

Summary

The present paper, called *The Establishment and Activity of the Russian Consulate in Iași until 1806*, conducted by professor doctor Gabriel Bădărău, addresses many aspects of the activity of the Russian consuls between the Kuciuk Kainargi peace and 1806.

Being captivated by the size of the bilateral reports that have been distinguished in time in the stave of international relations through a *universe of contrasts* and a signally problematic historical ambience, but, at the same time, by the complexity of difficulties that different identification strategies have been presumed by the *Romanian political elite* of a synergy field of action in its aesthetical proximity, in the present doctoral thesis, we assumed an audacious commitment to examine the way in which the relation between The Tsarist Empire and The Principalities during 1774-1806 was rethought, redefined and remodeled.

Thus, starting from the complexity of the objectives that we propose to achieve in tandem with the motivation of undertaking, but also from the reality of the bibliographical instruments that we have at our disposal, we tried to confer the paper a distinctive structure, from which the quintessence of the matter at hand should clearly emerge.

In this regard, we based the configuration of the paper on chapters and subchapters that follow the logic and diachronic thread of factual reality, trying to emphasize and highlight the nodal seam of the paper.

Before we go further into the subject, we must specify from the start, that there is no complex documentary - quality study that can state the creation and the activity of the Russian consulate in The Romanian Principalities, situation that otherwise will lead to the appreciation that the subject's prepared historiography is in the present time, in an emphasized incipient state.

However, in spite of such a situation, the examination of the actual problem that is subjected to investigation, has taken a privileged place, not only within specialty papers and studies, but also within some edited specialty papers.

Naturally, and as it might be expected, this corollary of emblematic and referential sources, which also adds importance to the subject's historiography, has laid the foundation of the present doctoral thesis, foundation which, was strengthened by a solid methodological basis. Hence, beyond this fan of bibliographical sources which has been the foundation of our research endeavour, the present doctoral thesis has at its base a very broad methodology.

Hence, under these circumstances, in which we have assumed our audacious commitment of introducing in the scientific debate, we must mention from the very beginning

that this kind of research - like the one we are proposing - cannot be built on archival documents because of objective reasons in the context of the impossibility of accessing and consulting some eminently primary sources, the same situation being met in the case of the diplomatical archives. Still, this distinctive type of historical research, presents different advantages than those derived from the knowledge that is based on the usage of archives. Thus, as an alternative, our research was based on consulting some specialty papers, to which, in the basis of an *interpretative analysis*, we assigned with impartiality, work hypotheses essential for the comprehension of the debated subject.

The paper *The Establishment and Activity of the Russian Consulate in Iași until 1806*, represents a new preoccupation for us. Our analysis finds the year 1782 as the moment of establishment of the Russian consulate post in Iași.

We have proposed to follow the evolution of the consulate from Iași at the end of the XVIIIth century and the beginning of the XIXth century. Russia's politics towards The Romanian Principalities in the aforementioned period raised the attention of numerous generations of historians. Also, we have proposed to analyze the Russian influence in the Romanian area, the way the two provinces, Moldavia and Wallachia, were at the center of the relations between Russian and The Ottoman Empire.

Thus, in the next lines our intention is to go beyond the scope of the relations between the cabinets and turn our attention towards the mechanism through which Russia has manifested its influence.

This mechanism was set in motion at the same time with the naming of the first Russian consuls in The Romanian Principalities, in general, and in Moldavia in particular. Because the institutions and their employees represent the subject of any ordinary historical analysis, we proposed to follow the organizational method and the evolution of a Russian consulate from within The Ottoman Empire, in general, and especially applicative towards the consular post in Iași,

The consular institution tended, in time, to provoke some controversies related to its political character or not. Was the consuls' mission political? The answer to this question arose many other questions. At least for The Ottoman Empire, the consuls' situation was different from the rest of Europe. In this case, their attributions were diversified. As the consul Adolphe Billecocq himself mentions in his paper called "Album moldo-valaque, on guide politique et pitoresque à travers les principautés du Danube", the consul was, under these circumstances, a mayor, a notary, an usher, a judge, a warden, the president of the first instance tribunal, a protector, but also a political agent. Thus, in The Ottoman Empire, the consuls had a political role, if not *de jure*, then *de facto*.

