

## LOOKING BACK TO SUCEAVA: ROMANIANS AND TURKS IN TRAVELERS' TALES (15<sup>TH</sup>-18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)

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### ÖZ

Romanya tarihinin hemen hemen beş yüz yıllık dilimi bir şekilde Osmanlılar veya Osmanlı Tarihi ile sıkı bir ilişki içindedir. Osmanlı tarihçileri, Romanya ve Batı Avrupa tarihçileri geleneğinde olduğu gibi Osmanlı-Boğdan ilişkilerinden bir takım önemli hadiseleri vurgulama suretiyle bahsederler. Bu bahsedilen hadiselerin bir kısmı da 1388-1564 yılları arasında orta çağ Moldova'sının başkentliğini yapmış olan Suceava şehri ile ilgilidir.

Bu makalede Suceava şehri ve kalesinin kroniklerde, askeri raporlarda veya seyahatnamelerdeki imajı üzerinde durulmaktadır. Sözü edilen bu kaynaklarda Moldova başkentindeki gerçekler, olaylar, barış dolu yıllar hakkında malumat bulunmaktadır. Kroniklerde şehrin kalesi, mimari yapısı, Osmanlılar tarafından alınmak istenmesi ve sonunda Moldovalılar tarafından teslim edilmesi gibi bilgiler de bulunmaktadır. Bunlara ek olarak kroniklerde değişik konulara ait parça parça bilgilere de rastlanılmaktadır. Bu bilgiler kaynaklarda rastladığımız diğer bilgileri tamamlaması ve yüz yıllar içerisinde oluşmuş Boğdan-Osmanlı ilişkilerini anlamamız açısından oldukça önemlidir.

### ABSTRACT

Almost five centuries of Romanian history are tightly related to the Ottoman one or, at least, under the sign of the relationships with the Ottoman Empire. The importance of their research doesn't need any pleading, since they represent a way of better understanding some realities which marked the whole medieval history. The Ottoman annalistic tradition, just like the Romanian and the Western European one, reflects the coordinates of the Moldavian-Ottoman relationships, insisting on certain crucial moments or events; between these there are those related to Suceava – capital of the medieval Moldavia between 1388 and 1564.

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The present article examines the image of Suceava and of its citadel just as they appear in chronicles, in military reports, in traveling logs or in those belonging to military expeditions. We can read about facts and happenings in the Moldavian capital, war moments, with depredations and arsons, but also quiet, peaceful years – be it relative or temporary. There are, also, constant references of the chroniclers to the fortress, to its architecture and endowment, citadel craved by the Ottomans, protected and, eventually, surrendered by Moldavians as a pacification price. There are accounts exposed in a more or less subjective or fragmentary manner, but which are constituted in useful sources to complete the framework in which the Moldavian-Ottoman relationships evolved, along centuries.

Those almost seven centuries of historical existence –which are certified through documents– should have offered more information regarding facts and happenings in Suceava, the former capital of Moldavia<sup>1</sup>. Our knowledge gathered from the written sources or the cartographic ones is limited and the necessary evidence to retrace the relationship between the Romanian and Turkish people is very poor. An explanation to “this situation may offer the residents of Suceava, with the following statement: “This county was threatened by wars coming from all directions”, and because of these wars, “Suceava became a deserted place, people scattered in other areas, like Transylvania, and only after several years of solitude, few people began to convene there. All the documents related to Suceava soon dissipated, and the letters were either lost or burnt”<sup>2</sup>. The penury of inland sources proved to be helpful, imposing the further research of external sources, such as the foreign people’s testimony or witness (Turks, Arabs, West-Europeans), by those who accompanied the Ottoman army, and stepped within the territory of Suceava County. Their accounts, rather subjective and fragmentary, represent valuable pieces of information, being spontaneously portrayed, without any alterations or tardy transformations<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Moldavia – a former principality corresponding to the territory between the Eastern Carpathians and the Dniester River. An initially independent and later autonomous state, it existed from the 14th century (1359) to 1859, when its western part united with Walachia as the basis of the modern Romanian state. Ottoman Turkish references to Moldavia included *Boğdan İflak* (meaning “Bogdan's Walachia”) and occasionally *Kara-Boğdan* (“Black Bogdania”).

<sup>2</sup> T.V. Ștefanelli, *Documente din vechiul ocol al Câmpulungului Moldovenesc* [Documents from the old district of Câmpulung Moldovenesc], Bucharest 1915, pp. 439-449.

<sup>3</sup> E.I. Emandi, M.S. Ceaușu, *Contribuții de morfologie urbană la cunoașterea istoriei orașului Suceava, 1388-1988* [Contributions to the urban morphology regarding the historical

Unfortunately, most of the documents offer information mainly regarding the Throne Citadel of Moldavia, and less about the town as a commercial, economical, religious, political and cultural centre.

The Slavonic and Romanian chronicles from the XV<sup>th</sup> to the XVI<sup>th</sup> Century are dating the beginning of the Turkish and Moldavian relations within the last reign of Peter III Aron<sup>4</sup> (“during his rule, the impost towards the Turks began”<sup>5</sup>). The references about Suceava concern the tribute to the Ottoman Porte. It is noted that the 1456 rebellion in Northern Moldavia, was against several noble rulers who decided to surtax the people by paying the *kharadj*<sup>6</sup>. The first 16 years of Stephen the Great’s<sup>7</sup> reign convey poor reports about the connections between Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, it can be concluded the fact that while Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror was busy with strengthening the conquered Rumelia and Anatolia regions, Stephen could remain autonomous by paying tribute. This happened only until 1473, as it is mentioned in a message sent to Venice, through his herald, Țamblac (in May, 1477): “Many Christians lived in peace for four years because I discouraged the Turks”<sup>8</sup>.

