

THE LOWER DANUBE ON THE EVE OF THE GREAT
CRISIS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE SECOND
HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (ANALYSIS OF
A CONTEMPORARY SOURCE)

A Master's Thesis

by
MERVE GENCER

Department of History
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
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MERVE GENCER

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Bilkent University 2023

To my beloved, Tolgahan



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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
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by

MERVE GENCER

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The Lower Danube on the Eve of the Great Crisis in the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century (Analysis of a Contemporary Source)

By Merve Gencer

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

Evgeniy Radoslavov Radushev

Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

Özer Ergenç

Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

Mehmet Veli Seyitdanlıoğlu

Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

Refet S. Gürkaynak

Director

ABSTRACT

THE LOWER DANUBE ON THE EVE OF THE GREAT CRISIS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (ANALYSIS OF A CONTEMPORARY SOURCE)

Gencer, Merve

M.A., Department of History

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Evgeniy Radoslavov Radushev

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This thesis examines life on the border within the context of the Ottoman Empire, focusing on the specific case of Wallachia. The central focus is the report of a commission established to investigate complaints arising from the position of Wallachia against central administration and the corruption and abuses of power by military-origin groups seeking to benefit from it. Primarily relying on archival sources such as commission reports, mühimme defters, and court records, and secondary sources, this study aims to provide alternative perspectives to existing interpretations. The investigations conducted demonstrate that such incidents were not unique to the 18th century, a period when the empire was relatively weaker, but extended back to the era of Suleyman, a time characterized by a strong central authority. This finding challenges the notion that the emergence of estates in the 18th century laid the foundation for decentralization.

Keywords: Balkans, Wallachia, Danube, Serhad, Periphery Life, Ottoman Empire, Eighteenth Century, Decentralization

ÖZET

ON SEKİZİNCİ YÜZYILIN İKİNCİ YARISINDA OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NDA YAŞANAN BÜYÜK KRİZİN ARİFESİNDE AŞAĞI TUNA (ÇAĞDAŞ BİR KAYNAĞIN ANALİZİ)

Gencer, Merve

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Evgeniy Radoslavov Radushev

Ağustos 2023

Bu tez Osmanlı'da sınır yaşamını Eflak özelinde bir örnek ile incelemektedir. Eflak'ın merkezi idareye karşı konumu ve bundan fayda sağlamak isteyen asker kökenli grupların yolsuzluk ve suistimallerinden dolayı gelen şikayetleri araştırmak üzere kurulan bir komisyonun raporu ana inceleme konusudur. Büyük oranda komisyon raporu, mühimmeler ve kadı sicilleri gibi arşiv kaynakları ve ikincil kaynaklara dayanan bu çalışma bu konuda yapılan yorumlara farklı bakış açıları getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Yapılan incelemeler Osmanlı Devleti'nde bu tür olayların imparatorluğun görece daha güçsüz görüldüğü 18.yüzyıla özgü değil aksine güçlü otorite dönemlerinden biri olan Kanuni Süleyman dönemine kadar dayandığını göstermektedir. Bu da çiftliklerin 18.yüzyılda ortaya çıkarak adem-i merkeziyetin temelini oluşturduğu algısını geçersiz kılıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Balkanlar, Eflak, Tuna, Serhad, Periferide Yaşam, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Onsekizinci Yüzyıl, Adem-i Merkeziyet

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.Objective of the Thesis

The primary objective of this thesis is to examine the commission report instituted to investigate grievances arising from the misconduct of Ottoman military contingents along the Danube coast during the 18th century. By doing so, this study aspires to draw nuanced and contextualized conclusions on this historical period, thereby contributing novel insights and perspectives to the existing scholarly discourse on this subject matter. The locus of these complaints is predominantly within the territory of Wallachia. The comprehensive analysis of this report allows us to understand how the Ottoman Empire positioned Wallachia, which was not under direct control but held a subordinate province status, and to what extent it benefited from the northern regions of the Danube. Within the realm of Ottoman studies, the 18th century stands as a period that has garnered relatively less attention from researchers. However, this does not imply a scarcity of resources; on the contrary, it signifies an era richly endowed with ample materials such as mühimmes, qadi registers, and

reports, which constitute essential source material. Thus, this research seeks to contribute fresh analyses, conclusions, and novel perspectives to the study of Ottoman military oppression during the 18th century, concentrating regionally on Wallachia. Furthermore, this study challenges prevailing notions by contesting the characterization of the commission report as a geographical text and refuting the notion that the military malpractices and oppressions were unique to the 18th century, as extant sources indicate comparable occurrences even as early as the 16th century. In this respect, this study can be regarded as a pioneering analytical attempt to comprehensively explore the commission report, delving deeply into each event.

This thesis consists of three main sections, beginning with the historical examination of Wallachia and culminating in the analysis of the commission report. The first section revolves around four pivotal points. Firstly, an effort will be made to elucidate the significance of the Danube River, along with its historical role. Additionally, to facilitate a smoother transition to comprehending Wallachia under Ottoman rule, the narrative will commence with the emergence of Wallachia as a principality, leading up to its incorporation into Ottoman dominion. Secondly, within this section, the process of Wallachia's integration into Ottoman rule will be scrutinized, accompanied by an exploration of the *haraçgüzar* status and its implications. Thirdly, an examination will be conducted of the trajectory leading from Wallachia's transformation into a tributary province to its eventual independence under the name of Romania. This portion will delve into the clashes between Mehmed II and Vlad, elaborating on how these conflicts laid the groundwork for the robust central authority of the subsequent Suleyman era. Another focal point will be the analysis of the role played by the appointment of Phanariot Beys as voivodes in the path toward independence and the emergence of Russia as a dominant power in the

region. Lastly, in the fourth section, the Ottoman border system will be expounded upon to demonstrate the extent of its influence on the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans. This will lead to a discussion of the importance the Ottoman Empire attributed to the Danube militarily and its establishment of an effective network of fortress defenses in this regard.

The second section addresses two main topics. This section primarily aims to conduct assessments within the context of the 16th century, using examples extracted from the 3rd register of *mühimme defters*. In this manner, an effort will be made to establish a coherent continuation that aligns with the subsequent analysis of the 18th-century report. Accordingly, in the first part, the position of Wallachia and its significance from the Ottoman perspective will be evaluated, exploring the nature of relations in terms of foreign policy, internal politics, and economic aspects through specific examples. Subsequently, the topic of banditry will be examined under a separate heading, providing an overview of the general characteristics of this period. By studying the emergence of banditry, an attempt will be made to understand the relationship between the center and the periphery. These bandits cross over from both outside Ottoman borders and within, reaching Wallachia, which provides us with an opportunity to observe examples in the decrees that help us understand life on the periphery. Another area of investigation will be the status attributed to Wallachia by researchers and how it was perceived from the Ottoman standpoint.

The final section pertains to the analysis of the portion of the commission report that constitutes the basis of the thesis, derived from imperial decrees. Preceding this analysis, the report will be examined under three headings: the paleographic characteristics of the manuscript composing the report, its administrative section, and lastly, its content. Subsequently, each decree within the report will be scrutinized in

detail, and from these, certain conclusions will be drawn. This approach aims to provide support for criticisms directed at other researchers and to introduce new perspectives with illustrative examples.

In a broad context, this study endeavors to elucidate the phenomenon of borderland existence within the Ottoman framework, encompassing Wallachia's peripheral status vis-à-vis the central authority, incorporating socioeconomic dimensions into the discourse. Additionally, the study aspires to introduce diverse perspectives into the existing body of scholarship on these matters. Ultimately, the research seeks to establish that subjects such as banditry and coercion, pervasive within Ottoman history, cannot be confined to a singular epoch, thereby attempting to validate their enduring presence across epochs.

1.2. Sources and Methodology

From its establishment, the organizational framework of the Ottoman Empire revolved around the core entities of the sultanate, the divan, and the military apparatus. However, as the 17th century unfolded, novel forces such as the Janissaries, *ulema*, and the *altı bölük halkı* surged in significance, progressively augmenting their influence. These developments triggered consequential modifications within the institutional fabric, concurrently precipitating a discernible erosion in central authority.¹ In this context, the 18th century occupies a pivotal role in Ottoman history, as structural transformations began to manifest during this period. With the erosion of the empire's

¹ Yaşar Yücel, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Desantralizasyona (Adem-i Merkeziyet) Dair Gözlemler," *Bellekten* XXXVIII, no. 152 (1974): 657–708, p.695.

socio-economic foundations and land tenure system, tendencies toward decentralization reached their zenith. In the classical era, the state maintained control over both the center and the periphery, yet in the 18th century, its dominion over the periphery began to wane. Individuals who perpetuated their presence in the provinces, either officially or de facto, had assumed rights such as military service and tax collection.² Consequently, gradually gaining strength, they began to assert their influence in the governance of their respective provinces.

In the 17th century, particularly in places like Vidin, Nikopol, and Timișoara, Janissary garrisons emerged, indicating their presence along the Danube region. These garrisons would eventually give rise to future notables (*ayan*) and leaders of Janissary discontent. While corruption was an inherent component of the state's normal proceedings even during the classical period, the state's circumstances were growing increasingly challenging over time. Ayans existed in both Anatolia and Rumelia, but while those in Anatolia supported the state, those in Rumelia were of Janissary origin and not affiliated with the state. Though topics such as Ayanship and Janissaries, as well as the region of Wallachia, have been subjects of various studies, there has been a relative dearth of analytical investigations concerning the interplay between the two. Although these subjects have been acknowledged, they have not garnered considerable scholarly focus thus far. Consequently, my thesis endeavors to fill this gap by embarking on an exploration that begins with the Ottoman administration in the region and extends to the juncture at which these entities assumed influential roles. This endeavor seeks to illuminate the intricate relationships between these groups

² 1. Nagehan Üstündağ Özdemir, "18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Yönetim Anlayışında 'Sorun Çözme' Süreci ve Pazvantoğlu Osman," *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 20 (Spring 2014): 236–60, p.245.

implicated in diverse corruption cases and their intricate interactions with the Wallachian context.

The methodology employed in this thesis entails the meticulous analysis of content extracted from primary sources, aiming to deduce conclusions and construct historical insights. Among the crucial primary sources utilized herein, the commission report holds a prominent position, accessed from the esteemed Topkapı Palace Museum Library. This study concentrates particularly on imperial decrees, affording a comprehensive understanding of the source material and facilitating a critical examination of the interpretations intertwined with it.

Within the scope of this thesis, I used a content analysis methodology to elucidate the contents of the report delineating the endeavors of the commission established to investigate the occurrences within Wallachia. This approach aimed to unveil the inherent intricacies and chronology of these events. Having a command of the details plays a crucial role in comprehending and interpreting the assessments made by other researchers regarding the source material. Furthermore, being able to discern the Ottoman State's actions within the region where these events unfolded in meticulous detail provides insights into the general attributes, strength, and authority of the state during that era. This, in turn, offers cues for evaluating and contemplating matters on those specific aspects.

Cengiz Orhonlu identified this source and evaluated it in terms of its purpose, formal characteristics, and authorship by composing an article on the subject.³ Before this, Celil Cice had prepared an undergraduate thesis focusing solely on the transcription of this source; however, numerous misreadings occurred throughout the

³ Cengiz Orhonlu, "Ahmed Resmi Efendi'nin Eflak Coğrafyası," *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 4-5 (1976): pp. 1-14.

work.⁴ Similarly, Mustafa Gündoğdu wrote a master's thesis employing this source.⁵ Grounded in the information within the source, Gündoğdu aimed to provide social and economic insights related to Wallachia, and subsequently, he concluded his thesis by directly incorporating the source's transcription as if he had discovered it anew. This thesis is replete with reading errors. Lastly, Virginia Aksan authored an article employing the source and extensively referenced Orhonlu.⁶

Another primary source utilized in the thesis is the transcribed version of the 3rd register of *mühimme defters*, published as a book by the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives General Directorate from the *Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri Dizisi*. From this source, I extracted examples relevant to Wallachia, categorized them based on their content, and conducted content analysis to derive certain conclusions.

Mühimme registers consist of *divan* records and are among the fundamental sources employed in historical research. Matters discussed in the *divan* were transcribed into these registers, and they were enacted after receiving the approval of the Sultan. Therefore, they can be understood to have the force of law. In addition to this, decrees sent to statesmen, sanjaks, and provinces were also recorded in the *mühimme* registers. Through this recording tradition, the Ottoman administration achieved a systematic functioning. Through these registers, we can gain firsthand insights into how the central and provincial structures of the state-operated, how internal and external relations were conducted, the relationship between the Sultan and his subjects, the military and administrative situations, as well as the social structure.

⁴ Celil Cice, "*Ahmed Resmi Efendi Eflak Coğrafyası*," (graduation thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi Yeniçağ Tarihi Kürsüsü, 1970).

⁵ Mustafa Gündoğdu, "*Giridli Hacı Ahmed'in Eflak'ta Meydana Gelen Olaylar Hakkında Kaleme Aldığı 1760 Tarihli Risalesi*," (master's thesis, Sakarya Üniversitesi, 2015).

⁶ Virginia H. Aksan, "Whose Territory and Whose Peasants? Ottoman Boundaries on the Danube in the 1760s," in *The Ottoman Balkans, 1750-1830*, ed. Frederick F. Anscombe (Princeton: Markus Weiner Publishers, 2006), pp. 61-86.

For these reasons, *mühimme* registers are essential sources for researchers engaged in the study of Ottoman history.⁷

Additionally, I have used an example from the Vidin Kadı Registers in this thesis to show that similar events are also found in court records. I got this source from the Sofia Oriental Department of the Bulgarian National Library.⁸ These registers have records of legal matters in both the main center and local areas of the Ottoman system. They provide insights into various aspects of Ottoman society, like family, law, and economy. In this context, these sources stand as paramount contributors to historical investigations within these domains. Given the influential roles held by qadıs within the state apparatus, these records constitute a foundational source for local historical researchers.⁹

1.3. Historiography

While Balkan historiography has largely been influenced by nationalist ideologies, it is noteworthy that historians with diverse perspectives have also emerged. A. K. Brackob, in his book *Mircea the Old: Father of Wallachia, Grandfather of Dracula*,¹⁰ employs a romantic nationalist perspective, characterized by an embellished style, to elucidate Mircea's story. In the broader context of Romanian history and the specific early period of Wallachia's principality, my

⁷ Zafer Yıldırım and Nezaket İslam Hayırlıoğlu, "Mühimme Defterlerinin Tarih Araştırmaları Açısından Önemi, 82 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri Örneği," *Uluslararası Sosyal Bilgilerde Yeni Yaklaşımlar Dergisi* 3, no. 2 (2019): 205–14, p.206.

⁸ Sofia, Oriental Department of Bulgarian National Library "St. Cyril and St. Methodius", S.41 fol. 94b-95a.

⁹ Yunus Uğur, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 39 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2010), s.v. "Şer'iyye Sicilleri", p.8.

¹⁰ A. K. Brackob, *Mircea the Old: Father of Wallachia, Grandfather of Dracula* (Center for Romanian Studies, 2018).

exploration was facilitated by the works of Balkan historians such as Radu Cârciumar, Tiberiu Frătilă Felmer, László Gulyás, Csüllög Gábor, Keith Hitchins, and Kurt Treptow. It is through these scholars' books and articles that I gained access to information concerning Mircea, Vlad, and other voivodes of the founding era.

In elucidating the meanings of terms such as *Derkenar*, *Cizye*, *Risale*, and *Haraçgüzar*, I frequently referred to the *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Additionally, to obtain a comprehensive historical overview related to Wallachia and the Danube River, I drew upon Islamic Encyclopedias produced by multiple institutions. These include encyclopedias prepared by the *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı*, as well as those by the Ministry of National Education and Brill Publishers.

In my pursuit to strengthen the foundation of the information presented in my thesis, I diligently turned to the works of historians who have extensively contributed to the realm of general Ottoman history. Among these esteemed scholars, the seminal work *Devlet-i Aliyye: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar* by Halil İnalcık played a pivotal role in deepening my understanding of the overall structure during the classical period of the empire. Equally valuable was Feridun Emecen's *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluş ve Yükseliş Tarihi (1300-1600)*, which provided a fundamental framework for comprehending the empire's formative years. Caroline Finkel's book *Rüyadan İmparatorluğa Osmanlı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Öyküsü 1300-1923*, critically evaluated the pivotal periods of the Ottoman State from its inception to its final phases, offering a critical vantage point to comprehend the transformation that occurred within the empire during these periods. Likewise, Franz Babinger's work *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time* scrutinized the Fatih era in a specific manner, proving to be one of the most effective sources for examining the conflicts between Fatih and Vlad.

Joseph V. Hammer, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Nicolae Jorge, Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen, and Yılmaz Öztuna are among the historians who possess multi-volume comprehensive historical series that meticulously delve into the Ottoman Empire. Their works have provided me with detailed insights into various aspects of my thesis. Barbara Jelavich's book *History of the Balkans-Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, which encompasses the Balkans in a general context, is indispensable for a comprehensive thesis. Likewise, Peter Sugar's work *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*, stands as a significant contribution. Kemal Karpat, a historian known for his evaluations of Balkan nationalism, contributed to my thesis with his book *Balkanlar'da Osmanlı Mirası ve Milliyetçilik*.

Various sources shed light on the late periods of Ottoman rule in Wallachia and have contributed to my understanding of topics such as the Phanariot voivodes. Among these, the works of scholars such as Mihaela Mehedinți Beiean, Cafer Çiftçi, Christine M. Philliou, Feyzullah Uyanık, Merve Karaçay Türkal, Sinan Yüksel, and Mahir Aydın stand out. These works have been instrumental in providing insights. In the first section of my thesis, while narrating the process leading to Wallachia's autonomy, I have drawn upon these works.

Without understanding the border issues and the concept of serhad in the Ottoman context, it would not be feasible to analyze the main source of this thesis. In this regard, I have found significant utility in Göksel Baş's master's thesis titled *Ottoman Serhad Organization in the Balkans (1450s to Early 1500s)*. His article titled *XV. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Balkanlarda Osmanlı Serhad Organizasyonunun Oluşumu: Kaleler Ağı, Askeri Personel, Finansman ve Mali Külfet* also played a crucial role in comprehending the organization of serhad. Moreover, Evgeni Radushev's noteworthy work *Ottoman Border Periphery (Serhad) in the Vilayet of*

Niğbolu, First Half of the 16th Century, provides valuable insights into understanding the Ottoman frontier, particularly in the context of Nikopol. Palmira Brummet has also made substantial contributions to border issues with works like *The Fortress: Defining and Mapping the Ottoman Frontier in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Additionally, Nuray Ocaklı has a master's thesis that delves into these specific subjects.

I cannot interpret the Ottoman attitude towards Wallachia without elucidating the Islamic terms for war and peace, the stance of the judges (*kadı*), treaties (*ahdname*), etc., among other factors. Therefore, I predominantly drew upon Viorel Panaite's book titled *Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Its Tribute-Payers from the North of the Danube*. Panaite, being a prominent authority in the field, has also contributed to various works concerning Wallachia and Moldavia, which have become essential references for me. Furthermore, he has made significant contributions to studies that investigate the region from various perspectives, including the Ottoman advancements along the Danube, the status of the principalities paying tribute, and the livelihoods of the local populations. When examining the governance and status of Wallachia, it was imperative not to overlook the *malikane* system. In this regard, Mehmet Genç's book *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve Ekonomi* served as a guiding reference. Similarly, Mihail Guboğlu has authored works delving into the relations between the Ottoman Empire, Wallachia, and Moldavia. In my thesis, I drew upon the work *Osmanlılarla Romen Ülkeleri Arasında İlk Devir İlişkileri (1368-1456) Hakkında Belirtmeler ve Doğrultmalar* to enhance the analysis.

Lastly, while analyzing the reports, I referred to Mehmet Zeki Pakalın's *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* to elucidate the place of military ranks frequently encountered in the decrees within the state system. Additionally, I utilized

numerous secondary sources that I have not mentioned here, which provide substantial support to my thesis.



CHAPTER II

WALLACHIA: THE “*SERBEST*” BANK OF THE LOWER DANUBE FROM OTTOMAN CONQUEST TO INDEPENDENCE

2.1. Danube as the Destiny River and the Emergence of Wallachia as a Principality

The Danube River is a geographically significant region that can be the subject of multiple topics. In this sense, it holds a strategic position that can provide advantages to the countries it passes through in various aspects. Apart from being a transportation route, it plays an important role in areas such as trade and shipping. All of these factors have made it a special region, and one can say that the river has its own life. When examined in a historical context, it should be noted that it has served

as a natural border with a strategic function that can be considered more important. With its peripheral fortresses like Vidin and Nikopol acting as a defensive line, it has posed a challenging obstacle for enemies throughout history, thus providing power and an international vision to the countries that have dominated the region.

The Ottoman Empire was the only Muslim state that established dominance in the mid and lower Danube basin by reaching the Danube River. From the perspective of Ottoman history, the Danube has always been significant as one of the main objectives during the empire's advancement in the Balkans, aiming to control important land and waterways.¹¹ During the challenging times in the Balkans, the Ottomans seized the opportunity to expand their influence, reaching as far as the Danube and spreading Islam to that region. Referring to its role as a natural border mentioned earlier, the Danube served as a natural defensive line for the Ottomans against potential attacks from the north. The more the Ottomans controlled the Danube, the fewer problems they faced from the north and northwest. Additionally, the presence of fortresses along the Danube coast provided the Ottomans with a strategic base, and their navy served as a supplementary power. To maintain a permanent presence in the region, it was not enough to succeed in land battles alone; a strong navy was also necessary.

Babinger refers to the Danube as the “River of Destiny for the Ottoman Empire”.¹² Evliya Çelebi, in his travelogue “*Seyahatname*,” also mentions the Danube as the “Mother of Rivers” in many places.¹³ All of these descriptions highlight the

¹¹ Mihai Maxim, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 41 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2012), s.v. “Tuna”, p.372.

¹² Franz Babinger “*Die Donau als Schicksalsstrom des Osmanenreiches*,” Aufsätze und Aufsätze und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte Südost Europas und der Levante, III, München 1976, pp. 86-96.

¹³ See Çelebi, Evliya. *Seyahatname*. vol. 7. İstanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1985.

significance of the Danube for the Ottomans, as it held strategic importance in safeguarding the empire's northern borders. Considering the eighteenth and nineteenth-century relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, it becomes evident that the Danube River posed the greatest obstacle to Russia's advancement. Taking the example of the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War, once Russia crossed the Danube, there was no major barrier left, and they were able to advance as far as Istanbul. This demonstrates that the existence and defense of the Danube held great importance for the Ottomans. This significance has been known since ancient times.

The Ottoman presence north of the Danube began with the conquest of Wallachia. This region has continued to attract the attention of researchers as it remains vibrant and dynamic. There were arrivals to the region long before the Ottomans, resulting in the emergence of cities along the river, and many civilizations passed through the Danube from the Roman era to the Ottoman period. The Ottomans eventually arrived in the region and continued according to that scheme. For example, large but not densely populated cities continued to exist in the region. While the influence of the Roman Empire is fundamental in these areas, the impact of many other civilizations can also be observed. The region serves as an open gateway for nations, and through this gateway, barbarians pass into the cradle of civilization, shaping history for centuries. This is why the nature of Wallachia is so intriguing. The Ottoman Empire planned to use this region as a buffer zone against enemies and barbarians. South of the Danube lies a different world.

Some historians claim that despite being under Ottoman hegemony, Wallachia preserved its fundamental independence. However, substantial evidence suggests otherwise. For instance, the Ottomans strategically stationed garrisons in significant areas of Wallachia and appointed qadis to administer justice. Moreover, they took the

sons of voivodes as hostages to secure their loyalty to the state. These practices raise doubts about the extent of Wallachia's autonomy. Historians engage in ongoing debates regarding this matter, and there is a necessity for thorough research and analysis.

The regional presence of Wallachia during the Ottoman period should be examined from a political perspective to establish a solid understanding of its historical trajectory. In this regard, Wallachia, which constitutes the southern part of present-day Romania and forms a natural border with the Danube River in the south, will be analyzed within the context of its emergence as a principality and its subsequent incorporation into Ottoman rule.

The independent principality of Wallachia arose at the end of the 13th and 14th centuries. Since the lands of Wallachia were part of the medieval Bulgarian state in the previous period, the considerable influence of the medieval Bulgarian institutions was felt there. The Bulgarian state primarily occupied public terminology, the functions of the state apparatus, the names of taxes, titles, and palace positions. The medieval Bulgarian language was the official language of the newly emerging Wallachian state institutions and the church. Towards the end of the 13th century, the territories of Wallachia were under Hungarian rule.¹⁴

In the 14th century, a voivode named Basarab (1304-1324/1351-1352) emerged and unified various political formations in the region, defeating the Hungarians in the Battle of Posada (1330) and establishing a new principality in the region extending from the Carpathian Mountains to Lower Danube.¹⁵ The voivode secured his territory

¹⁴ For detailed information, See. Endre Haraszti, *Origin of the Rumanians: (Vlach Origin, Migration and Infiltration to Transylvania)* (Astor, Florida: Danubian Press, 1977).

¹⁵ Ioan Bolovan et al., *A History of Romania*, vol. II (Iași: Center for Romanian Studies, 1996), p.65., For further information about Basarab I, see: Cărciumaru, Radu. "Basarab I at the Beginnings of

through alliances, which allowed him to focus on internal affairs.¹⁶ Until the reign of Mircea I, when significant interactions with the Ottoman Empire began, Basarab's successors prioritized their relations with the Hungarians due to Hungary's claims of sovereignty in the region. Additionally, as a result of long-term interactions, the Hungarians influenced the new Principality of Wallachia in terms of governance, daily life, language, and other aspects. For instance, they borrowed terms such as *orash* (city), *ban* (governor), and *hotar* (border) from the Hungarian language.¹⁷

After Basarab, his son Alexander (1352-1364) ascended the throne during great turmoil. In the north, Hungarians were attacking the Tatars from Moldavia. In the south, on the other hand, the Bulgarians were in decline. As a result of such events, Alexander had to reassess his foreign policy and eventually accepted Hungarian sovereignty. His connections with the Catholic Church made renewing political relations with the Hungarians easier. Nevertheless, he tried to preserve his autonomy and sought to declare independence again when the time came. Thanks to Moldavia's rebellion, he ended the vassal relationship and ceased to pay a yearly tribute. He managed to preserve his independence for the rest of his reign.¹⁸

When Vladislav (1364-1377) succeeded Alexander, the Ottoman Empire was gradually advancing, and the sound of horseshoes on the Danube could be heard. Bulgarian Tsar Shishman, seeking assistance from the Ottomans, launched attacks on cities along the Danube, and Vladislav had to deal with him. During this time, Vladislav also encountered Ottoman forces and achieved some successes in battles against them. This is considered the first encounter between the Ottomans and

Wallachia. An Attempt to Recompose the Moment of His Takeover of Power." *Annales D'Université Valahia Targoviste*, Section D'Archéologie Et D'Histoire XVIII, no. 1 (2016): 33-38.

¹⁶ Brackob, *Mircea the Old*, p.70.

¹⁷ Ibid, p.83.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp.85-90.

Wallachia. Vladislav was a pragmatic statesman who recognized the significance of Ottoman expansion in the Balkans. Therefore, he signed a treaty with Sultan Murad I, allowing the Ottomans to cross the Balkan Mountains and reach the shores of the Danube. Additionally, Vladislav emphasized cultural and religious developments and took steps in this regard. For instance, the construction of new churches and monasteries played a dual role as both religious hubs and educational establishments. These institutions served as centers for religious worship and instruction, as well as platforms for cultural activities and gatherings. Over time, their impact extended beyond the realm of culture, acquiring significant political influence.¹⁹

The period of Radu I (1377-1383), the last voivode before the emergence of Mircea the Great, was characterized by relative tranquility, during which the principality of Wallachia witnessed the development of its cultural life.²⁰ He was a man without political ambitions and preferred a monastic life.²¹ He refrained from pursuing a monastic life yet remained disengaged from state affairs. His primary objective was to safeguard the independence and territorial integrity of the state. Thus, his actions against Hungary were to ensure the independence of Wallachia. He asked for military support from the Ottomans in his conflicts against the Hungarians.²²

¹⁹ Kemal Karpat, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 10 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1994), s.v. “Eflak”, p.467.

²⁰ Aurel Decei, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 4 (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1979), s.v. “Eflak”, p.181.

²¹ Tiberiu Frățilă Felmer, "Radu I of Wallachia Deciphering a Mysterious Coat of Arms from the Universal Armorial of Herald Gelre," Villa Wellmer Association, 2017, p.10.

²² Brackob, *Mircea the Old*, p.108.

2.2. Wallachia under the Ottoman Dominance

Mircea I is considered by most historians as one of the greatest rulers of his age. The first military confrontations with the Ottomans began during his reign. When Mircea I took the throne, the Ottomans continued their victorious march in Southeast Europe. Over time, their relations became more problematic since Wallachians took Dobruja, which belonged to Bulgarians, but it was in the hands of the Ottomans. The hostile activities of Mircea gave reason for the Turks to attack. The first raids of Ottomans that happened in 1391-92 were mainly for looting. The other reason was threatening Wallachia to ensure neutrality in the territories north of the Danube.²³

The Anatolian principalities provoked Mircea to attack the Ottomans. The main reason was that they wanted to divert Bayezid's attention and work to regain their homeland in Anatolia. As a result, Wallachia was taken under control. Mircea gathered a large army and raided and plundered Ottoman lands, but the Ottomans had a more significant force and defeated Mircea. He fled the battle and was later forced to announce his surrender. The Ottomans imposed a large tribute on the principality. According to the sources, the Ottomans considered Wallachia a vassal province in the following period.²⁴

²³ Radu Cârciu, "Of Mircea the Elder's Rule. Historiographic Views on the So-called Battle of 'Rovine' and Its Consequences," *Annales D'Université Valahia Targoviste, Section D'Archéologie Et D'Histoire* XVIII, no. 2 (2011): pp.77-78.

