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**ON THE RIGHT TO STRIKE CURRENCY
OF THE REIGNING PRINCES OF MOLDAVIA AND
WALLACHIA DURING THE PERIOD OF
OTTOMAN SUZERAINTY**

Mihai MAXIM

In current numismatic research, Wallachia's last coinage dates from the reign of Basarab Laiota cel Batran (1473-1477, with interruptions) and of Basarab cel Tânar-Tepeluş (1477-1482, with interruptions). Afterward, around 1480, the regular issue of coins stopped in Wallachia; the striking of copper shillings with the image of Mihnea III in 1658 and the issue of medallions in gold and silver by Constantin Brâncoveanu in 1713 (to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of his rule) are but isolated instances. "With the commemorative coins issued in 1713 by Constantin Brâncoveanu", wrote Octavian Țiclescu, "the history of coinage in Wallachia ended"¹.

The principality of Moldavia continued the regular issue of currency until the end of prince Ștefanitâ in 1527, but there were also the currency issues of 1558 (by Alexandru Lapușneanu), of 1562-1564 (by Iacob Heraclid Despot and Ștefan Tomșa), of 1573 (by Ion Voda), of 1595 (by Ștefan Razvan), of 1597, 1600 (Ieremia Movila), then of 1662-1665 (Istrate Dabija), and even a series of counterfeits of Polish, Swedish and Prussian shillings begun under Dabija and continued under Gh. Duca (1665-1668, 1668-1672, 1678-1683) and under Iliăș Alexandru (1666-1668)².

1. O. Țiclescu, *Moneda în România 491-1864*, București, 1970, p.24.

2. *Ibidem*, p.34-38; idem, *Les monnaies. II. La monnaie des États tributaires*, in: *Istanbul à la jonction des cultures balkaniques, méditerranéennes, slaves et orientales aux XVI^e-XIX^e siècles*, Bucarest, AIESEE, 1977, p. 275.

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Today specialists are almost all in agreement that the halt of its own regular issues by Wallachia around 1480 and by Moldavia about a half-century later, wasn't due to the formal interference of the Porte, which in its capacity as suzerain would have denied the Romanian princes the right to stamp coins. Rather, it was the result of several "purely economic" factors³, or in other words "a sort of adaptation to new circumstances"⁴. "For this reason," I myself wrote in 1975, "and because of the scarcity of precious metals in Moldavia and Wallachia (and not because the sultan objected), Wallachian and Moldavian currency issues became unprofitable and ineffective against the Ottoman asper (which by contrast circulated freely from the falls of the Nile to the gates of Vienna) and stopped circulating completely in the 17th century"⁵.

This lack of profit in issuing their own coinage was due to many factors, among which particularly important was the heavy penetration of the Ottoman asper into the Romanian Principalities between 1421 and 1520, when Ottoman currency became, in fact, "the strongest in Europe"⁶. "This factor" - I stated in 1980- "and also the growth of financial obligations to the Porte after 1462 in Wallachia and after 1484 in Moldavia, which could be met in any currency including the Ottoman; the growth of domestic transactions that required growth in the money supply; the increase in the size of transactions with Ottoman merchants (the princes were themselves exempt from custom tariffs on the import of Ottoman goods to their countries); the decrease in availability of precious metals from any source but Ottoman ones; such were the reasons that determined, in our opinion, the lack of profit in Moldavia's and Wallachia's issuing their own currencies"⁷.

Other writers have also noticed that precious metal "became difficult to find"⁸. Moldavia's monetary issues' stopping later than Wallachia's was no coincidence, since "the reigning princes of Moldavia," -I pointed out- "having greater opportunity to obtain precious metal from their Transylvanian or Polish connections, and also less

3. O. Iliescu, *Les monnaies...*, p. 275; B. Murgescu, *Circulația monetară în Țările Române în secolul al XVI-lea*, București, 1996, p. 300-311.

4. E. Nicolae, review in: "Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române", anii LXXVII-LXXXIX (1983-1985), nr. 131-133, București, 1987, p. 483.

5. Mihai Maxim, *Considérations sur la circulation monétaire dans les Pays Roumains et l'Empire ottoman dans la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle*, in: "Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes" (*RÉSÉE*), XIII, 3/1975, p. 412.

6. Em. Condurachi, *Quelques problèmes des ateliers monétaires roumains au moyen âge*, In: "AIESEE Bulletin" (Bucarest), XIII-XIV, 1975-1976, p. 120.

7. Mihai Maxim, *Un tresor d'aspres turcs des XV^e-XVI^e siècles découvert à Bertești, département de Brâila*, In: "Studia et Acta Orientalia" (Bucarest), X, 1980, p. 93-94.

8. C. Kiritescu, *Sistemul banesc al leului și precursorii lui*, I, București, 1964, p. 90 (pages written together with O. Iliescu).

dependent than the Wallachian voyvodas on Ottoman currency, could occasionally permit themselves the luxury of stamping their own coins"⁹. And the great quantity of foreign coinage, particularly Ottoman, "did not make a separate mint necessary"¹⁰, besides which the cost of coin production itself increased. In other words, in the context of wide-spread economic decay and Ottoman dominance, currency issues didn't produce any revenue for the Romanian princes, on the contrary, minting their own currency became too costly and therefore disadvantageous. The case of Transylvania, which recognized Ottoman suzerainty in 1541 and despite this, continued regular coin issues, is from this point of view significant. It had superior economic, military and social potential and a more strategic location, but above all a more developed economy. It also had the resource of rich deposits of precious metals, particularly gold. From 1551 to 1690 (e.g. the entire period of Ottoman suzerainty, it stamped its own coins at many mints¹¹. The main goal of these mostly gold issues seems to have been to raise the tribute owed to the Porte¹². True, the value of this tribute was not large,¹³ and after the great official devaluation of the Ottoman asper between 1584 and 1586¹⁴, the gold was paid to the Ottoman treasury at a twice as favorable rate of exchange.

As far as the other vassal states are concerned, the Ragusan Republic (Dubrovnik) stamped its own currency until the end of Ottoman suzerainty (not long before 1806, when the city was occupied by Napoléon's army)¹⁵ and even the Crimean Khanate kept its currency separate until 1783, when it was annexed by Russia¹⁶. The case of the Khanate, an Islamic state, is particularly significant, because there

9. Mihai Maxim, *Le Statut des Pays Roumains envers la Porte Ottomane aux XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles*, "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire" (RRH), (Bucarest), XXIV, 1-2/1985, p. 43.

10. C. Kiritescu, *op. cit.* I, p. 90.

11. Iliescu, *Moneda în România*, p. 41-45 (such mints functioned in Cluj, Sibiu, Baia Mare, Alba Iulia, Șeica Mica, Brașov, Sighișoara, Bistrița, Făgăraș, Aiud); see also Adolf Resch, *Siebenbürgische Münzen und Medaillen von 1538 bis zur Gegenwart*, Hermannstadt, 1901.

12. Costin C. Kiritescu, *op. cit.*, I, p. 103.

13. The Principality of Transylvania paid in gold as tribute 10.000 Hungarian florins between 1541 and 1574 (see, for instance, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, Kepeci/KPT, 1765, p. 8d, nr. 1768, p. 71 bis etc) and 15.000 Hung. fl. after 1574 (until the middle of the XVIIth century) (BOA, KPT, 67/7, p. 645; KPT, 1772, p. 122; KPT, 1774, p. 93-94; D. BRZ, 20.628, p.6 etc).