The state of war unleashed between Moldavia and the Ottomans, which practically never ended between 1475 and 1484<sup>9</sup>, affected both Suceava and its surroundings. It is a well-known fact that from the Moldavian capital, on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1475, Stephen the Great announced Europe about his victory upon the Ottomans, writing among others: “I am making your Highnesses acknowledged upon the fact that (...) that Turkish emperor sent his mighty pagan army to our country and against us, 120,000 men and had as captains the closest and most loved among his servants (...) who are all by far the most powerful, and those army’s voivodes. When we

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acquaintance of Suceava City, 1388-1988], “Suceava, Anuarul Muzeului Județean”, XV, 1988, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Petru III Aron – voivode of Moldavia on three separate occasions: October 1451-February 1452, August 1454-February 1455, and May 1455-April 1457.

<sup>5</sup> P.P. Panaitescu (ed.), *Cronicile slavo-române din secolele XV-XVI* [The Slavonic and Romanian chronicles from the XV<sup>th</sup> - XVI<sup>th</sup> Century], Bucharest 1959, p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> S. Zidăriță, *Suceava, ghid turistic al regiunii* [Suceava, a touristic guide of the region], Bucharest 1967, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen the Great – voivode of Moldavia from 14 April 1457 to 2 July 1504.

<sup>8</sup> S.G. Gorovei, *Moldova în “Casa Păcii”* [Moldavia in “The House of Peace”], Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „Alexandru D. Xenopol” Iași, XVII, 1980, p. 631.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

saw the might army, we rose up courageously and resisted them”<sup>10</sup>. The next year, though, in 1476, “the Turks came back to Suceava and they burnt the town and from there they turned around, burning and destroying the whole country”<sup>11</sup>. About this event, the Turkish scholar Şemseddin Ahmed bin Suleiman Kemal – also known as Kemalpaşazâde or Ibn Kemal – author of the chronicle entitled *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman* (or *The History of Ottoman Dynasty*), noted: “Transforming that country into black dust, he (the Sultan) made it possible for the town known as Suceava (*Saçao*), which is the capital of Moldavia, to be devastated and burnt”<sup>12</sup>. Undoubtedly impressed by the size of the damage, Giovanni Maria Angiollelo, a bright man of the time who, in 1476, accompanied the Mehmed II the Conqueror during his military campaign, referred to Suceava in his writings as a town “surrounded by trenches and palisades”, and that had “wooden houses and churches (...) and the roofs were coated in shingle. Only the castle (...) was made of stone and plaster, on a slope outside the town”<sup>13</sup>. The whole land was desert “because the inhabitants had left”<sup>14</sup>. The story is just partially exact; indeed the Moldavian capital was not surrounded by stone or brick walls, neither had defense towers, as the Occidental and Central Europe towns had, but, except for the Royal Fortress, the city had many stone buildings, such as the Royal Court, the churches, some of the artisans’ and merchants’ houses<sup>15</sup>. It seems that at that time, the buildings were temporarily abandoned by their owners, for them, according to Angiollelo’s suppositions, “had taken some of their belongings along”, while “other things were buried in the ground”<sup>16</sup>. But besides telling of the actual event, in the testimony given by the occidental chronicler, it is interesting how the Turks managed to find “the hidden things”. Here is how they did it, as it is presented in Maria Angiollelo’s writings: “by

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<sup>10</sup> N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor* [A History of Romanian People], vol. IV, Bucharest 1937, pp. 177-178.

<sup>11</sup> O. Monoranu, M. Iacobescu, D. Paulencu, *Suceava, mic îndreptar turistic* [Suceava, small tourist handbook], Bucharest 1979, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> M. Guboglu, M. Mohammed (eds.), *Cronici turceşti privind ţările române*, Extrase, (*secolul XV - mijlocul secolului XVII*) [Turkish Chronicles regarding the Romanian Countries, Extracts, (XV<sup>th</sup> Century – middle of the XVII<sup>th</sup> Century)], vol. I, Bucharest 1966, p. 214.

<sup>13</sup> *Călători străini despre ţările române* [Foreign voyagers about the Romanian Countries], vol. I, Bucharest 1968, pp. 137-138.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>15</sup> O. Monoranu, M. Iacobescu, D. Paulencu, *Suceava cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> *Călători cit.*, vol. I, p. 137.

pulling a chain or a rope upon the ground, they (the Turks) hear and recognize the holes in the ground, where the goods and the grains are hidden; this is how buried wells of grain and other objects were found”<sup>17</sup>.