²⁴ Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi (1299-1453)*, trans. Nilüfer Epeçeli, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2011), p.214. There were various mentions of these events in the chronicles. For example, the famous Ottoman chronicler Neşri gave detailed information concerning this campaign of Bayezid I: "Şöyle rivayet iderler ki, Padişah-i İslâm Bayezid Han Aydın ve Menteşe ve Saruhan ve Germiyan İlini feth iderek, Menteşe oğlu, Yıldırım Han'dan kaçub, Kastamoni Begi Kötürüm Bayezid'e varub, tahrik idüb, ba'zi memalik-i mahruseile ehl-i islâmı gâret idüb, sûret-i 'isyân izhar idicek Hunkar dahi asâkir-i mansûreyi cem' idüb, Kastamoni'ye müteveccih oldı, Andan Eflak voyvodasi, Padişah'un harac-güzarı iken anı işidüb, Tuna'yı geçüb, Karin-ovasını gâret idüb, ehl-i İslâm'dan ba'zı şehid ve ba'zısın esir idüb, yine Eflak'a gitti. Hunkâr bu işden haberdar olub, Kastamoni'ye

The Ottomans sought Mircea, but they could not capture him. He succeeded in escaping to the Transylvania region. They replaced Mircea with Vlad I (1394-1397). Before they went, they left some Turkish guards next to him. Mircea had fled to Hungary and allied with the Polish king Vladislav to secure his safety. He also negotiated a treaty with the Hungarian king against the Ottoman Empire. Sigismund, the Hungarian king, captured Nikopol with Mircea by causing Vlad I's escape to the right bank of the Danube, which was Turkish land. Nevertheless, with the help of the Ottomans, Vlad caused difficulties for the Hungarians, thus managing to maintain his position until the Battle of Nikopol.²⁵

The Voivode of Transylvania led an army against Wallachia to immobilize Vlad I, not to help the Turks and join the crusade forces at Nikopol. Because of the heavy battle, Vlad I had to escape with his army. With the victory of the Transylvanian Voivode, there was no threat to the Crusaders on the Danube.²⁶ Vlad's escape allowed Mircea to become the prince of Wallachia again. The Ottomans won the Battle of Nikopol against the Crusaders in 1396 thanks to Bayezid I's effective leadership. Hence, the Ottomans won a decisive victory, making the Turks' dominance in the Balkans permanent.²⁷ The Sultan made his second expedition to Wallachia in 1397 and finally took revenge by marching on Mircea.²⁸

gitmeği ol yıl te'hîr idüb, dönüb, Edirne'ye gelüb, anda akıncı cem' idüb, Niğbolu'dan Eflâk'a geçüb, yakub, yikub, gaziler ganâyimle mugirnim olmuşken, nâm mevzi'de Mirça gelüb, ehl-i İslamla uğraşub, ol defa da münhezim oldı. Askerinün ekseri kılıçdan geçüb, Mirçâ itdüğüne peşîman oldı. Heman gelüp, Hünkâra yalvarub, haraca iltizam idüb, itaat itdi. Ve bu vakia hicretüñ Yidi yüz toksan üçünde idi.” Faik Reşit Unat and Mehmet A. Köymen, eds., *Kitâb-ı Cihan-nümâ Neşrî Tarihi*, vol. 1, III (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1949), p.316.

²⁵ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), p.188.

²⁶ Brackob, *Mircea the Old*, pp.145-146.

²⁷ Mustafa Daş, "Saint-Denis Ruhbanının Kroniği Adlı Fransız Kaynağına Göre Niğbolu Savaşı," *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* XXVII, no. 1 (July 2012): p.69.

²⁸ Nicolae Jorga, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi (1300-1451)*, trans. Nilüfer Epçeli, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2005), p.271.

After the Battle of Ankara (1402), Bayezid I was taken captive, and Mircea assisted his sons, who fought for the throne.²⁹ During the Interregnum (1402-1413), Mircea played a significant role in the Balkans. He always supported Musa Çelebi and mentioned in one of his letters that Musa came up to Wallachia. He even married Mircea's daughter there and won the war against his brother Süleyman Çelebi with his assistance. Following this incident, Musa assumed the role of Emir of Rumelia, extending his authority as far as Edirne. He governed Rumelia for a considerable period, garnering support from various factions, including Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians, and Turks. Although some historians think he took the title of "Sultan," there is no record. He was often called an emir because he was not a sultan who ruled the entire empire.³⁰

After consolidating the unity of the empire both in Anatolia and the Balkans, Mehmed I (1413-1421) reestablished Ottoman sovereignty and became the sole ruler after bloody battles of brothers for the Bayezid's throne. Furthermore, Mehmed was aware that Mircea supported Musa against him, so he should punish the voivode for revenge and to ensure the integrity of the northern lands.³¹ Mehmed wanted to teach Mircea a lesson and organized an expedition to Wallachia because he had established close ties with Musa Çelebi and later supported Mustafa the Impostor³² and his advisers. Sheik Bedreddin,³³ who had rebelled against Mehmed, also sought refuge

²⁹ N. Beldiceanu, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1991), s.v. "Eflak.", p.688.

³⁰ Mihail Guboğlu, "Osmanlılarla Romen Ülkeleri Arasında İlk Devir İlişkileri (1368-1456) Hakkında Belirtmeler ve Doğrultmalar," proceedings of IX. Türk Tarih Kongresi, *IX. Türk Tarih Kongresi-Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, September 21-25, 1981, p.834.

³¹ Brackob, *Mircea the Old*, p.185.

³² He is the one who claims to be Bayezid's son, but Mehmed I did not accept this, so he called Mustafa as an impostor.

³³ "When Musa Çelebi captured Edirne at the end of his war with his brother Süleyman Çelebi, Bedreddin was appointed to Kadiasker and thus his active political life began. Later, when Musa Çelebi was defeated by his brother Mehmed Çelebi, he was deported to İznik with his family in 1413 and placed under probation. However, due to his political ambitions, he did not accept this situation and took action to provide a religious-mystical organization in appearance and a political organization in

with him, and together, they attacked Silistra and the Deliorman region of Bulgaria and plundered. Mehmed captured and executed the sheik after a while, and Mircea was left alone.³⁴

Mehmed I raided Wallachia in 1419, and he had the Giurgiu Fortress built on the right bank of the Danube and took the Severin Fortress of Hungary. According to Neşri, the Wallachian Voivode surrendered and agreed to pay tribute.³⁵ The Ottoman Empire had a custom of taking the sons of the ruler from the vassal states as hostages. Thus, the ruler was forced to move right toward the center. Accordingly, Mircea sent three of his sons as hostages.³⁶

If a non-Muslim state to which the Ottomans had organized a campaign surrendered on peace terms and did not fight, that state would send a symbolic tax called “*bervech-i maktû*.” These taxes were paid annually and were referred to as “*harâc-ı umûmî*,” and the taxpayer country was described as “*haraçgüzâr*.” States with this status had an autonomous structure and no interference in their internal administration. However, if their enemies attacked, the Ottomans would protect them. In a word, these people had the same rights as the *dhimmi* subjects.³⁷

The term “*haraçgüzâr*” encompassed various economic, military, and political responsibilities, including the tribute sent to the Porte. An additional obligation related

reality.” Bilal Dindar, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 5 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1992), s.v. “Bedreddin Simâvî”, p.332.

³⁴ Jorga, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, vol.1, pp.331-332.

³⁵ Halil İnalcık, *Devlet-i Aliyye: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar*, vol. I (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015), p.89.

³⁶ Caroline Finkel, *Rüyadan İmparatorluğa Osmanlı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Öyküsü 1300-1923*, trans. Zülal Kılıç (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2014), p.33. Aşıkpaşazade also mentions that as “*Sultan Mehmed yürüyüp Tuna kenarına gelip durdu. Yirgögi kapılarını kapattı. Bunun üzerine akıncılar çıkardı. Pek fazla ganimetlerle döndüler. Ondan sonra Eflak Bey'i haracını elçiyle gönderdi ve eksiksiz itaat etti. Hatta oğlanlarını kapıya hizmete gönderdi.*” Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğullarının Tarihi*, trans. Kemal Yavuz and M. A. Yekta Saraç (İstanbul: K Kitaplığı, 2003), p.155.

³⁷ Feridun Emecen, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 16 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1997), s.v. “Haraçgüzâr”, p.90.

to *haraçgüzâr* status was to be a friend of the Sultan's friends and an enemy to his enemies. This included complying with the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire and participating in the Sultan's expeditions. Also, to report any hostile actions or behavior against the Porte by Christian states.³⁸ In brief, the Voivode of Wallachia (after 1417/1462) was granted vassal status, which required him to pay tribute, provide military support, and gather information.³⁹

After the death of Mircea, his son Michael (1418-1420) succeeded him as a new voivode. However, both Ottomans and Hungarians had interests in the lands of Wallachia, and Mircea's successors searched for help to assert a claim to the throne. Each successor had an equal right to the throne, and outside powers used this for their interest. Hence, a long civil war broke out between Mircea's heirs. Ultimately, Vlad Dracul (1436-1442) would eventually become successful.⁴⁰

Murad II informed the voivode of Wallachia about his accession to the throne with his messengers. The voivode congratulated the Sultan and asked for the ratification of the existing peace treaties. However, after a while, the voivode Dracul rebelled, attacked the border fortresses, burned and destroyed many places, and advanced into Ottoman territory. The troops on the European side repelled the voivode and, according to Sadeddin's statement, completely broke his will to fight the Ottomans from now on.⁴¹ After a while, Murad went to Edirne and stayed there; Dracul worried that Murad would seek revenge against him. Thus, he visited the Sultan, taking

³⁸ Viorel Panaite, "The Status of the 'Kharaj-Güzarlar'. A Case Study: Wallachians, Moldavians and Transylvanians in the 15th to the 17th Centuries," in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation*, ed. Kemal Çiçek, vol. I (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), pp. 227-238, pp.230-231.

³⁹ Viorel Panaite, "The Voivodes of the Danubian Principalities- As Haracgüzarlar of the Ottoman Sultans," in *Ottoman Borderlands Issues, Personalities and Political Changes*, ed. Kemal H. Karpat and Robert W. Zens (University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), pp. 59-78, p.61.

⁴⁰ Brackob, *Mircea the Old*, pp.207-208.

⁴¹ Zinkeisen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, vol.1, pp.402-403.

many gifts and his sons. The Sultan pardoned the voivode in exchange for leaving his sons as hostages and paying tribute.⁴²

The throne disputes that started with the death of the Hungarian king gave the Ottomans an opportunity for their activities in Wallachia. In that sense, Murad II captured Smederevo in 1439, the center of the Serbian Despotate, and took Wallachia under his control. After Murad's abdication in favor of his son, Hungarian influence began to be felt again in this region, and the Wallachian voivode abandoned the tradition of submitting obedience personally to the Sultan's presence.⁴³

Mehmed II's accession to the throne at a young age encouraged the Hungarians, and they broke the treaty they had previously made with Murad II, formed a joint army with Wallachians, and went to war. They also had the support of the Pope. Vlad Dracul joined Hunyadi's troops with around 4000 soldiers, and the Ottoman troops confronted this force at Varna in 1444. After the Ottoman victory in the Battle of Varna, the hopes of Europeans to eliminate the Ottomans ended. This also created a general pessimism in Europe and diminished the desire for crusader unity against a common enemy.⁴⁴

After being defeated in Varna, the Hungarian king replaced Vlad Dracul with Dan III (1446-1448). This voivode, loyal to the Hungarians, disappeared after a while. The Ottomans made Vladislav II (1447-1448) a new voivode, but the Ottomans' relationship was not well known in this period. In 1456, Vlad Tepes (1456-1462), who

⁴² Ibid, p.403.

⁴³ Feridun M. Emecen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluş ve Yükseliş Tarihi (1300-1600)* (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2016), pp.118-121.

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp.122-123.

was called Vlad the Impaler in Ottoman history, succeeded Vladislav II. He was the grandson of Mircea.⁴⁵

2.3. The Road from *Haraçgüzar* to a Privileged Principality and Aftermath

After strengthening his authority in Wallachia, Vlad III turned against the Ottomans and stopped paying tribute as a vassal for three years. He also ceased sending boys selected for the janissary corps. Mehmed II knew what Vlad could do because he was raised in Istanbul and received a good education during captivity. Therefore, an envoy was sent to meet Vlad and solve the problems at Giurgiu before taking military action. As a response, he acted with a deceptive move by bringing tribute and fifty children with him, but on the other hand, he had an army to blockade the Ottomans and took the envoy and the bey of Nikopol prisoners. He occupied and damaged Giurgiu, which was situated on the right bank of the Danube.⁴⁶

Vlad destroyed the Ottoman lands with his army, set every village on fire, and slaughtered the disarmed population, even women and children. Based on the available accounts, all prisoners, estimated to be around 25,000 individuals, were subjected to torture, specifically impalement, resulting in their demise. He pushed things even further by catching hold of an envoy. It was commanded that nailing the ambassador's

⁴⁵ Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol.1, p.190.

⁴⁶ Kurt W. Treptow, *Dracula: Essays on the Life and Times of Vlad the Impaler* (Las Vegas, NV: Histria Books/Center for Romanian Studies, 2019), p.23.

turban to his head. It was unimaginable to Mehmed II, so he beat the grand vizier Mahmud Pasha who brought him the news in the first burst of anger.⁴⁷

Mehmed immediately sent word to the provinces to gather a large army. This army was as big as the one that had conquered Istanbul. The Grand Vizier marched with this army towards the Danube. The Sultan also wanted to be at the head of the military for revenge and crossed the Black Sea by sea and sailed up the Danube with twenty-five galleys and one hundred and fifty other ships.⁴⁸

The Ottoman soldiers found every place they passed burnt to the ground. Vlad had sent some of his people into the forests, and there was no sign of life in the region. Vlad also disguised himself and made reconnaissance among the Ottoman troops, and finally made a night raid. His main goal was to enter the Sultan's tent and kill him, but he failed. Although the fighting continued until the morning, Vlad disappeared after a while. On the other hand, Mehmed II advanced into Wallachia and easily captured its center. When he arrived, he could not believe what he saw because he found about twenty thousand Turks and Bulgarians crucified and impaled. Consequently, he was unable to restrain his feelings of hatred upon encountering this scene.⁴⁹

Seeing the Ottoman soldiers crossing the Danube, Vlad resorted to various methods of deception and wanted to wear down the army. However, in the end, Mehmed II, who knew his enemy well, caused significant damage to the voivode's soldiers in various places. Since the battle to be made was a guerilla battle, the best-trained raiders were used. He had Mihaloğlu Ali and Turahanoğlu Ömer pursue Vlad

⁴⁷ Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton University Press, 1978), p.204.

⁴⁸ Joseph V. Hammer, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, vol. 3 (Üçdal Neşriyat, 2003), p.63.

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp.63-65.

for forty days. After staying here for another month, Mehmed left his raiders and returned to the capital.⁵⁰

Mehmed II deposed Vlad III and placed his brother Radu on the throne. Radu did a submission to the Sultan in exchange for an *ahdnâme* (treaty) outlining the terms of the principality's autonomy and the voivode's responsibilities.⁵¹ The boyars had to accept Radu as their new voivode in the new atmosphere. Having lost the support of the boyars, Vlad was left alone and promised loyalty to the Sultan to regain his country, but Mehmed did not want to deal with him anymore, leaving him to his fate. "The great ruler of the Ottomans," Vlad wrote to Mehmed in 1462.⁵²

"I, Voivode of Wallachia, your servant Vlad, beg your sincere forgiveness for the crimes I have committed against you and your country; I beg your forgiveness and allow me to send a messenger to you. I know every inch of Transylvania and Hungary. If our sultan wishes, I can give you all of Transylvania to atone for my crime; you can easily capture Hungary once you have captured Transylvania. Our envoys will give you more information on this matter. I will remain your faithful servant for the rest of my life. May God make his reign long-lasting."

The Hungarians intercepted this letter, and it could not reach the Sultan. With nowhere to run, Vlad had to seek refuge with the Hungarians. Since King Mathias, the Hungarian king, was aware of the letter, he knew about his promises to hand over Hungary and Transylvania to Mehmed II. Therefore, he captured him and sent him to captivity in Buda.⁵³

⁵⁰ Yılmaz Öztuna, *Büyük Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 1 (Ötüken Neşriyat, 1994), p.285.

⁵¹ Keith Hitchins, *A Concise History of Romania* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp.27-29.

⁵² Zinkeisen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, vol.2, pp.125-126.

⁵³ Ibid, p.126.

The treaty, which was signed between Radu and Mehmed II, was mentioned in Wilkinson's book, and some of its articles are as follows⁵⁴:

1. The Sultan consents and engages for himself and his successors, to give protection to Wallachia, and to defend it against all enemies, assuming nothing more than a supremacy over the sovereignty of that principality, the Voivodes of which shall be bound to pay to the Sublime Porte an annual tribute of ten thousand piasters.
2. The Sublime Porte shall never interfere in the local administration of the said principality, nor shall any Turk be ever permitted to come into Wallachia without an ostensible reason.
3. Every year an officer of the Porte shall come to Wallachia to receive the tribute, and on his return shall be accompanied by an officer of the voivode as far as Giurgiu on the Danube, where the money shall be counted over again, a second receipt given for it, and when it has been carried in safety to the other side of that river, Wallachia shall no longer be responsible for any accident that may befall it.
4. The Voivodes shall continue to be elected by the archbishop, metropolitan, bishops, and boyars, and the election shall be acknowledged by the Porte.
5. The Wallachian nation shall continue to enjoy the free exercise of their own laws; and the Voivodes shall have the right of life and death over their own subjects, as well as that of making war and peace, without having to account for any such proceedings to the Sublime Porte.

Upon careful examination of the articles outlined in the agreement, it becomes evident that Wallachia derived significant benefits from it. Based on this agreement, some Romanian historians argue that Wallachia was independent. However, the Ottoman Empire never viewed Wallachia as an independent state, despite variations in its administrative structure. When Mehmed II crossed the Danube to look for Vlad III, there was no reaction from the surrounding states; this place belonged to the Ottoman Empire, and Sultan went there quickly. If he had entered the territory of an

⁵⁴ William Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (London: Strahan and Spottiswoode, 1820), pp.20-22.

independent state, it would have been considered a cause of war. After all, Mehmed gave some concessions, but Wallachia was still dependent on the Ottomans.

Political and military struggles with Wallachia continued until the reign of Bayezid II. The results significantly affected both principalities when he organized an expedition to Moldavia. The capture of Kilia and Akerman on the Danube allowed the Ottomans to establish permanent dominance in the region. However, this permanent rule did not lead to lasting peace, and the voivodes tried to eliminate Ottoman rule in various ways. On the other hand, the Ottoman treatment of this region was slightly different compared to other provinces. They did not interfere in the administrative structures in the region except for the appointment of voivodes.⁵⁵

Significant changes occurred in power relations in Southeastern and Central Europe during Suleyman the Magnificent's reign. The Ottoman Empire conquered Belgrade, defeated the Hungarian army at Mohacs, and captured Budapest, efficiently demolishing the Hungarian Kingdom. Furthermore, Polish assertions and Habsburg incursions compelled Suleyman to decisively consolidate Ottoman authority in the north of the Danube. The political status of Wallachia was also affected by the Moldavian expedition, the second occupation of Buda, and Transylvania's turning into a vassal principality. As a result, Wallachia was on the verge of being placed under direct Ottoman control, with a Muslim governor in charge by the 1520s. This threat prompted the boyars to put aside their internal fighting and effectively repel the effort by executing a collective action of allegiance like the one performed in 1462.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ahmet Üstüner, "Osmanlı Coğrafya Kaynaklarında Eflak-Boğdan (15-17. Yüzyıl)," *Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi*, no. 28 (2020): pp.414-415.

⁵⁶ Viorel Panaite, *Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Its Tribute-Payers from the North of the Danube*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2019), p.116.

Suleyman was the first Sultan to assert absolute control of the principalities and regard the people there as his subjects (*re'âyâ*).⁵⁷ After his reign, the Ottomans regarded Wallachia as part of the “Well protected Dominions” (*Memâlik-i Mahrûsa*). According to Islamic law, these were lands inside the house of Islam (*dâr'ül-İslâm*), forming the realm of tributary protection. As a result, sultan-subject relations gave rise to a new form of protection for the Wallachians. They were regarded as dhimmi according to the judicial process adopted by the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁸

After Suleyman, the principalities could act more freely, but sometimes they could be disobedient. But he was a mighty Sultan and would not allow this. Thus, he punished the voivodes for what they did. An example is the voivode of Moldavia, Rareș, who led a rebellion in 1538.⁵⁹ By the sixteenth century, Wallachia was under strict Ottoman control. The conquest of Hungary in 1526 reduced the possibility of Wallachia receiving support from the north. Previously, the Hungarians had been claiming sovereignty over Wallachia at every opportunity. Still, with the transfer of Hungarian control to the Ottomans, these claims lost their effect, and the Ottomans took over even these rights.⁶⁰

The Ottomans had brought Mihai (the Brave) to power, expecting him to be a loyal voivode, but he was a great disappointment because he was negotiating with the Habsburgs against the Ottomans. At this time, the Ottomans were dealing with the Habsburg side, and the revolt of the Wallachian voivode and other regional voivodes

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.252.

⁵⁸ Viorel Panaite, “The Re'ayas of the Tributary-Protected Principalities The Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Ottoman Borderlands Issues, Personalities and Political Changes*, ed. Kemal H. Karpat and Robert W. Zens (University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), pp. 79-104, p.84.

⁵⁹ Yusuf Heper, “*Osmanlı Devleti ve Eflak-Boğdan İlişkileri (1574-1634)*” (dissertation, Uşak Üniversitesi, 2020), p.87.

⁶⁰ Karpat, “Eflak”, p.468.

put the state in a difficult situation.⁶¹ He placed an order to slaughter all of the Turks in Wallachia and assaulted the Ottoman fortress along the Danube. In return, Sinan Pasha got an order to invade Wallachia in 1595. Mihai opted to fight in a confined location encircled by hills which did not allow Ottoman forces to maneuver. During the conflict, three pashas were killed. However, it was simply a tactical win, and he retreated to the Carpathians, whereas the Turks took Targovishte and Bucharest.⁶² In response, the Ottomans sought friendship with Transylvania and Poland to isolate Mihai. Conversely, the voivode united Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania and declared himself sole ruler. Despite its short-lived nature, Romanian historians have accorded significant importance to the voivode and this unification, as it marked a milestone in their history. It is regarded as the initial consolidation of Romanians into a unified country.⁶³

After the death of Mihai, it was quickly carried out that the Sultan would choose the new voivode by his own will, and the principality reverted to tributary status; lastly, the treaty was made between Mehmed II and Voivode reaffirmed, but the tribute was increased significantly. Wallachia was maintained under the Ottoman Empire's control from then on, and despite repeated attempts to get rid of the yoke in the seventeenth century, their achievements were usually fleeting and hence more harmful than advantageous to them in the long run.⁶⁴

The Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) was a turning point in Ottoman history. After this date, Russia assumed the role of the protector of Orthodox Christians and started

⁶¹ Yusuf Heper, "Tuna Yalılarında Mihai Viteazul Tehdidi (1598): Osmanlı-Romen Kaynakları Işığında Yeni Bir Değerlendirme," *Karadeniz Araştırmaları-Balkan, Kafkas, Doğu Avrupa ve Anadolu İncelemeleri Dergisi* XVII, no. 68 (2020): pp. 889-900, p.890.

⁶² Ioan Bolovan et al., *A History of Romania*, pp.143-145.

⁶³ Karpát, "Eflak", p.468.

⁶⁴ Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia*, pp.28-29.

to make its influence felt in the Balkans, reaching as far as Moldavia. For these reasons, the voivodes of Wallachia and Moldavia began establishing closer relations with Russia.⁶⁵ Although the seventeenth century was considered a relatively calm period, it was also a period of new developments for Wallachia. In this period, Russia, later becoming one of the great powers, resolved its internal problems and started to give importance to its foreign policy. After the defeat in Vienna, which resulted in the Treaty of Karlowitz, Russia realized the weakness of the Ottoman Empire and joined the “Holy Alliance” founded by the Pope to take advantage of the situation. Thus, for the first time, it partnered with European states. Moreover, Russia, which took action against the Ottomans openly for the first time, became a threat to the northern borders of the Ottoman Empire. Russia, which had the power to be effective in the region, emerged as a significant danger to the Ottomans.⁶⁶

As the Ottoman power weakened and foreign pressure increased, voivodes and boyars took advantage of the naturally occurring situation. Although they had always been in contact with the Habsburg monarchy and Poland, Russia, a great Orthodox power, gave rise to the greatest hope for aid in the eighteenth century. As this state continued her pressure to land in the Black Sea, the tendency to act with Russian leaders to overthrow Ottoman rule became stronger.⁶⁷

Until the Prut War (1711), Wallachia was ruled by local voivodes. However, the voivode helped and agreed with the Russians in this war. Therefore, after this war, the Ottomans appointed Phanariot Beys from Istanbul as voivode to ensure their

⁶⁵ Merve Karaçay Türkal, “18. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Eflak ve Boğdan Üzerinde Osmanlı-Avusturya Mücadelesine Dair Anonim Bir Eser: Vakayi-i Eflak,” *Turkish Studies International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 12, no. 9 (2017): pp. 35-54, p.40.

⁶⁶ Feyzullah Uyanık, “II. Mahmud Dönemi Osmanlı İdaresinde Eflak-Boğdan” (dissertation, Trakya Üniversitesi, 2018), pp.49-50.

⁶⁷ Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans- Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, vol. I (Cambridge, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.101.

loyalty to the state.⁶⁸ Some historians see the establishment of the Phanariot regime as a way for the Ottomans to enhance their political, economic, social, cultural, and military authority over the principalities due to their strategic concerns in the region.⁶⁹

The local boyars elected the previous rulers and were regarded as voivode, whereas the new leader appointed rather than elected was seen solely as *hospodar*^{70 71}. The *hospodars* of the principalities had separate agreements with the Ottomans to produce more cereal and meat, increasingly for the Ottoman capital and in wartime for the Ottoman troops. They were both taxpayers and governors of the principalities, and they selected and married the native class of boyar landholders. They also procured the Ottoman troops and Istanbul with vital food supplies while establishing close patronage connections with the Orthodox Church organizations in these principalities.⁷² Romanians today see this period as a decline and remember it with hatred since bribery, intrigues, and injustices were rampant. When Phanariot Beys were appointed voivode, they came to Wallachia with their relatives and business partners. Although they stayed in office for a maximum of three years, it was believed that they exploited the local population too much. On the other hand, the Phanariot Beys tried to increase communication with the West during this period, opened

⁶⁸ Sinan Yüksel, “Küçük Kaynarca’dan Yaş Antlaşmasına Kadar Eflak-Boğdan Üzerinde Osmanlı-Rus Nüfuz Mücadelesi,” *Belleken* 83, no. 297 (August 2019): pp. 605-632, p.605.

⁶⁹ Mihaela Mehedinți Beiean, “Political Instability and Corruption. The Phanariot Regime as Seen by Russian and Nordic Travellers,” *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): pp. 21-44, <https://doi.org/10.53604/rjbns>, p.23.

⁷⁰ “In the Ottoman administration, the term *hospodar* emerged as the name of the Greek beys of Phanar who were appointed to replace the Romanian origin voivodes of former Wallachia- Moldavia.” İlber Ortaylı, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol.14 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1996), s.v. “Godpodarlık”, p.115.

⁷¹ Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*, vol. V (University of Washington Press, 1996), p.134.

⁷² Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (California, USA: University of California Press, 2011), p.11.

hospitals and schools, and abolished land-based slavery by granting some rights to the peasants.⁷³

The Russians had captured Iasi and Bucharest in the 1768-74 Ottoman-Russian War but returned them to the Ottomans with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. However, some treaty articles said Russia could intervene in principalities' internal affairs. After the 1787-92 War, the Ottoman influence in the region diminished even more because the Iasi treaty stipulated that the voivodes of principalities would be elected with Russia's approval and that the voivodes would remain in office for seven years. As Russia increased its power in the region, it became increasingly difficult for the Ottomans to protect their European territories.⁷⁴

The first Greek revolt broke out in Wallachia under the influence of the Phanariot voivodes, but the local population did not fully support it as the two nations did not have the same ideals for the future. Also, the Greeks killed the Romanian hero Tudor Vladimirescu. In 1821 the rebellion in Wallachia was crushed, and the uprising spread to the Peloponnese. As a result of these events, trust in the Greeks diminished, and the Ottomans reverted to appointing local voivodes in Wallachia.⁷⁵

European policies began to have an impact on Wallachian governance. The Russians proposed many directives for Wallachia. For example, in 1831, two separate assemblies of the boyars were established; one ordinary and one extraordinary. Afterward, political maneuvering continued there. An example of this was the

⁷³ Cafer Çiftçi, "Bâb-ı Âlî'nin Avrupa'ya Çevrilmiş İki Gözü: Eflak ve Boğdan'da Fenerli Voyvodalar (1711-1821)," *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 7, no. 26 (2010): pp. 27-48, p.37.

⁷⁴ Finkel, *Rüyadan İmparatorluğa Osmanlı*, p.361.

⁷⁵ Mahir Aydın, "Eflak Beyliği," *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 23 (2013): pp. 1-24, pp.4-5.

appointment of “extraordinary commissioners” in 1849, one Turkish and one Russian.⁷⁶

After the Treaty of Edirne (1829), Wallachia’s relationship with the Ottomans and the economic and social development of the region changed. In addition, constitutional arrangements were made in 1831-32, strengthening Russia in the region. Previously, the Ottomans had some preferential rights. One example was the priority of buying agricultural products from the area. Such rights were lost because of the agreements. As a result of these developments, a Romanian middle class emerged that wanted to establish national unity. The political dependence of the principalities on the Ottomans became even more important after 1831, as they acted as a shield preventing the Russians from annexing the region. Later, the Porte became more favorable to their unification to strengthen their resistance against the Russians.⁷⁷

The revolution of 1848 was of great importance in Romanian history. At this time, they aimed to eliminate Russian protectionism since it was more dangerous than being under Ottoman rule. The Russians were also uneasy with the revolutionaries of 1848 because they wanted social rights and the unification of all Romanian people under one roof. The Ottoman Empire supported the revolutionaries to reduce Russian influence. After a while, France’s involvement in the events caused a change in the Ottoman attitude as it was afraid of France’s imperialist aims. As a result, it was decided to solve the problem by holding a referendum.⁷⁸

In 1857, new elections were held in both principalities, and the representative councils voted strongly in favor of the unification of the Romanian state, an

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.6.