The Romans used the term consul when they were referring to each of the two colleagues who received the supreme magistracy as successors of the ones who possessed royal prerogatives. The same word, in Medieval Latin, would designate the royal councilman. In French, the term evolved from concile to console, in the XIIIth century, when in Marseille, for instance, it would refer to the principal magistrate. The French Revolution gave the republican governance to some supreme magistrates, called consuls.

There were three big branches, different by recruitment and attributions: the diplomatic, the consular and the one of the dragomans. Our attention will turn towards the regulation of the consular institution. Thus, although the present paper registers in the history of international relations, a history of Russian diplomacy at the end of the XVIIIth century and the beginning of the XIXth century, at the center of this subject there is the history of an institution - diplomacy and its classical definition - "a juridical-political reality, or, in broad terms, "a form of social organization, bound by its own values, norms, and conduct". Diplomacy as a part of the political superstructure and as one of the means of the state for the promotion of the external politics, developed at the same time with the human society, its character complying with the social relations from each social and economical formation and the class nature of the state.

In the last decades the establishment and the activity of the foreign consulates on the territory of the two Principalities were for a long time in the attention of the Romanian historiography. Studies, articles, comprehensive papers or doctoral theses have analyzed the method of organization and activity of the Russian, Austrian, British, Prussian and French consuls for different chronological intervals.

Strictly referring to the establishment, organization and activity of the Russian consuls in Iași, some considerations must be made. The articles published by Constantin Șerban and A. Giers bring into discussion the establishment and activity of the first consuls from the end of the XVIIIth century. Well documented, these studies, left as a reference until today, emphasize, primarily, the activity of the Russian consuls.

As far as we are concerned, we will turn our attention less in the implication of the consuls in various "parties" or backroom deals. The challenge of our endeavour will be to research who these consuls were, starting from the social origin to the professional evolution, and then the way in which they came into contact with the Romanian society, but, obviously, the way in which the post from Iași was organized, following the transformations that the end of the XVIIIth century and the beginning of the XIXth century underwent.

Some aspects of the subject researched here have been addressed tangentially or especially by many Romanian and foreign historians.

During our endeavour we have tried to make use of the documents published from the collection of Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi, the old and new series. *Documents Concerning the History of the Romanians*, an appendix published by Al. Odobescu. They contain a large part of the reports of the consuls from Iași and Bucharest and they concern matters related to their activity. In the same Hurmuzachi collections we find information about the economical and the socio - political situation of Moldavia and Wallachia, as well as the position of the consular agents and of the governments of the great European powers towards the intentions of annexation of the Principalities by Russia.

Thus, dictionaries, journals, memoirs, personal notes, logs of Russian travellers like D. Bantaș Kamenski, P. Ciceagov, A. Langeron and other eye witnesses of the events that occurred in the Principalities represented some major sources in the success of our endeavour.

From the overview of the major contributions in the area of early contacts and of the mutual Russian - Romanian imagology, even in a brief manner, of course, must contain at least one fundamental bibliographical reference, the collection *Foreing Travellers about The Romanian States*, which gathers commented or adnotated translations of Russian consuls and travelers through this area at the end of the XVIIIth century (vol. X) and from the first half of the XIXth century (new series, vol. I).

Any historical problem needs a new specific method to be better understood and that is why we considered the choice of a methodological toolbox to be very important. We reached the conclusion that not every method can be equally successful when used in the approach of each historiographical subject. At the beginning of the research that we undertook, we delayed the usage of any methodological pattern until we fully read the documented material and the bibliography that we had at our disposal. In this way, we let the analysis method to result from the specific of the historical relations that are reflected in the content of the documents.