Turning back to the chronological summary of events, the history also keeps the record, in the same year – 1476 – of the Turkish failure in trying to conquer the fortress. The historical sources talk about the resistance of the Moldavians, led by porter Şendrea, against the pressure, moreover the Polish chronicler Jan Dlugosz, when writing about the attack of the Turks upon the fortresses of Hotin and Suceava, noted that the sultan, “being terribly defeated under the two fortresses, was forced to retreat”<sup>18</sup>. But in the summer of 1484 followed another Turkish campaign in the Southern Moldavia, and the fortresses of Kilia and Cetatea Albă (the later Akkerman) were conquered. The letter, in which Bayezid II announced his victory to Ragusa, can be interpreted in the way that ultimately there had been a peace-making between his father and Stephen the Great.<sup>19</sup>

That peace, though, did not last long because a year later and in less than a decade since the arson of Moldavia’s capital, in 1485, while Stephen the Great was in Kolomyia, trying to make an alliance against the Ottoman Porte, “Hroiote<sup>20</sup> came with the Turks from down to upwards in Suceava and burned the city, September 19<sup>th</sup>, Monday and Tuesday”<sup>21</sup>. The Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga wrote that the town was in flames, “only the fortress remaining still, where there was no more Şendrea to protect it”<sup>22</sup>. Of the great importance in the annalistic Ottoman tradition, Tursun Bey, described the event in his own way: “after his country (Stephen the Great’s) remained abandoned, (the Turks), made a foray, hurrying their horses (*ilgar*) in every direction. Just as lions attack gazelles, the *gazii* attacked the prisoners. There were so many sheep herds and men taken that their number cannot be reckoned. They also burnt his miserable

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> I. Ursu, *Ştefan cel Mare* [Stephen the Great], Bucharest 1925, pp. 144-145.

<sup>19</sup> S.G. Gorovei, *Moldova cit.*, p. 642.

<sup>20</sup> Hroiote, or Peter the Lame, or Peter the Scraggy - claimant to the throne of Moldavia, killed in the battle of Scheia (1486)

<sup>21</sup> C.C. Giurescu (ed.), *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei* [The Chronicle of Moldavia], Craiova 1934, pp. 40-41, 45-46.

<sup>22</sup> N. Iorga, *Istoria lui Ştefan cel Mare* [The History of Stephen the Great], Chişinău 1990, p. 119.

capital (Suceava), as well as his deserted palace. Then, (the Sultan) employed *kadies* and *sanjak-beyis* in those fortresses and beyond the Danube there had been triggered 5 shots, according to the Mohammedan tradition.”<sup>23</sup>. “In January, 1486 – Tursun went on – Ali Bey decided to go after the enemy of the law and his country, without delay. Armies from all over the land had gathered to join the army which barred the victory, as the rivers gather into the seas and oceans. After they had arrived to the Danube and had prepared countless ships, the army victoriously crossed the Danube and went on towards the fortress. Having finished all the necessary preparations, he strengthened the fortress. Afterwards, he went into the country of Moldavia (...) which had been abandoned and the soldiers (Ottomans) having seen victory assured, went for their prey. They started to imprison countless boys and many girls, pretty ones, like the ones in Kashmir. The number of spoils and sheep taken, as well as other animals, was so high that they could not keep count. Burning the palace and the capital (...) they brought them to ashes and dust. With this great gift of conquest and glory, His Majesty, Ali Pasha kneeled in front of the Threshold of the Sultan’s Gate of the celestial world.”<sup>24</sup>.

The flaws that appeared in the Occidental alliances system, ultimately determined the Moldavian leader to put an end to the war-relation-state with the Ottoman Empire, attitude that was respected and followed by his successors, Bogdan III<sup>25</sup> and Stephen IV<sup>26</sup>. Moldavia kept its *dar al-ahd*, or “pledge territory” and of *dar al-sulh* or “House of Peace” statute, having a continuously renewed *’ahdnâme* and implicitly having complete autonomy<sup>27</sup>.

But the changes that occurred in Moldavia, after 1523, as a result of the country’s involvement in the European politics, will lead to the deterioration of its relations with the Porte. The year 1538 is the one that relates to both the Romanian-Ottoman relationship and Suceava’s history, the common point in both cases being, “the decisive campaign of Suleiman the Magnificent”.

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<sup>23</sup> M. Guboglu, M. Mohammed (eds.), *Cronici cit.*, vol. I, pp. 77-78.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>25</sup> Bogdan III (*the One-Eyed or the Blind*) – voivode of Moldavia from 2 July 1504 to 20 April 1517.

<sup>26</sup> Stephen IV-lea (*the Young*) – voivode of Moldavia, from 20 April 1517 to 14 January 1527.

<sup>27</sup> S.G. Gorovei, *Moldova cit.*, p. 631.

According to some historical sources, “the Holy War for Moldavia”<sup>28</sup> had a purpose: “to annex it to the Empire”, in other words, passing from *dar al-ahd* and *dar al-sulh* to *dar al-islam* meaning “the Land of Islam” or “the House of Islam”. The Sultan had stipulated a real battle, the proof being the army he had brought along to Moldavia. Practically, the idea of replacing the “unfaithful” Peter Rareş<sup>29</sup> had been on the Ottoman Gate’s mind since 1533; thus, the Moldavian boyars, being troubled about the potential military conquest, searched for a solution to avoid and prevent a military collision, preferred to replace their voivode. Thus none of them joined him in his exile – episode described in most of the texts from the time.