⁷⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, *Balkanlar'da Osmanlı Mirası ve Milliyetçilik*, trans. Recep Boztemur (İstanbul, Turkey: Timaş Yayınları, 2012), pp.82-83.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p.83.

independent parliamentary principality under Ottoman control governed by a foreign ruler. The Romanians' political move put the Great Powers in a difficult position. After much consideration, they formed the Paris Convention (1858), announcing that Wallachia and Moldavia would stay separate and administered by local rulers.⁷⁹

The Romanians solved the problem of unity when they jointly elected Alexander Cuza as their ruler. The Ottomans initially opposed this election as the sovereign power but later approved it. After Cuza visited Istanbul in 1860 in 1861, the Sultan issued a decree officially recognizing the union of the principalities. Accordingly, Wallachia and Moldavia became Romania, with Bucharest designated as its capital. Finally, the Treaty of Berlin (1878) gave Romania independence.⁸⁰

2.4. Ottoman Border-Periphery on the Lower Danube

Like other early modern frontiers, the Ottoman Empire's frontier was not designated and portrayed linear borders. Instead, they were characterized by physical characteristics, imperial claims, taxing units, armies' range, and the remembrance of older folk. Fortresses were the definitive indicators of border territory; they represented points of power among land and coastlines rather than being the limit of the empire. It was occupied territory dominated by armies or servants of suzerain authority; it may be identified as ours or theirs and labeled as such; it could be gained or got lost. Control of land and trading posts was measured based on fortress surrender,

⁷⁹ Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans from Constantinople to Communism* (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.231.

⁸⁰ Karpat, *Balkanlar'da Osmanlı Mirası ve Milliyetçilik*, pp.83-84.

and the capture of fortifications was documented in histories and marked on maps as a pointer of empires' and commanders' achievement or failure.⁸¹

Many of the enemies had proper border regions with the Ottomans as well. The physical markers of these boundary areas were rivers, passageways, wetlands, and mountains. From the beginning of their initial conquest in the Balkans, the Ottomans employed these geopolitically essential physical qualities to protect the interior territories by seizing or constructing fortresses in crucial passageways. From the end of the fourteenth century, the Ottomans had already captured the most significant castles on the Danube's east side. The Danube River became the natural frontline between the Wallachian Principality and the Ottomans.⁸²

The *uc* system, adopted from the Seljuk Sultanate for the military and defensive organizations of the Ottomans, was improved and fitted to the Balkans' particular circumstances. When the Ottomans eventually captured the Peninsula, they wasted no time putting those territories to good use: manpower for the army, centenary knowledge in building military defense lines, and fortress upkeep practices. In this way, the Ottoman military frontier system known as *serhad* was established in the Balkans. On the Danube's right side, the Ottoman Empire created a *serhad*, including major garrisons in Vidin and Nikopol.⁸³

The Ottoman advance on the Danube was based on strategic plans. This can be seen in the examples of the rapid and permanent conquest movements in the Balkans, the control of the fortresses on the Danube, and the patronage of the principalities.

⁸¹ Palmira Brummet, "The Fortress: Defining and Mapping the Ottoman Frontier in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 31-56, p.31.

⁸² Göksel Baş, "*Ottoman Serhad Organization in the Balkans (1450s to Early 1500s)*," (master's thesis, Bilkent University, 2017), p.16.

⁸³ Evgeni Radushev, "Ottoman Border Periphery (Serhad) in the Vilayet of Niğbolu, First Half of the 16th Century," *Etudes Balkaniques*, no. 3-4 (1995): pp. 1-29, p.4.

With this strategy, all the passes and fortifications around the Danube were controlled to create a network of fortresses. Thus, the *timar*⁸⁴ areas created could be protected. Taking action in this sense, the Ottoman Empire captured all the defense lines north of the Danube until the conquest of Belgrade in 1521.⁸⁵

The Danube had been the northern frontier of Ottoman authority in the Balkans after Bayezid I's reign. The border in the south of the Danube served as a critical defense line. Nikopol, Vidin, and Silistra were the three border sanjaks. Castles were important defense posts against invaders and incursions from the north during the pre-Ottoman period. As a result, tax registers, particularly the earliest ones, represent the pre-Ottoman boundary administrative and military organization. The Ottomans generally kept the pre-conquest administrative divisions of captured territories and previous financial and military norms and traditions. Alongside Shumen, Varna, and Silistra, Ruse became a significant seaport and one of the four fortresses in the Danube defense line. Along with the Danube's northern frontier, Ruse was the most effective military defense point in an attack on Edirne or Istanbul.⁸⁶

The Ottomans retained and repaired the fortresses along their defense lines and maintained their staff of local professional military units for as long as the tangible circumstances in one region or another required, as evidenced by the entire

⁸⁴ "It refers to the allocation made to support a cavalry unit and military-administrative hierarchy in the Ottoman central provinces and not through inheritance. The timar system was not only the main pillar of the military-administrative organization of the empire but also the main determining factor in the functioning of the Miri land system, in determining the status of peasant-farmers and the tax they would pay, and in the management of the agricultural economy in the classical era of the empire." Halil İnalçık, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 41 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2012), s.v. "Timar", p.168.

⁸⁵ Göksel Baş, "XV. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Balkanlarda Osmanlı Serhad Organizasyonunun Oluşumu: Kaleler Ağı, Askeri Personel, Finansman ve Mali Külfet," *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 33 (2018): pp. 151-181, p.153.

⁸⁶ Nuray Ocaklı, "Danubian Border in the Second Half of the 16th Century: Revolution and Transformation, Tradition and Continuation on the Eve of a New Era" (dissertation, Bilkent University, 2013), pp.10-11.

organization of the fort military posts along the border. The Ottomans established a military structure suitable to European reality at the period by utilizing local battle traditions and enlisting the help of generations of local warriors. Therefore, the Ottoman ranks had constantly incorporated several non-Muslims in locations like the garrisons; other than the leading commanders, there was no Muslim in any way since the beginning of the enormous conquests.⁸⁷

The Ottomans attached great importance to the Danube in military terms. During their campaigns to states such as Austria, Wallachia, Hungary, and Poland, they used to pass the necessary weapons, soldiers, and provisions for the campaign.⁸⁸ Eventually, the Ottomans were able to build an effective network of fortress defenses on the Danube with the support of auxiliary military elements, and they were able to do so long before they conquered Hungary and established a new frontier against the Habsburgs.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Radushev, "Ottoman Border Periphery..." p.18.

⁸⁸ Maxim, "Tuna", p.373.

⁸⁹ Baş, "XV. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında...", p.173.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS TO LIVING IN THE PERIPHERY?

*“...İmdi, vilâyet-i Eflâk ve Boğdan benüm şemşîr-i zafer-rehberüm ile feth u teshîr
olmuş memleket ü vilâyetümdür. Ve re‘âyâ vü berâyâsı dahı harâc-
güzârlarumdur...”⁹⁰*

3.1. Wallachia as the Eyes and Cellar of Ottoman Empire in Europe

Wallachia served as a buffer between the Ottoman Empire and the states to the north. In particular, border problems with the Hungarians and Poles, banditry and

⁹⁰ “...now, the province of Wallachia and Moldavia is my country that is conquered by the sword, my guide to victory. And even reayas are my tribute payers...”. 3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (966-968/1558-1560). Dîvan-ı Hümâyûn Sicilleri Dizisi, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1993), p.227.

groups of defeatists going back and forth between the two sides, and the attitude of the Ottoman Empire towards them were the factors that shaped the Ottoman foreign policy in the north, and Wallachia suffered greatly from these problems as a result of its geographical position, since the adversary was situated in that area. At the same time, the approach of the Ottoman Empire and its solutions to these issues also explain how the Ottomans positioned Wallachia, viewed its people, and utilized the north of the Danube.

Due to its geographical location, Wallachia was always involved in border issues. For example, Austrian and Polish lords were gathering in Transylvania, harassing the Wallachian border, and planning to march on the Wallachian voivode. The Moldavian voivode reported this issue to the Sultan and asked for help. The fact that Wallachia was a critical buffer zone, especially against Austria, meant that the Ottomans had to respond immediately to any danger coming from the enemy and take precautions. This was because Wallachia was a part of the state, and its voivode, who can be considered a regional official of the state, governed the region. An attack against the voivode could be perceived as an insult to Istanbul. In light of these, the state sent a decree to the voivode of Moldavia ordering him to stand by voivode Mircea and help him if the banditry, as mentioned earlier, tried to enter the Wallachian province, preventing any harm to be done to the Wallachian area.⁹¹

⁹¹ “Boğdan voyvodasına hüküm ki: Mektûb gönderüp bundan akdem perâkende olan Eflâk Pre-begleri Nemçe ve Lih vilâyetlerine perâkende olmuşlar idi. Şimdi mezbûrlar, cümlesi Erdel vilâyetine cem ‘olup Mirço Voyvoda’nun üzerine gelmek kasdın iderler. Mirço Voyvoda asker taleb iderse taleb olunduğu kadar asker viresin diyü fermân olunduğun bildürmişsin. İmdi, buyurdum ki: Yüce Âstâne’me olan ubûdiyyet ü rikkıyyet muktezâsınca Boğdan askeri ile dâ’ima hâzır u müheyyâ olup Mirço Voyvoda cânibine nâzır olup anun gibi zikr olunan ehl-i fesâd hareket idüp Eflâk vilâyetine dahl itmek murâd iderler ise aslâ te’hîr itmeyüp varup haklarından gelmek bâbında dakika fevt itmeyüp envâ’-ı mesâ’î-i cemîle zuhûra getürüp gereği gibi mu’âvenet ü müzâheret idüp etrâf ü cevânibün vâkıf olduğun ahabârı i’lâmdan hâlî olmayasın. Eflâk vilâyetine anlardan zarar irişdürmekden hazer idesin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.171, h.373.

The beylerbey of Timișoara was also informed about the same issue and was requested to conduct an investigation related to this matter. In addition, the beylerbey was requested to send a message to the king of Transylvania, warning him that the mentioned bandits should be dealt with and the encroachment on Wallachia should be prevented. However, in the event of any activity on Wallachia's side, he was instructed to remain vigilant and prevent any harm from occurring. Finally, he was asked to report the information obtained about the region and to write to the center about the situation of the bandits.⁹²

Wallachia is like the courtyard of the Ottomans. Whoever enters there, be it a thief, an enemy, etc., it is the duty of the landlord to expel them and protect the things there. This is how their logic works, but this courtyard is useless without people and cattle. When the *reaya* becomes unable to produce, the Sultan steps in and takes action because for the *reaya* to be able to engage in production and pay taxes, they need to be protected from such dangers. They implemented a range of security measures and military precautions in the area, thereby facilitating the integration of these territories into the state.

Moreover, through their voivodes, the Ottomans stabilized information gathering. Wallachia was an essential intermediary for the Ottomans to learn about the movements of their enemies to the north. They were gathering information on the

⁹² "Timișvar beglerbegisine hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Boğdan voyvodası Südde-i sa'âdet'üme mektûb gönderüp bundan akdem vilâyet-i Eflâk'dan perâkende olan eşirrâ vü [e]şkîyâ cümle vilâyet-i Erdel'de cem' olup fikr-i fâsidleri vilâyet-i Eflâk'a gelüp yine ifsâd itmekdür diyü i'lâm itmeğin buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, bu bâbda gereği gibi mukayyed olup tettebbu 'u tecessüs eyleyüp göresin; arz olunduğı gibi ise Erdel Kralı'na haber gönderüp onat vechile tenbîh ü te'kid eylesin ki, zikr olunan ehl-i fesâdun haklarından gelüp vilâyet-i Eflâk'a dahl ü tecâvüz itdürmeyeler. Şöyle ki, vilâyet-i mezbûreye dahl ideler, ehl-i fesâdun haklarından gelinüp, ammâ netîcesi kendüye â'id olur. Ana göre mukayyed olalar ve sen dahı dâ'imâ hâzır olup eger vilâyet-i Eflâk'dur ve eger sâ'ir etrâf ü cevânibe nâzır olasın. Anun gibi zikr olunan ehl-i fesâd Eflâk cânibinde bir hareket itmek iderler ise vech ü münâsib olduğı üzere tedârükün görüp mazarrat ü ifsâdların def 'u ref'eyleyüp eger ol cevânibün ve eger sâ'ir etrâfun vâkıf olduğun ahhâr-ı sahihayı i'lâmdan hâli olmayup zikr olunan ehl-i fesâdun ahhvâli arz olunduğı gibi midür, nicedür? Ma'lûm idinüp anı dahı yazup bildüresin." BOA, MD, no.3, p.174, h.383.

enemy's preparations and raids and reporting them to the center. For instance, the Sultan sent a decree to the Beylerbey of Buda to endeavor to protect a province included in the treaty after King Stephen of Transylvania reported that King Ferdinand was gathering troops because Transylvania was not included in the treaty. He also sent a decree on the same subject to the voivode of Wallachia, asking him to have the Wallachian troops ready, to investigate the situation on Ferdinand's side. He stated that if they were to attack Transylvania in violation of the treaty, he should swiftly repel and prevent any harm and losses and also inform him how he acquired the information about the situation.⁹³

The Ottomans used to conduct intelligence activities through their voivodes to learn about the military or political intentions of other political groups ruling in the region. This was an essential aspect of Ottoman foreign policy. In a decree sent to the voivode, the Sultan stated that he was aware of his information on Transylvania and other matters. He ordered the voivode to keep an eye on every front, regardless of whether it was Transylvania or other regions, without wasting time in protecting his homeland and, from now on, to convey any information he learned to the center.

⁹³ "Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Mektûb gönderüp vilâyet-i Erdel Kralı'nun sana âdemleri gelüp Dergâh-ı mu'allâ'ya irsâl itdiğin ve andan gayrı âdemün dahı her ne takdîr itdiyse ma'lûm oldu. İmdi, müşârün-ileyh Kral dahı atebe-i ulyâma mektûb gönderüp Ferenduş Kral Âstâne-i sa'âdet'ümle itdüğü barışıklıkda vilâyet-i Erdel anlamamışdur diyü memleketlerine külli asker cem' idüp gönderüp serhadlerinde ba'zı yirlerine dahl olunup ekser âdemlerin igvâ itmek üzere olduğunu bildürmüş. İmdi, bundan akdem sen mezkûrların vilâyetlerine ba'zı Nemçe askeri gelüp duhûl itmek üzeredür diyü bildürmüş idün. Buyurdum ki: Hüküm-i şerîfüm vusûl buldukda, bu bâbda Südde-i sa'âdet'üme olan ubûdiyyet ü ihlâsun muktezâsınca Eflâk askeri ile hâzır u müheyyâ olup ol cevânibün ve Ferenduş taraflarının ahvâl ü etvârın tettebbu' u tecessüs eyleyüp dahı müşârün-ileyh arz itdüğü üzere memleketlerine asker gelüp dahl ü ta'arruzları var mıdur, yoksa sâbıkâ sen arz itdüğün üzere midür, nicedür? Tamâm ma'lûm idüp dahı Südde-i sa'âdet'üme bildüresin. Şöyle ki, arz itdükleri üzere vilâyet-i Erdel'e ve sâ'ir Kral-oğlı'nun tasarruflarında olan memleketlerine ahd-nâme-i hümayûnuma mugâyir dahl ü ta'arruz ideler her ne tarikle münâsib ise te'hîr itmeyüp mazarrat ü ifsâdların def' u ref' itmek bâbında dakika fevt itmeyüp vilâyet-i Erdel'e anlardan zarar u gezend irişdirmeyesin. Bu bâbda Boğdan voyvodasına dahı hüküm-i şerîf gönderilmişdür, isâl idesin. Eger vilâyet-i Erdel'ün ve eger Ferenduş tarafının ahvâli ne yüzden idüğün ma'lûm idüp dahı ne vechile tedârük itdüğün mu'accelen bildüresin." BOA, MD, no.3, pp.83-84, h.178-180.

Finally, regarding the border, he was instructed not to let anyone through it and not to let the groups in Wallachia attack the other side.⁹⁴

When the Ottomans demanded something from the lord of a region, they took care to verify its authenticity by other means. In this sense, the Sultan had previously asked the king of Transylvania to capture the bandits who had fled there and send them to the voivode of Wallachia. In one of his decrees, he asked the voivode of Wallachia whether this request had been fulfilled.⁹⁵ It was significant for Transylvania, being one of the border regions under the control of the Ottoman Empire, to fulfill the assigned tasks or not, as otherwise, it could potentially collaborate with the enemy and cause harm to the state. These methods were helpful in Ottoman foreign policy, which could be considered successful for that period.

The voivodes generally followed their own policies, but according to the treaties at the time, the region belonged to the Ottomans. How the Ottomans would use it is a different issue. There would be a direct Ottoman regime or a voivode, but it belonged to the Ottomans; that was the main point. Suleyman I's words, "I took this place with my sword; if you are not careful, I will come again," serve as evidence of this. Although the voivode regime continued, Sultan's approval was mandatory for the

⁹⁴ "Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Mektûb gönderüp vilâyet-i Erdel küffâr-ı hâksârına müte'allık ve Erdel'ün harâcın husûsın arz idüp ve Eflâk sınırına dahl olunduğın ve anlardan gayrı dahı her ne bildürmişsen ma'lûm-ı şerîfüm olup buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, hıfz u hırâset-i memleket ve zabt u sıyânet-i ra'îyyet bâbında dakika fevt itmeyüp mücidd ü merdâne olup eger vilâyet-i Erdel'dür ve sâ'ir etrâf ü cevânibe göz kulak olup min-ba'd dahı her cânibden vâkıf olduğın ahbâr-ı sahîhayı ve sâ'ir muhtâc-ı arz olan ahvâli yazup Südde-i sa'âdet'üme bildürmekden hâlî olmayasın ve sınır husûsına dahı mü'ekked hükm-i şerîfüm yazılup kadîmî Eflâk sınırına kimesneyi dahl itdürmeyesin diyü emrüm olmuştur. Sen dahı atebe-i ulyâma olan ubûdiyyetün muktezâsınca Eflâk tâ'ifesin berü cânibe dahl ü ta'arruz itdürmeyüp gereği gibi tenbîh ü te'kîd eylesin." BOA, MD, no.3, p.579, h.1329.

⁹⁵ "Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Bundan akdem Eflâk bolarlarından ve sâ'ir ehl-i fesâddan ba'zı Erdel vilâyetine varduğın i'lâm eyledüğünde anun gibi vilâyet-i Eflâk'dan kaçup varan ehl-i fesâddan ele getirüp sana göndermek için bir iki def'a Erdel Kralı'na hükm-i hümayûnum gönderilmişdi. Buyurdum ki: Tercemân Mehmed vusûl buldukda, emrüm mücebince müşârün-ileyh zikr olunan ehl-i fesâddan şimdîye değin kimesne tutup göndermiş midür ve ne mikdâr kimesne göndermişdür? Yazup bildüresin." BOA, MD, no.3, p.389, h.861.

voivode to officially take office. Sometimes, the Sultan could appoint a voivode without consulting the boyars.

The satisfaction stated by the voivode of Wallachia in his letter to the residents of Sibiu, dated February 1, 1525, is as follows:⁹⁶

“I went to the palace of the Turks and appeared before the Sultan and the dignitaries of the Turkish lands. The rule of Wallachia was entrusted to me first by God and then by the Sultan; then I came back alive and healthy and took the throne and the rule of Wallachia.”

Again, during the reign of Suleyman, when Mircea, the voivode of Wallachia, died, his son Petri was appointed in his place. A sanjak was sent to Petri with Ali, *emir-i ahur*⁹⁷, and as customary, the taxes were reported. The Sultan advised Petri to devote his strength to the services related to his state, to protect his homeland and his subjects, to prevent harm to his land and subjects from bandits, as well as the obligation to dutifully convey relevant information to the central authorities.⁹⁸ This was followed by another decree in which similar issues were mentioned. The difference here was that Petri was told that his father had always been loyal to the state and that he should always act justly in matters related to the state and towards the *reaya*.⁹⁹ From the

⁹⁶ Viorel Panaite, “Osmanlı Hakimiyetinin Tuna Nehrinin Kuzeyinde Yayılışı: XIV. ve XVI. Yüzyıllarda Eflak ve Boğdan” in *Türkler*, trans. Numan Elibol (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), pp. 206-218, p.211.

⁹⁷ Head of those who take care of animals belonging to the Sultan.

⁹⁸ “Eflâk Voyvodası olup fevt olan Mirço'nun oğlu Petri Voyvoda'ya hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Südde-i sa'âdet'üme âdem gönderüp mezbûr baban mürd olduğın bildürmişsin. İmdi, senün hakkında avâtıf-ı aliyye-i şâhânem zuhûra getirüp Eflâk voyvodalığın sana inâyet eyleyüp sancağ-ı sa'âdet-fürûğ ile sâ'ir âdet üzere virgün inâyet ü ihsân olunup küçük emîr-i ahurum kıdvetü'l-emâcid ve'l-ekârim Ali zîde mecduhû ile irsâl olmak üzredür. Buyurdum ki: Dergâh-ı mu'allâ'm çavuşlarından Mehmed vusûl buldukda, vilâyet-i mezbûrede voyvoda olup kemâl-i emânet ve hüsn-i istikâmet ile devlet-i hümâyûnuma müte'âllık olan hıdmetlerde bezl-i maktûr eyleyüp hıfz [u] hırâset-i memleket ve zabt [u] sıyânet-i ra'îyyet bâbında mücidd ü merdâne olup a'dâdan ve sâ'ir ehl-i fesâddan memleket ü vilâyete ve re'âyâ vü berâyâya zarar u gezend irişdürmekden ziyâde hazer eyleyüp basîret üzere olup muhtâc-ı arz olanı dâ'imâ yüce Âstâne'ne i'lâmdan hâlî olmayasın.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.181, h.401.

⁹⁹ “Eflâk Voyvodası olup fevt olan Mirço Voyvoda-oğlu Petri Voyvoda'ya hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Südde-i sa'âdet'üme âdem gönderüp mezbûr baban mürd olduğın bildürüp inâyet recâ itmişsin. İmdi, baban Âstâne-i devlet-âşiyân'uma sadâkat ü ihlâs ile ubûdiyyet üzere olup dâ'imâ inâyetümle behre-mend idi. Hâliyâ hakkında avâtıf-ı aliyye-i şâhânem zuhûra getirüp baban yirine seni vilâyet-i Eflâk'a voyvoda nasb idüp i'lâmiyçün Südde-i sa'âdet'ümde küçük emîr-i ahurum olan iftihârü'l-emâcid ve'l-ekârim Ali

second decree, we can infer that Petri's continued voivodeship depended on his loyalty, just like his father's. In the event of acting contrary to expectations, the Sultan would not hesitate to intervene.

The voivode of Wallachia sent a letter to the center, stating that his father's place had been granted to him and that he was loyally protecting Wallachia in return, and that bandits from the province of Hungary who tried to harm Wallachia had been defeated. The Sultan ordered him to protect the area as in the past, promote the welfare of the *reaya* without delay and report critical situations.¹⁰⁰

From an economic point of view, most scholars have argued that the annual delivery of goods, such as food, from the principalities to Istanbul was done as a vassal duty and was a form of taxation. Archival research, on the other hand, has revealed a more complex economic relationship between the state and the principalities. The widespread urbanization of the Ottoman Empire from the classical period to the seventeenth century led to an uninterrupted and regular flow of agricultural products and a great need for raw materials for the guilds. To ensure stability in the prices of food products consumed in cities and the prices of artisanal products, they were purchased from producers in the Balkans and principalities at fixed prices. Like other

zîde mecduhû ta'yîn olunup ve âdet üzere sancağın virgün dahı irsâl olınmışdur. Buyurdum ki: Varup i'lâm itdükde, gönderilen sancak-ı hümayûnum virgüyi alup dahı baban yirine vilâyet-i mezbûrda voyvoda olup hıfz [u] hırâset-i memleket ve zabt [u] rabt-ı ra'ıyyet bâbında ve devlet-i hümayûnuma müte'allık vâkı' olan hıdemâtda kemâl-i adâlet ve hüsn-i istikâmet üzere hıdmetde olup re'âyâ vü berâyâ arasında tamâm adâlet ve hakk üzere olup emn ü emân-ı vilâyetde dakika fevt itmeyüp gaflet ile a'dâdan ve sâ'ir ehl-i fesâddan memleket [ü] vilâyete ve re'âyâ vü berâyâya zarar u gezend irişdürmekden ziyâde hazer idüp muhtâc-ı arz olan umûrı yüce Âstâne'me i'lâmdan hâlî olmayasın." BOA, MD, no.3, pp.181-182, h.402.

¹⁰⁰ "Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Âstâne-i sa'âdet'üme mektûb gönderüp Mehmed Çavuş yedinden hüküm-i şerîf vârid olup baban yiri sana ihsân olunduğın ve vilâyet-i Eflâk'un sadâkat ü ihlâs üzere hıfz u hırâsetinde olduğun ve Ungurus vilâyetinden vilâyet-i Eflâk'a mazarrat u hasâret kasdına gelen ehl-i fesâd münhezim ü makhûr oldukların i'lâm eylemişsin. Her ne ki bildürmişsen ale't-tafsîl ma'lûm oldu. İmdi, buyurdum ki: Varıcak, kemâ-kân vilâyet-i mezbûrenün hıfz u hırâseti ve zabt u sıyâneti husûsında dakika fevt itmeyüp ehl-i fesâd ü şenâ'atden zarar u gezend irişdürmeyüp re'âyâ vü berâyânun refâhiyyet ü istirahatleri bâbında ikdâm ü ihtimâm zuhûra getüresin ve lâzımü'l- arz olan ahvâlî Âsitâne-i sa'âdet'üme arz u i'lâm eyleyesiz." BOA, MD, no.3, p.209, h.466.

states of the period, the state gave weight to the continuation of social stability. To this end, it endeavored to maintain financial and economic balance by conducting price controls, as seen with minor changes in the value of *akçe*, the state currency. Merchants usually bought products from markets in Istanbul called *kapan*. Local vendors would collect the products from the producers and sign a contract with the merchants. Thanks to such relations, the boyars in Wallachia and the merchants in Istanbul built their fortunes.¹⁰¹

With its fertile soil and abundant water sources, Wallachia was in an essential position in agricultural activity with rich resources, which increased its value in commercial relations. That geography was the Ottoman wheat depot, the source of the army and the fodder for the animals. The key word here was that Wallachia was seen as the Ottoman cellar, and this was expressed at every opportunity. Wallachia was the wheat and grain storehouse for the Ottomans. Without it, the Ottomans could not advance further west. If there was no harvest or in the case of famine, military campaigns were also not undertaken because the army's food supply relied on these regions. If the activities of the Russians in the region are analyzed in the following periods, it is seen that the Russians also wanted to use this region and settle there. The main reason was that Wallachia, with its abundant grain, was a base on the way to Istanbul. That is why they also attached great importance to Wallachia and Moldavia. If we look at the example of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, when Russia took it from the Ottomans, many people died of starvation in Istanbul. In Rumelia, people fled from Russian oppression because the cellar was lost. The Ottoman Empire needed the

¹⁰¹ Karpat, *Balkanlar'da Osmanlı Mirası ve Milliyetçilik*, p.297.

wheat and cereals it received from there and tried to start and develop farming and agriculture in Anatolia to meet this need.

As we find in the *mühimme registers*, the center frequently sent decrees demanding barley from Wallachia to voivodes and qadis. In a decree sent to the qadi of Brăila, he was ordered to load the barley he had collected onto ships and send it to the port of Hârşova, since he had previously been sent a decree to collect barley and send it to Istanbul and since agriculture was one of the most critical ammunitions. In this case, he was asked to send the barley he had prepared following the previous order without delay and to send the ledger of how much was sent to the center.¹⁰² The qadi of Hârşova was also told about the order shipped to the qadi of Brăila, and he was ordered to load the barley on wagons when it was sent to Hârşova and to send it to the Constanza port and then load it on ships and send it to Istanbul.¹⁰³

In a decree sent to the Wallachian voivode Petri, it was stated that the remaining portion of the barley that was previously ordered to be sent to Istanbul by his deceased father, Mircea, should be sent flawlessly.¹⁰⁴ It appears that this order was not fulfilled

¹⁰² “Brayıl kâdîsına hüküm ki: Bundan akdem arpa cem ‘idüp İstanbul’a göndermen için sana hükm-i şerîfüm gönderilmiş idi. Hâliyâ zahîre husûsı ehemmi-i mühimmâtdan olmağın taht-ı kazândan cem ‘olunan arpa, şaykalara tahmîl olunup dahı Hırsova iskelesi’ne gönderilmesin emr idüp buyurdum ki: Vardukda, emr-i sâbıkum üzre tedârük ü ihzâr olunan arpayı te’hîr ü terâhî itmeyüp şaykalara tahmîl idüp zikr olunan iskeleye gönderüp ve ne mikdâr arpa tedârük olunup gönderildüğün suret-i defterin Südde-i sa’âdet’üme gönderesin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.21, h.47.

¹⁰³ “Hırsova kâdîsına hüküm ki: Brayıl kâdîsına hükm-i şerîf gönderilüp Brayıl’dan mahrûse-i İstanbul’a irsâl olunacak arpayı şayka ile Hırsova’ya irsâl idüp araba ile Köstence iskelesi’ne irsâl olunup, andan berü cânibden varan at gemilerine tahmîl olmasın emr idüp müşârün-ileyh emrüm üzre arpayı Hırsova’ya gönderdikde arabalara tahmîl eyleyüp zikr olunan iskeleye ilet düresin ki andan varan at gemilerine tahmîl olunup mahrûse-i mezbûreye irsâl olına.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.22, h.48.

¹⁰⁴ “Eflâk Voyvodası Petre Voyvoda’ya hüküm ki: Bundan akdem mürd olan baban Mirço Voyvoda’ya Südde-i sa’âdet’üme gönderilmek emr olunan arpadan bâki kalan arpayı dahı bî-kusûr gönderilmek emr idüp buyurdum ki: Vardukda, te’hîr eylemeyüp zikr olunan arpadan bâki kalan arpayı bî-kusûr gönderesin ve yazup bildüresin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.182, h.404.

during the reign of the previous decree, as another decree was sent on the same matter, instructing the prompt collection and sending of the barley without delay.¹⁰⁵

The voivode of Wallachia wrote a letter stating that his father Mircea had previously received a decree to collect three thousand measures of barley from Wallachia and deduct whatever amount was due from the tribute and that while his father was alive, one thousand five hundred and fifteen measures of barley had been loaded on ships and sent to Istanbul, and that he had collected the rest and sent it to the port of Brăila. In response, the center said that the grain was waived because it was no longer needed and that they should send what had been collected so far and not collect any more grain.¹⁰⁶ What should be noted here is that the state made detailed plans even for the supply of barley and endeavored to deliver it to the capital without any problems through its officials. This may be an example of how much the center needed this barley.

