sup>113</sup> See the brief, but very suggestive considerations of Neagu Djuvara in the study *Genealogie, istorie și psihanaliză, în "Arhiva Genealogică"*, 1 (VI), 1994, no. 1-2, p. 141, stating that "in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, [...] when France dominated Europe demographically and culturally, the political staff is recruited [...] almost exclusively among an administrative nobility", that of certain noble families at the North of Loire.

<sup>114</sup> See Robert Muchembled, *Societatea rafinată. Politică și poliție în Franța, din secolul al XVI-lea până în secolul al XX-lea*, translated by Ilie Dan, Chisinau, 2004.

<sup>115</sup> I. C. Filitti, *Ordinul Constantinian al Sf. Gheorghe*, in idem, *Arhiva Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino*, Bucharest, 1919, pp. XXXIV-XXXVI.

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strongly reiterated their Byzantine political inheritance and they tried to maintain for themselves a status comparable to that of the European nobles regarding the nobility<sup>116</sup>.

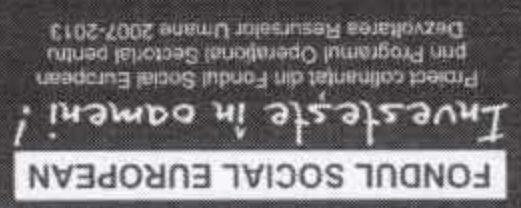
Given this external influence, the few genealogies of the great autochthonous families elaborated in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Principalities, taking over – more or less accurately – elements of the European genealogic model<sup>117</sup>, explicitly reflect the desire to differentiate themselves from the rest of the autochthonous or “foreign” noble families who got to high ranks, but who could not claim the same illustrious and ancient origins<sup>118</sup>. The interest in genealogy has been associated with representations of themselves citing the historical roots of country’s privileges and how their ancestors had defended these privileges. By applying these strategies, the boyars within the “great families,” claiming to be “fathers of the country”, protectors of the political and social order, tried to build a political legitimacy of *national aristocracy* (as in Austria and Russia), Romanian nobility by blood from the ethnic perspective and devoted to founding the Romanian national State, but with an oligarchic organization.

On the other hand, the climate of religious fervour – extended by Russia’s main offensive actions on the Danube, by the pan-Orthodox political ecumenism with insist on proselytizing and proclamations of the Russian Tsars court, by the rise of the Russian influence on the monastic life of the Principalities, by the prophetic scenarios spread at the end of the century, associated with the steep involvement of France in the East, by the persistence of religious attitudes related to the imaginary “salvation” – favoured the emergence of a type of political solidarity of the great boyars – *boyar brotherhoods*. It reinforced the ‘oath of allegiance’ of the conspirators “before the living

<sup>116</sup> Mihai Dimitrie Sturduza, *Familia Balaș istoria unei genealogii*, in idem, *Familii boierii din Moldova și Tara Românească. Enciclopedie istorică, genealogică și biografică*, I, *Abaza-Bogdan*, Bucharest, p. 258.

<sup>117</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu concluded that in the Romanian Principalities the first genealogical documents “did not concern, except in a very low degree, the analytical method of the descendants’ tables” (*Importanța tabelilor de ascendenți pentru genealogie și istorie*, “Arhiva Genealogică”, I (VI), 1994, no. 1-2, p. 155).