Although the battle that the sultan prepared did not take place anymore, because the country was faithful and was not conquered<sup>30</sup>, the expedition was the pretext for some “conquering letters” (*fetihname*)<sup>31</sup> and even for some chronicles<sup>32</sup> entitled *Fetihname-i Kara-Boğdan*. There have been writings about the 1538 campaign, by Mustafa Ğelalzade<sup>33</sup>, Nasuk Matrakçı<sup>34</sup>, Rüstem Paşa<sup>35</sup>, Mohammed Paşa Küçük Nişancı<sup>36</sup>, Mustafa Ali<sup>37</sup>,

<sup>28</sup> „The Holy War for Moldavia” was part of the *gazavât* category, or from Ottoman „holy expeditions”.

<sup>29</sup> Peter IV Rares was twice voievod of Moldavia - 20 January 1527 to 18 September 1538 and 19 February 1541 to 3 September 1546.

<sup>30</sup> S.G. Gorovei, *Moldova cit.*, pp. 660-661.

<sup>31</sup> *Fetihnâme*, as “a letter of conquest” or “book of conquest”, was addressed to the contemporaries, edited at the Ottoman palace right after the victorious battles and was sent to the foreign princes (friends and enemies) or to his own servants. The dimensions of this document could vary from a few detachable sheets a few meters in length. Sent with the purpose to brag, intimidate or just to inform, more or less detailed, upon a war expedition just completed. (see V. Panaite, *Pace, război și comerț în Islam. Țările române și dreptul otoman al popoarelor (secolele XV-XVII)* [Peace, war and commerce in Islam. The Romanian Countries and the Ottoman rights of the people (XV<sup>th</sup>-XVII<sup>th</sup> Century)], Bucharest 1997, pp. 31-32).

<sup>32</sup> Compared to the “Letter of Conquest”, “The Chronicle of Conquest” is addressed to the posterity. The authors of the chronicle present a detailed and exact unwinding of one or more military campaigns lead by the sultans, great viziers or beyler-beys. (V. Panaite, *Pace cit.*, pp. 33-34)

<sup>33</sup> Mustafa Ğelalzade, the author of a chronicle named *Tabakat al-Memalik ve Daradjat al-Mesalik* or *The Social Levels and the jobs in the Ottoman Empire*.

<sup>34</sup> Nasuk Matrakçı, contemporary with Suleiman the Magnificent, wrote *Fetihname-i Kara-Bogdan* or *Chronicle about the Conquering of Moldavia*.

<sup>35</sup> Rüstem Paşa (1500-1561), twice as great a vizier, writes *Tarih-i Âl-i Osman* or *The History of the Ottoman Dynasty*.

<sup>36</sup> Mohammed Paşa Küçük Nişancı (d. 1571) wrote *Tarih-i Nişandji* or *The Chronicle of Nişandji*.

<sup>37</sup> Mustafa Ali (1541-1599) is the author of *Künh-ül Ahbar* (*The essence of Information*).

Mohammed bin Mohammed<sup>38</sup>, Ibrahim Peçevi<sup>39</sup>, Kâtib Çelebi<sup>40</sup> and Solakzade Mohammed Hemdemi<sup>41</sup>, contemporary or not with the event. Moreover, out of the 8 diaries (*ruzname*) about the expeditions of Suleiman the Magnificent (1521, 1522, 1526, 1529, 1532, 1534, 1536 and 1538), the last one, named *Turkish Itinerary*, described, extensively, the campaign in Moldavia.

Once arrived in Suceava, the chroniclers had made interesting remarks regarding the settlement “under the fortress”. Thus, Mustafa Ğelalzade wrote about Suceava that “it is quite a blooming city. The climate is temperate and the waters are fresh and clean. The surroundings are covered by forests and everything is covered in green. In short, it is a beautiful city, in all its regards”<sup>42</sup>. On his own account, Mustafa Ali saw Suceava as “a pleasant city, with good climate, with vineyards and melon field yards, magnificent location for feasts”<sup>43</sup>.

However, these scholars’ scripts show how they constantly related more to the Fortress and less to other monuments. Most details refer to the architecture of the fortifications and its figure that dominated the scene through its massiveness and height<sup>44</sup>. “The Fortress is high– Mustafa Ğelalzade noted– the towers are strong, the gates narrow, the trenches are wide, thus it is impossible even for a bird to break in. In its towers lay cannons of all sizes, ammunition and an abundance of supplies. There are wooden and iron spears settled in the trenches that prove to be other obstacles. The Fortress is so hard-set, that it cannot easily be conquered. In the belfry towers, carefully built, there are skillfully carved faces which are very noticeable”<sup>45</sup>. It was compared to “a marvelous bird with numerous and strong walls, resembling those raised by Alexander the Great (*Iskender*)” because of the “three rows of towers from one edge to the other, which rose

<sup>38</sup> Mohammed bin Mohammed wrote *Nuhbet-üt-tevarih ve'l-ahbar*.

<sup>39</sup> Ibrahim Peçevi (982/1574-1060/1650) wrote a “History (*Tarih*) of the Ottoman Empire since the time of Suleiman the Magnificent till the end of the Murad the 4<sup>th</sup>’s reign”.

<sup>40</sup> Kâtib Çelebi or Mustafa bin Abdullah (1017/1609-1067/1657) edited a chronicle entitled *Irşadü'l hazara ia tarihy el-yunan ve'n nasara* (*Lucky ways in the Greek and Christian History*).

<sup>41</sup> Solakzade Mohammed Hemdemi is the author of a *Tarih*.