In addition to foodstuffs such as barley and wheat, the Wallachian voivode was also obliged to deliver various animals to the center if requested by the Ottomans. Upon examining the decree sent regarding this matter, it is evident that information was provided stating that the eight horses and four falcons sent by the voivode following custom and law had been received.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, there were agreements

¹⁰⁵ “Eflâk Voyvodası'na hüküm ki: Bundan akdem baban Mirço Voyvoda, mahrûse-i İstanbul'a arpa göndermek emrüm olmuş idi. Ba'zı irsâl olup ba'zı dahı henüz gelüp vâsıl olmamağın buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, mukaddemâ vilâyet-i Eflâk'dan gönderilmesi fermân olunan arpanun bâki ne mikdârı kalmış ise te'hîr itmeyüp cem' u tahsîl idüp gönderesin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.182, h.405.

¹⁰⁶ “Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Südde-i sa'âdet'üme mektûb gönderüp bundan akdem baban Mirço Voyvoda'ya hüküm-i şerîfüm gönderilüp vilâyet-i Eflâk'dan üç bin müd arpa cem' u ihzâr idüp akçası ne mikdâr olursa harâcdan aşğa varıla diyü fermân olınmağın baban hayâtda iken bin beş yüz on beş müd arpa gemilere tahmîl olunup ba'dehû mürd olındukda mahrûse-i İstanbul'a gönderildi. Bâki kalanı dahı isti'câl üzre cem' u tahsîl idüp Brayıl iskelesi'ne irsâl olunur diyü arz eylemişsin. Hâliyâ terekeye ihtiyaç olmamağın ferâgat olunmuşdur. Buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, şimdiye değin cem' olunan emr-i sâbık üzre irsâl idüp dahı şimden sonra tereke cem'i bâbında mukayyed olmayasın.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.323, h.720.

¹⁰⁷ “Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Hâliyâ âdet ü kânûn üzre irsâl eyledüğün sekiz re's bârgîr ile dört cenâh şâhinleri âdemlerün Südde-i sa'âdet'üme teslim olındı. Buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, min-ba'd dahı atebe-i ulyâma olan ubûdiyyet ü rikkıyyetün muktezâsınca vâkı' olan hıdemât-ı hümayûnuma bezl-

between the voivode and the Sultan to fulfill such requests. Similarly, the voivode Petri was asked to send twenty of the best of that year's falcons to the center, as was the custom.¹⁰⁸ In short, such requests were commonplace in times of need, and Wallachia was obliged to fulfill them since it was part of the Ottoman Empire.

Another economic contribution of Wallachia to the Ottoman Empire was the *jizya tax*¹⁰⁹ levied by the state on non-Muslims there. The Ottomans set an annual tax on the tributary states, and in return, the people of the principality were considered subjects of the Sultan.¹¹⁰ Accordingly, the voivode of Wallachia was also asked to collect his *jizya* and send it to the center according to the ancient custom.¹¹¹

i maktûr idüp hıfz [u] hırâset-i memleket ve zabt [u] sıyân-et-i ra'ıyyet bâbında envâ'-ı ikdâm ü ihtimâm üzre olup etrâf ü cevânibden vâkıf olduğun ahhâr-ı sahîhayı ve muhtâc-ı arz olan ahhvâli i 'lâmdan hâlî olmayasın.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.141, h.309.

¹⁰⁸ “Eflâk Voyvodası Petri'ye hüküm ki: Hâliyâ vilâyet-i mezbûrede bu yıl hâsıl olan bâd-rev şâhinlerin yararlarından Bâb-ı sa'âdet'e göndermek için hâssa çakırcılarından Osmân irsâl olındı diyü çakırcıların başı Gazenfer, mühürlü tezkire gönderüp arz itmeğin buyurdum ki: Bu senede hâsıl olan bâd-rev şâhinlerin eyülerinden âdet-i kadîme üzre yigirmi cenâh yarar şâhinler tutup mezkûr ile Bâb-ı sa'âdet'e gönderesin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.460, h.1035.

¹⁰⁹ “Cizye is derived from the penal infinitive meaning "to suffice, to repay, to pay." It was given this name in Islamic literature because it is considered in return for the tax paid by non-Muslims who are citizens, to keep them separate from the war ones, and to ensure the safety of life and property.” Mehmet Erkal, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol.8 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1993), s.v. “Cizye,” p.42.

¹¹⁰ Halil İnalçık, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 8 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1993), s.v. “Cizye,” p.46.

¹¹¹ “Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Hâliyâ vilâyet-i Eflâk'un harâcı Südde-i sa'âdet'üme gönderilmesin emr idüp buyurdum ki: Hükm-i şerîfüm vusûl buldukda, vilâyet-i mezbûrenün âdet-i kadîme üzre cizyesin cem'itdürüp Südde-i sa'âdet'üme irsâl eylesin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.388, h.858.

3.2. An Open Gateway of Nations and Banditry Activities

If we talk about banditry in general, it also exists in Europe. It was common everywhere in pre-modern times. They came from the Ottoman northwest in Wallachia. The *mühimme registers* are full of this kind of information. There is something special here compared to Europe. There is a tendency to portray these bandits as acting against Muslims, but there were almost no Muslims in these areas. No Muslims were engaged in agriculture, farming, or animal husbandry in Wallachia. So, in this case, the bandits are once again plundering Christians but causing harm to the Muslim state as a result because the state reacts by saying, “They are my *reaya*.” Such bandits were called freedom fighters, but there is no such thing. It is just banditry and what we call romantic nationalism.

There was always confusion in the periphery, and everyone wanted to enter through the borders. This gives the impression that there was impotence. They were entering and robbing non-Muslims. These bandits had nothing to do with the Ottomans because they were a vast empire, and bandits were afraid of that, but they would steal from a region where they could make small robberies and take their wheat, cattle, etc. This is the voivodes’ problem as the Ottomans would ask them for wheat, barley, horses, etc., when necessary. Still, the voivodes could not solve the problem independently, so they would complain to the Sultan.

Why is banditry emerging? Because the periphery and the center were far away. Punishment from the center, the center’s reaction was prolonged as it was far away, and they robbed and ran away. There were regional powers like voivodes and a few janissaries, but more was needed. The voivodes sought help not from the Habsburg

king, Transylvania, etc., but from Istanbul since Wallachia depended on Istanbul as a state and as their subject; this was in their psychology. Banditry was not only a problem across the Danube, but the situation was the same on the Ottoman side. They also crossed the Danube from the Ottoman side.

There are two things here. First, they were coming just to loot the farmers and livestock. This is normal banditry in Europe. There is a power here, which can be seen as a Muslim motive. From a Christian point of view, they said we would mix with infidels, but there were no infidels there. *Reaya* was Christian like themselves and sometimes even belonged to the same ethnic group. For example, those who entered Serbian lands were Serbs who fled from there or Serbs who lived in Habsburg and Hungarian lands. They were robbing their Serbian compatriots in Serbia.

Secondly, why did the Ottomans cross over? The same thing happens here; to rob. Nevertheless, here, they were stealing from the Sultan's subjects. How did they have the courage? Again, they were distant, and the center's reaction was slow. It took at least half a year before they were punished for what they had done. This did not happen around Istanbul, as the state could intervene immediately. For instance, Janissaries entered, robbed, and returned whenever they wanted. The voivode, who was the regional ruler, was afraid of them. The Ottomans also had representatives there, such as qadis and garrisons. For example, there was a garrison in Timișoara, but there was nothing else there, making it easy to plunder. The power was far away, which is why they came.

The state reacted to all this and tried to keep it under control, but the bandits still did such acts. Thus, this banditry was mutual; this was life on the periphery. They came from both sides. The *mühimme registers* were full of these kinds of complaints.

Ultimately, banditry is a complicated issue. Everyone in the periphery had a plan. To illustrate, the Habsburgs and the Poles wanted to interfere and draw a new border by taking this region from the Ottomans. There were also activities within the Ottoman Empire itself. There was general tension in the area; as a result, bandits felt this tension, robbed and ran away.

Researchers want to give Wallachia a different status. They talk about it as if the Ottomans went all the way to the Danube and ended there, and on the other side, as if things were getting out of hand as if there was no active control. However, this is not the case since the state was trying to keep the region under control. If there was corruption, banditry, etc., on the other side, the state was immediately informed. Without power, they would not even know about it, which would have been lost after 20-30 years. In other words, the state had a control mechanism and attached great importance to its security as the first line of sight for the enemy. We can also mention a decree written to the king of Transylvania and Hungary. The voivode of Wallachia sent a letter to Istanbul and reported that some bandits had escaped and traveled to Transylvania, where they gathered and repeatedly harmed the Wallachian *reaya*. In response, the Sultan said to the king of Transylvania that Wallachia and Moldavia are a province of mine which I conquered with my sword, and its inhabitants are my subjects. The bandits from there always take refuge in your region and continue to cause harm. You have been repeatedly ordered to prevent them from entering your country and to deal with those who come. It is necessary to search for the bandits who fled and came there and send their heads to me so they will not dare to commit mischief again. Report to me how many of them you captured and how you dealt with them, not

allowing anyone to come there again and complain about banditry.¹¹² As we can see from the decree's content, the Ottomans considered Wallachia their land, especially after Suleyman; they said it belonged to them. With the understanding of international diplomacy of that period, when the land was conquered with a sword after a war, it belonged to the person who took it, and a peace agreement would be signed. This was also the case in Wallachia. In a way, the Ottomans were trying to prevent damage to their land.

Voivodes were utilized to identify and take measures against issues such as injustices against the *reaya*, banditry, and rebellions. In this case, Wallachia could be considered an essential part of Ottoman domestic politics because it was also part of the state, and the state did not leave it unattended. The state intervened when it deemed it necessary to return goods stolen by banditry and to prevent injustice. Especially the qadis around the Danube were assigned to such cases. An example is a decree written to the qadi of Brăila, Nikopol, and Çernovi. The voivode of Wallachia wrote a letter to the Sultan, stating that some people from the towns of Giurgiu and Brăila drove the horses, cattle, and other cattle of the Wallachian *reaya* and when the owners found their cattle with their stamps and asked them back, they asked for Muslim witnesses

¹¹² “Erdel ve Macar Kralı'na hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Eflâk Voyvodası Petri Voyvoda atebe-i ulyâma mektûb gönderüp vilâyet-i Eflâk'dan ba'zı ehl-i fesâd kaçup vilâyet-i Erdel'e duhûl idüp kendü hevâlarına tâbi' ba'zı ehl-i fesâd cem' idüp niçe def'adur ki Eflâk re'âyâsın gâret ü hasâret eyleyüp bu def'a dahı ba'zı ehl-i şenâ'at cem' olup vilâyet-i Eflâk'a küllî zarar u ziyan idüklerin bildürdi. İmdi, vilâyet-i Eflâk ve Boğdan benim şemşir-i zafer-rehberüm ile feth u teshir olmuş memleket ü vilâyetümdür. Ve re'âyâ vü berâyâsı dahı harâc-güzârlarumdur. Dâ'imâ vilâyet-i mezbûrenün ehl-i fesâdı varup sizün vilâyetiniuze sığınup gelüp eger Eflâk ve eger Boğdan'da fesâddan hâlî olmayup niçe def'a bu husûs için size ahkâm-ı şerife gönderilüp anun gibi ehl-i fesâdı memlekete komayup ve dâhil olanları ele getirüp haklarından gelesiz diyü fermân-ı şerifüm olmuş idi. Sen dahı yarar kulumsun. Gerekdür ki dergâh-ı gerdûn-iktidârımuza olan mahz-ı ihlâs ve fart-ı ihtisâsınız muktezâsınca bu bâbda dâ'imâ bi'z-zât mukayed olup eger Eflâk'dan ve eger Boğdan'dan anun gibi firâr idüp ol cânibe varan ehl-i fesâdı her kande[y]se ve her kimse tettebbu' u tecessüs idüp ele getirüp dahı haklarından gelüp başların Südde-i sa'âdet'üme gönderesin ki bir dahı zikr olunan vilâyetlerin ehl-i fesâdı anda varup fitne vü fesâda mübâşeret itmeğe iktidârları olmaya ve bi'l-cümle bu def'a vilâyet-i Eflâk'dan varup fesâda mübâşir olanları her ne tarikle olursa ele getirüp haklarından gelmek bâbında envâ'-ı mesâ'î-i cemîle zuhûra getüresin. Bir dahı kimesne varup anda şakâvet idüp tekrâr şekvâ itdürmelü itmeyesin ve zikr olunan ehl-i fesâddan ne mikdâr ele getirilüp ne vechile haklarından gelindüğin yazup bildüresin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.227, h.507.

and the *reaya* could not find them. In response, the Sultan sent a decree to the qadi of Brăila, Nikopol, and Çernovi, stating that the cattle of the Wallachian *reaya* had been stolen and that when the qadi found them in their towns, they were to find out who had them, from whom they were taken and how they were taken, and to imprison those who had stolen these cattle.¹¹³

Since the Vidin-Nikopol-Ruse line was the closest line of land to Wallachia to the Black Sea, Vidin Sanjak was one of the leading centers where orders regarding the order of Wallachian were sent. The Wallachian voivode Petri had previously sent a letter to the Sultan stating that some defeatists had united in Transylvania but that he hoped they would soon be dealt with. In response, the Sultan sent a decree to Vidin's bey and Moldavia's voivode to be on Petri's side. He should communicate with them if necessary and try to protect the homeland and the *reaya* in unity.¹¹⁴ A decree was also sent to the bey of Vidin on the same subject, asking the bey to keep an eye on the region since the voivode of Wallachia had asked for help when necessary, and if

¹¹³ “Brayıl ve Niğeboli ve Çernovi kâdisına [kādîlarına] hüküm ki: Eflâk voyvodası Südde-i sa’âdet’üme mektûb gönderüp ... ve Yergöği ve Brayıl nâm kasabalardan âmiller ve ba’zı uğrı, vilâyet-i Eflâk re’âyâsının bârgîrin ve sığırın ve sâ’ir davarların sürüp ashâbı, tamgasiyle davarın bulup taleb eyledükde re’âyâdan Müslimân şâhid isteyüp Müslimân şâhide acz çeküp bî nihâye davarları zâyi’ olup bu husûsda re’âyâya ziyâde zulümdür; Müslimân şâhid bulmağa kâdir değillerdür diyü i’lâm eylemişsiz. Buyurdum ki: Hüküm-i şerîfüm vardukda, her biriniz bu bâbda mukayyed olup anun gibi Eflâk re’âyâsının davarları serika olup taht-ı kazânuzda alâmetleriyle bulduklarında her kimün elinde bulunursa ve ne yirden alup ve kimden alduğun buldurup dahı ne tarıkla alduğı yiri bulmaya, serika olduğı zâhir ola, ol makule elinde serika olunmuş davar bulınanları habs idüp ahvâllerin ve elinde bulunan davar kimin olup ve ne makule kimesne idüğün yazup bildüresiz. Fi’l-vâkı ‘kazıyye arz olunduğı üzre midür? Anı dahı yazup bildüresiz.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.141, h.308.

¹¹⁴ “Eflâk Voyvodası Petri Voyvoda’ya hüküm ki: Südde-i sa’âdet’üme mektûb gönderüp Erdel’den ba’zı müfsidler cem’iyyet üzre olup ammâ ümîzdür ki an-karîb münhezîm ü makhûr olup haklarından geline ve memleket birleşince Emîr-i Ahurum Ali zîde mecdühû ol vilâyetde eğlenmesi husûsın i’lâm eylemişsin. İmdi, Vidin begine ve Boğdan voyvodasına senün tarafuna hâzır u nâzır olmalarıçün hüküm-i şerîfüm gönderilmişdür. Buyurdum ki: Vardukda, anun gibi ba’zı ehl-i fesâdun def’ u mazarratı husûsında lâzım gelürse anlar ile haberleşüp yek-dil ü yek-cihet olup hıfz u hırâset-i memleket ve zabt u sıyânet-i râ’iyyet bâbında dakika fevt itmeyüp ikdâm ü ihtimâm üzre olasin ve müşârün-ileyh emîr-i ahurum Âstâne-i sa’âdet’üme gelüp gide.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.220, h.489.

bandits moved, to support them by allying with the voivode when he sent news for their expulsion.¹¹⁵

To control such movements immediately, decrees were sent to the qadis and sanjak beys in the immediate vicinity, and efforts were made to maintain order with the measures taken. For this purpose, the bey of Vidin, one of the closest points to Wallachia, was appointed as the minister of Wallachia and authorized to solve any problems. A decree was sent to the bey and qadi of Vidin, and the Sultan reminded the bey of Vidin that he had previously sent an order to Vidin to be the guardian of Wallachia. He also mentioned the letter of the voivode of Wallachia and asked them to be always ready for that side, to help and support if bandits came, and to send men if the voivode requested it. As a noteworthy point, the men to be sent were warned and asked to refrain from attacking the land and its inhabitants when they arrived in Wallachia.¹¹⁶

The fact that such requests were made from Vidin, which we know was directly connected to the central administration, indicates that Wallachia had a slightly different status than these provinces and that those who left Vidin were trying to take advantage of this. On the other side of the Danube, the format of power, the land

¹¹⁵ “Vidin begine hüküm ki: Eflâk voyvodası Südde-i sa’âdet’üme mektûb gönderüp vilâyet-i Erdel’den gelmiş ba’zı müfsidler cem’iyyet üzere olup anun gibi vilâyet-i Eflâk’a zarar kasdına hareket iderlerise def’ u mazarratları husûsında mu’âvenet lâzım gelürise mu’âvenet olunmasın i’lâm i[t]düği ecilden buyurdum ki: Varıcak, sen dahı mezkûr voyvoda taraflarına göz ve kulak tutup anun gibi ehl-i fesâd hareket idüp def’ u mazarratları bâbında mu’âvenet lâzım gelüp sana haber gönderdükde mezkûr voyvoda ile yek-dil ü yek-cihet olup hüsn-i ittihâd ü ittifâk üzere ehl-i fesâdun def’-i mazarratları husûsında her ne tarikle olurise mu’âvenet ü müzâheret eyleyüp memleket [ü] vilâyete zarar u gezend irişdürmemek bâbında ve devlet-i ebed-peyvendüme müteferri’ olan mesâlih u mühimmâtı envâ’-ı mesâ’îf-i cemile zuhûra getüresin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.220, h.490.

¹¹⁶ “Vidin begine ve kâdîsına hüküm ki: Bundan akdem sana hükm-i şerîfüm gönderilüp Eflâk cânibine nâzır olasın diyü emrüm olmuş idi. Hâliyâ Eflâk Voyvodası Petri Voyvoda mektûb gönderüp Ungurus tarafından ba’zı ehl-i fesâd zuhûr idüp vilâyet-i Eflâk’a dâhil oldukda üzerine varup haklarından geldiğün bildürmeğün buyurdum [ki]: (Boşluk) Vusûl buldukda, dâ’imâ ol cânibe hâzır u nâzır olup anun gibi bir cânibden ehl-i fesâd zuhûr idüp mu’âvenet lâzım gelüp senden müzâheret taleb iderse eger âdem göndermek iledür ve eger sâ’ir her ne tarikle olursa gereği gibi mu’âvenet ü müzâheret idesin. Ammâ gönderdiğün âdemlere tenbîh ü te’kid eylesin ki, ol cânibe varmalu olduklarında vilâyet-i Eflâk’a ve re’âyâya te’addiden hazer ideler.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.212, h.474.

regime, and the status of territorial authority differed from those under direct control. In Wallachia, there was hardly any mîrî land regime; there was an exception. In the *Mâlikâne System*, the owner of the malikane gained some independence. They could exploit the tax source according to state rules. Wallachia had a similar format. The state never considered Wallachia independent or autonomous; only the form differed.

With the permission granted by the state, the owner of the Malikane acquired all financial rights related to taxation on the estate, as well as some rights related to public order and administration. As explained in the famous phrase “*mefrûzu'l-kalem ve maktû'ü'l-kıdem min külli'l-vücûh serbestiyyet üzere hayatda oldukça tasarruf olunmak*” the Malikane owner gained rights to use in his lifetime. No official other than qadi, who had administrative authority, would be allowed to interfere with the Malikane. This was clearly stated in the certificate issued by the state.¹¹⁷

As will be detailed in the next chapter, since Wallachia had also been ruled on a complimentary basis since time immemorial, we can talk about a system similar to the Malikane system because the same thing was used in that system; the right to collect taxes was for life, but the peasant and the land belonged to the state. In short, there was controlled exploitation. This is not feudalism; it is a paternalistic model. The Ottomans saw Wallachia as a Malikane. It gave freedom to voivodes and aristocrats to collect taxes freely. The Sultan said, “Economically, it belongs to me; it is Miri land, but I gave it to the voivode.” The fact that the men from Vidin were warned not to harm Wallachian land and *reaya* may have created the impression of a more liberal administration, and this may have made it more open to exploitation. In addition, the lack of a stricter administration like Vidin may have encouraged those who crossed

¹¹⁷ Genç Mehmet, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve Ekonomi* (Beyoğlu, İstanbul: Ötüken, 2014), p.103.

the Danube to engage in such activities, creating the expectation that they would not face heavy penalties from the center. However, the state had to take social, economic, and military measures there because it says, “I took this land; it belongs to me.”

Again, a decree was sent to the qadis of Silistra, Nikopol, and Ruse on the same subject, mentioning the letter of the Wallachian qadi and asking them to send volunteer men without delay if bandits came there again and the voivode needed help. Furthermore, again, they were told not to attack the Wallachian *reaya* and to deal with the bandits with the help of the voivode.¹¹⁸ The fact that such warnings were repeated in different regions shows that such incidents were encountered, and the state was trying to take measures against them.

In another decree sent to *emir-i ahur*, the *reaya* also sent petitions and complaints to the center in response to these situations. In this regard, the center wanted to investigate the problems in the petitions and find the truth. Did such incidents happen, or did these *reaya* come to the center with the provocation of someone? Also, did they come only for these incidents, or did they come with the enticement of someone who had a benefit? In short, the answers to all these questions and the situation in Wallachia were requested to be written and reported.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ “Silistre ve Niğebolu ve Ruscuk kâdîlarına [ve] voyvodalarına hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Eflâk voyvodası Südde-i sa’âdet’üme mektûb gönderüp Ungurus vilâyetinden ba’zı ehl-i fesâd zuhûr idüp Eflâk vilâyetini gâret kasdına geldüklerinde üzerlerine varup haklarından geldüğün bildürmeğün buyurdum ki: Anun gibi girü ba’zı ehl-i fesâd zuhûr idüp vilâyet-i Eflâk’a duhûl idüp voyvodaya mu’âvenet lâzım gelürse te’hîr itmeyüp gönüllü yarar yiğitlerden ve sâ’irden voyvodalara koşup gönderesiz. Siz ki voyvodalarsız, anun gibi varmalu oldukda siziñle giden halkdan vilâyet-i Eflâk re’âyâsına kimesneyi dahl ü tecâvüz itdirmeyüp gereği gibi hıfz eyleyüp ehl-i fesâd olanların Eflâk voyvodası ma’rifetiyle haklarından gelesiz.” BOA, MD, no.3, pp.212-213, h.475.

¹¹⁹ “Küçük emîr-i ahura hüküm ki: Hâliyâ vilâyet-i Eflâk’dan ba’zı re’âyâ gelüp re’âyâ ağzından ba’zı arz-ı hâller sunup sıhhati ma’lûm olmak için aynı ile sana irsâl olunup buyurdum ki: İrsâl olunan kâğıdlarda olan ahvâle bi’t-tamâm vâkıf olup dahı aslı nedür, vâkı’midür, yohsa ba’zı kimesnelerin igvâsiyle mi gelmişlerdür ve bunda gelenler ne makule kimesnelerdür? Mücerred bu husûs için mi gelmişlerdür, yohsa gayrı kâr ü kisbleri için gelüp dahı mücerred igvâ ile mi bunları sunmuşlardır? Ve bi’l-cümle hasb-i hâle muttali’olup vuku’ı üzre mu’accelen mezbûr ile yazup bildüresin ve andan gayrı bir dahı her cânibden vâkıf olduğun ahvâli ve Eflâk vilâyeti ahvâlin yazup bildüresin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.256, h.568.

Investigations revealed that the situation differed from what was described in the petitions, and a decree was sent to the voivode of Wallachia. Accordingly, the Sultan sent an edict to Ali, his *emîr-i âhur*, to have the letters of the Wallachian *reaya* inspected, and Oruç Çavuş, to whom he had sent an order, brought the ayans of his province and told them that he had seen the letters presented and the matters attributed to the boyars. They sent a letter to the center in which they said that all the ayans rejected the notes, they did not know of them, these were all lies, the people who brought the letters were not the *reaya*, and they did not oppress them, the people who got the letters were corrupters who fled to Sokol and Transylvania and were subject to the treacherous boyars, and that their men always dealt with them justly. The voivode also stated that he trusted no one and settled every matter himself with his useful boyars. Those who had deserted from the war and gone to Transylvania had gone to the capital disguised as *reaya*. The Sultan said that he was aware of all this, reiterated that he had conquered Wallachia with his sword and that its *reaya* were tributaries like other *reaya*, and reminded the voivode that he had protected the province entrusted to him for a long time by his father Mircea, that he had not oppressed the *reaya*, that he had spent his strength on services to fulfill his servitude, and that he was now a helpful servant. As a result, the voivode was instructed to act promptly in protecting the country, preventing any oppression against the subjects, taking measures to prevent harm to the state from bandits, and striving to serve in all aspects even more diligently than his father by reporting news from all directions.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ “Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Südde-i sa’âdet’üme mektûb gönderüp mukaddemâ anda irsâl olunan kîdvetü’l-emâcid ve’l-ekârim emîr-i ahurum Ali zîde mecduhû’ya hükm-i şerîf gönderilüp vilâyet-i Eflâk re’âyâsı tarafından Südde-i sa’âdet’üme sunulan ruk’aların vuku’ı ve gayr-ı vâkı’ olduğu teftîş olunmak emrüm olmağın müşârün-ileyhe Südde-i sa’âdet’üme müteveccih olup hükm-i şerîfümle irsâl olunan kîdvetü’l-emâsil ve’l-akrân Oruç Çavuş zîde kadruhû bi-nefsihî vilâyet-i mezbûrenün a’yânın getürdüp sunulan ruk’aları ve sâ’ir bolarlarına isnâd olunan husûsları hakk üzerine görüp vilâyet-i mezbûre a’yânı bi’l-küllî ol ruk’aları inkâr idüp “Bundan haberimiz yoktur, cümlesi tezvîrdür ve itdikleri da’vâ hilâf-ı vâkı’dür ve varup ruk’a sunanlar re’âyâ değildir. Bizüm mesâlihümüz her vechile

The banditry issue had a very negative impact on the people of Wallachia, both socially and economically. For this reason, the Ottomans focused on this issue to protect their subjects. Previously, an order had been sent to King Stephen of Transylvania to deal with the banditry in Wallachia and those who went to Transylvania. Still, nothing had been done about it, and it was heard that the bandits had gathered here and intended to harm Wallachia. Thereupon, the Sultan wrote a decree ordering the investigation and punishment of the mentioned bandits, emphasizing the need to protect the villages, districts, and subjects of Wallachia from harm and demanding that the heads of the leaders be brought to his presence. In this regard, he was ordered to waste no time and write down how many bandits had been captured so far and not to leave a single individual in Transylvania so that there would be no possibility of an attack on Wallachia in the future and also to be in alliance with the Wallachian voivode.¹²¹

görlüp senden rızâ vü şükrân üzere olup sâ'ir bolarlardan ve gayrıdan zulmümüz yokdur. Ruk'a sunan eşirrâ Sokol ile Erdel'e gaybet idüp el'ân anda olan hâ'in bolarlara tâbî' müfsidlerdür ve âdemimiz her vechile istirâhat üzere olup mesâlihümüz hakk üzere görlüp bu kazıyye ba'zı şerîrlerün igvâsiyle tedârük olunmışdur" diyü a'yân-ı vilâyet mektûblar virüp Südde-i sa'âdet'üme gönderüp andan gayrı sen dahı vilâyet hıfz u hırâsetinde olup kimesneye i'timâd itmeyüp yarar bolarların ile her husûsı kendün gördüğün bildürüp bundan evvel cengden fîrâr iden Erdel'e varup re'âyâ sûretinde Südde-i sa'âdet'üme geldüklerin i'lâm itmişsin. Her ne dimiş isen ma'lûm oldı. İmdi, vilâyet-i Eflâk benim şemşîr-i zafer-te'sîrüm ile feth u teshîr olmuş memleketüm re'âyâ vü berâyâsı dahı sâ'ir re'âyâm gibi harâc-güzârlarumdur. Baban Mirço niçe zamân voyvoda olup memleket [ü] vilâyet[i] emânet ü istikâmet ile hıfz idüp re'âyâ vü berâyâyâ zulm ü te'addî itmeyüp ve itdürmeyüp ubûdiyyet ü ihlâs ile vâkı' olan hıdemât-ı hümayûnumda bezl-i maktûr ider kulum idi. Sen dahı yarar kulumsun. Buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, sen dahı kemâl-i basîret üzere olup hıfz [u] hırâset-i memleket ve zabt [u] rabt-ı ra'ıyyet bâbında dakika fevt itmeyüp re'âyâ vü berâyâyâ zulm ü te'addî itmekden ve kimesneye itdürmekden ziyâde hazer idüp dâ'imâ adâlet üzere ahvâllerin bildürüp görüp atebe-i ulyâma olan ubûdiyyet ü rıkkıyyetün muktezâsınca vâkı' olan hıdemât-ı hümayûnumda bezl-i maktûr eyleyüp a'dâdan ve sâ'ir ehl-i fesâd ü şenâ'atden memleket [ü] vilâyete ve re'âyâ vü berâyâyâ zarar u gezend irişdürmekden ziyâde ictinâb eyleyüp her husûsda mücidd ü merdâne olup emn ü emân-ı vilâyet ve refâhiyyet-i itmi'nân-ı ra'ıyyet bâbında dakika fevt itmeyüp muhtâc-ı arz olanı ve etrâf ü cevânibden vâkıf olduğın ahbârı i'lâmdan hâlî ü zâ'il olmayasın. Her husûsda babandan ziyâde hıdmet itmeğe sa'y idesin." BOA, MD, no.3, pp.295-296, h.649.