<sup>118</sup> One of the first attempts of this type was an “armorial” of the Moldavian family Balaș, comprising 16 persons within four generations, ascendants of the children of the great treasurer Iordache Balaș, Alecu, Ioan (Iancu) and Ecaterina. The armorial was entitled *Insemnare arătoare de 16 neamuri ale boierilor Alexandru și Ioan Balaș și a surorii sale Ecaterina Toranu di pi tata și di pi mama*. See Maria Dogaru, *Un armorial românesc din 1813. Spița de neam a familiei Balaș dotată cu steme*, Bucharest, 1981, pp. 75-98. Romanian historian Sever Zotta supposed that the armorial was necessary to the boyars in order for Alecu Balaș to get the title of Austrian, starting from its structure, on 16 “quarters”, as in the Habsburg Empire (see in *Arhiva Genealogică*, II, 1913, no. 4-6, pp. 98-99). Taking into account that Alecu Balaș did not get the title, but that his brother Ioan Balaș, settled in Bessarabia, received the title of Tsar chamberlain before 1818 (Gh. Bezviconi, *Boierimea Moldovei dintre Prut și Nistru*, I, Bucharest, 2004, p. 15), we believe that the armorial was generated more likely for Ioan Balaș to be acknowledged the title. Written and edited by Iordache Mălinescu in 1842, the lineage picture of the Costache family was “a humble reverence to the venerated metropolitan Veniamin Costachi and a “compliment” for the “pretentious Gheorghe Costachi aga” and for “Mihail Boldur Costachi, general and *halmán* [...] of Moldavia” (Gh. Ghibănescu, *Roșiești și apa Idricului. Studiu și documente*, Husi, 1924, p. 18).



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God" to save the heathen Muslim orthodoxy of persecution and "homeland" oppression by "foreigners". These "fraternities" of boyars derived their political legitimacy from political and religious kaleidoscope imaginary representations of the time, citing "the will of God, who gave us strength to show all the evil under which we toil"<sup>119</sup> and "God's help to rule down the abuses" committed by the prince and the boyars from the Divan.<sup>120</sup> As the image of the great boyars within the *protipendada* of "fathers of the fatherland" started to erode, undermined by abuses or sponsored by the members of the Divan the rest of the old nobility and, especially, some prestigious and dissatisfied families about oligarchic rule of the "protipendada" claimed to be released from the traditional "obligation" and "obedience" they owed to the "fathers of the country," authorized by the unwritten social norms of tradition. Labelling more and more often the great boyars of the country as "hungry wolves" who neglected the "suffering people", the contesting boyars rephrased their obligations to the "homeland", claiming the "brotherly union", "Christian and patriot feeling" which motivated them, while being sensitive to "the awful sufferings" of the "poor inhabitants".<sup>121</sup>


Deprived of the power and influence of political groups of the "protipendada," the boyar brotherhoods gave up on the traditional, consecrated political actions and adopted conspiracy methods and a violent language, announcing the imminent rebellion against the prince and the "protipendada." The political conducts and manners validated by tradition were abandoned on the pretext of their lack of efficiency in a country deeply affected by the scourge of corruption and blameable "collusion" between the great boyars within the Divan and the Greek clerks – collusion controlled by the prince. To justify the disrespect to the legitimate, natural forms of political expression – the "complaints" addressed to the prince –, the "brotherhoods" were outweighed by the moral degradation of the society and especially the "pillars of the country," accusing them of not proving themselves true "fathers of the fatherland" and "true Christians" to the suffering of the others, but allies of the "foreigners", sacrificing their country for their personal well-being. They were contesting the right of the "pillars of the country" had to speak in the name of "homeland," but not because of social or political considerations, but because they violated the Christian moral precepts and the respectful social customs owing to which the society had acknowledged their eminent position. Thus, in the texts produced by the members of these "boyar brotherhoods," the members of the "great families" are represented with a precise social identity – "magnates" or "oligarchs". Nevertheless, they had a confused ethno-national identity, and they were not seen as

<sup>119</sup> *Documente privind istoria României*, Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki collection, new serie, IV, *Rapoarte diplomatice ruse (1797-1806)*, Edited by Andrei Ojetea, Bucharest, 1974, p. 548 (Iasi, 29 November 1803, *Jalba boierilor moldoveni inaintata consulatului rus*).

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*, IV, p. 549.

<sup>121</sup> *Uricariul*, XV, Edited by Teodor Codrescu, Iasi, 1889, p. 254-255.

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true Romanian and patriots, as they were thought to be allied of the "foreigners" – of the Greeks

within the administration, first of all, ignoring the "sufferings of the poor nation."