Hence, the prior lecture of the documents has led us, on one hand, to the observation that there is a big difference in quality and quantity between the ensemble of Romanian - Russian relations of the XVIIIth century and the beginning of the XIXth century, and on the other hand, we reached the conclusion that at the end of the XVIIIth century and the beginning of the XIXth century there was a big number of projects and intentions concerning bilateral relations but there was a sluggish transposition of them into practice, having there been a big distance between the theoretical projects and their materialization. That is why, we felt obligated to look for the causes for which those intentions and projects didn't reach a completion.

In the course of this work, we tried to explain not only what it was but what it was not and why it was not. Concerning the structure, we opted more on the model of a simple, linear, chronological exposure, eventually on "steps" of all the events that happened during the analyzed period, taking the risk of discarding the detailed analysis of some aspects for the sake of maintaining a clear chronological line, devoid of digressions.

Consequently, the result was constituted by the chronological presentation of the events from the 1774-1806 period. The consular representations, the economical connections and the political reports are individually presented and sometimes with some elements from each. Because of this reason the chapters of the paper have a certain degree of autonomy through their placement together and can be perceived as a whole.

In some places, we got distracted by the history of the events; however, we tried to use diverse methods in the problematic realization of the chapters. And so, we have resorted to the help of the prosopography as a method of investigation. The prosopography, as it appeared in the Grand Larousse, is the auxiliary science of history that studies the filiation and the career of the great characters. The prosopography has become irreplaceable to the social history, and has gained more and more ground in the context of historical research. Thus, we will try to follow who the consuls from Iași and the Russian travellers were, the families from which they came, their education, the jobs they had until the moment of appointment to capital of Moldavia, but also the positions they held after their departure from Iași. Knowing the biography of the consuls may explain, at certain times, gestures that they made that could have stirred controversies.

Also, we used the comparative method, to explain the differences and the similarities between the consulates from the Ottoman Empire and the ones outside of it, to understand the situation of the Russian consuls, in comparison with the others who settled in the Principalities, in general, and in Iași, in particular. The statistical method, although used less in the current paper, applied correctly, might help us in our endeavour concerning the commercial relations between Russians and Romanians. And the lines that we will dedicate to the location of the consulate and the ceremony of receiving the consuls at the royal court will take us closer to the trends of the European historiography, to a history of international relations.

We would like to point out from the beginning that because of the multitude of information, often conflicting and because of the danger of getting lost in the details, the next plan was imposed with necessity: the present paper must be composed of three chapters, each having a structural composition in both thematic and chronological vision.

The first chapter, **The Romanian Principalities in the time of the Russian-Austrian-Turkish War at the End of the XVIIIth Century and the Beginning of the XIXth Century**, has an introductory role, of assessing the context in which Russia showed concern for the juridical status of the Principalities and the political-diplomatic changes that allowed the creation of the foreign consulates, as well as their attributions.

The end of the XVIIIth century and the beginning of the XIXth century coincide with the moment the Romanian Principalities rose to a new step in the system of the international reports, and the series of wars and Russian-Turkish or Austrian-Russian-Turkish negotiations placed them in front of the European politics, in this part of the continent becoming, like the Russian chancellor Panin stated, “la principale pierre d'achoppement”, qualified as one of the major pieces of reglementation of the military and political confrontations.

These two provinces, had already served as a battlefield between the Ottomans, Russians and Austrians, that wanted the domination of the Danube plains, which served their political and commercial purposes very well. The treaties between The Gate and Russia were signed in the Principalities, which regulated day after day the new situations, and the Russian diplomacy, seizing the peace clauses, reserved its right to intervene any time it wanted, even when it was not necessary in Moldavia and Wallachia, by charting the frontiers more vaguely, and by the protection that it imposed upon the Christians. Moldavia and Wallachia became more than ever the place that intersected the excessive desires of possession of the European powers, in which case, with them and by taking them into account, the territorial combinations of the powers in the Orient were built.