¹²¹ "Vilâyet-i Erdel ve Macar Kralı İstefan Kral'a hükm-i şerîf yazıla ki: Bundan akdem vilâyet-i Eflâk'dan fesâd ü şenâ'at eyleyüp vilâyet-i Erdel'e varup eşirrâ vü eşkıyânun haklarından gelesin diyü emrüm olmuş idi. Henüz dahı haklarından gelinmemek ile girü vilâyet-i Erdel'de cem'iyyet idüp vilâyet-i Eflâk'a zarar u gezend kasdında idükleri istimâ' olunup buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, Âstâne-i devlet-âşîyân'uma olan vüfûr-i ihlâs ve fart-ı ihtisâsun muktezâsınca bu bâbda gereği gibi mukayyed olup zıkr olunan ehl-i fesâdı her kande ise tetebbu'u tecessüs eyleyüp ele getirüp onat vechile haklarından gelüp anlardan ve gayrıdan vilâyet-i Eflâk'un kurâ vü nevâhîsine ve re'âyâ vü berâyâsına zarar u gezend

From time to time, bandits who wanted to take advantage of the change of voivode in Wallachia could also emerge. We find this example in a decree sent to the voivode of Moldavia. According to this, after the death of voivode Mircea, some bandits who had betrayed him were sent to Black Wallachia with the alliance of King Stephen, all the boyars, and the Transylvanian and Hungarian beys. In response, the voivode of Moldavia stated that his troops were ready but could not go without a decree. According to the news of his men from Transylvania, King Stephen allied with all the boyars and the Transylvanian and Hungarian guards. He decided not to pay the tribute they paid yearly. In addition, one of Stephen's men in Istanbul would inform him of any information and send the news to Ferdinand. In this situation, voivode Stephen stated that he did not know the opinions of the king, Transylvanian, and Hungarian lords when they gathered. He said that if he learned what the bandits were about to do, he would report it as it was. The Sultan's reply to the voivode was to be always ready for the voivode of Wallachia, to help him with as many men as necessary, and to carry out various activities to expel the designed troublemakers by whatever means possible. He also ordered him to refrain from harming Wallachia, to devote his strength to the service of the Sultan following his servitude, to report the news he had learned, and if anyone came to harm Moldavia like this, to be dealt with properly and to protect the country from harm.¹²² A look behind the scenes at the Ottoman relations

irişdurmeyüp baş müfsidlerün başların atebe-i ulyâma gönderesin. Bulunan espâb ve emvâllerin alup zabt eylesesin. Kadîmden Âstâne-i sa'âdet medâr'uma sadâkat ü istikâmet ile hıdmet idegelmiş yarar kulum olduğun ecilden vilâyet-i Erdel ve Macar'un cumhûr u umûrî senün re'y-i sıyânetüne tefvîz olunmuşdur. Bu husûsda dahı tamâm basîret üzre olup zikr olunan ehl-i fesâdı emr-i şerîfüm üzre ele getirüp haklarından gelinmek bâbında dakika fevt itmeyüp ve şimdiye değin ne mikdâr ehl-i fesâd ele getirüp salb itdiğün ve hâliyâ dahı ne mikâr ele gelüp hakkından gelindüğün yazup bildürüp zikr olunan a'dâdan vilâyet-i Erdel'de bir ferd komayup bir vechile haklarından gelesin ki, anlardan vilâyet-i Eflâk'a min-ba'd te'addî ve tecâvüz ihtimâli olmaya. Vilâyet-i Erdel'i dahı onat vechile zabt u rabt eyleyüp re'âyâ vü berâyâ emn ü emân ve refâhiyyet [ü] itmi'nân üzre olmaları bâbında mücidd ü merdâne olup gaflet ile bir mahalle zarar ırgürmekden hazer idüp vâkıf olduğun ahhâr-ı sahîha[yı] i'lâmdan hâli olmayasın ve Eflâk voyvodasıyle dahı yekdil [ü] yek-cihet olup, hüsn-i ittihâd [ü] ittifâk üzre olasın." BOA, MD, no.3, p.183, h.407.

¹²² "Boğdan voyvodasına hüküm ki: Mektûb gönderüp Mirço Voyvoda fevt olduktan sonra mezbûr Mirço Voyvoda'ya hıyânet iden ba'zı eşirrä üç bölük olup, bir bölüğü İstefan Kral'un ve bir bölüğü

with Austria and Hungary reveals that the voivodes and their spies closely monitored the military and political situation. The fact that Transylvania sent information to the Austrian king even though it was part of the Ottoman Empire calls into question the loyalty to the state in the most distant parts of the Ottoman Empire. It gives a clue about life on the periphery. Accordingly, these regions could easily change sides, but no matter what, the state did not hesitate to protect its borders and emphasized at every opportunity that these regions belonged to it. Its success in this was directly proportional to the power of the state.

One of the situations that disturbed the Wallachian *reaya* was banditry and robbery by Ottoman officials. Notably, the state recognized these individuals down to their names, indicating their efforts to maintain power in the face of these incidents. An example of this can be found in the decree sent to the qadi of Silistra. Accordingly, the Wallachian voivode sent a letter to the center stating that a person called Hamza Subaşı in Brăila gathered men from the Wallachian raiders and caused disturbances in Wallachia and that they stole cattle and brought them to Hasan's house, that he

Plademir Çaret ve bir bölüğü Patrandıraş (?) ellerinde olup İstefan Kral'un ve cümle bolarların ve Erdel ve Macar beglerinin ittifâklariyle birin Kara Eflâk vilâyetine gönderüp varup duhûl itmişlerdür. Husûs-ı mezbûr için askerimiz hâzırdur. Emr-i şerîf olmayınca varup mukâbil olmazuz, İstefan Kral itdüği gibi itmek istemezüz. Erdel cânibinden gelen âdemlerimiz şöyle haber getürdiler ki: "İstefan Kral cümle bolarlariyle ve Erdel ve Macar bekçinüz ile ittifâk eylediler ki, şimdiye değin seneden seneye harâc virildüğü gibi bir dahı virilmeye" diyü Âstâne-i sa'âdet'e harâc getürmezlerse isyân üzre olmaları mukarrer olur ve Âstâne-i sa'âdet'de İstefan Kral'un Julay Mihay nâm âdemisi olup ziyâde şerîr olup, 'de her ne istimâ' iderse bi'l-külliyeye İstefan Kral'a i'lâm ider ve İstefan Kral dahı Magrib cânibinden olan krallara ve Ferenduş'a ve sâ'irlere haber idüp i'lâm ider. Şimdiki hâlde İstefan Kral, Erdel ve Macar beglerini cem'idüp, danışık itmek isterleriken fikri ne idüğü ma'lûm olmadı. Efkâr-ı fâsidi nenün üzerine olduğı ma'lûm olursa ber-vech-i isti'câl arz olunur diyü i'lâm eylemişsin. Bu bâbda her ne dahı dinilmişse ma'lûm-ı şerîfüm oldı. Eyle olsa buyurdum ki: Vardukda, Eflâk voyvodası cânibine dâ'imâ hâzır u nâzır olup anun gibi eger nefsünledür ve eger kifâyet mikdârı âdem göndermek iledür, her ne vechile olursa gaflet itmeyüp, mahall iktizâ itdüğüne göre gereğı gibi mu'âvenet ü müzâheret idüp her ne vechile mümkün ü mutasavverse mazarrat ü ifsâdların def' u ref' itmek bâbında envâ'-ı mesâ'î-i cemîlen zuhûra getüresin. Gaflet ile ehl-i fesâddan vilâyet-i Eflâk'a zarar u gezend irişdürmekten hazer idesin. Atebe-i ulyâ'ma olan ubûdiyyet ü ihlâsun muktezâsınca vâkı' olan hidemât-ı hümayûnumda bezl-i maktûr eyleyüp, her cânibden vâkıf olduğun ahabâr-ı sahîhayı Südde-i sa'âdet'ime i'lâmdan hâlî olmayasın ve anun gibi Boğdan vilâyetine zarar kasdına gelenleri dahı gereğı gibi haklarından gelüp memleket [ü] vilâyete îrâs-ı zarar u ziyân irişdürmeyüp hıfz u hırâset-i memleket ve savn u siyânet-i râ'îyyet bâbında envâ'-ı mesâ'î-i cemîle zuhûra getüresin." BOA, MD, no.3, p.222, h.495.

supported the raiders, and that they destroyed and devastated the nearby places. All the *reaya* who lived close to those places had repeatedly gone to voivode Mircea and complained to him, and they had also come to the present voivode and cried out. The voivode informed them that if this man did not leave Brăila or was not dealt with, they had decided to leave their homes and go elsewhere. In this case, the Sultan asked the qadi of Silistra to inspect the man and prepare him for the court, to inspect all of them if there was anyone who deserved to be sued, and if it was as the voivode presented, to imprison him and report the situation in writing if it was proved by sharia that he had taken bandits like him and supported them and stole the cattle of the *reaya*.¹²³

The center continued to receive complaints about people under different names engaging in the same activities. In this regard, when the voivode of Wallachia sent a man and complained that a man named Memi had raided villages and massacred men, he requested a decree for inspection again since this had not been done despite the issuance of an edict for review. In response, the Sultan sent a decree to the governor of Vidin and the qadi of Silistra, ordering that the man be brought to his presence and inspected without delay and that whatever was ordered by the sharia be carried out. However, the sharia did not establish his guilt; he instructed to investigate whether he had any involvement in mischief and evil, whether he associated with bandits, and whether he had a criminal record and to report the findings. Furthermore, he also

¹²³ “*Silistre kādīsına hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Eflâk Voyvodası Petri Voyvoda Südde-i sa’âdet’üme mektûb gönderüp kasaba-i Brayıl’da mütemekkin Hamza Sübaşı dimekle ma’rûf nâm kimesne vilâyet-i Eflâk müfsidlerinden yanına niçe müfsid cem’ idüp mezkûrûn müfsidler vilâyet-i Eflâk ihtilâline sebep olduklarından gayrı gice ve gündüz vilâyet-i mezbûrenün davarların serika idüp ve mezkûr Hasan’un evine getirüp kendüsi zıkr olan müfsidlere mu’in olup yakın olan memleketi yıkup harâb itdürmüşdür. Ol yire karîb olan re’âyâ bi’l-küllîyye defe’âtle babam Mirço Voyvoda kullarına gelüp şikâyetler eyledüğinden gayrı yine tekrâr bu kullarına gelüp feryâd ü figân eylediler. Eger bu kimesne Brayıl’dan gidüp ve yâhûd hakkından gelinmezse cümle yirimüz ve yurdumuz biragup âhar yire firâr eylemek mukarrerdür diyü bildürmüşsin. İmdi, mezkûrun teftiş olunmasın emr idüp buyurdum ki: Mezkûri ihzâr idüp da’vâ-yı hakk ider kimesneler varsa husamâsiyle berâber idüp Şer’ile teftiş eyleyüp göresin; müşârûn-ileyh voyvoda arz itdüğü gibi ise anun gibi ehl-i fesâdı yanına alup mu’in olduğı ve re’âyânun davarın ve sâ’ir espâbın serika itdüğü ve yataklığı Şer’ile sâbit olursa habs idüp ahvâlin mufasssal yazup bildüresin.*” BOA, MD, no.3, p.324, h.721.

ordered an investigation into the establishment of a later farm on the border of Wallachia, assessing whether it causes harm to the *reaya* of Wallachia, and inquiring about the origins of the farm, whether it was newly established or pre-existing, and report the true nature of it.¹²⁴

It is understood from the ongoing complaints that Hamza and Memi were involved in many incidents that caused unrest in the region. The voivode of Wallachia informed the center in a letter that the carriage in the house of a man named Hasan in Giurgiu had broken down and his belongings had been stolen and that the suspects were the owner of the house, Memi and his associates. The state sent a decree to the bey of Vidin and the qadi of Silistra, ordering them to inspect the matter with the confrontation of the adversaries, and if Hamza had the stolen goods and if Hasan was also found, to take their rights through sharia, and if not, to investigate the arbitrary actions of Hamza, Hasan, and others from the people, to find out whether they have a criminal record or whether they are known as good people, and to report in detail. He asked for copies to be sent if they had a criminal record.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ “Vidin begine ve Silistre kâdîsına hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Eflâk voyvodası âdem gönderüp Memi nâm kimesne için, köyler basup ve âdemler katl itdi diyü bundan akdem arz olındukda, teftîş için hüküm-i şerîf virilüp görilmediğin ve tekrâr teftîş olmak için hüküm-i şerîfüm recâ itmeğin buyurdum ki: Vardukda, te’hîr eylemeyüp mezbûr ele getürüp husamâ muvâcehesinde husûs-ı mezbûr ber-mûceb-i Şer ‘-i Şerîf teftîş idüp göresin; fi’l-vâkı ‘kazıyye arz eylediği gibi ise ki Şer ‘ile sâbit ola, bu bâbda emr-i Şer ‘ neyse icrâ idesin. Ammâ şöyle ki, Şer ‘ile sâbit olmayacak olursa mezbûr kimesnenün yaramazlığı ve fesâd ü şenâ’ati var mıdur ve yanına levend ve hırsuz ehl-i fesâd makulesinden âdem gelür gider nicedür ve tühmet-i sâbıkası var mıdur? Hakikati vuku’ı üzre yazup bildüresin ve mezbû[r], Eflâk sınırında sonradan bir çiftlik ihdâs eyleyüp Eflâk re’âyâsına ziyâde zararı var imiş, anı dahı göresin; ne asl çiftlikdür, sonradan mı ihdâs olmuşdur; re’âyâya zararı var mıdur? Aslı üzre bildüresin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.363, h.802.

¹²⁵ “Vidin begine ve Silistre kâdîsına hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Eflâk voyvodası mektûb gönderüp Yergöği’nde Hasan nâm kimesnenün evinde arabaları konup ol gice bir arabası bozulup çûka ve sâ’ir espâbları serika olunup mazınnaları ev sâhibi ve Memi nâm kimesneler ve sâ’ir şerîkleri idüğün arz itmeğin bundan akdem dahı hüküm-i şerîf virilüp sicill olduğın bildürmeğin buyurdum ki: (Boşluk) Vardukda, bu husûsı onat vechile hakk üzre Şer ‘ile husamâ muvâcehesinde teftîş idüp göresin; şöyle ki, mezkûrun evinde arabaları bozulup espâbları serika olunup eger mezkûr Hamza’dadur ve eger Hasan’da ve eger sâ’ir her kimde zuhûr iderse Şer ‘ile müteveccih olan hakların bî-kusûr mütevecih olandan hüküm idüp alıvirüp eger Şer ‘ile sâbit olmaz ise mezkûr Hamza’nun ve Hasan’un ve sâ’irlerinin keyfiyyet-i ahvâllerin halkdan tefahhus idüp anun gibi tühmet-i sâbika ile müttehem olmuşlar mıdur, nicedür, yoksa eyülükle mi meşhûrlardur? Mufasssal ahvâllerin bildüresin. Anun gibi tühmet-i sâbıkaları var ise aynı ile sûretlerin ihrâc idüp gönderesin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.369, h.816.

Although the Ottomans tried not to interfere in Wallachia's internal affairs, they also tried to protect the people there as they considered them their subjects. In order to ensure justice similar to that in other territories of the state, interventions were made in exceptional circumstances. Although sometimes state officials such as the *subaşı* were involved in such banditry, the Ottoman Empire never tolerated them and, when necessary, warned the qadi offices on the southern shore of the Danube and even appointed the sanjak beys of these areas as the ministers of Wallachia. If the voivode could not do anything alone, he endeavored to ensure they were ready to help and keep the peace in the region. In short, the state was constantly focused on the region's security. In this regard, a decree was sent to the qadi of Nikopol to imprison any treacherous boyars from Wallachia who came to Nikopol and to report the number of them.¹²⁶

This matter was not left unattended and similar decrees were sent to other sanjaks. Silistra was one of them. After the voivode of Wallachia reported that some of the former Wallachian boyars who had fought against the voivode and were defeated had settled in Brăila and Silistra, their names were written down and sent to Sinan Pasha, the bey of Silistra. Sinan Pasha was asked to capture and imprison these people and to write and report how many he had captured. It was also emphasized that this was important and that no time should be lost in capturing them.¹²⁷ The voivode

¹²⁶ “Niğebolı kâdisına hüküm ki: Eflâk vilâyetinde hıyânet iden bolarlardan taht-ı kazânda mütemekkin olan kimesne varsa tutulup habs olunup bir dil bilür bir erin Südde-i sa’âdet’üme gönderilmesin emr idüp buyurdum ki: Tercemân Mehmed zîde kadruhû vusûl buldukda, anun gibi taht-ı kazânda zikr olunan bolarlardan kimesne bulunursa ve kaç nefer ise emrüm üzre bir dil bilürin mezkûra koşup gönderüp bâkisin habs idüp yazup arz eyeleyesin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.390, h.862.

¹²⁷ “Silistre Begi Sinân Paşa’ya hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Eflâk voyvodası mektûb gönderüp bundan akdem Eflâk bolarlarından fitne vü fesâd iden kendüleriyle muhârebe idüp münhezim olan bolarlardan ba’zı Brayıl’da ve bazı Silistre’de temekkün itdüklerin ve girü fesâd ü şenâ’at üzre oldukların bildürmeğin ele gelmek için isimleriyle yazılup sana irsâl olındı. Buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, bu bâbda hüsn-i tedârük idüp mezkûrları her ne tarikle olur ise gaybet itdürmeyüp ele getürüp habs idüp ne mikdâr bolar ele gelüp habs olunduğun yazup bildüresin. Husûs-ı mezbûr mahall-i ihtimâmdur. Ana göre mukayyed olup mezkûrları ele getürüp habs itmek bâbında dakika fevt itmeyesin.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.547, h.1247.

of Wallachia was then informed that the necessary action regarding the banditry of the boyars had been written to Sinan Pasha. He was also asked to protect the country and convey the information he received without wasting time.¹²⁸

Various instructions were given to the bey of Silistra, and solutions were tried to be found. Previously, it was known that the Wallachian boyars who were causing mischief were based in Silistra and Brăila, and the names of some of them were sent. Since there was an edict to the bey of Silistra to imprison them wherever they were and to report how many boyars were detained, ten of the infidels who had fled from Wallachia were captured and imprisoned in Silistra castle. The boyar named Baluca has been there for six years and has now converted to Islam, and after Mircea became voivode of Wallachia, some of them slaughtered their relatives and brothers, were afraid and came here and settled here for three years, and lastly, a person named Alyo was captured and imprisoned in Hârşova and then converted to Islam. However, since it was not reported that those who converted to Islam from the non-Muslims above were apostates, the Sultan ordered the bey of Silistra to find out whether those who converted to Islam were apostates as reported, and when they converted to Islam and became apostates again, and to find out their situation and to fulfill whatever he ordered about them without pardoning their imprisonment.¹²⁹ The voivode of

¹²⁸ “Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Mektûb gönderüp vilâyet-i mezbûr bolarlarından bundan akdem fitne vü fesâd idenlerden ba’zı halâs olup kimi Brayıl’da ve kimi Silistre’de sâkin olup ele gelmeleri husûsın bildürmüşsin. İmdi, mezkûrları ele getirüp habs etmek için Silistre Sancağı Begi Sinân dâme ulüvvuhû’ya hükmi-i şerîfüm gönderilmişdür. Buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, sen dahı hıfz-ı hırâset-i memleket ve zabt [u] rabt-ı ra’iyyet bâbında mücidd ü merdâne olup dakika fevt itmeyüp vâkıf olduğun ahbârı ve muhtâc-ı arz olan husûsları i’lâmdan hâlî vü zâ’il olmayasın.” BOA, MD, no.3, p.547, h.1248.

¹²⁹ “Silistre begine hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Dergâh-ı mu’allâ’ma mektûb gönderüp Dergâh-ı Âlî çavuşlarından İskender Çavuş yedinden emr-i şerîf vârid olup mazmûn-ı hümayûnunda bundan akdem vilâyet-i Eflâk bolarlarından fesâd üzre olup Silistre’de ve Brayıl’da temekkün idüp ve ba’zın isimleri yazılıp gönderildi. Her ne mahalde var ise gaybet itdirmeyüp ele getirüp habs idüp ve ne mikdâr bolar habs olunduğın yazup bildüresin, diyü fermân olunmağın vilâyet-i Eflâk’dan kaçup gelmiş kefereden on nefer kimesne ele gelüp, Silistre kal’ası’nda habs olunup ve mahbûs-ı mezbûrinden Baluca nâm bolar geledi altı yıl olup hâliyâ Müslimân olup ve mâ’adâ Mirço, vilâyet-i Eflâk’a voyvoda olduktan sonra ba’zınun akribâsın ve ba’zınun karındaşların katl idüp bunlar dahı havflerinden kaçup memâlik-i

Wallachia was also informed about the measures taken against these bandits through the bey of Silistra.¹³⁰

Due to Wallachia's location, the Ottomans attached great importance to its borders and security and tried to take precautions against border violations. However, sometimes there were interventions on the borders. The voivode of Wallachia wrote in a letter that some officials and governors from other sides had entered the Wallachian border, violating some of his laws and offending and attacking his subjects. The center sent a decree to Ahmed Bey, the bey of Nikopol, and the qadi of Shumen and Razgrad, warning them not to let their men from the other side attack Wallachia's long-standing border and offend the Wallachian people and to write and report those who did not listen. However, he also emphasized that it was not permissible for the Wallachian side to enter his *memâlik-i mahrûse* under this pretext and to write what should be submitted accordingly.¹³¹ What is noteworthy here is that while trying to

mahmiyye-i İslâma gelüp sâkin olalı üç yıl olup ve Alyo nâm Eflâk dutulup kal'a-i Hırsova'da habs olunduktan sonra şehâdet kelimesin getürüp Müslimân olduğın arz eylemişsin. Ammâ zıkr olunan zimmîlerden İslâm'a gelen zimmîler mürtedler idüğü i'lâm olınmağın buyurdum ki: Varıcak, mezbûr zimmîlerden Müslimân olanları onat vechile görüp fi'l-vâkı 'i'lâm olunduğı üzere mürtedler midür ve ne zamânda Müslimân olup girü mürtedd olmuşlardur, nicedür? Ahvâllerin onat vechile görüp ma'lûm idinüp dahı habsden itlâk itmeyüp ahvâllerin yazup arz eyleyesin. Sonra anlar hakkında emrüm ne vechile olur ise mücebi ile amel idüp bâkilerin mahallinde haklarından gelesin ve emr-i şerîfüm yirine varup haklarından gelindüğün yazup arz eyleyesin." BOA, MD, no.3, p.628, h.1449.

¹³⁰ "Eflâk voyvodasına hüküm ki: Bundan akdem Dergâh-ı mu'allâ'ma mektûb gönderüp Eflâk tâ'ifesinden ba'zı ehl-i fesâd Brayıl'da ve Silistre'de mütemekkin olup, fesâd üzere oldukların arz itdüğünde iftihârü'l-ümerâ 'i'l-kirâm Silistre Begi Sinân dâme ulüvvuhû'ya ol bâbda hükmi şerîfüm gönderilmişdi. Hâliyâ müşârün-ileyh Südde-i sa'âdet'üme mektûb gönderüp zıkr olunan ehl-i fesâdun on neferi ele gelüp ikisi İslâma gelüp cümle habs olundukların ve seniün cânibünden dahı ol İslâma gelenler mürtedd idükleri arz olınmağın, mezkûr iki neferün ahvâlleri teftiş olup arz olup ve bâkilerinin haklarından gelinmek emr olup ol bâbda müşârün-ileyhe hükmi şerîfüm gönderilmişdir. Buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, tamâm basîret üzere olup hıfz [u] hırâset-i memleket bâbında dakika fevt itmeyüp, muhtâc-ı arz olanı yazup bildüresin." BOA, MD, no.3, p.630, h.1452.

¹³¹ "Niğebolı Begi Ahmed Beg'e ve Şumnu ve Hezargrad kâdisına hüküm ki: Hâliyâ Eflâk Voyvodası Petri Voyvoda mektûb gönderüp berü cânibden ba'zı ümenâ vü ummâl vilâyet-i Eflâk'un sınır ve hudûdına duhûl idüp kendüye müteveccih olan ba'zı hukuka ta'arruz idüp andan mâ'adâ re'âyâsın rencide idüp te'addî iderler imiş. Buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda, bu bâbda her biriniz bi'z-zât mukayyed olup vilâyet-i Eflâk'un kadîmden mu'ayyen ve mümtâz ve ma'mûlün-bih olan sınırına berü cânibden eger begler âdemlerinden ve eger sâ'ir ümenâ vü ummâlden ve bi'l-cümle ümerâyı dahl ü ta'arruz itdirmeyüp re'âyâsın dahı kimesneye hilâf-ı Şer' rencide itdirmeyesin. Anun gibi eslemeyenleri men'idüp memnû' olmayanları yazup bildüresin. Ammâ bu bahâne ile Eflâk tarafından dahı Memâlik-i mahrûse'm hudûdına dahl olmak câ'iz değildir. Ana göre mukayyed olup muhtâc-ı arz olanı yazup bildüresin." BOA, MD, no.3, p.579, h.1330.

ensure the border security of Wallachia, those on the other side were also asked not to violate the border. Thus, the state was trying to maintain general control over its territory.

Another border issue was the attempt of the governor of the castle of Giurgiu to change the border, which led to a complaint from the voivode of Wallachia. The voivode wrote in his letter that the previous disputes that had arisen because the border of the Giurgiu castle and the border of Wallachia were adjacent to each other had been inspected. Ahmed, the past governor of Nikopol, had determined the border. While the castle had been disposed of, as mentioned until now, the current castle's *emir*, Gıyâs (?) and Ali, wanted to redraw the border and attack. The Sultan sent a decree to the qadi of Ruse, saying that it was not appropriate to change the border that had been inspected and determined by his edict once before, and as if the matter was as presented, he commanded not to allow anyone to violate the law and his order by disobeying the border determined and not to allow anyone who acted against his orders and to report those who did not act accordingly to Istanbul.¹³²

¹³² “Ruscuk kâdîsına hüküm ki: Eflâk Voyvodası Petri Voyvoda mektûb gönderüp Yergöği kal‘ası'nun sınırı Eflâk vilâyetinin sınırına muttasıl olmağla mukaddemâ dahl ü nizâ‘ olunup emr-i şerîf ile sâbıkâ Niğebolı Begi; olan Ahmed dâme ulüvvuhû teftîş idüp cânibeynün sınırı ta'yîn olunup bu âna gelince[ye] değin minvâl-i mesfûr üzre tasarruf olunur iken hâliyâ kal'a-i mezbûrenün emîni olan Gıyâs (?) ve Ali nâm kimesne yeniden sınır ihdâs etmek isteyüp te'addîden hâlî değildir, diyü bildürdi. İmdi, bundan akdem bir def'a emr-i şerîfümle teftîş olunup ta'yîn olunan sınırı hâliyâ tağyîr idüp âhar sınır ihdâs etmek câ'iz değildir. Buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda göresin, arz olunduğı gibi ise min-ba'd vilâyet-i mezbûrenün mukaddemâ emr-i şerîfümle ta'yîn olunup fasl olunup bi'l-fi'l amel olunugelen sınırına hilâf-ı Şer' u kânûn ve mugâyir-i emr-i hümayûn kimesneyi dahl itdürmeyüp ma'mûlün-bih sınırı her ne mahalden ise anunla amel idüp kimesneye emre muhâlif iş itdürmeyesin. Eslemeyeni yazup Südde-i sa'âdet'üme bildüresin.” BOA, MD, no.3, pp.610-611, h.1405.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMMISSION AS THE ARCHITECT OF UNSOLVABLE SOLUTIONS AND THE SO-CALLED “*EFLAK COĞRAFYASI*”

The corruption of the Ottoman military corps in Wallachia was a long-standing and severe problem. Corruption and robbery were widespread throughout the empire, and this region was just one part of a more significant problem. The janissary, or the sipahi, was an Ottoman officer in the state’s service but was corrupt. If we look closely at the *mühimme registers*, they were crossing into Wallachian territory without authorization. There are indications of such incidents in the mid-16th century. We can also find traces of the same problems in the qadi registers. In the 18th century, the same thing happened, and the state could no longer do anything; things were getting out of hand because, during this period, there was a danger posed by the Russians on the opposing side. At the same time, the lands seen as the state’s vault were being lost; this was a period of intense war. There was also an enemy from within: the ayans. This

type of authority created a contradiction against the power of the center. Decentralization was a problem for the state because then integration became difficult. The relations between the periphery and the center could break down, or eventually, those lands could be lost because that unity was no longer there. These were the weakest points for the state. In these cases, the state was in a difficult situation and could no longer exercise tight control and eventually started to back down. This type of peripheral event continued until the 18th century. We have explained all this in the 16th century, but this was the everyday life of the periphery. In the past, during the classical period, the central authority was strong and could easily intervene to keep these issues under control. However, as time passed, the situation started to change, leading to different circumstances. We have an exciting source that tells us what all these events were.

This process continued until the 18th century, when the Ottoman Empire reached a breaking point or a peak. Something interesting can be found regarding the Danube that can explain this matter. As we can see, the situation in the 16th century became more severe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Indeed, such events continued to occur, and they unfolded at an even higher pace. Additionally, during that period, decentralization issues also came into play. We had an interesting source that elucidated and exhibited these peripheral problems, explaining the fluctuations and developments in detail.

4.1. Paleographic Characteristics of the Manuscript

This source, which constitutes the basis of our research topic, is titled “*Eflak ve Boğdan Hakkında*” and is registered in the Treasury section of the Topkapi Palace Museum Library, number 445. The note for the source mentions that it is a report on Wallachia and contains information on geography and statistics.¹³³ In 1976, Cengiz Orhonlu informed us about the existence of such a source and brought it to our attention with his article titled “Ahmed Resmi Efendi’nin Eflak Coğrafyası.”¹³⁴ Orhonlu did not make a detailed paleographic and diplomatic evaluation of the source but mentioned it as a geographical text.