Speaking on behalf "of all who groan under the yoke" of the state<sup>122</sup>, the members of these

"brotherhoods" thought to be entitled to use the most unexpected forms of support for planned

actions, denying the conduct that society deems legitimate, according to common sense and their

social status. Thus, the secret informant, about whom nobody knew he was working for the

Russian consulate service, has recorded, without giving names, a series of earthy confidences

made by several boyars, who were outraged by the latest charges made by the prince Alexander

Callimachi in Moldavia, some months before being deposed. One of the speakers, a native boyar,

threatened with military revolt and "spoke only of revenge", this seemed like an extreme measure,

to pass on the Frenchman's side, though it seems to be sure that they "will spoil and will take all,

[...] will destroy religion"<sup>123</sup>. But if all these disasters will occur only once, compared with the

endless extortions and the injustices done by the "Greeks" and the earthy rulers "appointed by

them", then it was "a sufficient consolation to put up with French atheists"<sup>124</sup>.

Political means used by these boyar "brotherhoods" or "union" combine tradition with

innovation, seeking to overcome one of the most difficult obstacles, namely the opportunity to

express their grievances, claims and political views in some other ways than those adopted by the

boyars' "pillars of the country"<sup>125</sup>. The desire to make themselves heard, breaking the monopoly of

the "protipendada" in politics, the urge to act secretly and to imitate the methods that made use of

foreigners in the capital (Iasi) under the protection of the French Consulate, where possible,

without undermining their social equity position considered degrading for a native boyar. The

petition and "manifesto" ("manifesturi"), contained serious allegations against the rulers,

expressed in quite radical terms, is an imitation of the forms of political action by written protests

and pamphlets produced by Poles and Greeks islanders in town, the "paper" being copied by hand

and thrown into the courtyard of foreign consulates, the prince and the metropolitan court<sup>126</sup>. In

contrast, members of these "brotherhoods", as landowners, reluctant to protest openly, to develop

open city streets, causing public agitation as they had done several times in the early nineteenth

century groups of "revolutionary" chosen from among "foreigners", sponsored by the French

Consulate in Iasi and Bucharest. The preference for collective action, hatched in secret, on

condition of anonymity was not necessarily a reflection inspired by the fear of the rulers, but also a



122 Documente privitoare la Istoria României, Colecția Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, new serie, IV, p. 549.  
 123 Ibidem, IV, p. 245 (Iasi, 2 April 1799, Nota primului informator).  
 124 Ibidem.  
 125 Vlad Georgescu, *Mémoires et projets de réforme dans les Principautés Roumaines 1769-1830. Répertoire et textes inédites*, Bucharest, 1970, p. XII.  
 126 Documente privitoare la Istoria României, Colecția Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, new serie, IV, pp. 548-549, 586-587.





normal attitude, specific to the traditional boyar behaviour, verified over a long historical experience<sup>127</sup>.

The first boyar "brotherhood" attested by the studied sources is "the letter of brotherhood between the Bals Iordache, Constantin Vărnăv, Ienache Cana and Iordache Canano", of 18 June 1774, near the conclusion of the treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji. It was established under a "covenant" of "the will of merciful law judge, God our Creator" of the ones who are related to "have love one for the another, in times of hate and rivalry". They were swearing in front of God "to have a pure union, as we could see from the bounds that were among us". The purpose of twinning has not explicitly a political one, but targeted the acquisition a support for each other in the struggle for jobs in the Divan; this type of "covenant" would be taken over by the "brothers" policy at the end of the eighteenth century<sup>128</sup>. Among them, the group of Moldavian boyars around Manolache Bogdan Manolache Bogdan is called by Paul Păltănea "taraf", referring to a quote in Manolache Bogdan's letter to Bishop Gavril Callimachi<sup>129</sup>. Documentary limits exclude the possibility to submit documentation thoroughly tested considerations on the length of the term "taraf" used to mean the landlord group, but the nobles around Ionă Bogdan and Manolache Cuza did not form a "taraf", but a kind of boyar "brotherhood", restricted in membership and established following an "oath of allegiance" to the "living God". As an evidence, signatories (Lupu Bals, Grigore Crupenschi, Manolache Bogdan, Constantin Greceanu and Alexandru Neculce) were condemning the boyars "who had now begun to join in «tarafuri» (who brought shame and instability to the whole country)"<sup>130</sup>. From this position, intransigent against Turkish rule, including the acceptance of a new phanariot prince, and involvement in the boyars "taraf", the group accused the great boyars of the moldavian delegation sent to the Focsani that they had made "their hidden demands" with hidden and harmful purposes for the country's emancipation from the yoke of Turkish<sup>131</sup>.