14. Mihai Maxim, *XVI. Yüzyılın Son Çeyreğinde Akçe'nin Devalüasyonu ve Eflak-Bogdan'ın Haracı Üzerindeki Etkisi*, in: *IX. Türk Tarih Kongresi ...*, II. Cilt, Ankara, 1988, p. 1001-1011 (with the bibliography).

15. O. Iliescu, *Les monnaies...* p. 273-274. Ragusan coins of the XVIIth century were found recently in Romanian Dobruđa: Sergiu Iosipescu, *The Vadu Coin Finds. XIVth-XVIIth Remarkable Finds of Romanian Military Archaeology*, "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire Militaire", 4/1987, p. 118-119; Mihai Maxim, *Un tezaur otoman din secolul al XVII-lea, descoperit la Nalbant, jud. Tulcea*, fn: "Cercetari Numismatice", VII, București, 1996, p. 199, 207. The classical catalogue of Ragusan coins remains: Resetar, *Dubrovačka numizmatika*, Sremski Karlovac, 1924.

16. O. Iliescu, *Les monnaies...* p. 276; see also the classical catalogue of O. Retowski, *Die Münzen der Girei. Mit 30 Tafeln und 32 Abbildungen*, Moskau, 1905.

according to Islamic practice the sovereign (the Ottoman sultan) would have at his disposal *hutbe ve sikke*, that is the making of Friday prayers and the stamping of coins in his name.

Thus, we have proofs (*per analogiam*) that the Porte did not forbid its vassals the exercise of the right to strike coins. As a result, with regards to Moldavia and Wallachia, "the question is not one of a formal loss of the right to issue currency, but only of not exercising this right for almost four centuries"¹⁷. Regular minting in Wallachia, and later in Moldavia, stopped for mainly economic reasons, not political or legal ones.

Nevertheless there existed the opinion that the loss of the royal right to issue currency reflected "a usurpation on the part of the Ottoman Empire. After all, we know that the Ottomans didn't care for the elective-hereditary principle (election from amongst princely families who had the right to accede to the throne-M.M.) The vassal's acts of submission (in Romanian *închinare*-M.M.), or the capitulations agreed to by the Romanian Principalities with the Porte, guaranteed their autonomy, including their right to produce currency. In spite of this, the Turks tried, even after 1866, to get the Romanians to make a mark on their currency that would demonstrate Ottoman authority, but this desire was never made explicit with an order of the imperial chancellery. The growth of the suzerainty of İstanbul's powerful (sultan) led implicitly to a *capitis diminutio* of the internal sovereignty of our countries"¹⁸.

How can one reconcile these two opinions -the belief that Romanian currency issues stopped for economic reasons and the opposite one, according to which the mintings stopped as the result of an interference of the Porte? To do so, we must reexamine the loss of the Moldavian and Wallachian princes' *jus monetae* during the period of Ottoman suzerainty.

From a methodological point of view, a new examination of this problem requires a review of various factors, as well as political and economic ones, and the use of, at least for certain parts, of the comparative method.

As far as economic reasons are concerned, that the Moldo-Wallachian voyvodas, in contrast with the Transylvanian princes, had recourse to modest resource reserves of precious metals, in any case not

17. O. Iliescu, *Moneda în România*, p. 23, 37.

18. Aurel Golimas, Cristache Gheorghe, *Bibliografia numismatică românească*, București, 1984, p. 17.

enough for their own currency issues in the context of the growing volume of economic exchange and the availability of strong foreign currencies, is evident. A mere glance at the map of Romania's minerals shows clearly that gold and silver are to be found in Transylvania, but not at all in Moldavia or Wallachia.

Without doubt, this fact was still true in the Middle Ages, even though foreign travelers between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as Reicherstorffer¹⁹, Sivorî²⁰, Beke²¹, Bandini²², Clas Brorsson Ralamb²³, Paul of Aleppo²⁴ and Evliya Çelebi²⁵, wrote of the existence of rich silver and gold mines in these areas, untapped by the princes out of fear that the Ottomans would increase their countries' tribute to the Porte. This is an explanation shared by several writers with regards to the Romanian Principalities²⁶ and passed incredulously from one traveler to another. Actually, the gold was only extracted from one panning amongst the rich sands of the Olt, Jiu, Motru, Gilort, Râmnic, Argeş, Topolov, Dâmbovita, Ialomita and Distrita Rivers, of which most originated from in Transylvania, or those of the Danube²⁷, a practice that was, without doubt, even more ancient²⁸.

According to reliable sources from the eighteenth century the "boisseliers" gypsies of Wallachia provided to the voyvodas annually between 600²⁹ and 1000³⁰ drachmas³¹, that is to say between 1.907 and 3.179 kilograms of "pure" gold extracted from the riverbeds. In Moldavia, according to Dimitrie Cantemir³², the gypsies brought each year to the prince's wife as taxes 1600 drachmas, or 5.080 kilograms³³ of gold collected by the same method.

19. *Calatori straini despre Tarile Române*, vol. I, Bucureşti, 1968, p.192.

20. *Ibidem*, III, Bucuresti, 1971, p. 15.

21. *Ibidem*, V, Bucureşti, 1973, p. 275.

22. *Ibidem*, p. 324.

23. *Ibidem*, p. 612.

24. *Ibidem*, VI, Bucureşti, 1976, p. 141.

25. *Ibidem*, p. 714.

26. Maria Holban, in *Calatori straini* (Foreign travellers), V, p. 275, note 8.

27. C. Şerban, *Contribuții la istoria meșteșugurilor din Tara Românească: tiganii rudari în secolele XVII-XVIII*, in: "Studii. Revista de istorie", XII, 2/1959, p. 132.

28. Dinu C. Giurescu, *Tara Românească în secolele XIV și XV*, Bucureşti, 1973, p. 85; for the XVI th c., see *supra* n. 20.

29. Dinu C. Giurescu, *Anatefterul-Condica de porunci a vistieriei lui C. Brancoveanu*, in: "Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie" (SMIM), V(1962), p. 428.

30. Apud C. Şerban, *op. cit.* p. 139.

31. We calculated 1,283-1,271 kg. for an *okka* (*vukiyye*) of Wallachia (N. Stoicescu, *Cum masurau stramoşii*, Bucureşti, 1971, p. 278) and 3.179 gr. for a *drachma* (*drant*) (N. Stoicescu, *loc.cit.*)

32. D. Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei* (*Descriptio Moldaviae.*) Bucureşti, 1973, p. 48-49.

33. The Moldavian *okka* (*vukiyye*) was of 1.291 kg. (N. Stoicescu, *op.cit.*, p. 279); a Moldavian *drachma* (*dram*) was of 3.227 gr. (*ibid.*)

But how much money could one mint from this amount (from two to five kilograms) of gold?

Given that at the time the Venician gold coin (the ducat or the *zecchino*) and the Ottoman (the sultanin: *sikke-i sultaniye*) each required 3,5 grams of yellow metal³⁴, one can conclude that the Moldo-Wallachian voyvodas could mint annually from the given quantity of gold, some 1000 pieces in Wallachia³⁵ and some 1500 pieces in Moldavia³⁶ (apart from the cost of the minting).