This source is in the form of a book. It has 58 pages and measures 14x22 cm. It is a type of manuscript that resembles a booklet and is bound in cherry leather. The pages are later numbered in pencil. It is preserved in good condition and has both a beginning and an end. The font of the source resembles the *Nesih* script, which was one of the most widely used types of writing before the arrival of the printing press in the Ottoman Empire. As Somer mentions, “Raw paper, with rough surfaces on which the pen does not slide easily and which absorbs and distributes ink, was treated in the Ottoman Empire to make it suitable for writing. In addition, the paper is naturally off-white. The form used primarily for manuscripts was dyed, as its color would tire the eyes during long-term reading.”¹³⁵ Considering these factors, the source was seasoned

¹³³ Giridli el-Hacc Ahmed Efendi, “Eflak ve Boğdan Hakkında,” Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Milli Saraylar Başkanlığı, accessed March 29, 2023, <https://www.millisaraylar.gov.tr/hizmetler/yazma-eserler>.

¹³⁴ Orhonlu, *Ahmed Resmi Efendi’nin Eflak Coğrafyası*, pp.1-14.

¹³⁵ Şekibe Nihal Somer, “Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerinin Günümüze Ulaşmasının Nedenleri: Kâğıt, Mürekkep ve Cilt Özellikleri,” *Muhasebe ve Finans Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 6 (2014): pp. 238-274, p.251.

as durable paper and dyed yellowish. It is written in deep black ink¹³⁶ and has retained its glossiness, making it easy to read.

By placing the texts in a frame, an attempt has been made to achieve orderly writing, and signals are given about each new section through the “*derkenâr*” (marginalia). As Çetin explains, in the dictionary, the Persian word *derkenâr* means “writing written on the margin or underneath, a note, a departure from the original text.” In official Ottoman Empire correspondence, explanatory writings were written on the documents’ sides, bottom, or top. In addition, statements requiring explanation were also written next to the texts in literary and historical books. This was also called *derkenâr*.¹³⁷ Similarly, the marginalia in the source also contains explanatory writings and summarize the subject in question. As mentioned by Kütükoğlu, although black soot ink was used in daily writing, red ink was used in some marginalia on documents and in some notebooks.¹³⁸ This is also the case in the current source.

Places in the source that are considered important are highlighted with red lines. When giving information about the *kazas* in Wallachia, where the name of the *kaza* is written, the number of *kazas* mentioned is noted in red ink. In addition, there are triangular red highlighting points, especially where there are adjective phrases and in the places of prayer before personal names. In the last section, the buildings

¹³⁶ The ink in the manuscript is as if they wrote it yesterday. To understand why, Mihail Guboğlu’s work on Turkish-Ottoman Palaeography and Diplomacy reveals that the Ottoman documents in Romania use a solid, dark black ink. The author points out that Romanian documents of the same age are fading while Ottoman documents, on the contrary, retain their luster. Iron sulfate and gum arabic were added to the Ottoman ink and stored in inkwells. A silk called “*lika*” was placed inside the inkwell to absorb the gum and moisten the pen. Türkkaya Ataöv, review of *Paleografia și Diplomatica Turco-Osmana: Studiu și Album*, by Mihail Guboğlu, *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, (December 1968): 307–13, pp. 307–313, p.311.

¹³⁷ Atilla Çetin, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 9 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1994), s.v. “*Derkenar*”, pp.179–80.

¹³⁸ Kütükoğlu Mübahat S., *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili (Diplomatik)* (İstanbul: Kubbealtı Akademisi Kültür ve Sanat Vakfı, 1998), p.43.

destroyed in the *kaza* are mentioned in a tabular format, and the number of farms and mills in each *kaza* is listed in red ink, again in a table-like structure.

4.2. Administrative Section of the Manuscript

Was this source prepared in advance or as a result of the commission's work? Was there any preparation? When was it done? Was it before the commission started its work or after the commission's report? In my opinion, as an answer to these questions, the commission conducted preparations before embarking on their journey, working in the archives (*Defterhâne-i Âmire*¹³⁹). They found the necessary documents and prepared either a copy or a file, and went to the region. Then, with the help of the information they had, they did their research and finally wrote a treatise with the results. As proof of this, the source mentions that a committee was formed to investigate the issues in depth and that the committee members were ordered to write a treatise. Kâtip Çelebi's definition of a treatise as "a short text that summarizes and analyzes an issue and presents its conclusion"¹⁴⁰ supports this idea. This source has an official nature because it serves the needs of the state.

¹³⁹ "In the Ottomans, the name of the government office where the books related to land and timar records were kept. In the Ottoman Empire, separate Tahrir books were prepared for each sanjak at certain times to appoint and determine the ownership and disposition system of the land and the amount of tax. These Tahrir had a significant role in the organization of the Ottoman Empire and the functioning of this organization in an orderly manner." Erhan Afyoncu, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 9 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1994), s.v. "Defterhâne," p.100.

¹⁴⁰ Mustafa İzzet Uzun, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 35 (İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2008), s.v. "Risale," p.114.

4.3. Content of the Manuscript

This geography has always attracted the attention of researchers. Recently, a study has explored the same problems and has caught our attention. This study was inspired by the source we mentioned. Virginia Aksan's "Whose Territory and Whose Peasants? Ottoman Boundaries on the Danube in the 1760s" is centered around the source that forms the basis of our thesis, the "Geography of Wallachia," and makes inferences about the period in question.¹⁴¹ Aksan also wants to work on these problems, but I would like to make some additions and contributions here. For example, Aksan says that this manuscript is considered the first Ottoman geography of Wallachia.¹⁴² I see this differently, and one of the main criticisms I will make throughout the thesis will be to build a counter-argument to this argument and, with the addition of various sources, support that the source is not geography. Also, is the question "Whose territory and whose peasants?" a question that belongs only to that problematic century? Or was it consistently one of the main problems of the Ottoman Empire? On this issue, which we consider life on the periphery, Aksan's article needs to include the connections of events. Also, there are two elements in "whose territory and whose peasants"; territory + peasant. Why is she asking this question? Because they are integral, two parts of a whole. The combination of peasants and land (*çiftthane system*) is a whole, and empires have this system. In this article, Aksan puts a question mark on the most critical issue of empire, and I will try to explain this question by making connections to the life of the periphery.

¹⁴¹ Aksan, *Whose Territory and Whose Peasants? Ottoman Boundaries on the Danube in the 1760s*, pp. 61-86.

¹⁴² Ibid, p.62.

Cengiz Orhonlu talked about this source, and then Virginia Aksan wrote an article about it, but the subject remained there because they wanted to use it as a geography. I think there are different things at play here. If we look at the source, we will find answers to all the questions. This source is similar to a book of government because it was written for the rulers at the center. It describes the political and social life of the Wallachian lands, their socio-economic situation, land regime, and status; it is not geography. The men who wrote it are not geographers. Their job was to go there and solve problems. For this reason, they described the situation of the place they went to so that those in Istanbul would know: what were these events, and why were they happening like this? In other words, it was not written just out of curiosity. When we examine the source in detail, we cannot help but ask: what is an edict doing in a geographical text? In essence, this source pertains to a particular event, delving into its complexities and providing insightful analyses. It sheds light on the means through which the authority addressed and resolved the situation at hand.

This thesis can be seen as a multifaceted study in that it includes many branches of history, like historical geography. On the one hand, an attempt is made to examine the period in which the source was written and conduct a general content analysis. On the other hand, an effort is made to explore it as a discipline of source science. Why am I doing this? Because the source itself and its content are exciting and worthy of further research. After finding the source in the archives, I made some evaluations by accessing the studies about it, and I concluded that there are things to add to these studies or there are some items that cannot be accepted. Thus basically, there are things to criticize and some gaps to fill. For all these reasons, I am starting this study.

As for the content of the source, which consists of 58 pages in its entirety, in the first 25 pages, Wallachia is introduced geographically, and it is stated that

Wallachia consists of two parts, and the *kazas* in this part are described one by one. The villages in these districts are described in detail. The fruits and vegetables grown in these districts, the animals that existed thanks to the fertile pastures, and essential export products such as salt and honey are discussed along with the conditions of their existence. The fact that even the rivers flowing through the *kazas* are described one by one and that the distance between the *kazas* is calculated can be considered an essential factor in evaluating this source as a geographical work.

After the geographical topics, the source moves on to different topics in the second part. There are copies of some documents. Between pages 25-30, there is a letter from the voivode of Wallachia describing the actions of the bandits and information about the people assigned to restore order, and it is stated that all edicts related to this issue are included in the treatise in the same order. From here to page 40, there are copies of the orders sent to the investigation officers from Istanbul. Pages 40-44 contain copies of decrees on the return of castles and farms seized in violation of the treaties to their owners. The section from here to page 48 includes the grand vizier's praise for the officers assigned to this matter, the fines imposed, the orders sent for the payment of these debts, and the summary statement sent to Istanbul regarding the finalization of the affairs. Pages 49-53 contain a copy of an edict and a decree concerning the disputes between the Wallachian *reaya* and the voivode of Fethulislam. Then, from pages 54 to 58, there are copies of orders and decrees sent by the Minister of Silistra regarding complaints about the Danube and axes. Finally, a table shows the types and numbers of buildings destroyed in Wallachia and Black Wallachia.

When we look at the source's content, we see it is a compilation because it is a text composed of different topics. In the first pages, we learn about the geography of

Wallachia, and then it moves on to other things; there are copies. In short, it is a report containing general information, decrees, and administrative items. Aksan and Orhonlu consider it a geography text, but it is a commission report, a compilation of documents to meet the commission's needs.

4.4. Commission Report

In the section containing the copies, there is initially a petition in which the Wallachian voivode describes the abuses by bandits and seeks assistance from the Sultan. Alongside the copy of this petition, marginalia (*derkenâr*) as “The Fall and Subsequent Rescue of Wallachia and Declaration of Order” is included in the commission report. As a result, it is mentioned that a commission was formed to investigate the events, and the composition of the commission is specified, along with an order to write an epistle (*risâle*).¹⁴³ According to this petition:

Due to officers' negligence, the indifference of local notables, and the leniency of voivodes and boyars, the Albanian and Alaiye bandits gradually infiltrated Wallachia and spread. They forcefully seized the belongings of the *reaya*, raiding their homes and coercively taking away their possessions, supplies, and livestock. Fleeing to neighboring regions and higher grounds, *reaya* sought refuge. Within the country, oppression spread across villages and towns. Testimonies from both women and men highlighted the bandits' merciless and brutal nature, engaging in excessive acts of violence. It was emphasized that these bandits had been expelled from the presence of God (*dergâh-ı izzet*).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ *Eflak ve Boğdan Hakkında*, folio 25b.

¹⁴⁴ Folio 25b-25a.

The bandits erected dwellings, manors, farms, lodges, mills, shops, and bakeries in towns, villages, neighboring townships, and *kazas*. They forcibly appropriated livestock from the destitute *reaya* and grazed their burden-bearing animals in *muşias*¹⁴⁵. They brazenly seized imported grain and forced *reaya* to sow and harvest it in their *muşias*. In possession of the common folk, should honey and oil be found, they laid claim to them as a rapacious surcharge for past debts, confiscating their provisions and granaries. Their actions affected not only the poor but also the wealthy, surpassing everyone's earnings. Not only the inhabitants of Istanbul but even the towns and fortresses in nearby regions cried out against their tyranny.¹⁴⁶

As a result of these events, the Wallachian voivode, Iskerlet bin veled Ligor, requested the assistance of the Sultan and the protection of his homeland. The petition, sent through the alliance of the boyars, reached the Grand Vizier Ragıp Mehmed Pasha. It implored for eradicating these wicked wrongdoers, eliminating oppressive troublemakers, and for the Sultan to decide after hearing the summary of the petition presented in his presence. It also called for seeking retribution against the unjust individuals who gathered around Wallachia, disturbing the peace of its people. The petition further requested the appointment of a just and capable judge to handle foreign affairs, with authority to execute orders, to rectify and punish those who disobey, to establish order among the Janissaries, and to bravely enforce and administer military matters.¹⁴⁷

All these matters were presented to *Devlet-i Aliyye* in separate sections. As a result, during an in-depth investigation on this subject, el-Hac Mehmed Ağa, formerly

¹⁴⁵ A traditional Romanian name used for a farm.

¹⁴⁶ Folio 26b-26a.

¹⁴⁷ Folio 26a-29b.

*Cebecibaşı*¹⁴⁸, was appointed as the head of the epistle (*risâle*). *Serturna*¹⁴⁹ Hüseyin Ağa, the son of Abdullah Pasha, who had attained the esteemed rank of the head of Janissaries in the year 1150 (1737), assumed power. It was ordered that he, being well-known, should join the aforementioned ağa and contribute to writing the epistle (*risâle*).¹⁵⁰

The edicts given to the commission formed regarding this matter were included in this report in the same order. The first edict, with the explanation, “It is declared that this is the copy of the initial decree sent from the State,” was appended to the report.¹⁵¹ Accordingly;

To the former *Cebecibaşı*, el-Hac Mehmed, to the appointed Judge, Giridi el-Hac Ahmed, and to the official who joined from the Janissaries, *Turnacıbaşı*¹⁵² Hüseyin, the Sultan says: Know that when my esteemed command reaches you,¹⁵³

While Wallachia has long enjoyed freedom (*öteden beri serbestiyet üzere*) and has been under my protection as the granary of the capital, the people living along the Danube coast and the military forces stationed at the borders have spread into the Wallachian territory, forcibly seizing properties and lands, establishing chambers and [illegal] quarters. The Wallachian subjects are in a state of despair. With the issuance

¹⁴⁸ “He was the commanding officer of the cebecis, the infantry section of the private soldier called kapıkulu of the old Ottoman army.” Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, “Cebecibaşı,” in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü I* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.262.

¹⁴⁹ “It is the name given to the commander of the sixty-eighth center of the Janissary Corps. In the times when Christian children were taken as devshirme, he also served in this role.” Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, “Serturna,” in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü III* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.192.

¹⁵⁰ Folio 29a-30a.

¹⁵¹ Folio 30a.

¹⁵² “It is the name given to the head of the 68th middle of the 196 middle that constitutes the Janissary Corps. Like many others, it was taken from the hunters’ names of the first Ottoman Sultans. It was also his duty to collect the devshirme, the Christian children recruited for the Janissary Corps.” Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, “Turnacıbaşı,” in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü III* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.535.

¹⁵³ Folio 30a.

of my noble decree, appoint tipstuffs and judges to proceed to the designated place; examine from Fethülislam to Brăila in Wallachia, reclaim the seized properties, lands, pastures, and fields from the hands of oppressors, and deliver them to their rightful owners. Destroy the [illegal] quarters and farms, remove them from Wallachia, and make agreements to ensure that those who have been expelled do not return and refrain from constructing farms, chambers, or [illegal] quarters. Confirm their agreements and inform my exalted authority accordingly.¹⁵⁴

As it has been explicitly instructed through my noble decree for the preservation of order, henceforth, in the event of any daring act contrary to this order and command, according to the records of the dîvan, orders have been dispatched for the destruction of the established chambers and [illegal] quarters, and for the removal of the bandits from Wallachia.¹⁵⁵

With the utmost effort dedicated to the stability of order, the troubles have been completely eliminated, and there was no need to complain about the tyranny of bandits. However, in the petitions sent by the metropolitans, bishops, monastery priests, boyars, and others of Wallachia, it was reported that due to the leniency of the officials, the bandits have found opportunities again to gradually infiltrate the villages of Wallachia and Black Wallachia, constructing [illegal] quarters, beehives, and chambers.¹⁵⁶

Therefore, it is requested through my noble decree that soldiers and not-soldiers (*gayr-ı askerî*), as well as the oppressors, who have established chambers, [illegal] quarters, beehives, and farms in Wallachia and Craiova, be completely eradicated as before, and they are removed from the surrounding region. The military

¹⁵⁴ Folio 31b.

¹⁵⁵ Folio 31a.

¹⁵⁶ Folio 31a.

personnel among them should proceed to their assigned regions, rescue the impoverished subjects, return their spouses, children, lands, fields, and *muşias* to their rightful owners, refrain from supporting unjust Muslim merchants, and shape the restoration of order in Wallachia by avoiding travel within the country and remaining in marketplaces where officials are present for trade purposes. This is to be communicated to me through my noble decree.¹⁵⁷

Even the Wallachian voivode, Iskerlet, submitted a petition affirming the situation and seeking assistance. A summary of the document was presented before me. As it is my desire to ensure the continuation of the order and security of the Wallachian subjects, I grant permission for the consideration of their petitions and deem it essential to investigate the matter and appoint a judge to enforce the orders.¹⁵⁸

Therefore, you, who have taken the responsibility of this edict, appointed by the indication of *Şeyhülislâm* Ismail Asim, you, who are the *Kapıcıbaşı*, and you, who have been appointed as the guardian from the ranks of the corps, have been entrusted with the mission to enforce the Wallachian order. Now, together with your assembly, hasten to reach the designated places. Rescue the people from the oppression of the bandits that have been afflicting the Wallachian order, destroy the constructed chambers and [illegal] quarters, ensure the removal of the bandits with their possessions and livestock from the province, examine and arrange the areas that require organization from Fethülislam to Brăila, demolish the chambers and [illegal] quarters constructed by those who act against the order and deliver the lands, *muşias*, and possessions of the *reaya*, along with their meadows, to their rightful owners. Remove the vagabonds, both soldiers and not-soldiers, who roam around Wallachia

¹⁵⁷ Folio 31a-32b.

¹⁵⁸ Folio 32b-32a.

with their beehives and livestock, and strive to prevent any individual from deserting Wallachia in the future. Do not support the oppressive Muslim merchants who violate the dignity of the people.¹⁵⁹

One may be present in the marketplaces as authorized by the voivode with a permission document granted by the *kapûdân*¹⁶⁰ and the *beşlûyân*¹⁶¹ for the purpose of resting. While efforts have been made to liberate Wallachia from the bandits following my imperial decree, henceforth, anyone who acts against my orders by establishing farms, chambers, and [illegal] quarters contrary to my will shall be punished by the officials. After all, you, who are appointed as the trusted envoy, are among the esteemed members of my state, chosen for your loyalty. With the special appointment as the envoy, you and your associates are responsible for completing the order in Wallachia, paying attention to your duties. Endeavor together to swiftly resolve this pressing matter, avoiding any negligence or leniency, as stated in my decree. When reaches you, abide by the decree as explained in this matter, and be cautious not to act contrary to it.¹⁶²

One notable aspect here is that at the beginning of the edict, it emphasizes that Wallachia has been governed with a sense of freedom since ancient times and is regarded as the cellar of the state. This highlights that solutions to the problems will be sought, taking into account these characteristics of Wallachia. Briefly mentioning the issues, the edict provides a detailed explanation of what the commission should do once they arrive in the region. Another point is that such complaints were previously

¹⁵⁹ Folio 32a-33b.

¹⁶⁰ "It was the title of one of the admirals of the Ottoman Navy. His rank was equivalent to first lieutenant." Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, "Kapudan," in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü II* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.187.

¹⁶¹ "It is the term used for those who were employed by the governor and the bey or in the zaptieh. The voivode of Wallachia also had such an organization." Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, "Beşlûyan," in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü I* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.211.

¹⁶² Folio 33b-34b.

expressed in the form of petitions by individuals such as priests and boyars in Wallachia. This suggests that there were unresolved issues, and, ultimately, the voivode was compelled to seek direct assistance from the Sultan.

At last, a commission was formed, and the departure of the commission was recounted in the report as “The day the appointed officials set forth from Istanbul for this matter.”¹⁶³ According to this,

Upon the proclamation and notification of the execution of this decree and the imperial command, it is necessary to proceed accordingly and swiftly engage in the implementation of this significant order. Therefore, on the 5th day of Muharram in the year 1173 (1759/60), departing from Istanbul and reaching the opposite side of the Danube and the town of Giurgiu on the 25th day, as instructed and advised by the Grand Vizier, the initiation and progression of the order is essential. It is known to the honorable Vidin Governor, Kethüda Mehmed Pasha, that he is inclined to act with justice and righteousness. Therefore, it is requested that they present themselves and receive the imperial commands addressed to them. Upon the arrival of the aforementioned decree to the statesmen regarding this matter, they are ordered to promptly commence their duties in an appropriate manner.¹⁶⁴

Establish an Imperial Court of Justice to eradicate the enemy and ensure their obedience to the state. Divide their *aman* into three parts to soften their resistance and publicly announce the decree to all. Finally, address everyone with kindness and complete the written record of this noble command to ensure its continuation.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Folia 34b.

¹⁶⁴ Folio 34b-35b.

¹⁶⁵ Folio 35b.

It is evident that the first edict included harsh measures such as the destruction of chambers and [illegal] quarters, but with the departure of the commission, it was emphasized to treat everyone with kindness. The desire to ensure the continuity of order may have influenced this change in attitude, aiming to secure it as soon as possible.

Finally, when the latest news was announced, it was reported that the public heard and obeyed, expressing their trust in the justice of the Sultan. Necessary matters were conveyed to the officials, and an edict was sent to the government, which reads as follows under the title “This is the edict sent at the beginning of the high order issued to the side of the state.”¹⁶⁶

Accordingly, Wallachia, having been historically governed with a certain degree of autonomy and regarded as an integral part of the state apparatus, witnessed a period of unrest in its vicinity and the pressing need to address the concerns of the *reaya* and to restore order. In response to these circumstances, and under the authority of an imperial decree, the esteemed *Kapıcıbaşı* of the palace, *Cebecibaşı*, el-Hac Mehmed Ağa, accompanied by *Serturnacı* Hüseyin Ağa from the Janissaries, assumed their respective roles as officials and commenced their official duties.¹⁶⁷

According to the information provided, it was possible for some of the military and vagrant-type soldiers from Istanbul and occupied Wallachia to be sent to the border defense, but it was difficult to place the vagrant ones as they had no fixed place. The roaming of the vagrants in Wallachia relies solely on the support of the military stationed in the towns, who, in turn, follow the military orders to demolish their own chambers and [illegal] quarters, sever their connections, and migrate from Wallachia.

¹⁶⁶ Folio 35a.

¹⁶⁷ Folio 35a.

It is evident that the vagrants will have no refuge once they flee, and they will be left helpless. Furthermore, even the soldiers themselves who resist are primarily the *ortalār*¹⁶⁸ and former *yamakan*¹⁶⁹ stationed in the mentioned castle and the town of Craiova in Wallachia, and their loyalty is tied to them. It has been decided to enforce discipline and establish order, as the absence of the commanders renders the soldiers ineffective. Since it is understood that the investigation will come to a conclusion, this situation has been reported to the Vizier.¹⁷⁰

In order to grasp the nature of the implemented measures, the governors of Vidin and Özi asked for a comprehensive report. Subsequently, the people in the commission state that after they came across the Danube River, a copy of the edict containing their appointment and a letter addressed to the aforementioned individuals for their support were sent to their respective states.¹⁷¹

The directives given to the committee members are as follows: Upon the arrival of the edict, letters were dispatched to the respected leaders and influential individuals of Vidin Fortress, known for their experience and competence, to ensure compliance. Subsequently, without detouring to Bucharest, the commission members were instructed to return to the Craiova and commence their duties with the appointed officials. Urgency in advancing the order is of paramount importance; however, be mindful of the violation of the properties belonging to the nobles (*iimerâ*), as reported by the mentioned fortress; it is essential to proceed cautiously. Read and disseminate

¹⁶⁸ “It is a term used instead of a battalion in the Janissary organization. Their number was increased from time to time.” Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, “Orta,” in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü II* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.730.

¹⁶⁹ “It is a term used to refer to those who served in the Janissary Corps and military organizations such as artillery and gunnery and those who served in the fortresses as castle guards.” Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, “Yamak,” in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü III* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.604.

¹⁷⁰ Folio 35a-36a.

¹⁷¹ Folio 36a.

the edict, cutting off communication from all sides, and remain in Craiova for a period of 5-6 days, engaging in amicable dialogue with the military factions present there. Exercise kindness in your interaction and treat them gently upon their acceptance. Announce the order sent by the Fortress Guard, Vizier Mehmed Pasha, in Vidin, and announce the letter received from the Janissary Corp at the *Ağa Kapısı* before everyone present.¹⁷²

As mentioned in the past, various arrangements have been documented, indicating strong alliances and the compliance of everyone involved. The directives in the letter sent by the Vizier, which state that everyone must obey, have undoubtedly led to remarkable progress in this matter, as even the appointed Castle Judge, being aware of it, reported the successful developments.¹⁷³

In the ongoing orders, it was commanded that on the 11th day of Safer, *Kapıcıbaşı Ağa* shall convene a council meeting at the inn where he stayed, and through the efforts of the corporals and scribes under the supervision of *Turnacıbaşı Ağa*, shall gather 200 military personnel who owned chambers in Craiova. They were instructed to deliver the letter of the vizier and, when the letter from the Head of Janissaries was read in the castle, to listen carefully and obey the orders.¹⁷⁴

In addition, it is advisable for the representatives of the *ortalı* and former *yamakan* to convene and engage in comprehensive deliberations to consolidate the agreements that have been reached. They said that since our comrades are present in Wallachia and resided there for 12 months, the bandits roam around and cause destruction relying on them; according to the imperial decree, the establishment of

¹⁷² Folio 36a-37b.

¹⁷³ Folio 37b-37a.

¹⁷⁴ Folio 37a.

order in Wallachia is a local command. It is unacceptable that they consume the blessings bestowed by the Sultan, receive monthly salaries, and then abandon their duties in the fortress and permanently reside in non-Muslim lands, causing problems even for us. Muslims should migrate to the Islamic country and be registered in the fortress where they serve as officials. Moreover, those engaged in trade should fulfill their duties in the marketplaces according to the orders, and thereafter we do not consent to their residence there. Henceforth, it is necessary to make the imperial order the guiding principle of our actions. It was added that, after reaching a mutual agreement, they informed their companions in Wallachia through separate letters, urging them to destroy their chambers and [illegal] quarters and sever their connections. They were instructed to complete their trade activities, stay in the inns for a few days as guest merchants, and then return to their respective fortresses with the papers provided for them.¹⁷⁵

Moreover, it is instructed that ten soldiers and one sergeant be sent, and they should both obey the orders and their corps' regulations. They should start destroying the existing chambers and [illegal] quarters in Craiova, ensuring that not a single individual remains. Those making false claims should be brought to court, and the rights of those whose rights have been established should be duly collected.¹⁷⁶

Those who put an end to it quickly proceeded to the border, where they were assigned to serve, and subsequently, municipal districts were appointed with deputies. Since there were some people who could easily sever their connections in those regions and those who preferred migration, orders were sent in the form of documents even to Nikopol, Silistra, and Brăila directions, informing them of the situation. According to

¹⁷⁵ Folio 37a-38a.

¹⁷⁶ Folio 38a.

the correspondence received by the Janissary officers present there, even they were informed about the movements of the inhabitants of Vidin Fortress and instructed to comply with their actions in accordance with the previous situation, which was reported to the central government.¹⁷⁷

In this verdict, once again, the freedom in the governance of Wallachia and its status as the granary of the state are emphasized. It is evident that the troublemakers in the region were the soldiers and the dependent ruffians associated with them. These ruffians were causing disturbances with the support of the soldiers, and the solution sought was to return the soldiers to their former duty stations. Thus, the ruffians would be left unsupported and would eventually be unable to sustain their presence in the region. For this purpose, the letters of the Grand Vizier and the head of Janissaries were read in Craiova, gathering the 200 soldiers who had constructed chambers there. The attempt to reach an understanding with these soldiers, using delicate methods, for the destruction of the chambers and [illegal] quarters they had built provides a glimpse into the power of the state during that period. We observe a shift from initially harsh measures aimed at burning and demolishing structures to later attempts by the state to resolve the issue through reconciliation with the troublemakers.

Another edict was sent with the explanation, “This is a copy of the decree given by the Sultan.” The Sultan addresses the appointed officials of the Wallachia administration, *Kapıcıbaşı* el-Hac Mehmed and Judge el-Hac Ahmed, saying: Let it be known that when my noble command reaches you:¹⁷⁸

In the letter sent by the Vidin Castle Guardian, my vizier Mehmed Pasha, it was stated that my decree regarding the organization of Wallachia was read in the

¹⁷⁷ Folio 38a-39b.

¹⁷⁸ Folio 39b.

presence of my military servants and the people of Vidin. Everyone obeyed my command and agreed, under certain conditions, to destroy the farms and [illegal] quarters and to give *muşias* to the *reaya*. They also agreed to leave Wallachia with their livestock.¹⁷⁹

However, some of the *reaya* and boyars have claims and debts to settle. As the appointed authority, it is your duty to investigate and fulfill these rights in accordance with the sharia law. In line with my decree, you shall thoroughly investigate legal cases concerning the boyars and *reaya* of Wallachia to bring a satisfactory resolution to the matters for which you have been appointed. If any outstanding debts are discovered, they should be collected and returned to their rightful owners, ensuring justice is served. This decree is sent with the intention of fulfilling these obligations.¹⁸⁰

According to my decree regarding the matters for which you have been appointed, make diligent efforts to bring a satisfactory resolution to the cases and disputes of the Vidin *yamakan*, ensuring fairness and justice in their commercial and legal affairs. Investigate and collect the established rights of the boyars and Wallachian *reaya*, deliver them to their rightful owners, and be cautious not to commit any injustice in these disputes. Send the necessary records and documents to the imperial court and ensure timely payment to the service officer. This is my decree, commanding you to follow and avoid any deviation from it as stated in the instructions upon receiving my orders.¹⁸¹

Here, it appears that the commission's work has proven effective, and solutions have been found. Although we are aware that these solutions may not be permanent in

¹⁷⁹ Folio 39b-39a.

¹⁸⁰ Folio 39a.

¹⁸¹ Folio 39a-40b.

the long run, we see that the soldiers have pledged to abide by the decisions made during that period. While the matter seems resolved, since there are ongoing issues of debts and obligations between the *reaya* and the boyars, the central committee was ordered to investigate these cases as well. The directive to resolve these issues with fairness indicates an effort to eliminate any potential disturbances in the region. In doing so, the state's dependence on the granary, which affects the military, social, and economic aspects, would continue smoothly, ensuring the uninterrupted flow of grain.

The next document pertains to the decision issued to the province of Black Wallachia, calling for the demolition of old buildings and newly established military structures, as well as the restitution of properties to their rightful owners. This announcement serves as a directive from the highest authority, explaining the order of the Sultan and guiding the actions to be taken accordingly.