<sup>42</sup> M. Guboglu, M. Mohammed (eds.), *Cronici cit.*, vol. I, p. 269.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 353.

<sup>44</sup> E.I. Emandi, M.S. Ceauşu, *Contribuții cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>45</sup> M. Guboglu, M. Mohammed (eds.), *Cronici cit.*, vol. I, p. 269



to the sky”<sup>46</sup>. Mustafa Ali wrote about the towers that they were “small as well as large, with a concave shape that rose toward the sky”. The fortress also “had a wide and deep trench (...) as well as it was full of cannons (*şaklos*) and *darbzens*, at the same time having various crossing places strengthened with trees. All these were defended with great courage and mettle”<sup>47</sup>.

Given these statements, it is conspicuously understandable why the episode of taking over the famous fortification by the Turks is consistently present in every chronicle or letter, although in the case of the Fortress of Suceava we cannot speak of a “conquest” but more of a “yielding”. Mustafa Ğelalzade himself acknowledges that “those in the fortress, realizing that they could not face the Turkish army, they were forced to submit unwillingly; thus, they surrendered and brought the Padishah the keys of the fortress”<sup>48</sup>. The opinion of Ştefan Mailath<sup>49</sup>, the voivode of Transylvania, was completely different. In a report for the imperial adviser Stefan Broderic, he noticed that the lack of interest on the part of Rareş in administrating and supplying the fortresses was a big price to pay for Moldavia; if the lord – he wrote – would have “endowed“ the fortresses, giving them into the administration of “good and worthy men”, the result would have been quite different, for, according to their spies, the Sultan wouldn’t have “brought along his great cannons which he would use to destroy the strongest fortresses”, but only 230 small field cannons<sup>50</sup>.

Free access in the fortress helped the capture Peter Rareş’s buried “fortune”. “But once the sultan found out about this, he called his *imbrahor* (*mirahor*) Hussein Aga and employed him with the mission to find the thesaurus. Hussein Aga, after receiving the great order, began digging in the places thought to be holding the thesaurus. The precise digging being done, there were discovered different objects together with Romanian voivode’s fortune, such as: silver rams, carafes, kettles, hats (*serpuş*), drinking glasses,

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 353.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>49</sup> Ştefan Mailath (or Maylád István) - voievode of Transylvania from 1534 to 1538 and along with Emeric Balassa, from June 1538 to August 1540.

<sup>50</sup> *Suceava. File de istorie. Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului, 1388-1918* [Suceava. History Sheets. Documents Regarding the History of the City, 1388-1918], Bucharest 1989, p. 159.

swords with engraved precious stones, German swords, very narrow swords and with pointy top, precious pearls, jewelry, precious flower vases, silk shirts, silver and golden bound books, gospels (*indjil*), crucifixes, a lot of coins, objects and merchandise as well, and ornamental and luxury objects, silk chequers and many other things that cannot be described by the author's pen. The money and all those things were taken and deposited in the royal treasury as precious objects"<sup>51</sup>. Another "inventory" of the hidden treasure in the fortress belongs to Mustafa Ali, the one who thought that "there were so many precious diamonds revealed and so many treasures that could not cross even the emirs' minds. Thus there were found various golden and silver dishes, various weapons and ornamented artistically crafted battle tools, wheels and objects with engraved precious stones, artistically bound gospels, golden crosses, precious clothes, pure gold bars etc. Finally, there were so many treasures found and the thesaurus hidden in the ground as if they were the great Afrasiab's and Afridun's treasures"<sup>52</sup>. All those unbelievable treasures were taken for the treasury of the lucky Padishah"<sup>53</sup>. But in a diplomatic report in 1562, there was the record of giving back Peter's treasure by the sultan himself<sup>54</sup>, except for Stephen the Great's sword, which still remains in Istanbul<sup>55</sup>.

Of course, the glorifying descriptions of the Ottoman sources have their charm, though they are at the limit between reality and fiction. For instance, Mustafa Ğelalzade stated that the Ottoman troops "settled their camp in the surroundings of the fortress, on the valleys, the mountains, the hills and the planes around"<sup>56</sup>, a far too generous scenery for such a relatively limited space. Not less plastic is the description made by Nasuk Matrakçi who wrote that "that pleasant and wide plane and that pleasurable place had been transformed into a land blown by waves, because they settled their unending tents, which were reaching for the sky and which would let everyone be amazed by their sight"<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> M. Guboglu, M. Mohammed (eds.), *Cronici cit.*, vol. I, pp.269-270.

<sup>52</sup> Afrasiab and Afridun, legendary figures in the Ottoman tradition.

<sup>53</sup> M. Guboglu, M. Mohammed (eds.), *Cronici cit.*, vol. I, p. 354.

<sup>54</sup> *Călători cit.*, vol. II, Bucharest, 1970, p. 175.

<sup>55</sup> The tradition mentions the fact that, among the goods captured by the Ottoman, in 1538, was also the sword of Stephen the Great.