Jules Michelet, a well known French historian asked himself: *How come these Romanian states which existed for 18 centuries, how come this nation which overcame so many barbaric invasions, without losing its nationality, which escaped unharmed from the awfulness of the mid century, from so many powerful and more numerous enemies who threatened to conquer, how come this nation that had been for so long the champion of Christianity and the boulevard of civilization and freedom, how can it be destined for perdition now in the 19 th century, in the century of lights, of the awakening of the people, in the century of freedom? If no soul perishes, said Mr. Michel, how will those big souls of the nations, with their vivid genius, with their rich history of martyrs, full of eroic sacrifices, full of immortality, how will they fade?*

The beginning of the IXth decade of the XVIIIth century, when the first Russian consulate appeared in the Principalities, represented an episode of certain unpredictable consequences for the Romanian society that registered on a thematic coordonate that we have proposed. The direct result of applying one of clauses of the Kuciuk - Kainargi treaty, as well

as some thorny endeavours that were undertaken with the Turkish authorities during a two-year period, the inauguration the first Russian diplomatic representative on Romanian ground (February 1782) had a distinctive significance.

The thing that marked a strong breach in the isolation and mentality of immuability in this era was the appearance of the first foreign consulates in the Romanian society. At the same time with the appearance of the consulates, a small part of the Romanian social spectre started to understand that the Principalities were also a part of the general European circuit of values and relations and that these were about to be integrated in the political games of this continent. The geographical area of the diplomatic representation of a state constituted, in the modern age, a clue of importance on the international stage.

Seen from a different angle, this situation had totally different implications, namely the other Great Powers, concerned by the Russian penetration in this area of the continent, were bound to follow Russia's example, and, invoking the capitulation system concluded with the Ottoman Gate, they obtained the right to open consular posts in Moldavia and Wallachia. Consequently, two years later, The Austrian Empire commissioned its first emissary (Ignaz Raicevich), followed by France (1793) and Great Britain (Francise Summerers, 1803).

The creation of the foreign consulates, and the Russian one among them, constituted a great way for the penetration of the cultural and ideological influences in the Romanian Principalities. Around those consulates, genuine colonies of foreigners appeared, who were more privileged than the native people. In the ranks of the foreign southerners (vassals) there were teachers, medics, craftsmen and sometimes adventurers.

The second chapter called **The Establishment of the Russian consulate in Iași** has proposed to capture less known aspects concerning the Russian general consulate in the Principalities.

Thus, the first 3 subchapters have been dedicated to the activity of the first two consuls from the Principalities. We took into account the first Russian diplomats, those who occupied the function of consul in Bucharest and Iași in the forementioned period and the realisation of the consul's profile, beginning with social and professional information.

Thus, within the Russian consulate built in 1782, the tandem of conduct of the first Russian consul Serghei Laskarev and of the viceconsul Ivan Selunski towards the rulers and the native boyars, did not create a very good impression of Russia within the Romanian society because of their lack of tact, measure and moderation.

In the third chapter, **The Russian Consulate's Activity in Iași until 1806**, we bring into discussion the activity of the consuls and of some Russian travellers in the Principalities, starting with the way in which they were received in the Romanian society, and ending with

the relations that they developed within it, the ceremony of welcoming the consuls in different occasions which also represents an element of prestige, which could have been used in the "competition" for the attraction of the local elites and how the consular activity was centered or at least how it was supposed to be, on the needs and the protection of its subjects.

Thus, the diplomatic representatives that succeeded Laskarev, either being called Severin, Iakovlev, Malinovski, Gervais or Bolkunov, tried to acknowledge the Romanian reality, following the line ordered by Sankt Petersburg with pragmatism. Of course, we can only positively appreciate some of the undertakings done by them, and also the political apparatus of the Russian Empire for the improvement of the Romanian fate, that had tangible results. This does not circumvent their tendency to overlap the ruling authority by removing the Russian southerners from the Romanian jurisdiction, and by transgressing the Romanian legislation.