In accordance with the received orders, the complex affairs and state of affairs in Wallachia, which have been turbulent as of late, are to be restored to their previous state. Various structures established in Wallachia are to be demolished, with the aim of alleviating the concerns and damages caused by the military and unruly elements to the residents and inhabitants. Furthermore, measures are to be taken to export livestock and cereals, and restitution is to be made by returning the properties to their rightful owners, as well as recovering the rights of the creditors as established by law. To accomplish these objectives, *Cebecibaşı*, el-Hac Mehmed Ağa, and the representative of the Janissary Corps, *Serturna Hüseyin Ağa*, have been instructed to appoint officials as both paritors and judges in the matter.¹⁸²

The orders given to Mehmet and Hüseyin Ağas were as follows:

¹⁸² Folio 40b-40a.

Upon reaching your designated locations, commence the assigned tasks. Make an effort to commence the work in the Black Wallachia region, specifically in Craiova town, located east of the Olet River, opposite of Nikopol, and in the western area facing Fethülislam, exert efforts to begin the task promptly. Firstly, ensure the removal and expulsion of the military and unruly elements present in that area.¹⁸³

After destroying the houses, cellars, mansions, stables, basements, granaries, honey presses, cellars, and additional annexes, comprising a total of 131 households, 7 shops, 3 bakeries, 3 slaughterhouses, 3 honey houses, 13 rooms, 3 stables, 1 cellar, and 1 mansion, along with 2 houses containing 5 rooms, 2 stables, and 1 cellar, proceed to the rural districts and initiate the destruction of the remaining houses, cellars, mansions, stables, basements, granaries, tower roofs, beehives, hay houses, and other related structures, encompassing a total of 708 farms and winter quarters, as well as completely demolishing 112 mills. At the same time, liberate 393 out of the 450 *muşias* unjustly seized in the districts and return them to their rightful owners, reaffirming that the remaining 59 *muşias* will also be reclaimed smoothly in the near future.¹⁸⁴

Efforts should be made to collect and return the majority of the debts obtained from individual borrowers in various amounts, considering the small and arbitrary nature of these transactions, and to ensure their proper payment. Furthermore, the livestock and shepherds should also be exported from Wallachia and sent to the opposite side of the Islamic community, with the intention of minimizing their influence and severing all connections. However, it is important to proceed with

¹⁸³ Folio 40a.

¹⁸⁴ Folio 40a-41b.

caution, taking into account their abundance and their effects during the winter months.¹⁸⁵

Embark on the task of demolishing buildings from the opposite side of the Olt River to Brăila with utmost haste. Several emissaries have been appointed from the Danube River to Giurgiu and from Brăila to again Giurgiu. While efforts were made to advance with the assistance of Ali Pasha, the governor of the Özi province, from the Brăila side, a royal decree was swiftly sent to both the governors of Vidin and Özi and to the aforementioned emissaries through Ali Ağa. Firstly, it was read in the Vidin council due to its proximity, and everyone became aware of its contents. A noble law (*şer'-i şerif*), encompassing their ancient commitments, was granted unanimously as they had suffered from Wallachia.¹⁸⁶

When this verdict reached the appointed officials of the state, even the entrusted lords complied, and we made every effort to ensure the cautious progress of our messengers. Therefore, the preceding incident was duly communicated to the central authority.¹⁸⁷

It appears that the troubles regarding the governance of Wallachia persisted, and on this occasion, the state took strict and severe measures. However, it is noteworthy that apart from those forcibly seized but later returned to their rightful owners, the proclamation also emphasized the swift retrieval of remaining properties, demonstrating the state's efforts to find a lasting solution without escalating aggression from both sides. Furthermore, the document highlights the particular significance placed on Black Wallachia, suggesting that stability should be restored starting from

¹⁸⁵ Folio 41b-41a.

¹⁸⁶ Folio 41a-42b.

¹⁸⁷ Folio 42b.

that region, possibly due to its proximity to the Austrian border and the desire to project strength by not appearing weak. The detailed knowledge of all the structures built by the military and unruly elements, while refraining from intervening until complaints were received, raises questions about the extent of the state's control and authority in the region during that period.

The subsequent edict, appended to the report with the statement, "This is the decree that includes the petitions received from Vidin Commander Kethüda Mehmed Pasha and the local residents,"¹⁸⁸ provides further insights. According to the edict,

To my vizier Kethüda Mehmed Pasha, the qadi of Vidin, the Janissary Officer, the *Serdengeçti Ağas*¹⁸⁹, *Alemdâran*¹⁹⁰, *Baş Eskileri*¹⁹¹, and the Council of the Wallachian Guard in Wallachia, the Sultan conveys the following message: When my noble decree reaches you, know that;¹⁹²

The capital of Wallachia, known for its freedom for a long time, has recently been subject to intrusion by the *yamaks* of Vidin and other military factions who have built chambers and [illegal] quarters on Wallachian land and have harmed the possessions, belongings, properties, and animals of the poor *reaya*. This matter was previously reported to me. The constructed chambers and [illegal] quarters in Wallachia must be completely destroyed, and their owners should be expelled from Wallachia. The soldiers should return to their assigned territories, ensuring the

¹⁸⁸ Folio 42b.

¹⁸⁹ "It is a term used to describe those who enlisted as fedayeen to plunge into an enemy army or enter a fort under siege and who succeeded in the task they had undertaken and returned after escaping from under the wing of death. This title was considered the epitome of courage." Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, "Serdengeçti Ağası," in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü III* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.182.

¹⁹⁰ It is a term used for flag bearers.

¹⁹¹ "It is the name given to the oldest and senior members of the middle or company in the Janissary Corp." Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, "Baş Eski," in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü I* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p.163.

¹⁹² Folio 42a.

liberation of the poor *reaya* from oppression and the restoration of Wallachia to its former state. In accordance with my imperial decree and with the intention to promptly fulfill this, the detailed instructions previously provided in my decree have been sent.¹⁹³

Kapıcıbaşı el-Hac Mehmed and Giridi el-Hac Ahmed were assigned, accompanied by *Turnacıbaşı* Hüseyin from the Janissary Corp, and sent forth. As the vizier-in-council, you have mentioned in your recent letter to me, as well as in the petitions submitted by the qadi of Vidin, the military personnel, and other provincial inhabitants, that my imperial decree has been understood, and they have undertaken the task of demolishing the chambers and [illegal] quarters that have been constructed in Wallachia and returning the properties to their rightful owners while severing their connections with Wallachia. Furthermore, it is stated that the comrades entrusted with the preservation of order shall ensure stability in Vidin, while those who have been engaged in companionship with them shall be expelled, and no acceptance shall be granted to those who engage in similar actions and wander as vagrants in Wallachia.¹⁹⁴

The execution of appropriate penalties has been entrusted to the law enforcement officers (*zâbit*), who have pledged their support. It has been reported that those who have debts from Wallachia residents and are under the guarantee of the officers shall not proceed to Wallachia unless they receive a letter from the said officers, and those who arrive without a letter shall be held accountable for their actions. Furthermore, it is stated that all measures have been taken to sever all connections with the demolished chambers, [illegal] quarters, *muşias*, and lands, thus consolidating the order in its entirety. The received decree has been duly recorded in

¹⁹³ Folio 42a-43b.

¹⁹⁴ Folio 43b-43a.

the records of the Imperial Council (*Dîvân-ı Hümayun*). Therefore, those who have been expelled from Wallachia, along with their livestock, shall refrain from returning to Wallachia and establishing new chambers and [illegal] quarters. Those who must visit Wallachia for necessary reasons shall adhere to the requirement of having a letter from the officers before proceeding. Thus, restore order and instruct all individuals concerned accordingly.¹⁹⁵

Those who dare to act contrary to this order shall be held accountable by the officers and shall face the necessary consequences. To ensure the continuity of this order, my noble decree has been sent to strengthen and enforce it. Now, upon its arrival, it is decided that these established conditions, written agreements, and violations of the order by trespassing and encroaching upon Wallachia shall result in the appropriate legal and religious penalties. Therefore, this order shall be recorded once again in the records of Vidin, and utmost attention shall be given to the preservation of the aforementioned order. Henceforth, no permissions shall be granted that contradict my imperial decree and the agreed-upon treaties. Let it be known that strict adherence to the decree is required upon its receipt, and any deviations from it shall be avoided.¹⁹⁶

In this edict, we can see that the importance of Wallachia as the cellar of the capital continues to be emphasized. Furthermore, it is mentioned that the perpetrators causing harm to the *reaya* and constructing unauthorized structures are the Vidin *yamaks* and other soldiers. An important point to note is their agreement to destroy the constructed chambers and [illegal] quarters and return the *muşias* to their rightful owners. This indicates that, although it required significant efforts, the state has

¹⁹⁵ Folio 43a.

¹⁹⁶ Folio 44b.

ultimately intervened and managed to eliminate the troublemakers. It is also stated that appropriate punishments will be imposed, and the enforcement of these penalties will be supervised by the officers to ensure the sustainability of order.

After the investigations and attempts to implement the orders sent from the center, a letter was sent to those who were assigned to this matter, containing the compliments of the Grand Vizier. The speech began by stating that the complimentary letter (*iltifatnâme*), which contains the compliments of the Grand Vizier, was written exactly as it was.¹⁹⁷

The Grand Vizier has written to praise the services of the assigned officials, *Kapıcıbaşı* el-Hac Mehmed Ağa and el-Hac Ahmed Efendi, in relation to the appointed duties in the Wallachia administration. He acknowledges that their efforts in explaining the established order in Wallachia, the reports they have sent, and their explanations have allowed them to understand the situation. He has written that their services in this matter have been appreciated.¹⁹⁸

Furthermore, it has been reported that some members of the military faction who were expelled from Wallachia persisted in harassing the poor *reaya*. Despite being sent to the outskirts of the fortress for discipline through the intervention of the officers, this proved to be ineffective. As a last resort, an order was issued to the fortress guards and redoubt defenders on the banks of the Danube through the intermediation of *Turnacıbaşı*, ordering the imprisonment of these individuals. This information is documented in your mentioned record. Additionally, it has been reported by the postmen coming from all directions that Varnalıoğlu İbrahim Ağa, the appointed administrator of Nikopol, diligently implemented the imperial decree sent

¹⁹⁷ Folio 44a.

¹⁹⁸ Folio 44a.

to ensure order and took action against the bandits. Therefore, he issued an order to discipline all those who persist in defiance and opposition.¹⁹⁹

Finally, an imperial order was sent to Vidin Guard Mehmed Pasha, emphasizing the continuation of order through imprisonment, intimidation, and the prevention of any opposition to the established order. The information was given that the letter was written and sent through their messengers, Hacı Mustafa. It was added, “Hopefully, this order will contribute to the continuation of the established order.” The order was concluded by stating, “Please exercise utmost care in carrying out the recently completed order of your appointment.”²⁰⁰

In the next step, it was emphasized with great care that all the buildings previously constructed by the military members of the Islamic community in Wallachia and Black Wallachia, in all districts and villages, should be demolished. The *muşia* and property owners should be given their rightful possessions, while the soldiers and not-soldiers should be expelled from Wallachia. Furthermore, the transportation of livestock, grains, and beehives to the neighboring Islamic territories should be meticulously carried out. This directive was executed in accordance with the aforementioned imperial order. In Black Wallachia, the governor, boyars, and *muşia* holders should attend the Council of Justice (*meclis-i şer'*), where oaths and agreements will be made to allocate *muşias* to the soldiers and the Islamic community. The necessary documents supporting these oaths and agreements will be collected to strengthen the established order. At the same time, an imperial order is issued regarding the payment of debts, and it was duly recorded.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Folio 44a-45b.

²⁰⁰ Folio 45b-45a.

²⁰¹ Folio 45a.

According to this edict, the Sultan addresses *Kapıcıbaşı* el-Hac Mehmed, who is entrusted with the administration of Wallachia, the appointed qadi Giridi el-Hac Ahmed, and *Turnacıbaşı* Hüseyin. The Sultan declares: Let it be known that when my noble command reaches you.²⁰²

As you are well aware from the decrees sent since the commencement of your honorable duties, it is evident from the received reports that you have been striving for the destruction of the constructed chambers and [illegal] quarters in Wallachia, the expulsion of their owners from there, and the restoration of the previous order.²⁰³

It has been observed for the past few years that both soldiers and not-soldiers entering Wallachia and Black Wallachia have been exploiting their positions with greed and avarice. They have unreasonably increased the interest rates on the loans they provided to the impoverished *reaya* and unlawfully seized their properties, *muşias*, and crops in exchange for the collected payments. In order to restore order and put an end to such practices, it was previously instructed that no one, whether people from Vidin or other individuals, should be allowed to cross into the Wallachia side without a permission letter from the border officials and appropriate measures were taken to enforce this order. However, it has come to my attention through the testimonies of some witnesses and complainants that certain individuals, using the excuse of harsh winter conditions, have delayed exporting their livestock from the interior of Wallachia and have shown reluctance to sever their ties with Wallachia. They persist in their intention to prolong the situation and, as both witnesses and claimants, demand immediate payment of their debts from *reaya* without any agreed-upon deadline. Their oppressive actions have caused unrest and dissatisfaction among

²⁰² Folio 46b.

²⁰³ Folio 46b.

the people. They have expressed their concerns about these bullies, who are now eager to collect the outstanding payments they consider to be deficient from their previous transactions within a few days.²⁰⁴

The practice of collecting the debt from the impoverished *reaya* without establishing a just and lawful system for its repayment has caused oppression and has brought misery upon the province. It is evident that special attention should be given to matters of debt and credit in accordance with sharia law. Those who engage in usury and demand interest on the loans they have provided must not be granted permission to charge more than eleven and a half percent annually. Any amounts they have collected under the name of usury in years that have not reached their maturity should be accounted for and returned, with appropriate adjustments and exchanges based on the established legal rates. These discrepancies have become apparent through careful accounting.²⁰⁵

Let it be known that for the debts that are substantial and pose difficulty for immediate repayment, arrangements should be made to provide an extension and allow for gradual repayment, ensuring the establishment of a proper system and issuance of promissory notes. As for the debts that are small and easily repayable, efforts should be made to have them settled directly with the debtor, thus eliminating the entire issue of credit and debt. Special attention should be given to the process of restructuring the Wallachia system and liberating the impoverished *reaya* from any form of oppression.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Folio 46b-46a.

²⁰⁵ Folio 46a-47b.

²⁰⁶ Folio 47b.

It has been decided that when the appointed time comes for issuing promissory notes for the remaining debts, it should be ensured that these notes are not given to anyone without a letter from the officials to the Wallachian voivode stating their eligibility to receive them. Each individual should be cautious to fulfill their commitments and avoid any negligence. This edict has been issued with the intent that upon receiving my orders, strict adherence to the instructions in the decree should be ensured, and any deviation from it should be avoided.²⁰⁷

From this edict concerning debts, we understand that as the state strives to maintain stability and resolve issues, the soldiers and not-soldiers were finding new ways to exploit the common *reaya*. One example of this was lending money to people at exorbitant interest rates. When they could not repay these debts, their lands and crops were forcibly seized. In other words, a definitive peace could not be achieved in the region, and the events seemed to be stuck in a vicious cycle. The state, however, attempted to alleviate the burden on *reaya* and put an end to the injustices through various payment methods. The commission was tasked with determining fair payment procedures.

As a result of the discussion and investigation of the events, definitive decisions were made, and a statement was sent to the state. The officials stated the following in the text:

The orders we have received as officials are limited to five main points. Four specific issues among these are the demolition of newly emerged buildings, the transportation of livestock, beehives, crops, and movable possessions, the expulsion of military groups, and the retrieval of *muşias* to their rightful owners. It is emphasized

²⁰⁷ Folio 47b-47a.

that these directives apply specifically to the five districts of Black Wallachia. We shall pay meticulous attention to completing the tasks in their entirety, even beyond Wallachia, to ensure the successful resolution of the matter.²⁰⁸

Nonetheless, the fifth point pertains to the essential matter of settling debts and severing connections. When the military groups arrive with their officers and initiate claims against the *reaya* of Wallachia, it becomes a challenging task to resolve the disputes and conflicts that arise, causing disruptions and mental distress. Efforts have been made to diligently investigate and rectify the situation in accordance with the principles of justice and maintaining order. This involves reconciling and adjusting claims, sometimes favoring peace and, at other times, addressing the concerns of the demanders while refusing to accept alterations and changes that deviate from the prescribed methods of payment. As a result, a total of 880 pouches of *akçe* have been collected and delivered to their rightful owners, with appropriate documentation (*tahvîl*) obtained from them. Yet, the majority of those claiming to have outstanding debts are often disgruntled members of the Alaiye and Albanian bandits who have been expelled from Belgrade. They collect debts from various districts (*nahiye*) and from impoverished *reaya*, who believe that the situation has become unbearable. However, the incompetence of the *reaya* makes it impractical for them to seek legal recourse, and they flee from one region to another. Some claim a total of 170 *akçe*, but their claims are met with suspicion by reliable individuals who have already collected their owed amounts. Consequently, the majority of these claimants remain unfortunate and have resorted to fleeing.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Folio 47a.

²⁰⁹ Folio 47a-48a.

However, due to their violent and selfish nature, the claimants persist in their claims, causing deprivation and suffering among the *reaya*. In order to address this situation and provide relief, it is necessary to take action and spread awareness about their deceptive practices. For this purpose, two separate ledger books containing the debts have been reported to the central government, urging the implementation of measures.²¹⁰

Despite clarifications on many issues, the matter of debt repayment has proven to be quite challenging for the commission, as the persistent claims of the outlaws and the desperate flight of the helpless and vulnerable people from the region have made it difficult to find common ground. Therefore, it has been explained to the central authority that it was necessary to provide the people in difficult circumstances with some additional time to repay their debts and requested that measures be taken accordingly.

As the commission concluded its work, it was instructed to investigate the difficulties between Fethülislam and the Wallachian voivode, and a corresponding imperial edict was sent from the central authority. This decree was added verbatim to the report. According to this edict, the Sultan addresses *Kapıcıbaşı* el-Hac Mehmed, Giridi el-Hac Ahmed, who are responsible for the Wallachia administration, and the appointed messenger of the Jannisary, *Turnacıbaşı* Hüseyin, saying: Let it be known that when my noble command reaches you:²¹¹

The proclamation of the deputy of Fethülislam, along with the grievances of its people and a letter from its voivode, was received by me. It is stated that the land of Fethülislam is limited and unsuitable for sowing seeds and cultivating fields, which

²¹⁰ Folio 48a.

²¹¹ Folio 49b.

has made it necessary for the *reaya* of Fethülislam to engage in sowing seeds, cultivating fields, and harvesting grass in the neighboring Wallachia land to fulfill their regular taxes and additional dues. This practice has not been hindered until now. However, the Wallachia boyars summoned the *reaya* of Fethülislam to Wallachia, unlawfully seized the lands of those who have property rights in Wallachia, confiscated their livestock, and issued them taxation (*ispence*) papers. Moreover, they have intimidated and frightened them by demanding excessive local taxes.²¹²

If the Wallachian voivode does not put an end to such oppression and aggression, the *reaya* will be completely devastated, and it will also cause harm to the endowment properties (*mâl-i vâkıf*). Therefore, a definitive decision has been made, and it is stated in the testimonies given by the *Kapı Kethüdas* and in a proclamation previously issued by the qadi of Vidin, which were all sent by Fethülislam, that the mentioned situation has been completely conveyed. Henceforth, the *reaya* residing in the villages, monasteries, and boyar estates of Wallachia were forcibly relocated and settled in Fethülislam villages through the deployment of armed forces, and they were subjected to extortion, burdened with taxes and subjected to humiliation and injustice.²¹³

Furthermore, the men of Fethülislam voivodes crossed over to the Wallachia side and forcibly relocated criminals and *reaya* from the Çerniç region, which was under the authority of Wallachia boyars, by issuing taxation (*ispence*). This caused damage to the provincial order and public properties. In order to obtain a decision of dismissal, they requested the sending of my imperial decree. When the situation is thoroughly considered in light of the submitted testimonies, it becomes clear that both

²¹² Folio 49b-49a.

²¹³ Folio 49a.

benefits and contradictions arise, and it is not possible to investigate the truth of the matter in this context. Therefore, it is necessary to refer the matter back to their respective locations for further examination of the parties' veracity, as understanding the true nature and essence of the dispute requires local investigation. Hence, I have entrusted this matter to you to provide me with a comprehensive report on the essence and truth of the dispute.²¹⁴

When my imperial decree reaches you through ..., as you are still in the Wallachia administration, I trust you to understand the essence of the dispute through every possible means, as it has been customary. Determine whether there have been any instances of oppression where parties have attacked each other's *reaya* and subsequently imposed tax (*ispence*), and identify the party responsible for the oppression. Seek not to deceive or deviate from the truth and avoid the need for further questioning and answering. Unite and unanimously present your decision to me, ensuring the accuracy and truthfulness of the matter, devoid of falsehood and contradiction. Yet, it should be noted that the purpose of my directive to you is to ensure the soundness of the dispute. If it is found that you have openly shown favoritism by coveting money and taking sides, and if you deviate from the truth, it will be heard, and it has been determined that you will be reprimanded accordingly in my presence. Therefore, act faithfully and take utmost care to avoid even the slightest negligence or oversight. In this matter, my imperial decree has been issued, commanding that when my orders reach you, you adhere to the instructions given and refrain from acting contrary to them, as explained in the decree.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Folio 50b.

²¹⁵ Folio 50a.

The disputes surrounding tax collection between Fethüislam and the Wallachia voivodes shed light on the dynamics of territorial transitions along the Danube River. Each party attributed the forceful relocation of *reaya*, and consequently the collection of taxes by the opposing side, as acts of misconduct. The substantial traffic from Fethüislam to Wallachia, as evidenced by the edict, indicates a longstanding pattern of migration. The central commission, composed of appointed members, was tasked with investigating these allegations and determining the party responsible for unjust treatment. Notably, the Sultan admonished the commission members against accepting bribes or exhibiting leniency toward any party. The fact that Fethüislam was on the Ottoman side may have created the impression that the governor of that place could influence the members of the commission. Nonetheless, a fair and comprehensive inquiry was imperative to address this matter and achieve an equitable resolution, given that both banks of the Danube are recognized as sovereign territories. However, the recognition of both banks of the Danube as sovereign territory by the state necessitates a fair investigation and proper resolution of this issue.

A proclamation has been sent to the center regarding the situation with Fethüislam, outlining the circumstances and proposed solutions. The commission's submission is as follows:

The meaning of the letter sent by the deputy of Fethüislam to the central government and the letter sent by the people present and voivodes is as follows: The territory of Fethüislam district is limited, and it is not suitable for agriculture and farming. Therefore, out of necessity, its *reaya* has been engaged in agriculture and farming in Wallachia lands since the time of the conquest, with the intention of paying their tithe (*âşar*) to the landowners. However, the boyars have unjustly confiscated the

lands of these people and subjected them to oppressive burdens in the form of arbitrary taxation (*tekâlif-i şâkka*).²¹⁶

The statements provided by the Wallachia *Kapı Kethüdası* and the previous official announcement from the qadi of Vidin contradict the complaints against Fethülislam voivode and the alleged acts of oppression and confiscation of the *reaya* in Wallachia territory. The allegations of oppressing *reaya* in Wallachia and issuing tax (*ispence*) papers, as well as the claims of capturing and forcibly relocating criminals from the Çerniç district of Fethülislam's jurisdiction to the opposing side, are contrary to the reports provided. Therefore, following the imperial edict sent by the postmen to be submitted as an announcement of the central government, it is necessary to swiftly turn to the town of Çerniç in the nearby and neighboring Black Wallachia region, which is an hour away from Fethülislam, and gather reliable information and investigate the truth from trustworthy and settled individuals in the towns and villages of Vidin, Ada-i Kebir, Flordin (?), and others. Upon receiving the findings and information, the situations of the parties should be reported, and it should be emphasized that the *reaya* of the Fethülislam district, who possess extensive fields and pastures and have abundant agricultural products, sell the surplus produce to other lands, manage taxes, and handle their affairs; therefore, they do not have a need and dependency on Wallachia.²¹⁷

The Fethülislam voivodes have historically collected the customary tax (*jizya*) and other taxes, which are valid, and they do not show any interest or preference in crossing over to the Wallachia side or engaging in any mutual agreement. If the Wallachia voivode were to attack them in any way, it would be considered contrary to

²¹⁶ Folio 51b.

²¹⁷ Folio 51b-51a.

the witnessed agreement. However, for the past 5-6 years, the *reaya* of Wallachia have been crossing over to the Fethülislam side, avoiding paying the taxes of the opposing side, and instead paying 33 *para* in corn wheat fees and 46 *para* in tax (*ispence*) fees, without customary tax (*jizya*), along with the transfer of their families, as well as their vineyards, gardens, fields, beehives, livestock, pastures, agriculture, and farms being located on the Wallachia side. They investigate and deliver the tithe (*öşür*) of the land to the landowners and the animal tax to the officials. However, they do not pay the municipal fees (*rüsûmat-ı belediye*), and apart from the 79 *para* share they have been giving to the Fethülislam voivodes, they have no other benefits in the Fethülislam community, who are not located on the Wallachia side.²¹⁸

With this arrangement, after three years have passed, when they establish certain vineyards on that side, once they feel safe to return to their original homeland, they are included in the existing framework, and customary tax (*jizya*) and other taxes are collected from them. This situation has spread among the *reaya*, and as a result, they have migrated to the Fethülislam side and other areas in this manner. The majority of those who had migrated from the Wallachia side 7-8 years ago have established villages and towns on the shores of the Danube and in those surrounding areas, cutting off their ties with the Wallachia side, and they do not have any disputes. The migrations of the Wallachia *reaya* mentioned to encircle the Fethülislam territory lasted for two years or a few months, and since it is difficult for those who possess property on the Wallachia side to reach the lands under Fethülislam control, they continue to utilize their *muşias*, gardens, livestock, and crops on the opposing Wallachia side. Therefore, the Fethülislam *reaya* claim that they are dependent on the Wallachia land.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Folio 51a-52b.

²¹⁹ Folio 52b-52a.

The dispute between the two sides is about these matters, and sometimes some of them, without even migrating, are referred to as our shepherds or as relatives of our *reaya* by the Fethülislam side, who even provide them with taxation (*ispence*) papers. It is also about those who, realizing that they would fall into the tax group on the Fethülislam side, choose to return to their original homeland. In other words, the Fethülislam voivode says, “These are my *reaya*, I do not consent to them paying taxes to the voivode on the Wallachia side, and even the punishment for the crimes committed should be administered by me.”²²⁰

The Wallachia voivode also claims that those who were formerly my subjects, with fields, crops, and other properties (*muşia*) under my control, should be subject to customary (*örfi*) taxes, their crimes (*cürüm*), and offenses should be investigated by me. Additionally, despite having a royal edict in my possession regarding the migration and resettlement of *reaya* to Wallachia, I have shown tolerance in its implementation. There has been no incidence of imposing taxes, crimes, or offenses on any individual of the *reaya*, whether they have migrated or not, since they have been under the control of Wallachia.²²¹

However, the Fethülislam voivode, by taking two *kurus* and completely usurping the taxes paid by the Wallachia *reaya*, not only disrupted the established order but also benefitted from some activities, such as planting vineyards, fields, trees, farming, livestock, and beekeeping in Wallachia. While the Wallachia *reaya* enjoyed the benefits of cultivating the land and utilizing its resources, the Fethülislam voivode only collected a tax (*ispence*), and perhaps when they no longer had any participation in the taxes after migration, they were unable to bear the burden of the taxes necessary

²²⁰ Folio 52a-53b.

²²¹ Folio 53b.

to maintain the state's assets (*mâl-i mîrî*). As a result, *reaya* suffered, being left in a state of distress and turmoil, leading to the apparent breakdown of the established order. In accordance with the reliable Muslims who maintain the old order through their alliance, it has been reported that the Wallachia people, who resided in Wallachia, severed their ties with the others upon crossing to the other side, and likewise, the people who returned to Fethülislam had their ties severed by Fethülislam, thus reinstating order. Therefore, if the command and decree of the revered ruler reach them through the edict, the *reaya* shall remain steadfast, not moving from their place, and the dispute between the two parties shall come to an end, as decisively determined. This is the order and edict of the esteemed ruler.²²²

According to the commission's report to the center, the claim of the Fethülislam voivode stating that people crossed to the opposing side due to the scarcity of cultivable land there was not true. On the contrary, they had ample and fertile land, and they even sold their surplus produce. They did not need to depend on Wallachia land. As for the *reaya* of Wallachia, they crossed to the opposing side and cultivated the land there, avoiding the traditional taxes imposed in Wallachia by paying only the product tax. Their vineyards and gardens in Wallachia continued to exist, creating a division. Those who stayed in their new settlements after crossing, which took 7-8 years, had no issues. However, it was claimed that those who crossed to Wallachia were dependent on Wallachia land because it was more difficult for them to access their lands on the other side. The reason for this claim could be Fethülislam's proximity to the center, making state control easier.

²²² Folio 53b-53a.

Ultimately, the commission attempted to resolve the issue by imposing restrictions on crossings between the two sides. According to this, *reaya* would abide by the rules of the side they crossed to and sever their ties with the opposing side. This would put an end to the confusion regarding taxes. However, implementing this decision would not be easy during a period of prolonged warfare and increased financial burden on *reaya*. They had developed a habit of migrating to the side where they paid fewer taxes and obtained higher yields from the land. In short, unless a wall was erected between them, preventing such migrations would be difficult, which brings us to the fundamental question of “whose territory, whose peasants?” raised by Virginia Aksan. In the broadest sense, these situations can be considered prime examples of the periphery, as this was the natural course of peripheral life.

During this time, the appointed governor of Silistra, in alliance with its population, initiated the process of dispute along the borders of the Danube, as previously decided in relation to Wallachia. Even the truth of this matter was recorded in the report, awaiting the arrival of the imperial order for its official proclamation.²²³

According to this decree, addressed to the officials in the administration of Wallachia, namely el-Hac Mehmed and the appointed qadi, Giridi el-Hac Ahmed, the Sultan declares: Let it be known that when my esteemed command reaches you;²²⁴

The cleansing and organization of my inherited property in Wallachia and Black Wallachia will ultimately be accomplished through your dedication and care. In order to maintain their connection to the land of Wallachia, the population of Silistra has been appearing day by day. They have formed alliances and intermediaries with certain merchants. The matter has been thoroughly investigated, both secretly and

²²³ Folio 53a-54b.