<sup>56</sup> *Călători cit.*, vol. II, p. 175.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

The history sources also talk about the calling of the Country Assembly: “Otherwise, the leaders of this country, the son of a former leader, the priests and the merchants wanted to come and beg the ones around the sultan so that they could present him their offer of loyalty and to pray for forgiveness. Because the sultan could not wait for too long, he ordered them to present their offer in at least four days”<sup>58</sup>. According to Nasuk Matrakçı, Mustafa Ali and İbrahim Peçevi, the “surrender” of Suceava – the ultimate element of the plan of treason conceived by some of the Moldavian noblemen, enemies of Peter Rareş – and the capture of the great royal treasure have justified *Kanunî Süleyman*’s right to unilaterally decide, in 1538, the future statute of Moldavia. Furthermore, by issuing the *Letter of Conquering Moldavia (Fetihname-i Kara-Boğdan)* on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1538 the sultan, who entitled himself in the Bender inscription “The Conqueror of Bogdan’s Country” planned on canceling the rights that the great noblemen gained by “the conditioned surrender” of Moldavia. As followed, in Ottoman sources, we see Suleiman the Magnificent in his right, from an Islamic perspective, to “forgive (*amân*) the whole Moldavian population”, though, preferring on the steady political - military and economic - financial grounds, maintaining the country in an *’ahd* regime, instead of changing it into a *Pashalik*<sup>59</sup>. But then, again, the documents are the ones that recall the choice made by the sultan. Therefore, though “the son of a ruler” still lived in the country, at the throne of Moldavia was preferred Stephen or “Cetne”, who was paid (*ulufe*) by the emperor<sup>60</sup> and “who long served the Porte with obedience and submission”<sup>61</sup>. We are speaking of an old Empire protégé, known in history as Stephen Locust<sup>62</sup>. His name will relate to the installation of the Ottoman military garrison in the once long-craved fortress. Mustafa Ğelalzade and İbrahim Peçevi (who wrote at a distance of a century between each other) mentioned the sultan’s presence in Suceava, the place of the crowning festivity of the new ruler. He was given a hat (from other sources, a golden cap)<sup>63</sup>, a *kuka*, a flag, a drum

<sup>58</sup> M. Guboglu, M. Mohammed (eds.) *Cronici cit.*, vol. I, p.269.

<sup>59</sup> V. Panaite, *Pacea cit.*, pp. 410-411.

<sup>60</sup> M. Guboglu, M. Mohammed (eds.), *Cronici cit.*, vol. I, p. 270.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 353.

<sup>62</sup> Stephen V (Locust) – voivode of Moldavia from 18 September 1538 to December 1540.

<sup>63</sup> M. Guboglu, M. Mohammed (eds.), *Cronici cit.*, vol. I, p. 353.

and a cembalo<sup>64</sup>, but also a shiny *hilat* (a cloak)<sup>65</sup> or a red fur coat (*bürk*)<sup>66</sup>.

A fact remains certain: in the month of *rebi-ul-ahîr* of the year *II 945* (September 1538), with a Moldavian refugee ruler, with a cancelled battle and a submissive country, the sultan's intention of naming *sanjaks*, remained uncovered. This was the real reason for which joining the kingdom was not possible any longer<sup>67</sup>.

Moldavia kept its *dar-al-sulh* status, because, according to the information that reached Stephen Mailath, at the border between Moldavia and Transylvania, "the Turks do not kill anybody, and the Emperor himself does not indulge any pillage against the population"<sup>68</sup>. Nevertheless, the Ottoman plan will continue to manifest through the tendency to include the Moldavian state in the economical, and then in the political and system of the Empire, documents mentioning about the attention that the *pashas* of Moldavia surveyed the area's situation<sup>69</sup>. The state of things which followed 1572 resulted in the fact that Moldavia's ruler was not to be chosen by the country anymore, but by buying his throne from Istanbul; the command of confirmation on behalf the sultan had to reach Suceava through a special *kapudgi-başa*<sup>70</sup>.

The ever-increasing tribute, because of the fall of the Ottoman currency, also on behalf of the applications for participation in military supplies and the Empire's capital, had reverberated on top of the boyars' property, on the feudal domain and the social structure in general. Thereby, because the great Moldavian officials did not manage to raise the amount demanded by the Ottoman Porte, and the sultan wanted to receive the tribute integrally, the voivode of Moldavia managed to take care of this aspect himself. Documents reveal the fact that Peter the Lame<sup>71</sup> took from the chancellor Solomon the village of Hrințești, from the county of Suceava, with ponds and mills on the Solca river, on behalf of the 70,000 aspers (or

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 353.

<sup>67</sup> S.G. Gorovei, *Moldova cit.*, p. 661.

<sup>68</sup> *Suceava cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>71</sup> Peter V the Lame – voivode of Moldavia: June 1574 - 23 November 1577, 1 January 1578 - 21 November 1579, and 17 October 1582 - 29 August 1591.

300 Hungarian ducats) debt, with which the official had been in debt to the treasury, being responsible for the raising of the contributions from the area of Suceava. To get that missing amount, the ruler gave the respective village to the Metropolitan Bishop of Moldavia<sup>72</sup>. Another document speaks of Isaac, the mayor of Suceava, who, in 1623, addressed the Jude of Bistrița, asking for his permission for a few salesmen from Suceava, sent to Transylvania to acquire suet for the debt to the Ottoman Porte<sup>73</sup>.