Consequently, the allegation of Sivori (the end of the XVIth century) that the prince of Wallachia could provide about 20.000 ducats as revenue from gold extracted from the riverbeds³⁷ seems to be quite exaggerated.

For tribute alone, Wallachia paid in gold in 1480, when the principality stopped mint its own currency, 14.000 pieces³⁸, that is to say about 49 kg. of gold. A century later, in 1574-1579 years, this tribute reached its highest amount: some 102.000-104.000 gold pieces³⁹, that is 357-364 kg. of gold, even though the tribute did not have to be paid in gold, but could be in any currency (including aspers)⁴⁰ so long as it was authentic and unadulterate (*bî-kusûr ve lâ-kesûr*)⁴¹. But in this case also, a large amount of silver would be sent to the Ottoman Empire each year: for instance, some 4.194,3 kg. of silver (instead of gold) for the same tribute of 1574-1579 years (in aspers: 6.150.000 pieces of 0,682 gr.)⁴².

As for Moldavia, this principality had to pay in gold in 1527/1528,

34. O. Iliescu, in "RÉSÉE", t. XXV, 1/1987, p. 91-92; H. Sahillioğlu, *Années siviş et crises monétaires dans l'Empire Ottoman*, in: "Annales. É.S.C.", 5/1969, p.1082.

35. Even between some 542 and 908 gold pieces.

36. Some 1453 gold pieces.

37. *Calatori straini*, III, p. 14-15.

38. I. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, II. cilt, 2. baskı, Ankara, 1964, p. 434, note 1: *Eflak ve Boğdan'ın XVI. asır başlarındaki (918H.=1512) vergileri*; M. Guboglu, *Le tribut payé par les principautés roumaines à la Porte jusqu'au début du XVI^e siècle d'après les sources turques*, in: "Revue des Études Islamiques" (*REI*), Paris, 1969/1, p. 77, 79-80 (the same study in: *Ö.L. Barkan Armağanı*, İstanbul, 1984, ayrı basım).

39. Mihai Maxim, *Circonstances de la majoration du kharadj payé par la Valachie à l'Empire Ottoman durant la période 1540-1575*, in: "AIÉSÉE. Bulletin", XII, 2/1974, p. 379; idem, *Haraciul Moldovei și Tarii Românești în ultimul sfert al veacului XVI*, "Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie", XII/1994, p. 31-34 and 44.

40. Mihai Maxim, *Considérations sur la circulation monétaire...*, p. 410, tables nr. 2-3; idem, *Relatiile Moldovei și Tarii Românești cu Imperiul otoman în a doua jumătate a veacului XVI. Evoluția haraciului și peșcheșurile anuale*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis (Univ. of Bucharest, 1976, under the supervision of Professor M. Berza); see the *résumé* published by Univ. of Bucharest, Faculty of History, 1976, p. 5-6 (*Moneda de plata*).

41. Mihai Maxim, *Culegere de texte otomane*, București, 1974, p. 65, doc. 14.

42. See *supra* note 39.

when ceased its own regular currency issues, some 10.000 pieces⁴³, that is some 35 kg. of gold. The highest amount of the Moldavian tribute was recorded in the 1591/1592 financial year: about 60.000 gold pieces, that is 210 kg. of gold, or 7.000.000 aspers (of 0,384 gr.), that is 2.688 kg. of silver⁴⁴. As a matter of fact, we can exactly calculate the quantity of precious metal sent annually to the Ottoman Empire as tribute thanks to the payments records extant in *Ruznâme*, which mentions in detail all currencies of payment and their rate exchange at the Ottoman Treasury⁴⁵.

But we must add to the tribute (*harac, cizye*) the extraordinary growth of other payments, notably of official gifts (*pişkeş*) with a total sum near to that of the tribute⁴⁶, and especially of unofficial bribery (*rüşvet*). For instance, according to some European sources, the prince Petru Cercel (1583-1585), supported by the French king, paid 1.160.000 gold pieces (4.060 kg. of gold) in order to obtain the Wallachian throne⁴⁷, while his rival, Mihnea II (1577-1583, 1585-1591), supported by the King-Mother (*Valide-Sultan*) and the grand vizir, had to pay another huge sum of 1.000.000 ducats (3.500 kg. of gold) in order to maintain his throne⁴⁸. Consequently, as a result of this terrible struggle for the throne, in the 1581-1590 decade, the total Wallachian expenses at Istanbul (including *harac, pişkeş* and *rüşvet*) reached their peak: some 650.000 of gold pieces, that is 2.275 kg. of gold, *per annum!*^{48 bis}

We must also mention the continual expansion of the volume of economic transactions, and finally the invasion of strong currencies such as Ottoman and European gold and particularly silver ones⁴⁹, especially after the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Under these conditions, the countries' precious metal reserves were totally insufficient for regular currency issues (even with the considerable commercial surplus of these countries: about 400.000 gold pieces for Wallachia and some 200.000

43. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, *KPT*, 1764, p. 16, doc. of 12 Zilkade 933/10 Aug. 1527; *KPT*, 1863, p. 186, 190; Mihai Maxim, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na XVI. yy. İlk Yarısında Verilen Romen Haracı ve Peşkeşleri Üzerinde Yeni Belgeler*, in: Prof. Halil İnalçık'a Armağan, İstanbul, Eren, 1998.

44. More exactly 59.322 gold pieces, that is 207,6 kg. of gold. See Mihai Maxim, *Haraciul Moldovei și Tarii Românești în ultimul sfert al veacului XVI*, p. 25.

45. For the first half of the sixteenth century see: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, *KPT* (*Ruznâme*), 1863, p. 186, 190, 205, 207; *D. BRZ*, 20.616, p. 82-83; M. Maxim, *Considérations sur la circulation monétaire*, tables nr. 2-3; idem, *XVI. yüzyılın Son Çeyreğinde Akçe'nin Devalüasyonu ve Eflâk-Boğdan'ın Haracı*, p. 1001-1011.

46. See supra notes 40 & 43.

47. Stefan Pascu, *Petru Cercel și Tara Românească la sfârșitul secolului XVI*, Cluj, 1944, p. 33.

48. M. Berza, in *İstoria României*, II, București, 1962, p. 782.

48. bis *Ibidem*.

49. Cf. Mihai Maxim, *O lupta monetară în secolul al XVI-lea; padișahî contra aspru*, in "Cercetari Numismatice", V/1983 (București), p. 129-157.

gold pieces in the case of Moldavia^{49 bis}. In fact, the Romanian princes were already obliged by the beginning of the fifteenth century to prevent the exit of gold and silver abroad⁵⁰.

The situation was different in the fourteenth century when the first Moldavian and Wallachian currencies were struck.

In effect, the first monetary issues of Wallachia (around 1365 during the reign of Vladislav Vlaicu) and of Moldavia (probably beginning in 1377 under Petru Muşat) occurred in the context of prosperous economy and developed taxation system which provided "considerable revenue to the voyvodas"⁵¹.