In the Wallachia, the existence of boyar "brotherhood" was much harder to identify than in Moldavia. Vlad Georgescu signed a "declaration" that could be an "oath" between the "brotherhood" – Constantin Balaceanu, Isaac Raleț, Constantin Crețulescu Barbu Știrbei, Grigore Ghica, Barbu Văcărescu, Istrate Crețulescu and Dimitrie Bibescu – who joined in a "social society devoted to the interests of the administration and our country able to ensure our safety against the worst criminals"<sup>132</sup>. Dimitrie Bibescu's natural son and Barbu Știrbei's adoptive son, Barbu Știrbei, the future prince of the Wallachia, had since 1819 an identification paper that attested that he

<sup>127</sup> *Ibidem*, s.n., IV, p. 631 (Iasi, June-July 1806, *Jalba mitropolitului, a episcopului de Roman și a unor mari boieri adresată lui Alexandru I*)

<sup>128</sup> *Documente*, in "Ion Neculce", III, 1923, fasc. 3, pp. 132-133.

<sup>129</sup> Paul Păltănea, *Nearnul logofătului Costache Conachi*, București, Editura Albatros, 2001, p. 32.

<sup>130</sup> *Uricariul*, VI, p. 425 (15 August 1774, Manolache Bogdan to metropolitan Gavril Callimachi).

<sup>131</sup> *Ibidem*, VI, pp. 424-426.

<sup>132</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 14 (2/14 octombrie 1812).

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belonged to the Masonic lodge<sup>133</sup>; this did not necessarily imply the fact that social society was a mason organisation, but that there was this kind of tradition in his family. An interesting hint that I have not seen so far reported in the literature refers to a "secret society", "last winter, [1817] many travelers, especially French and other foreigners, gathered at Bucharest in a society and formed a brotherhood, which was named the Brotherhood oca, after the unit oca, all present being admitted to the Masonic ceremonies, their meetings taking place under the veil of mystery, more with regard to places of drunkenness". Fleichhackl seized the first opportunity "to show to the prince [Ion Caragea - Ed], through Grigore Brâncoveanu about the inadequacy of such an union, in which the sons of the local boyars, supposedly revolutionary reasons", Gregory Brâncoveanu hinting "at the president of the company, a French painter named Mondonville, in whose house the meetings were held, that if these meetings would not end, he would fling himself upon them and chase them out of there. Since then I have not heard anything about this brotherhood, which was under the distinguished British consul general Wilkinson protection, because one of his chancelleries, Jean Marco, later Prussian agent in Bucharest, "was one of the leaders of society"<sup>134</sup>. Mondonville came in Wallachia together with another Frenchman, Coulin, appointed in 1810 by Dimitrie Bibescu, father of the future two princes of Wallachia, as preceptor and "head in his house"<sup>135</sup> and the French painter immortalized Iancu Văcărescu in a painting, another boyar with "new ideas", poet, dazzled by French culture and hostile to Russia since early youth. The other mason, Marco, of Serbian origin, was a "professional" office of the consular service, dragoman of the Russian Consulate in Iasi, in 1786, then head of Wilkinson's office of English consulate in 1814-1819. After he was the consul of Prussia (1819-1820)<sup>136</sup>. "Comrade of youth" with Page, the French consul in Bucharest<sup>137</sup>, Marco showed criticism towards of the "immense privilege" of the Wallachian boyars<sup>138</sup> and Russian policy<sup>139</sup>. He wanted to marry the daughter of dr. Caracas<sup>140</sup>, but died prematurely in 1819; the marriage he designed suggested a link with Laurençon, Ion Câmpineanu's teacher and Felix Colson, Iancu Văcărescu's teacher, both closely associated with