Undoubtedly, beyond these aspects bound to the tribute payment or other debts towards Ottoman Empire, the economical policy of the rulers, even after 1572, sought to preserve Moldavia in a circuit of economical trades as large as possible. Although, in the year 1564, during the second reign of Alexander Lăpușneanu<sup>74</sup> and according to the orders of the Sublime Porte, Suceava lost its status as the capital of Moldavia in favor of Iași<sup>75</sup>, on its streets products manufactured in Suceava were still being sold and bought, as well as many other goods specific to the area (cattle, grain, fish, honey, butter, etc.), but also products imported from many other craftsmen centers of the Orient and Europe, from cloth to the so-called “Tartar merchandise”: silk, pepper, various fabrics, etc<sup>76</sup>. Also, Suceava gathered, besides the local dealers, salesmen from other Romanian cities, as well as from the large centers of Europe and the Orient – Armenians, Jews, Polish, Germans, Italians, Greeks, Turks, French, etc<sup>77</sup>.

Historians estimate that the relative thriving period reached by Suceava within a century and a half, was followed by another one, characterized by economic decline, instability, political anarchy and frequent interventions of the Tatar–Turkish, Polish, or Russian or Austrian soldiers, during which they would register devastating plagues, fires and massive goods damage. In the memory of the citizens of Suceava persisted the idea that the city had been filled “along with the entire country, with troubles that

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<sup>72</sup> *Din tezaurul documentar sucevean. Catalog de documente, 1393-1849* [From the Documentary Thesaurus of Suceava. Document Catalogue, 1393-1849], Bucharest 1983, p. 88.

<sup>73</sup> *Suceava cit.*, p. 241.

<sup>74</sup> Alexander Lăpușneanu – voivode of Moldavia from September 1552 to 18 November 1561, and from October 1564 to 11 March 1568.

<sup>75</sup> *Călători cit.*, vol. V, p. 27.

<sup>76</sup> O. Monoranu, M. Iacobescu, D. Paulencu, *Suceava cit.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

have always threatened the Ottoman Porte”<sup>78</sup>. In contrast with the blooming image of the city, starting with the last decades of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, the foreign travelers that passed through Suceava present a completely different view, a place in its glorious decline, “ruined by wars“ and abandoned by its people.

Thereby, after Mehmed IV (the Hunter) attacked Moldavia, in 1650, all the way to Suceava<sup>79</sup>, in 1653 took place the devastating war between Vasile Lupu<sup>80</sup> and Gheorghe Ștefan<sup>81</sup> for the title of Moldavia’s ruler, a war which resulted in not only the longest siege against the Fortress, but also in a really disastrous effect on the city’s economy, with obvious consequences on its further development. About the two-month siege<sup>82</sup> another Turkish chronicler, Mustafa Naimâ wrote<sup>83</sup>: “The Fortress of Suceava<sup>84</sup>, which the sultan Suleiman had conquered before<sup>85</sup>, a massive fortress, was given by the lord of Moldavia to the hetman’s son, his son-in-law (Tymish Khmelnytsky)<sup>86</sup>. Then, the hetman’s son left that fortress along with all his wealth and his wife, a woman that was very popular and known for having left the Ottoman Porte, and he marched along with the Cossack army with the intention to bring Walachia to ruin”. But Matei Basarab managed to resist and, even more, he counter-attacked and passed all the way to Moldavia. “From there on, marching his way into the Fortress of Suceava, he demanded for the hetman son’s wife, along with all her possessions and treasury. (The Fortress inhabitants) refused to obey, and so he brought it to ashes. Meanwhile, the hetman’s son came in a hurry and unexpectedly entered the fortress to help the besieged ones. His father (Bohdan

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<sup>78</sup> *Suceava cit.*, p. 470.

<sup>79</sup> *Călători cit.*, vol. VI, p. 336.

<sup>80</sup> Vasile Lupu – voivode of Moldavia: 27 April 1634 - 13 April 1653 and 8 May 1653 - 16 July 1653.

<sup>81</sup> Gheorghe Ștefan (seldom referred to as *Burduja*) was voivode of Moldavia between 13 April and 8 May 1653, and again from 16 July 1653 to 13 March 1658.

<sup>82</sup> C. Șerban, *Aseidiul Sucevei în anul 1653* [The Arson of Suceava in 1653], “Suceava”, X, 1983, pp. 235-245.

<sup>83</sup> Mustafa Naimâ (1654-1716) is the author of a chronicle entitled *Naima Tarihi* (*History of Naima*).

<sup>84</sup> In other rhymes, the toponym appears as *Südjâr* or *Sücav*.

<sup>85</sup> Reference to Suleiman the Magnificent.

<sup>86</sup> Tymofiy Bohdanovych Khmelnytsky or Tymish Khmelnytsky - the eldest son of Cossack hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky, was besieged by a Walachian army in Suceava and died in the confrontation (1653)

Khmelnitsky)<sup>87</sup> could not come to give him a hand, as he had to go on an expedition to Poland. These facts will be described furthermore. The hetman's son was left off besieged along with his own son and family. Those damned Walachians and Hungarians, as they laid the city into flames, murdered and pillaged those left outside the Fortress's walls. The survivors ran to the fortress and thus, the siege lasted a few more days"<sup>88</sup>.