If Basarab the Great, the founder of the independent state of Wallachia in 1330, offered to king Charles-Robert of Hungary, 7.000 silver marks (1.157 kg. of high-grade silver), if in the second half of the fourteenth century the reigning prince of Wallachia, Vlaicu Voyvoda, was granting the Voditsa monastery an annual income of 1000 Byzantine hyperpers, if, finally, Petru Muşat of Moldavia could advance to the Polish king 3.000 rubles of silver (in other words 598 kg. of silver or 51 kg. of high-grade gold)⁵², then that the Romanian voyvodas had at their disposal large reserves of silver or refined silver ingots, from which they could mint their own currencies when necessary, is clear⁵³. Besides their political purpose, an expression of independence or of the royal rights of the Romanian princes, these issues had to fulfill an economic purpose, that of facilitating commercial exchange between Moldavia and Wallachia and their neighbours, in the first case Poland, and secondarily the Hungarian kingdom and the Bulgarian and Serbian states. This would explain why the issues were once again linked to these countries' systems of weight and value, especially those of Poland and Hungary⁵⁴.

Ottoman expansion into the Balkans completely changed the situation.

"In effect, silver Ottoman currency -the asper- with an average weight of 1,21 grams under Murad II (1421-1481) and of 1,098 grams under Mehmed II (1451-1481), and excellent purity (% 90), became at the time the strongest coin of Europe", according to Prof. Em.

49. bis. B. Murgescu. *Circulația monetară*, chapt. II. 1.

50. See, for instance. Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu. Dinica Ciobotea. *Viata economică a Tarii Românești în epoca lui Mircea cel Mare*, in the vol. *Marele Mircea Voievod*, coordonator: I. Patroiu. București, 1987, p. 74.

51. A. Golimas. Cr. C. Gheorghe. *Bibliografia*, p. 20.

52. O. Iliescu. *Le prêt accordé en 1388 par Pierre Muşat à Ladislas Jagellon*. "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire", 1973, I. p. 123 et suiv.

53. Em. Condurachi. *Quelques problèmes*, p. 112, 114.

54. *Ibidem*, p. 117-119.

Condurachi⁵⁵. The fiscal reform of Vladislav II (1452) in Wallachia, and of Petru Aron (1456), continued by Stephen the Great (1457-1504) in Moldavia, had as result the "alignment" of Moldo-Wallachian currency with that of the Ottoman Empire, which permitted -remarkably- their free circulation throughout the vast territory of the Ottoman Empire⁵⁶.

But the economic struggle to safeguard the independence of these countries could not be continued. Losses of territory, including the rich merchant cities of Chilia and Cetatea Albă (1484), severely reduced economic and treasury-building possibilities. What's more, the growth of fiscal charge by the Porte (which was already mentioned above) also contributed to this problem.

Documents and finds show the massive penetration of Ottoman currency into Wallachia and Moldavia, beginning in the reign of Mehmed II, but particularly in that of Bayezid II⁵⁷, so at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. The collapse of Serbia as an economic center, of Novo Brdo (1455), and of other Balkan monetary centers, the entrance of the Crimean Khanate -where there were many mints- to Ottoman suzerainty, the conquest of eastern Anatolia with its important centers of silver production (Gümüşhane and Diyarbakır as well as the cities and mints of Erzurum and Aleppo, situated on the "silk route", and finally the conquest of Egypt (1517) with its economic center of Cairo and with its economic center of Cairo and with its Sudanese gold, by Selim the First (1512-1520)⁵⁸. All these facts explain this new phase of the penetration of Ottoman currency into Wallachia and Moldavia, where up till now have been discovered almost ten Ottoman treasures from the period 1451-1520⁵⁹.

This penetration of Ottoman currency (against which the Hungarian kingdom also struggled with out result in Hungary and Transylvania⁶⁰)

55. *Ibidem*, p. 120.

56. Matei Cazacu, *L'impacte ottoman sur les pays roumains et ses incidences monétaires (1452-1454)*, "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire", t. XII, 1/1973, p. 159-193; A. Golimas, *Limitele cronologice ale reformei monetare a lui Petru Aron*, in: "Buletinul Societatii Numismatice Române", LXX-LXXIV/1976-1980 (București, 1981), p. 321-330.

57. See *supra* note 7 and also Eugen Nicolae, *Moneda otomana în Tarile Române (1451-1512)*. Ph. D. thesis. University of Bucharest, 1997.

58. Slobodan Sreckovic, *Osmanski novac kovan na tlu Jugoslavije*, Beograd, 1987, p. 67-76; Cüneyt Ölçer, *Sultan Yavuz Selim şah bin Bayezid han dönemi Osmanlı sikkeleri 918-926 AH/1512-1520 AD*, İstanbul, 1989; Mihai Maxim, Eugen Nicolae, *Contributions à l'étude des aspres de Selim I^{er}*, a paper delivered to the International Congress of Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire-Turkey (Heidelberg, 1994).

59. A. Berciu-Draghicescu, *Repertoriul descoperirilor monetare otomane din teritoriile locuite de români (sec. XV-XVI)*, in: "Caietul Seminarului Special de științe auxiliare", Universitatea București, Fac. de Istorie, București, 1989, p. 88-124; E. Nicolae, *Problèmes actuels de la numismatique ottomane en Roumanie*, in: "Caietele Laboratorului de Studii Otomane", University of Bucharest, 2/1993, p. 50-51.

60. Hurmuzaki-Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. II, partea 3-a. București, 1892, doc. 312, p. 446 and doc. 355, p. 507; N. Docan, *Studii cu privire la numismatică Tarii Românești. Bibliografie și documente*, in: "Analele Academice Române. Memoriile Secțiunii

was favored for more than a century by the mutually advantageous character of Romanian- Ottoman relations until the last quarter of the sixteenth century, by the vast expanse of the zone in which the asper circulated, and by the health and stability of the Ottoman economy, until the very last years of the sixteenth century, when decadence began to set in.

In this context, took place the halt of regular currency issues by Wallachia around 1480 and by Moldavia in the first half of the next century, without any official Ottoman interference. Then around 1480, we notice also, the "stabilization" of the *'ahd* status (to use the Islamic term for European vassalage) of Wallachia vis-à-vis the Porte, six decades after the beginning of regular payment of tribute. The Ottomans tended to follow this legal pattern in their relations with Stephen the Great's Moldavia after 1484-1486, and with principality of Transylvania after 1541⁶¹.

So, the end of regular currency issues of Wallachia was not due to the stabilisation of the *'ahd* status in this country vis-à-vis the Porte, but to the increasing pressure of the Ottoman economy and monetary expansion, both of which actually reinforced this status.

One may remark that the complete halt of currency issues by Moldavia between 1527 and 1558, coincides with the politico-military and economic highpoint of the Ottoman Empire, at the time of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566), and with the beginning of the decline of the Principality of Moldavia, which had already reached its highpoint during the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504).

During the same period, the Ottoman sultan began to claim that Petru Rareș (1527-1538, 1541-1547) didn't have the right to have his own foreign policy: *sive ille sit Voievoda Bogdanus (Moldaviae) sive Valachiae; nam ambo isti servi subditi et tributarii mei sunt, eorumque provinciae computantur inter alia dominia nostra et in numero provinciarum Bosnae et Semendriae habentur, nec diddimiles sunt provinciis meis propriis; sicut et subditi eorum sunt at similitudinem subditorum meorum*⁶².

istorice", Seria II-a, t. XXXII, 1909-1910, p. 525-569; Gernot Nussbächer, *Contribuții privitoare la mișcările sociale din sud-estul Transilvaniei la începutul secolului al XVI-lea*, in: "Revista de Istorie", t. 32,7/1979, p. 1324-1325.