²²⁴ Folio 54b.

openly, to ascertain the true nature of these occurrences, and the findings were recently sent to the central authority for official proclamation through my previous imperial decree. However, now, in collaboration with the governor of Silistra, the aforementioned local inhabitants claim that our governor holds documents ensuring that there will be no interference by the Wallachia voivode in the regions that have been affected by the overflow of the Danube, extending forty steps from the riverbanks. This includes agricultural lands, farming, lakes, islands, the peasant population, and their assigned dwellings, known as “*dams*.”²²⁵

First and foremost, in accordance with the aforementioned imperial decree sent for the sake of order, those who persistently cause oppression without withdrawing from Wallachia should be identified and held accountable. The true nature of the matter, including the forty-step lands and the so-called “*balta*” lakes, islands, the *reaya*, and the dams associated with agriculture and farming, should be thoroughly inspected, investigated, and properly delineated from both sides of the border. Once this is done, the truth should be proclaimed to the central authority for my decree to be implemented. Therefore, I command that a separate imperial decree be sent to you, as per the request and petition of the Wallachia *Kapı Kethüdas*, so that you may execute it accordingly. When this decree reaches you, the essence of the matter and the lands encompassing the forty-step and “*balta*” regions, which are vital for agriculture and farming, should be thoroughly inspected to determine from which side they have historically been under control. After properly ascertaining the borders, you shall proclaim the truth to the central authority and carry out my imperial decree.²²⁶

²²⁵ Folio 54b-54a.

²²⁶ Folio 54a-55b.

Silistra, being located on the southern side of the Danube River, is a neighbor to Wallachia, just like Fethülislam. Although the Danube serves as a natural border, it has not prevented disputes between the neighboring regions. Both sides have accused each other of forcibly seizing control of the lakes, dams, and *reaya* for their own benefit. In response, the state, taking advantage of the presence of the commission, has requested the resolution of this issue and the elimination of border-related problems.

This matter has been thoroughly investigated, and the truth has been ascertained. A formal declaration has been sent to the state authorities. According to this declaration:

Silistra governor el-Hac Halil Ağa, together with certain merchants and with their alliance, claimed rights over the areas that overflowed from the Danube River, extending up to forty steps of land, including agriculture, farming, lakes, islands, *reaya*, and the dwellings they considered their own. They refused to comply with the order sent for the organization of Wallachia and persisted in their oppression of the people. They filed complaints with the qadis and addressed their grievances to the state authorities, while the Wallachia *Kapı Kethüdas* also submitted petitions, expressing their distress and fear, requesting the cessation of these acts.²²⁷

The true nature of the matter, the condition of the forty-step land for agriculture and farming, the state of the lakes and the *balta* lakes, and the historical ownership of the *reaya* and dwellings (*dam*) were thoroughly inspected, and their boundaries were clarified. In accordance with this, a decree was sent to the Wallachia administration by el-Hac Mehmed Ağa. The decree emphasized the need to demolish the previously established buildings in Wallachia and restore the original order, which would keep

²²⁷ Folio 55b-55a.

the hands of soldiers and oppressive forces off Wallachia and its *reaya*. However, during the process of demolishing the mentioned buildings in Silistra and the surrounding coastal areas of Wallachia, disputes and rumors arose, prompting our messengers to conduct inspections among the local population. It was reported by trustworthy Muslims that the Danube shores and the *reaya*, as well as the taxes, have long been under the control of the Wallachia voivodes and the owners of the *muşia*. Furthermore, the Silistra court's registry book records the resolution of the dispute in 1082 (1671/72) and the definitive decision and appointment of messengers and judges from the state in 1131 (1718/19), affirming that the ministers have no authority over those areas and lakes. These records exist and will be thoroughly investigated when the decree is received, as they contain the necessary sharia documents confirming these facts.²²⁸

And from the Imperial Council (*Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn*), it was issued that due to the significant dispute involving the mentioned governor, the military buildings in those areas were demolished. In addition, the boundaries encompassing the *reaya*, monastic endowments, and the estates of the boyars were established in accordance with the relevant documents, without any dispute, under the supervision of the qadi of Silistra, Mehmed Efendi. It was also confirmed that he thoroughly investigated the matter and that the owners complied with the regulations. When the *reaya* of Wallachia presented the decrees they possessed, as mentioned in the royal decree recorded in the sacred book (*sâdr-ı kitap*), it was sent to the noble council. The colluding *muşia* owners, the monastic committee, and other boyars and *reaya* came before the noble council. Each of them explained that *muşia*, as well as the taxes collected from the *balta* lakes and the lakes, had been in possession of them for a long time. They

²²⁸ Folio 55a-56b.

presented and proved the old deeds that encompassed the boundaries, and they were renewed due to the ongoing conflicts.²²⁹

After the presentation of the sharia documents, the mentioned royal decree was also declared. According to the reliable Muslims in Ruse, Silistra, Hârşova, Brăila, and the surrounding areas, an extensive investigation was conducted. From Brăila, Ali Ağa bin Mehmed Ağa, İbrahim Ağa ibn-i Süleyman Ağa, and Mustafa Ağa ibn Ahmed Ağa, from Silistra, Seyid Ömer Ağa ibn-i Seyid Mustafa Ağa, Mehmed Efendi ibn Feyzullah Çelebi, and Mustafa Ağa ibn-i Abdurrahman, and from Ruse, Seyid Mustafa Ağa ibn Süleyman Ağa and Mehmed Emin Efendi ibn Ahmed Çelebi Seyid Halil Ağa ibn Seyid Ali and from Hârşova İbrahim Ağa ibn Ahmed Ağa, along with Mustafa Ağa ibn Ali and Ali Ağa ibn Mustafa from Hârşova, were among the recognized individuals. Furthermore, the representatives of various endowment holders were present in the esteemed sharia council, which convened at the designated gathering place in Wallachia in the presence of the appointed official, el-Hac Mehmed Ağa and *Serturna* Hüseyin Ağa, who were residing in the Great Bucharest townhouse, the news was received regarding the disputed land under the jurisdiction of Silistra governor. It was reported that the land originated from the Wallachia mountains along the Danube coast, where three rivers named Muştina?, Galoçay?, and Zagliye? emerged.²³⁰

The *balta* lakes encompassing Kaldaroşat, Nebaşe, Belço, Raskol, Fakami, Orsar, Galaçoy Mareçyan, Çökeneşt, and Yokurite, as well as the fish tax collected from the lakes and mentioned three rivers, Borçe being the main river, which flows and expands from there to Oraladan, Oslopориye, Kotraçan, Kascori, Bordişan, and other Bordişan, Çegan, Mesle, Pişkol, Yepure, Estelenka, Konşet, Dodeşt, Tanbureşt,

²²⁹ Folio 56b-56a.

²³⁰ Folio 56a-57b.

Belonivit, Dal, Boze Peskoyi, Harayol, Karahosol, Dohaskol, Peyaevlan, Terişan, and Mefran, are all consolidated with authentic deeds and records, comprising 23 *muşias* of 2 lands (*kita*) of established ownership rights. These territories have been seized and the tithes were collected by the Wallachia monasteries' trustees and the involved parties, including the boyars. The fish caught in the lakes and other related taxes are also collected from the respective parties, and the taxes of the *reaya* residing there are collected by the Wallachia voivodes. The officials have been appointed to ensure the implementation of these processes, and the ministries are strictly prohibited from any interference. However, for the past three years, there has been growing oppression by the Silistra oppressors, similar to the oppressors who encroach upon Wallachia, such as Canbazoğlu Mustafa Ağa, who was appointed as the customs officer by the governor. Initially, this oppression began with a small incident, but it has been increasing day by day.²³¹

Therefore, they have been notified to report each of these incidents involving the mentioned *balta* lakes, *muşias*, and fish tax and to have the real documents seized according to their rightful owners. The newly constructed military barracks, which were initially destroyed, were demolished accordingly. However, the previous organization of the forty-step crime has not been restored. The peasants' rights have only been partially regained through disruptive means, causing harm and hindrance. To seek the cessation of oppression and the continuity of order, a petition has been submitted to the esteemed minister and the related parties, requesting their exemption from interference in agriculture and farming and from aggressive intervention. This

²³¹ Folio 57b-57a.

petition has been presented to the higher authorities, requesting the reinstatement of the previous situation.²³²

The commission diligently undertook efforts to address the intricate disputes between Silistra and Wallachia, recognizing the need to scrutinize historical records in order to ascertain the veracity of conflicting claims. By delving into the archives of court registers, they unearthed pertinent complaints and the corresponding judgments that pertained to similar grievances. Meticulously collating this wealth of information with the contemporaneous incidents at hand, the commission strived to synthesize a viable and equitable resolution. The regions contiguous to the Danube River encountered persistent challenges in delineating their borders with Wallachia, prompting protracted engagements by the central administration in pursuit of effective remediation. Remarkably, even the formidable natural barrier presented by the Danube River failed to impede the recurrence of such conflicts, highlighting the peripheral dynamics within the prevailing socio-political milieu.

At the conclusion part of the commission's report, a table entitled "Declaration of the Number of Destroyed Buildings in Wallachia and Black Wallachia" was included.²³³ According to this table:

The statement declares the number of destroyed buildings in Black Wallachia, which consists of five major districts (*nâhiye-i kebire*), with one side being the Olet water and the other side being under the influence of Fethülislam. The numbers of destroyed buildings are as follows:²³⁴

²³² Folio 57a-58b.

²³³ Folio 58b.

²³⁴ Folio 58b.

<u>District</u> <i>(Kazaha-yı)</i>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>Mill</u> <i>(Âsiyâb)</i>	<u>Household</u>	<u>Store</u> <i>(Dekâkin)</i>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Storehouse</u>
Krayova	141	8	139	5	25	3
Tirguzi	82	13	-	-	-	-
Karakol	146	42	-	-	-	-
Remoniç	82	-	-	-	-	-
Hokna	119	-	-	-	-	-
Çerniç	115	-	-	-	-	-
Total	685	63	139	5	25	3

In the western region of Wallachia, which is bordered by the Olet water to the west and Brăila to the east and comprises 12 districts, the number of buildings owned by the Muslim residents that were established as properties and were destroyed by the imperial decree is mentioned as follows:²³⁵

<u>District (Kaza-yı)</u>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>Mill (Âsiyâb)</u>
Olet	109	20
Argil (Arceş)	18	63
Muşcel	14	-
Îlfov	34	-
Balomiçe	120	-
Demboviçe	17	-
Remnik	72	-
Boze (Bozu)	45	-
Sukuyan (Sakuyan)	36	-
Berahova (Rahova)	50	-
Piteşti	12	-
Filipsine	10	-
Vilaşko	92	-
Total	628	83

Number of farms in Black Wallachia: 685

Number of farms in Wallachia: 628

Number of mills in Wallachia and Black Wallachia: 83

Number of demolished houses in the inner town of Bucharest: 6

²³⁵ Folio 58a.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to demonstrate that the subject of the commission report is not merely an isolated incident and that new interpretations can be made in the evaluation of the report. As emphasized by Virginia Aksan, were these events confined solely within the context of the Ottoman-Russian wars of the 1750s and 1760s? No. In other words, this is not just an event but a long-standing phenomenon deeply ingrained in the Ottoman tradition. Border violations, corruption, and the abuses of relatively lenient governance in Wallachian territories are recurring incidents. So, why do these events keep recurring in Wallachia? One reason might be the application of a structure similar to the *malikane* system, which is extensively discussed in the third section of the thesis.

In connection with these events, I gathered numerous pieces of information from qadi records. An illustrative example of this can be found in a similar incident I acquired from the Vidin qadi records: the leading agas of the Vidin Janissary Garrison, a total of 197 individuals, crossed over to the Wallachian side, promising to put an end to the corruption they were involved in, and signed a document to that effect, which was duly noted in the records. The case that concluded with the decision between the Deputy of Voivode Yorgaki Boyar and the Janissaries was heard in the presence of Vidin Guardian Numan Pasha in the sharia court. According to this, these individuals would dismantle the structures they had established in Wallachia, such as sheep pens, lodgings, winter quarters, and beehives. They also agreed not to wander without permission in unauthorized areas, preventing harm to the local inhabitants. Those who had settled there under the pretext of trade would be expelled, and assistance would be given to the authorities in capturing criminals who engaged in banditry.²³⁶

Here we see once again that soldiers of military origin facilitate transitions from the side where the Ottoman central authority is more dominant to the side with more freedom. For the Ottoman Empire, the issue is not with the land itself but with the land laborers, as land without people has no value. The combination of land and labor brings revenue to the state treasury. If there is no labor, land alone generates nothing. These soldiers cross to the opposite side and engage in corruption, leading to the Wallachian voivode being unable to pay taxes to the center. At the same time, soldiers are also going to the farms there, along with the *reaya* from Rumelia, and they are disappearing without paying taxes anymore. This is the main issue for the state, and how the Ottoman Empire will resolve this matter is the primary challenge.

²³⁶ Sofia, Oriental Department of Bulgarian National Library “St. Cyril and St. Methodius”, S.41 fol. 94b-95a.

In connection with the land issue, there are two important elements: the military slaves (*kul*) and the common people (*reaya*). Whose subjects are *reaya*? The Janissaries'? Wallachia's? The state's? This is one of the main problems of history. For instance, if there are 500 farm laborers, you need to calculate them along with their families. That is, around 2000-3000 people crossing over to Vidin. They leave Rumelia behind and cross the Danube to Wallachia. Crossing to the opposite side had become a tradition in Bulgaria. The soldiers might have promised the people that if they come with them to the other side, they will be exempt from taxes, and they will also provide a salary, for instance. This means a decrease in the number of taxpayers for the Ottoman Empire.

During this historical phase, the Ottoman state grapples with a notable predicament involving these prominent figures. The evolving dynamics of these relationships are indicative of a pivotal transition – one marked by the gradual detachment of peripheries from the central authority, as regional entities aspire to self-sufficiency while evincing reduced dependence on centralized control mechanisms. As time goes on, these individuals gain more influence, and the state finds itself in a tight spot. They firmly establish themselves in the region. This leads to Janissary families rising to prominence and becoming local ruling families. Eventually, they become a major threat to the central authority. There is not much difference between Mihail and Pazvantoğlu in the context of the Ottoman Empire. Pazvantoğlu also seeks help from the Habsburgs against the Ottomans. These situations cause big problems for the state, so they have no choice but to send a commission to try to fix things.

Researchers have always been intrigued by this region. Within the context of the 18th century, they aim to identify the emergence of estates in Rumelia and present

these estates as the foundation of decentralization. However, the reality is somewhat different. From the documents we have examined, we also see similar incidents in the 16th century. These events date back to that era. These individuals want to break free from state control and engage in corruption. It is as if the status quo in Wallachia offers them an opportunity for less oversight and more authority.

The established commission, as observed, can be deemed largely ineffective in practice, given its lack of tangible outcomes. In a subsequent span of years, the emergence of Pazvantoğlu and his severance of ties with the central authority in the region become evident. The ensuing conflict between Pazvantoğlu and the Ottoman state materializes. Concurrently, additional influential actors such as Tırsiniklioğlu emerge, ushering in a period of competition along the Danube. While the central administration undertook an experimental intervention to curtail these developments, the results proved elusive. Subsequently, the Tanzimat era will arrive because these situations are beginning to pose a danger to the state.

In my opinion, Aksan's question is posed somewhat redundantly, as we are well aware of the ownership of these lands and the population. However, the crucial query lies in whether they were able to harness these resources adequately. This is significant because figures like local *ayans* are emerging, giving rise to decentralization. By now, the authority of the center no longer extends to distant territories. This encapsulates the logic of the 18th century. This source, therefore, serves as a research topic that elucidates this and brings these events to light.

In conclusion, to comprehend this historical process more effectively, the first section provided a general framework from the emergence of Wallachia as a principality to its independence in 1878. The second section drew examples from the

relevant parts of the 3rd *mühimme* register, striving to demonstrate that the mentioned issues were long-evolving developments. In the final section, the main focus was on a comprehensive analysis of the commission report, which constitutes the core source of the thesis. A detailed examination of the report's content was conducted, followed by assessments of the source itself, aiming to foster a novel perspective on the historical period.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Several examples from the simplified version of the decrees within the commission report, Giridli el-Hacc Ahmed Efendi. “Eflak ve Boğdan Hakkında.”
Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Milli Saraylar Başkanlığı.

Eflak’ın düşüşü ve sonra kurtarılması ve nizamı beyanı

-Arnavud ve Alaiye eşkiyası

-Zabitlerin göz yumması

-Ayanların kayıtsızlıkları

-Voyvodaların ve boyarların müsamahaları

Sebepleriyle Eflak’a yavaş yavaş girme, yayılma. Cebren muşiaları zapt etme, ırgat etme, mal, erzak, binek hayvanları zorbalıkla alma.

Reaya çevre memleketlere, yükseklerle kaçtı. Memlekette köy ve kentlerde zulüm yayıldı. Kadınlar ve erkekler arz etti ki; bunların merhameti, acıması yok. Haddi aşan taşkınlıkları var. Dergâh-ı izzetten kovulmuşlar.

Kasabalarda, köylerde, çevre nahiyelerde, kazalarda ev, köşk, çiftlik, kışlak, değirmen, dükkân, fırın yaptılar, kovanlık eklediler. Cebren fukaradan hayvanlar gasp ettiler ve yük hayvanlarını muşialarda otlattılar. Başka yerden getirilen hububatı gasp edip muşia tarlasında reayaya ektirip hasat ettirdiler.

Reayanın elinde bal ve yağ bulunursa eskiden verdikleri paranın tefeciliği olarak erzaklarına, ambarlarına el koydular. Sadece fakirin değil zenginin bile kazancını geçerek herkesi etkiliyorlar. İstanbul ahalisi şöyle dursun yakın memleketteki kasabalar, kaleler bile zorbalığa feryat ediyor.

Eflak voyvodası **İşkerlet bin veled Ligor** padişahın yardımını ve memleketini korumasını istiyor. Boyarların ittifakıyla gönderdiği arzuhal **Sadrizam Ragıp Mehmed Paşa'ya** kadar gitmiş. Bu kötü işleri yapan alçakların yok edilmesi, zulmeden bozguncuların def edilmesi, sultanın huzuruna ulaşan arzuhalin özetini duyurarak karar vermesi ve bu yolla Eflak'a el uzatan adaletsiz, ahalinin rahatını bozanlardan intikam fetvasını icraya çaba gösterme,

Hariciye işlerini uygulamada bir hâkim tayin etme ve emrin infazı için idare fikrine sahip, şerefli, emre göre hareket edecek, ocak kullarını yoluna koyacak, emirlere icabet ile Yeniçeri Ocağı'nı cesurca düzelterek ve cezalandıracak, askeri işlerde muktedir biri tayin etme.

Mesele devlet-i aliyeye bölümler halinde anlatıldı.

Bu konuda derinlemesine araştırma esnasında geçmişte **Cebecibaşı Kapıcılarından el-hac Mehmed Ağa** risale başlığına memur oldu. 1150 senesinde Yeniçeri Ağası olup yüce rütbeye layık olan Abdullah Paşa'nın oğlu **Serturna Hüseyin Ağa** iktidar sahibi oldu. İyi bilinen olmasıyla onun da adı geçen ağaya katılması ve risale yazması buyuruldu.

Taraf-ı devletten ibtida-i irsal olunan emr-i ali suretidir beyan olunur

-Kapıcıbaşılardan evvelki Cebecibaşı el-hac Mehmed

-Hakim tayin olunan Giridi el-hac Ahmed

-Ocaktan katılan memur Turnacıbaşı Hüseyin

Eflak **öteden beri serbestiyet üzere ve başkentin kileri olduğu için** ahalişi mezalimden himayeme memur olmuşken;

Tuna sahili ahalişi ve serhadde olan askeri taifesi Eflak arazisine yayılmış, emlak ve arazilerini cebren zapt etmiş, odalar ve kışlaklar ihdas etmiş. Eflak reayası perişan halde.

Mübaşirler ve hâkim tayin edip sadır olan emr-i şerifimle mahalline varın;

Eflak'ta Fethülislam karşısından İbrail'e dek muayene ederek ahali ve boyaranın zapt edilen emlak, arazi, otlak ve tarlalarını zorbaların elinden kurtarıp sahiplerine teslim edin. Kışlak ve çiftliklerini yok edin, Eflak'tan uzaklaştırın ve ihraç edilenlerin bir daha gelmemeleri ve çiftlik, oda, kışlaklar bina etmemeleri için hepsinin anlaşma yaptıklarını tescil edip der aliyeme bildirin.

Nizamın devamlı olması için emr-i şerifimle tembih olduğundan bundan böyle adı geçen tarihten bu vakte gelince bu nizama ve emirlere ters harekete cesaret olduğunda bina olunan oda ve kışlakların yok edilmesi, zorbaların Eflak'tan uzaklaştırılması için emiler gönderildiği divan kayıtlarından malumum.

Nizamın istikrarına sarf edilen gayretle sıkıntılar külliye bertaraf olup eşkıya zulmünden şikâyet etmek lazım gelmezken Eflak'ın **metropolid, psikopos, manastır rahipleri, boyarları** ve diğerlerinin gönderdikleri dilekçelerinde;

Zabitlerin müsamahaları sebebiyle eşkıyalar eskisi gibi boşluk bulup Eflak ve **Kara Eflak**'ın köylerine yavaş yavaş girip kışlak, kovanlık, odalar bina ettiler.

Askeri, gayr-ı askeri ve zorbaların Eflak'ta ve **Krayova**'da ihdas ettikleri oda, kışlak, kovanlık ve çiftliklerin eskisi gibi tamamen yok edilmesi ve kendilerinin çevre bölgeden uzaklaştırılması, askeri olanların memur oldukları bölgeye gitmesi, fukara reayayı kurtarma, eşlerini, çocuklarını, arazilerini, tarlalarını ve muşialarını sahiplerine verme, Müslüman zalim tüccarlara sahip çıkmama, memleketin içlerinde gezmeyip alışveriş için zabitanı bulunan pazar yerlerinde durmak üzere Eflak'ın yeniden nizamına şekil verme bana bildirilmek üzere emr-i şerifim istirham olundu.

Hala Eflak voyvodası **İskerlet** bile arzuhalıyla keyfiyeti tasdik ederek yardım diledi. Evrakın özeti huzuruma takdim edildi.

Eflak reayasının mezalimden emniyetleri emirler ile verilen nizamın devamı isteğim olduğundan arzuhallerine müsaade edilip hususun araştırılması ve emirlerin hükmünü yürütmek için bir hâkim tayin olunması elzem.

Sen ki bu emrin sorumluluğunu almaya iktidar sahibisin, Şeyhülislam İsmail Asım'ın işaret etmesiyle bu hususa hâkim tayin edildin, sen ki kapıcıbaşısın ve sen ki ocaktan tayin olunan mumaileyhsin mübaşiri maiyetine katıp Eflak nizamına memur kıldın.

Şimdi cümleiniz birlikte hareket edip mahale varmaya acele edin. Eflak nizamı için ahaliyi tasallut eden eşkıyanın elinden kurtarın, bina olunan oda ve kışlakları yok edin, eşkıyanın vilayetten kovan ve hayvanatlarıyla uzaklaştırılmasını sağlayın, **Fethülislam** karşısından **İbrail'e dek** tanzimi gereken yerleri muayene edin, nizama ters davrananların bina eyledikleri odalarını, kışlaklarını yok edip reayanın yerlerini, mezralarını, muşialarını sahiplerine teslim edin, askeri ve gayr-ı askeri Eflak'ta gezip dolaşan serserileri kovan ve hayvanatlarıyla uzaklaştırın, bundan böyle bir ferdin Eflak'a firar eylememesi için çabalayın ve ehl-i ırz olan zalim Müslüman tüccara sahip çıkmayın.

Eflak'ın içinde gezmeyip alışveriş için **kapudan** ve **beşlüyan** zabitanı pazar yerlerinde dinlenmek üzere voyvoda'nın izin belgesiyle bulunabilir.

İrade-i hümayunumla Eflak'ın eşkıyadan kurtarılmasına gayret edilmişken bundan sonra tekrar rızama ters çiftlik, oda ve kışlak ihdasıyla emrime karşıt hareket edenler her kim olursa olsun zabitlerle cezalandırılsın.

Neticede sen ki mübaşir-i mumaileyhsin, devletimin ricalindensin sadakatin sebebiyle seçildin. Bu hususa özel mübaşir tayin olunmakla gerekli memuriyetin üzere sen ve ortakların isteğim üzerine Eflak'ın nizamını tamamlamaya dikkat ederek emrimi icraya beraber gayret edin. Sıkıntılı konuyu az zamanda suhuletle bitirmeye gayret gösterin, rehavet ve müsamahadan son derece kaçının babında fermanım sadır olmuştur buyurdum ki....

Tahriren- Evail Muharrem sene 1173

Bu hususa memur olanların asitane-i saadetten ibtida-yı azimetleri günü

Bu emrin icrası ve irade-i emr-i hümayunu bildirildikten sonra gereğince hareket edilmesi ve bu mühim emrin yürütülmesine süratle girişmek için 1173 senesi Muharreminin 5. Günü İstanbul'dan yola çıkıp 25. Gününde **Tuna'nın karşısına ve Yergöğü kasabasına** birlikte ulaşp tembih edildiği üzere ve sadrazamın tavsiyesiyle emrin başlaması ve ilerlemesi elzem olduğundan;

Vidin Muhafızı Kethüda Mehmed Paşa hazretlerinin hayırlı davranışlarda olduğu malum-ı cihandar olduğu için adaletli efendimizin adı geçenden malumu olduğundan arzu edilenin ibrazı ve irade-i hümayunlarını kendilerine hitaben buyurmalarıyla;

Bahsedilen yerden bu konuda gönderilen o emir devlet adamlarına ulaştığında munasip suretle aceleyle başlamaları buyuruldu.

Düşmanın kökünü kırıp devlete itaatleri için **Adalet Divanı** kurun ve amanlarını 3 fasıl edip bu yolla yumuşatıp hırçınlık ettiklerinden emri okuyup herkese ilan edin. Nihayetinde herkese hoş hitap edip bu ulu emrin tarafımdan tahririni içeren bir iltimasınız olursa hakkın devamı için kelimaları tamamlayın.

Appendix B: A few examples from the commission report.



Appendix D: Map 1, Moldavia and Wallachia



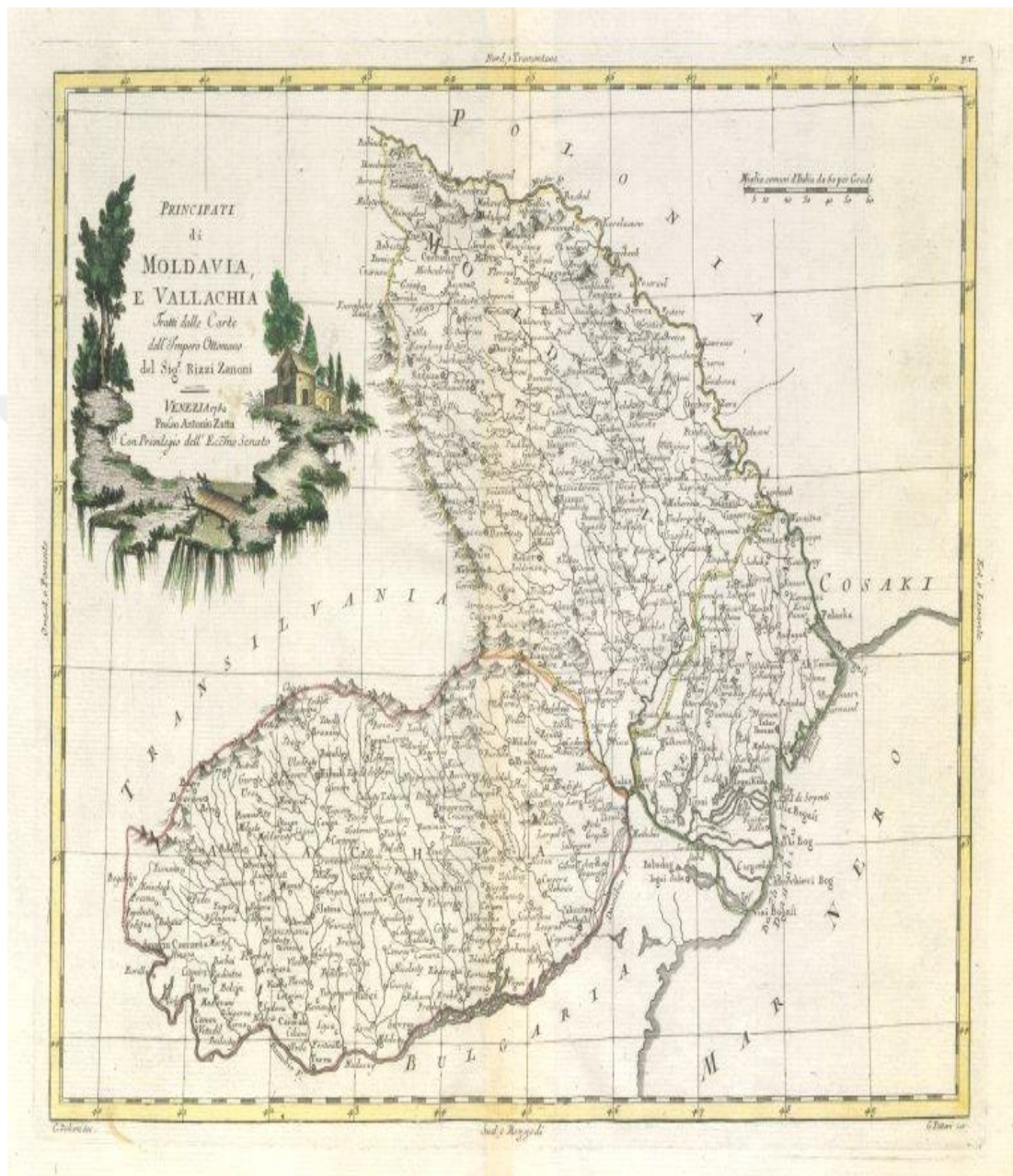
Source: Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans- Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, vol. I (Cambridge, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.99.

Appendix D: Map 2, The northwestern lands of the Ottoman Empire around 1664



Source: Viorel Panaite, “Watching over Neighboring Provinces in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of Tributary Princes from the North of the Danube in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” essay in *Tributaries and Peripheries of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Gábor Kármán (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2020), 7–23, p.9.

Appendix D: Map 3, Principate di Moldavia, e Vallachia



Source: <https://www.antiquemapsandprints.com/categories/prints-and-maps-by-country/europe/romania-wallachia/product/-principati-di-moldavia-e-vallachia...-moldova-wallachia-romania-zatta-1783-map/P-7-014121~P-7-014121>