- <sup>133</sup> Dan Cernovodeanu, *Le rôle de la Francs-Maçonnerie roumaine*, in "Revue des Etudes Roumaines", XVII-XVIII, Paris-Iasi, 1993, p. 160.
- <sup>134</sup> *Documente private la Istoria României*, Colectia Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, new serie, II, *Raportare consulare austriece (1812-1823)*, Edited by Acad. Andrei Ojetea, Bucharest, 1967, pp. 357-358 (Bucharest, 19/31 august 1816, Fleichhackl to Metterich).
- <sup>135</sup> N. Iorga, *Istoria învățământului românesc*, Bucharest, 1928, pp. 132-133.
- <sup>136</sup> Idem, *Prefața la Documente private la Istoria Românilor*, Colectia Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, X, *Raportare consulare prusiene din Iasi și București (1763-1844)*, published by N. Iorga, Bucharest, 1897, p. LII.
- <sup>137</sup> *Ibidem*, X, p. 48 (Bucharest, 4 February 1819, Marco to von Miltitz).
- <sup>138</sup> *Ibidem*, X, p. 50 (14 April 1819, Marco to von Miltitz).
- <sup>139</sup> *Ibidem*, X, p. 66 (13 August 1819, Marco to von Schladen).
- <sup>140</sup> *Ibidem*, X, p. 67 (16 August 1819, Marco to von Schladen).

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dr. Caracas<sup>141</sup>, the owner of the printing company from "Mavrogheni's pump"<sup>142</sup>. However, in this environment of French education, from reading the French classics, with access to the authentic liberal ideas, the future leaders of the Wallachian "national party" were shared by a new political spirit.

Being at the top of the social system and controlling the State institutions in an "oligarchic" manner "the magnates' system", "the great families" did not allow the rest of the nobility to express themselves publicly within the traditional institutions. The rest of the boyars also depended on the *protipendada*, as could only evolve socially through "services and favours". The low boyars – including the tax-exonerated categories without a noble rank – had to keep on being loyal to "the great families" in order to preserve their social status, to get jobs and resources. In exchange, the families belonging to the "nobility by lineage", excluded from the power system of the country, tried to get back their social and political position towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, claiming ethno-national and noble legitimacy similar to that of the *protipendada*.

In this context, "the politics of patriotism" (in the words of the American historian David Bell) was expressed in the social space of a couple dozen noble families in each Principality. The political legitimacy was still much related to the *traditional social system* and to the attributes of *nobility*, still essential to determine the political rights of the boyars. The great political struggle and discourse for legitimacy and symbolic power between the "great families" of the *protipendada* (*the magnates*) and the members of the "boyar brotherhoods" (named *newly-rich*, meaning common people, by the adversaries, with no right to be included within the aristocracy) during the autochthonous reigns – carried on among families with similar durations, but not powers, when the true newly-rich (low boyars or boyars with no functions) were mostly "decorative," being subordinated – took place in this social territory. The purposes were to establish the percentage of each party within the State institutions, to define "nobility" as foundation of political ascension and, not least, to define the noble elite (in a more or less limited manner) as *national aristocracy*.

Iasi  
04.04.2012

Cercetator postdoctoral,  
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<sup>141</sup> Dictionarul literaturii romane de la origini până la 1900, Bucharest, 1979, p. 891.  
<sup>142</sup> N. Iorga, *Istoria literaturii romane în secolul al XVIII-lea*, II, p. 306, n. 56, 37



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