61. Mihai Maxim, *Tările Române și Înalta Poartă. Cadrul juridic al relațiilor româno-otomane în Evul Mediu*. Cu o Prefață de Prof. Halil İnalçık, București, 1993, p.197-261 and (for Summary) p. 269-282.

62. Hurmuzaki-Iorga, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, XI, București, 1900, doc. XXV, p. 20-21; according to Mihnea Berindei and Gilles Veinstein (*L'Empire ottoman et les pays roumains 1544-1545*, Paris, 1987, p. 54), "L'assimilation des deux pays roumains aux *sanğaq* de Bosna et de Semendire était sans doute abusive; elle ne correspondait aucunement à la réalité politique et relevait plutôt de la rhétorique ottomane".

We must specify that claim was expressed in an official document sent to the king Poland, which included Süleyman's objection to direct diplomatic contacts between the Principality of Moldavia and the Polish kingdom. According to Süleyman, only the Ottoman emperor had the right to represent Moldavia in international affairs.

We can find the same assertion several months later, in a letter sent by the Grand Vezir İbrahim Pacha to the Polish king: "You know that the country of Moldavia is not outside (*hariğden*) (the Empire). It is a territory that belongs to his majesty, our blessed *pâdişâh*. Petri voyvoda (Rareş-M.M.) himself is one of his servants (*qul*), designated as *beg* in this country likewise his other *begs*, and the subjects (*re'aya*) (of Moldavia) are also his tributaries. Trepassing in the country of Moldavia is the same as striking a blow against the territory of his majesty our blessed *pâdişâh*"⁶³.

The same claim to be "caretaker" of Moldavia and Wallachia is renewed in 1545, this time concerning Wallachia: "The country of Wallachia is my state in the same way that my other states and their subjects are likewise my tribute-paying servants (*vilâyet-i Eflâq benim sâ'ir memleketlerim gibi memleketim olub re'âyası dahi harâğgüzâr qullarındır*")⁶⁴.

Through such a pretence, the sultan was interferring in the relationship between the ruling prince and his nobles (boyards): for example, during the same year he ordered the confiscation of the lands of the "rebel boyards"⁶⁵.

This is a totally new occurrence, because in his *'ahdnâme* granted to Stephen the Great, probably in the spring of 1480, the conqueror of Constantinople solemnly pledged not to interfere in the business of the country either personally, or through his dignitaries: "Neither he (the voyvoda), nor his possessions, nor his country will be attacked *by me* (our emphasis-M.M.) or by my *sancakbey's* or by my other subjects"⁶⁶, where -as we must point out- by the XVIth century, the sultan has already left himself off this list. In other words, he claims to be entitled to interfere in the internal affairs of the country⁶⁷, as its "proprietor".

As is very known, the legal doctrine observed by the Ottomans was the Hanafi, and the reign of Süleyman is a period during which it was

63. Apud M. Berindei, G. Veinstein, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

64. *Idem*, doc 61, p. 202.

65. *Ibidem*, doc. 60-61, p. 200-202.

66. Mustafa A. Mehmet, *Documente turcești privind istoria României*, vol. I, București, 1976, doc. 5, p. 6.

67. Mihai Maxim, *Culegere de texte otomane*, p. 66; Tahsin Gemil, *Documente turcești inedite*, in "Revista Arhivelor", an LVIII, vol. XLIII, 3/1981, p. 353.

vigorously affirmed through the elaboration of the doctrine's basic text by İbrahim Halebi (d. 1546), which represents the Hanafi doctrine "in its fully developed form"⁶⁸. According to Halebi, *dâr al-'ahd* (the land of the pact) -which includes the Romanian Principalities too- simply does not exist as an intermediate, separate entity between *dâr al-Islâm* (land of Islam) and *dâr al-harb* (land of war).

Consequently, the above mentioned claims of Süleyman concerning the position of the Romanian Principalities, especially in international affairs, found their ideological and judicial support in the field of Islamic Hanafi doctrine.

The second half of the XVIth century marked an expansion without precedent of the economic and financial obligations of Moldavia and of Wallachia towards the Ottoman Porte. Around 1580, commercial relations between the Romanian Principalities and the Porte also entered a new stage. The real and official devaluation of the asper, the spread of corruption and abuse beginning at the Grand Vizirate after the assassination of the famous Sokollu Mehmet Pacha (in 1579), the increasing neglect of canon law (*shari'a*), the decadence of the Janissary corps involved in commerce and money-lending, and finally the long war with Iran (1578-1590), as well as other causes, profoundly influenced the evolution of Romanian-Ottoman commercial relations, in the sense that they gradually became disadvantageous to the Romanian Principalities.

According to some Ottoman documents, Romanian supplies destined for the lands of Iran and turned over as tribute, were already being paid for by the Ottoman treasury at lower than market-prices⁶⁹. They were thus no longer paid for "with the exactitude and honesty typical of the time of Süleyman the Magnificent", as Iorga put it⁷⁰.

The Ottoman emperor tried sometimes to impose from İstanbul official prices, e.g. the price ceilings on beef and lamb, such as in 1579 and 1581⁷¹.

The new claims of the Porte do not make themselves less felt in the political sphere. The sultan began to believe princely power belonged to him by right: he only ceded it temporarily and at will. In June 1592, for

68. J. Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford, 1964, p. 112; see also Ya'akov Meron, *The Development of Legal Thought in Hanafi Texts*, "Studia Islamica", XXX, 1969, p. 116, note 5.

69. Mihai Maxim, *Regimul economic al dominației otomane în Moldova și Tara Românească în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea*, in "Revista de Istorie", t. 32.9/1979, p. 1756.

70. N. Iorga, *Istoria comerțului românesc*, I, București, 1925, p. 299.

71. Mihai Maxim, *Regimul economic al dominației otomane*, p. 1756; see also Antony Greenwood, *Istanbul's Meat Provisioning: a Study of the Celepkeşan System*, an unpublished Ph. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1988, p. 23-25 and 55-56 (a copy was given by the author to the Library of Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi).

example, the sultan wrote in a menacing tone to the boyards of Moldavia, who did not want to accept his choice for prince: "Do you actually possess the *vilayet*?"⁷². In 1572, Selim II pretended in his letter to the king of Poland: "Exactly as for my beys and my other subjects, the impoverishment or the appointment (of the princes of Moldavia) as well as everything related to their imprisonment or their release, depends on our majesty and involves us personally"⁷³.

At the end of the century, different subjects of Moldavia or Wallachia were called to İstanbul with their wealth without the prince's even being asked⁷⁴. In 1592-1593, the prince's representative himself in İstanbul was selected by the Porte⁷⁵.

In 1589 the representative (*kethüdâ*) of Mihnea II, prince of Wallachia, to İstanbul was ordered by the Ottoman *kadi* to pay a fine for some infraction⁷⁶, a clear indication that step by step the principality's representative had lost his diplomatic status.

All these points show the gradual tendency of the Porte to suppress the sovereignty in foreign relations of the Romanian Principalities, and even to limit their domestic sovereignty. In this context, the Porte tried to impose on the reigning Moldo-Wallachian princes the same monetary policy as its own. For instance, between 1591 and 1600, the Romanian voyvodas were asked to implement the policies adopted by the Porte in order to hamper the Europeans' access to Ottoman territory, and in order to interdict the circulation of *padişahi*'s (or *dirhem*'s) struck in East Asian mints⁷⁷. The Romanian countries also contributed to "the repair of the imperial currency" (*akçe-i tashih-i sikke-i humâyün*) in 1586, 1587, and 1588⁷⁸.