Nicolae Iorga underlined the fact that the Russians brought new habits, customs of ruling, other procedures in the administration, other methods, other parties and other vices. Apart from this, western ideas... sweep through with the foreign armies and will remain there even after their departure.

On the other hand, the consuls played an important political role, and the connections of the two country leaders with them, represented to some extent, an official and unconcealed beginning of rebirth of a fully-fledged diplomatic activity.

Taking into consideration that a series of decisions were taken based on the information they sent, the role of the Russian consuls in the Principalities was very important, although they never got passed the preconceptions, often making comparisons with the society they came from.

The Russian consuls often offered solutions for the improvement of the living standards of the less favored classes, becoming fine connoisseurs of the society from the Romanian Principalities. At the same time, they didn't neglect the needs of their own subjects as an integral part of the Moldavian society, nor their own needs. Concerning their relation with the rulers and the boyars, this was, in general, very tense because of the mutual suspicions and intrigues. Depending on the alliances between the states, but also on their personal affinities, the Russian consuls' relations with their counterparts evolved in time.

The Russian consuls, as emissaries, renowned for the Russian influence in the Principalities, had to protect the Russian financial interest, to forward the memoirs and complaints of the local partisan corps to Sankt Petersburg, whilst keeping an eye on the political gossip conveyed between their counterparts from other states. All their activities took place amidst a small group of boyars and phanariots who dominated the entire life span of the

two Principalities. To implement the tsar's policy, by defending and coordinating the activities and the interests of their local supporters, the Russian consuls followed their purposes by exerting their influence on the other benevolent consuls and acted against the agents from the enemy countries.

The consuls acted in various ways. As renowned emissaries of the Russian influence in the region, "they had to forward the memoirs and complaints of the local partisan corps to Sankt Petersburg or towards the Russian ambassador in Istanbul, to protect the Russian financial interests, to take care of the Russian army's deserters from the Principalities, they were receptive to the political gossips conveyed by their colleagues, and had an exhausting social life.

In Russia's case, who did not have great commercial interests in the Principalities and had an under-developed industry, "the presence of a consul in Bucharest not only met some commercial purposes, but also some political interests. Russia needed a fine political observer, who could deliver information directly, securely and in detail, about everything that the Russian government was interested in concerning this blind spot of the Ottoman conglomerate.

The Russian consul had to send information about the movement of the Turkish army, about the restoration of the Danubian fortresses, about the Gate's war preparations, about the attitude of the rulers from The Principalities towards Russia and about the course of the policy at Constantinople. This was the secret political mission entrusted to the Russian consul in The Principalities. The official mission, the one with a commercial character was to take care of "the businesses of the Russian traders and travelers who come and go both on land and on the rivers in The Principalities".

The Russian consuls exerted a political influence, greatly exceeding their legal attributions and becoming veritable instruments of undermining the state's autonomy. The Russian representatives followed their own agenda, exerting their influence on the benevolent consuls, taking action against agents from the enemy countries and to implement the tsar's policy, defending and coordinating the activities and interests of the local supporters.

There were two contemporary assessments concerning the Russian consuls in The Romanian Principalities belonging to the Englishmen Thornton T. and Wilkinson W., in which Thornton stated categorically: there cannot be an example of intervention of the Russian consuls for the alleviation of the people's sufferance, the prevention or restraint of the Greek tyranny or the proposal of a permanent plan for the poor inhabitants.

However, Wilkinson shows that: during my stay in The Principalities, I witnessed many times the active intervention of Russia in keeping within bounds the system of

extorsion adopted by the turks and opposing to the oppression of the population, intervention that often prevented the worsening of the yoke that pressured these poor populations.

The Russian consulate's general headquarters was in Bucharest until the Turkish-Russian war from 1788-1792, after which, the most important offices were moved to Iași. Unlike the headquarters of the French consulate which was established in a small house, narrow with no aspect, the Russian consulate had its headquarters in one of the most beautiful houses of the city.