In the face of the Porte's policy, the reaction of the Romanians took many forms, such as complaints and protests by the princes and boyards made to the Porte, the murder of certain Ottoman officials and merchants, and attempts to gain by gifts and bribery the good will of the sultan and important Ottoman dignitaries⁷⁹. In foreign relations, secret

72. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, *Mühimme Zeyl Defteri*, vol. 6, p. 26, doc. of 10 Ramazan 1000/20 June 1592.

73. In: M. Mehmet, *Documente turceşti*, I, doc. 103.

74. Mihai Maxim, *L'autonomie de la Moldavie et de la Valachie dans les actes officiels de la Porte au cours de la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle*, "Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes", XV, 2/1977, p. 217.

75. *Ibidem*.

76. Mihai Maxim, *New Turkish Documents concerning Michael the Brave and his time*, "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire", XXXII, 3-4/1993, p. 185-189.

77. Mihai Maxim, *O lupta monetara în secolul al XVI-lea*, p. 133, 137.

78. Mihai Maxim, *Considérations sur la circulation monétaire*, p. 413.

79. Mihai Maxim, *L'autonomie*, p. 219-220.

diplomacy was resorted to, in order to obtain the alliance of the great Christian powers⁸⁰. Sometimes, the Romanians even turned to armed struggle, such as in 1574, under John the Terrible, prince of Moldavia, or in 1594-95, under Michael the Brave, prince of Wallachia, the latter of which is thought by Professor Halil Inalcik to be "the first large scale reaction against the Ottoman régime in the Balkans"⁸¹.

The Romanians responded to Ottoman economic policies with the large export of contreband to the Christian lands, despite the official interdiction of the Porte against the export of essential products to the Christian world⁸². Several attempts were made to independently mint coins, which, according to late Professor Nicoara Beldiceanu, is evidence of the desire to take the principalities out of the Ottoman system⁸³. We must observe in addition that Ottoman currency also suffered from the increasing budget deficits of the Ottoman state: after the outbreak of the war with Iran, the Grand Vizir Sinan Pacha admitted in 1581 that revenues covered only two-thirds of expenditures⁸⁴.

Besides in 1558, Alexandru Lapuşneanu, prince of Moldavia, issued a silver coin, the so-called *dinar* after the Hungarian *dinar*, and he tried to intensify commercial relations with Transylvania and unify the currencies that circulated on both sides of the Carpathians⁸⁵. In turn, Jacob Heraclide the Despot, prince of Moldavia (1561-1563), tended to adapt the Moldavian monetary system to the system that was most vigorous in the Occident and in the center of Europe by striking gold ducats and silver thalers, orts and dinars, as well as copper *mangirs*⁸⁶.

We should note from the standpoint of our topic, that the Moldavian voyvoda was faced with the problem of a dearth of precious metals in his country and was obliged to obtain them by pillaging the gold and silver treasures of the Slatina Monastery⁸⁷. Vis-à-vis the issue of

80. Mihai Maxim, *Les pays roumains et les relations Habsbourg-ottomanes dans la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle*, in: *Habsburgisch-osmanische Beziehungen. CIEPO Colloque, Wien, 26.-30. September 1983*, Wien, 1985, p. 91-105.

81. Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Decline and its effects upon the reaya*, Athènes, 1970 (A.I.É.S.É.II^{ème} Congrès international des études du Sud-est européen), p. 19.

82. Mihai Maxim, *Regimul economic al domniei otomane*, p. 1758.

83. Nicoara Beldiceanu, *La crise monétaire ottomane au XVI^{ème} siècle et son influence sur les principautés roumaines*, "Südost-Forschungen", Bd. XVI, 1957, p. 86.

84. Halil Sahillioğlu, *Années siviş et crises monétaires dans l'Empire Ottoman*, "Annales. É.S.C.", 5/1969, p. 1082.

85. Octavian Iliescu, *Moneda în România*, p. 34.

86. Constanta Ştirbu, *Effigies conventionnelles et effigies-portrait dans l'art monétaire de la Valachie et de la Moldavie du XIV^e au XVIII^e siècle*, in: *La numismatique-source de l'histoire de l'art et de l'histoire des idées*, Bucarest, 1981, p. 78.

87. Costin C. Kiritescu, *op. cit.*, I, p. 98.

a copper *akça* at the mint of the principality of Moldavia by Ion Voyvoda in 1573, the view has been expressed that by striking such a coin, which had a value close or equal to that of the Polish currency, the reigning prince attempted to eliminate the differences in the exchange rate and in this way to aid Moldavian merchants involved in commerce in Poland⁸⁸. According to a new point of view, the voyvoda's aim was to introduce into circulation a copper currency, more used by the ordinary people and more attractive under the prestigious name of *akça*; in turn, he obtained silver which much needed^{88 bis}.

We must point out that these monetary issues occurred during periods of normal relations with the Porte, and not those of conflict and that the Porte did not intervene to prevent the Moldavian princes' image's being imprinted on the coins⁸⁹, a right reserved according to the Islamic principle of *hutbe ve sikke* for the (supreme) sovereign, the *padişah*⁹⁰.

In 1595, Stephen Razvan, prince of Moldavia, himself struck a silver coin worth 3 gros in the new monetary system, close to that of Poland and especially that of Transylvania, his ally, with the voievoda of Wallachia, Michael the Brave, in the anti-Ottoman struggle⁹¹. The anti-Ottoman direction of this monetary enterprise is, this time, very clear.

As far as Jeremia Movila, who accepted Polish suzerainty alongside the Ottoman, is concerned, he officially received in 1597 the recognition of his coinage minting rights by King Zsigmund-therefore in the practice of international relations of the time, the suzerain could officially recognize the royal minting right of his vassal: the Moldavian prince adopted Polish currency as a model⁹².

If the assertion of Carlo Magni (September, 1596) was correct, according to whom Michael the Brave sent to the sultan a quantity of aspers that were actually fakes⁹³, we may ask ourselves if the Romanian princes did not have secret mints in which they could strike counterfeit Ottoman currency in order to subvert the Porte's money. For the moment,

88. Constantin C. Giurescu, Dinu C. Giurescu, *Îstoria românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri pâna astăzi*, Bucureşti, 1971, p. 31.

88. bis Eugen Nicolae, *Moneda otomana în Tarile Române (1451-1512)*, unpublished Ph. Dissertation, Univ. of Bucharest, 1997.

89. Constanta Ştirbu, *op.cit.*, Plansa IX, 24-27, X, 28-30, XI, 31-32.

90. Cf. Mehmet Altay Köymen, *Alp Arslan zamanı Selçuklu Saray Teşkilatı ve Hayatı*, "Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi", IV, 6-7/1966, p. 15-16.

91. Constanta Ştirbu, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

92. N. Iorga, *Polonais et Roumains. Relations politiques, économiques et culturelles*, Bucarest, 1921, p. 57; Em. Condurachi, *Quelques problèmes des ateliers monétaires roumains*, p. 121.

93. În: *Calatori străini despre Tarile Române*, IV, Bucureşti, 1972, p. 12. Actually I didn't find in *Ruznâme*'s kept at Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi any evidence concerning Michael the Brave's tribute in cash (after finishing his revolt).

we have a confirmation of a great quantity of imitations and counterfeits of aspers from the end of the XVth century and the beginning of the XVIth century. According to the numismatist Eugen Nicolae, "les découvertes ainsi que les témoignages des documents de l'époque, suggèrent qu'elles ont été frappées en Valachie et en Moldavie. Il reste à voir si cette production a commencé plus tôt, vers le milieu du XV^e siècle, comme semble l'indiquer l'existence des faux d'après les aspres de Murad II, et si elle a continué jusque vers la fin du XVI^e siècle"⁹⁴.

We may also recall the special chapter devoted to the counterfeiting of currencies (on "Calpuzani") in the Codex (*Pravila*) published at Iași, capital of Moldavia, in Romanian, by Vasile Lupu, prince of Moldavia, in which severe penalties were threatened for such counterfeiting⁹⁵, so there probably occurred at that time such activities by the princely mints, official or otherwise. By no coincidence does there exist in the middle of the seventeenth century evidence of a prosperous trade with Poland, the country from which Romanian merchants imported gold and silver⁹⁶, to such an extent that Polish merchants involved in exchange with the Ottoman Empire through Moldavia transported to İstanbul by that route gold and silver ingots⁹⁷. In this context, we may note the name of a certain Lupu *Banarul* ("the minter") from Baia, whose tombstone dates from 1652⁹⁸, even though we neither have express mention of his activities in Moldavia, nor elsewhere⁹⁹.

An archival document mentions "20.000 thalers that were struck" and suggests that this quantity of thalers was perhaps minted by Vasile Lupu and were entrusted to his *logothète* (chancellor), Gheorghe Stefan, who however, used the money for recruitment of troops against his master¹⁰⁰. We can see here a confirmation of counterfeiting practiced by the Prince himself¹⁰¹.

94. Eugen Nicolae, *Problèmes actuels de la numismatique ottomane en Roumanie*, "Caietele Laboratorului de Studii Otomane", 2/1993, p. 52; idem, *Imitations et contrefaçons des aspres ottomans en Roumanie (fin XV^e-début du XVI^e siècle)*, in: T. Hackens et al. (eds.) *Proceedings of the XIth International Numismatic Congress*, vol. 3, Louvain-la Neuve, 1993, p. 305-307.

95. *Carte românească de învătătura. 1646*. București, Edit. Acad., p. 84-86.

96. Miron Costin, *Letopisetul Tarii Moldovei*, in: M. Costin, *Opere*, ed. P.P. Pănițescu, I, București, 1965, p. 106.

97. Marian Malowist, *Les routes du commerce et les marchandises du Levant dans la vie de la Pologne au Bas-Moyen Age et au début de l'époque moderne*, in: *Méditerranée e Oceano Indiano* (Atti del Sesto Colloquio Internazionale di Storia Marittima, tenuto a Venezia dal 20 al 29 settembre 1962), Firenze, MCMLXX, p. 173-174.

98. Alexandru Ligor, *Prin Moldova lui Vasile Lupu*, București, 1987, p. 38, 43.

99. *Ibidem*, p. 43.

100. *Ibidem*, p. 157, note 17 (cf. Arhivele Nationale București, *Mss.* nr. 629, f. 352, 646, f. 44, *Mrea Bogdana*, XXII/4).

101. C.A. Stoide, *Insemnări despre mesterii și banaria lui Eustratie Dabija Voda*, in: "Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A.D. Xenopol"-Iași" ("AIIAI"), I (1964, p. 151, n. 48 and p. 153).

In any event, if all internal minting activity ceased to exist, then why did Vasile Lupu make mention of counterfeiters in his codex, where he also specified that the first condition for "good and true" currency was that "he who mints the coin have skill and *the permission of te emperor* (our emphasis-M.M.)"¹⁰². Does this result from the global adoption of the Byzantine Codex or perhaps the adoption of certain parts?¹⁰³ True, the voyvoda did not formally order with an official court document (*hrisov*) the translation of the Byzantine Codex, but at the same time his involvement in the production is also clear¹⁰⁴.

In our opinion, the Moldavian prince possibly retained here, in this Codex, the provision of the *formal approval* by the emperor -this time an "infidel" one- of the right to strike currency, in order to not challenge the Porte. The prince adopted the same formal attitude as a loyal and humble servant of the sultan in his correspondence with İstanbul, where he entitled himself even as "the slave Lupul, the present voyvoda of Moldavia (*bende-i Lupul, voyvoda-i vilâyet-i Bogdan hâlâ*)"¹⁰⁵.

But we must make a distinction between such a formal expression and the unofficial, including monetary, policy of the prince.

In 1658, Mihnea III in Wallachia struck a silver coin with his effigy¹⁰⁶, but, this time because he was a rebel prince against the Porte, his issue is not relevant from the point of view of this study, but in 1662, in Moldavia, during the reign of Eustatie Dabija (1661-1665), the mint (*banaria*) of Suceava was reorganised and modernised with the help of an Italian (Boratino), who has studied in Paris the art of engraving in copper. Here that was struck the last Moldavian (copper) currency,¹⁰⁷ known as *şalai* in Romanian documents and with the effigy of the prince. Besides, as it was mentioned at the beginning of this study, Dabija made a lot of counterfeits of Polish, Swedish and Prussian shillings, which provoked a great discontent. Despite of this, the same activity was continued by the Moldavian voievode Gh. Duca (during his first reign, 1665-1666) and Iiaş Alexandru (1666-1668)¹⁰⁸.

Consequently, we have the proof that, despite the fact that Romanian princes struck currency even with their own effigy and made

102. *Carte românească de învățatura. 1646*, ed. cit. p. 84-86.

103. Valentin Al. Georgescu, *Bizantul și instituțiile românești până la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea*, București, 1980, p. 119.

104. *Ibidem*, p. 124.

105. Tahsin Gemil, *Relatiile Tarilor Române cu Poarta otomana în documente turcești (1601-1712)*, București, 1984, doc. 113, 117; idem, *Tarile române în contextul politic international (1621-1672)*, București, 1979, p. 87-150.

106. C. Şürbu, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

107. *Ibidem*, p. 80-81.

108. Em. Condurachi, *Quelques problèmes*, p. 121.

advantageous counterfeits¹⁰⁹ in the mint of Suceava (1666-1668)¹¹⁰, however the Porte didn't intervene with a formal interdiction.

After the mint of Suceava ceased its activity, foreign currencies penetrated more and more into the Romanian Principalities¹¹¹. This monetary chaos was accentuated by the issue in 1687 of a new, big Ottoman silver coin -the piaster (*guruş*). In these conditions, that was impossible for the Romanian Principalities to impose their own, profitable currency.

So, the "royal right" of the reigning princes of Moldavia and Wallachia to strike currency was not interdicted formally by the Porte, at least until 1668, when ceased the last coin issues of these Principalities, but, simply, this right was not exercised primarily because of the *economic reasons*.

At the end of this period, some new *political factors* added to the previous economic reasons, creating -once again- for the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia an impossibility to impose their own currency.