Like any building that houses an institution and the consular headquarters, they had some characteristics that distinguished them from other buildings. They were installed in houses of rock, distinguished by tall poles, situated in front of the entrance on which the flags of the represented states were placed.

A consular post in The Principalities was a hard trial because there were lots of perils amongst which even the diseases which needed to be avoided because of the poor sanitary conditions from the two cities in that period. And then the consuls had to integrate themselves into an extremely expensive social environment and because they were not paid enough at their posts in The Principalities, they could not keep up with the boyars that were in competition to impress each other.

From the accounts of the Russian travelers and consuls through the Romanian area, from the end of the XVIIIth century and the half of the following one, we can easily retrace the history of the two Principalities through a variety of angles: historical, social, ethnical, with the striking contrasts between the social classes, commercial, municipal and urbanistic, morality and social life aspects. Sometimes, in the travelers' accounts some loans can be distinguished, other than the original contribution, caught live, sometimes non-critically taken and without the indication of the source from the works of some predecessors.

The travel accounts, the epistles or diary notes, the diplomatic documents offer a cultural perspective on the genesis of the Romanian-Russian relations in the last part of the XVIIIth century and the first half of the XIXth century. The sources were not selected only under the aspect of informational accuracy; we tried to capture an image drawn from other images.

In general, the Russian travelers and consuls were very optimistic concerning the perspectives of the nation from the two Principalities: the qualities of the Romanian nation's representatives, having a glorious and sometimes idealized past, entitle the trust of the strangers in a bright and hopeful future. For that matter, the subject of Latin origin of the inhabitants from The Principalities was often addressed in the writings of the Russian observers: the language, traditions, the clothing and even the physical characteristics of the

Romanians represented the same amount of evidence in the support of this affirmation. The description of the exterior aspect of the Romanians insistently returns in the accounts of the travelers and consuls of the analyzed period...

The writings of the Russian travelers that only passed through or resided for a while in The Principalities at the end of the XVIIIth century and the first part of the XIXth century mirrored the Romanian realities and represented important sources for the reconstitution of the society's image in those times.

The enlightenment and the solid analysis of the writings left by the travelers or the Russian consuls about the two Principalities starting with the end of the XVIIIth century and continuing with the first part of the following century could provide the perspective in which the Romanians were perceived by the representatives of another world, to contribute at the same time to the enrichment of an area of the historical research. The foreign consulates, including the Russian one, constituted a great way of penetrating the cultural and ideological influences in the Principalities. Around these consulates, genuine colonies of strangers were formed, who enjoyed a privileged life compared to the natives.

In terms of methodology, the subject will be approached not from the inside to the outside or otherwise, but we will prefer an interfering of the plans, depending on the moment, event and protagonists, and more precisely on the more or less important role of the protagonists, namely the rulers, of The Great Powers and their representatives in the capital of Moldavia, as well as the consuls and the Russian travelers.

In the above facts we tried to capture only some of the aspects we considered to be defining and more significant of the consequences that the Russian-Turkish war had in the XVIIIth century and the establishment of the Russian consulate for the Romanian society. We wanted to underline our own contribution, which comprises the systematic analysis of the Russian documentary sources, old and new, in conjunction with the critical exploitation of the historical literature of profile.

We are fully aware of the imperfections of the present paper and we hope that at the end of our scientific endeavour, we managed to present at least a part of the activity of the Russian consulate in Iași and at the same time the complex image of the Romanian Principalities from the perspective of the Russian epoch sources: notes, travel diaries and especially consular reports.

No scientific research ever really ends, that is why our research will continue because any new fact that we determine, sparks new questions, sheds new lights on some facts that appeared to be definitively know.

From this point of view, I must confess that the research has been a fascinating adventure of knowledge.

Convinced by the fact that our endeavour can always be improved in the light of seemingly inexhaustible documentary sources, we can only hope that by using some unique sources, we managed to create a new image of the Romanian society in 1774-1806, which coincides with the establishment of the Russian consulate.