Indeed, from the political point of view, the second half of the XVIIth century revealed itself as a transitional period to the "Phanariote régime" in Moldavia and Wallachia (while Transylvania was incorporated into the Habsburg Empire after the peace of Karlowitz, 1699). The appointment of the Moldavian and Wallachian voyvodas from amongst the rich Greeks of the Phanar quarter of İstanbul, former Grand Drogmans ("Translators") of the Imperial Council (*Divân-ı Humâyûn*), was a frequent practice in the second half of the seventeenth century, since 1659¹¹². But, after 1711 in Moldavia and 1716 in Wallachia, this practice became a rule. This new practice introduced an important change in the status of the Moldavian and the Wallachian princes, also the juridical status of their countries, as buffer states, tributaries to the Porte and outside the *dâr al-İslâm*, i.e. the lands administrated directly by İslam, remained -generally speaking- the same¹¹³. Namely, in their position of former dignitaries of the Porte and

109. See also P.P. Panaitescu, *Date noi despre falsificări de monede polone în Moldova*, "Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române", XXVII-XXVIII (1933-1934).

110. Const. Moisil, *Bânăria lui Dabija Vodă din Suceava*, "BSNR", XI, 1914; (review: N. Iorga, in "Revista Istorică", 9-10, 1915); G. Severeanu, *Monedele lui Dabija Vodă (1661-1665) și ale lui Mihnea Radu (1658-1660)*, "BSNR", XVIII, 1923; I. Tabrea, *Originea și activitatea monetăriei lui Dabija Voda din Suceava*, "CNA", XIII, 1938; C.A.Stoide, *Insemnari despre meșterii...*, p. 147-153.

111. Em. Condurachi, *Quelques problèmes*, p. 122.

112. A. Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină în Tarile Române. Secolele XV-XVII*, București, 1983, p. 217.

113. Mihai Maxim, *Le statut des Pays Roumains envers la Porte*, p. 29-50; idem, *Tările Române și Înalta Poartă*, p. 160-161.

residents in İstanbul, in other words as internal subjects of the sultan, with their relatives still living, as hostages (*rehin*), in the Ottoman capital, the Phanariot princes couldn't claim such a sovereign pretence as *jus monetae*. From this point of view, it's significant, for instance, that already in 1716, in his *Descriptio Moldaviae*, the prince-scholar Demeter Cantemir, ex-voyvoda of Moldavia (1710-1711), didn't mention the royal right to strike currency among the other sovereign rights of Moldavian voyvodas¹¹⁴. As for Wallachia, the English reverend Chishull, who travelled through this country in 1702, noted that the Wallachian prince had "however all sovereign rights inside his principality, except the right to declare war and strike his own currency"¹¹⁵.

The Ottoman chronicler Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Aga (d.1723) reproached to the Wallachian prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714), who in 1713 had struck gold money-medals on the occasion of the 25 th anniversary of his reign¹¹⁶, that he "entitled himself a king (*kirâl*) and struck money on his name"¹¹⁷. In fact, this striking was used by prince's enemies, like Cantacuzene's, as an accusation against him at İstanbul¹¹⁸.

Consequently, *at the beginning of the XVIII th century, in the mind of contemporaries already existed the idea that jus monetae belonged (only) to the sultan and, therefore, every own striking was interpreted as a gesture of independence*. As a matter of fact, the Ottoman chroniclers Silahdar¹¹⁹ and Mehmed Raşid¹²⁰ accused Brâncoveanu for a "rebellion" and for "reigning in an absolute and independent manner". As for the Romanian chronicler (and great boyar) Radu Popescu, he also accused Brâncoveanu for "doing things that are not permitted to the humble obedients. That was a foolish action, not a wise one"¹²¹.

However, this time too, the Porte didn't issue a formal and expressly order prohibiting to the Romanian princes the right to strike currency. From this point of view, the *fetva* (a legal-religious advice

114. D. Cantemir, *Descriptio Moldaviae*, Edit. Academiei, Bucureşti, 1973, p. 127.

115. *Calatori straini despre Tarile Române*, VIII, Bucureşti, 1983, p. 201.

116. Del Chiaro, ed. cit. p. 164; Const. Moisil, *Medaliile lui Constantin Brâncoveanu si gravorul lor*, XI, 1914; Maier A. Halevi and C. Secăşeanu, *Medaliile lui Constantin Brâncoveanu și gravorul lor*. "Studii și Cercetari Numismatice" ("ŞCN"), I, 1957, p. 389-401; Constanta Ştirbu, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

117. *Cronici turceşti privind Târile Române*, vol. II, întocmit de M. Guboglu, Bucureşti, 1974, p. 526.

118. Octavian İliescu, *Moneda în România*, p. 23-24.

119. *Cronici turceşti privind Tarile Române*, II, p. 526.

120. *Cronici turceşti privind Tarile Române*, vol. III, întocmit de Mustafa A. Mehmet. Bucureşti, 1980, p. 228.

121. Radu Popescu-vornicul, *İstoriile domnilor Tarii Româneşti*, editie critica de Constantin Grecescu, Bucureşti, 1963, p. 207.

given by the *şeyh ül-islâm*) concerning the capture and the execution of prince Brâncoveanu in 1714¹²² is very meaningful: in this document does not exist any accusation about the striking of currency by the voyvoda in the previous year.

In conclusion, in a first period up to the beginning of the XVIIIth century, the right to strike currency of the reigning princes of Moldavia and Wallachia wasn't formally and expressly interdicted by the Porte, but *simply ceased to be exercised regularly because of economic reasons*: such currency issues became too expensive and ineffective against the Ottoman and European currencies. In a second period, which corresponded to the "Phanariote century" (1711/1716 -- 1821 / 1822), these economic reasons still existed, but this time the "royal right" couldn't be exercised primarily *because of political and mental reasons*: the Phanariote voyvodas, as "Greek subjects" (former Drogmans) "domiciliated in the Ottoman Empire", in the words of A.J. Toynbee¹²³ couldn't claim and obtain such a sovereign right as *jus monetæ*.

Even in the XIX th century, the Great Powers supported the Porte in its policy of extension of the capitulatory régime to the Danubian Principalities and of prohibition (this time officially) of the right of striking currency¹²⁴. Only on the eve of independence and after Charles of Hohenzollern came to the throne of Romania, the Romanians succeeded in 1866-1870¹²⁵ to create their own monetary system.

122. Valeriu Veliman, *Relatiile româno-otomane (1711-1821). Documente turceşti*, Bucureşti, 1984, doc. 11, p. 85-88.

123. A.J. Toynbee, *Mankind and Mother Earth. A Narrative History of the World*, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 548-549.

124. A. Otetea, *Patrunderea comerţului românesc în circuitul internaţional (în perioada de trecere de la feudalism la capitalism)*, Bucureşti, 1977, p. 25-31 ("Regimul Capitulaţiilor"); Mihai Maxim, *Tările Române şi Inalta Poartă*, p. 155.

125. Constanta Ştirbu, *Un veac de la înfiinţarea Monetăriei Statului*, Bucureşti, 1970; eadem, *Un episod din lupta pentru afirmarea suveranităţii naţionale. 100 de ani de la inaugurarea Monetăriei Statului*, "Studii. Revista de Istorie", 3/1970, p. 557-571; Gh. Platon, *Istoria modernă a României*, Bucureşti, 1985, p. 212, 469-470.