As we previously mentioned, the image of the city in its actual decline impressed the travelers that passed through the XVII<sup>th</sup> century Suceava. A note belonging to Vito Piluzzi, dating from 1674, shows that "every church in Suceava was destroyed by the Turks". The "devastation" episode also continued in 1675 when, after the Polish captured the convoy holding Moldavia's tribute (valuated at 50,000 thalers) on its way to Kamianets-Podilskyi and because of the suspicions that the Moldavians were accomplices to this action, the Turks "burnt all the villages on the bed of the Pruth River, including Suceava and Chernivtsi"<sup>89</sup>. A short time after the unfortunate event, in 1687, Giovanni Battista wrote that, after the Polish-Turkish battles, which had taken place in Moldavian cities – Suceava, Baia and Neamț – "there was nothing left but the empty walls still standing of the houses and of the churches as well"<sup>90</sup>. But the Turks were not the only enemies of the Polish in Suceava. According to the testimonies of Nicholas von Dyadowski, John III Sobieski, king of Poland, in 1683 the Polish army had been affected by the continuous rain showers and snow blizzards<sup>91</sup>.

Beyond these temporary hold-backs, the city remained the scene of some major military confrontations. In 1692, a Moldavian – Turkish army, led by Constantin Cantemir<sup>92</sup> and Mustafa – Bashaw tried to free the fortress, resulting in a failed attempt caused by the lack of support from the Polish and the Ukrainian Cossacks<sup>93</sup>. Even after the evacuation of the fortress in

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<sup>87</sup> Bohdan Zynoviy Mykhailovych Khmelnytsky (1595-1657) - hetman of the Zaporozhian Cossack Hetmanate of Ukraine.

<sup>88</sup> M.A. Mohammed (ed.), *Cronici turcești privind țările române, Extrase, (sfârșitul secolului XVI – începutul secolului XIX) [Turkish Chronicles regarding the Romanian Countries, Extracts, (end of XVI<sup>th</sup> – beginning of XIX<sup>th</sup> Century)]*, vol. III, Bucharest 1980, p. 104.

<sup>89</sup> *Suceava cit.*, p. 346.

<sup>90</sup> *Călători cit.*, vol. VII, p. 389.

<sup>91</sup> *Din tezaurul cit.*, pp. 197-198.

<sup>92</sup> Constantin Cantemir - voivode of Moldavia, from June 1685 till March 1693.

<sup>93</sup> *Suceava cit.*, p. 352.

1699, according to the foresights of the Karlowitz' Peace, the situation remained as deplorable as before. About the "fall" of Suceava Fortress, the Romanian chronicler Ion Neculce states the following events: "they allocated the soldiers, along with the Turks and Moldavians, in a way that they surrounded the Suceava Fortress for a while, and they could not bring out the Germans so they starved and bowed willingly, and received command from the Polish to come out. And those inside Neamț Fortress did not wait long, as they had no food, and as soon as they came out they went to Suceava, to the other compatriots. Then was Alexander Buhush at Podișoari, near Suceava Fair and, bravely assaulting with his servants, broke the German camp in two. Then they killed the horse under the hetman Buhush, and so the hetman fell to the ground, facing up in the plough land so he could not rise again in time. As the Germans rushed to grab him, a Moldavian captain, named Decusară rushed on his mount to meet them and the hetman grabbed the tail of Decusară's horse and, tightly holding it, they escaped him from the German assault. The hetman, mounting another horse, attacked a few more times, and many of the Germans died, some of them captured, and the rest still defended, until they reached the others in Suceava. They sent the surviving Germans, prisoners of war and the heads of those fallen to Dumitrașco-voivode<sup>94</sup> in Iași who sent them to the Kingdom. So on, an army stood before the fortress, and they could not bring them out; and for two years the Germans held their ground at Suceava, and they could not bring them out. Only that Dumitrașco-voivode sent Panaitachii Morona, the chancellor alongside with a Turkish *aga* and other boyars to break the fortresses. And then, as the Germans left Suceava, Panaite – the *aga*'s interpreter – came, along with the Turkish *aga* and broke everyone's locks, the ones that were there and many other valuable things as they became wealthy. And later, Panaitachii's son remained and starved to death. And from that moment they devastated the fortresses of Suceava, Neamț and Hotin"<sup>95</sup>.

It's easy to understand why, as the modern age began, in 1709, Daniel

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<sup>94</sup> Dumitrașcu Cantacuzino (or Dimitrie Cantacuzino) – voivode of Moldavia: November 1673 / February 1674 - November 1675, and 8 February 1684 - 25 June 1685.

<sup>95</sup> Ion Neculce, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei* [The Chronicle of Moldavia], Bucharest 1982, pp. 241-245.



Krmann, who once knew a blooming Suceava , speaks “now” of a “ruin”, of a fortress “that once was” well fortified, but nowadays stands in ruins because of the Turks, who “did not want to have fortresses in this country, fearing a rebellion”<sup>96</sup>, although it was at their own command that in this part of Moldavia, “stone bridges” should be built over “large and small rivers”<sup>97</sup>. And in 1713, one of the last travelers, Erasmus Heinrich Schneider, passed by Suceava mentioning the once “wonderful city”, wrote about the “two fortresses” of Suceava: the first was the Throne Fortress, “in ruins, outside the city” and a second one, Zamca, risen by the Poles to “establish the connection with Neamț” and fortified “with a monastery close to the city” which was also handed over to the Turks after establishing peace”<sup>98</sup>. But the end of the Polish-Turkish hostilities didn’t mean the settlement of peace in Moldavia. The ruler demanded the sultan armed support to push back the Swedish and Ukrainian troops taking refuge here, following the defeat in the war with Russia belonging to the Tzar Peter I<sup>99</sup>. It was not by accident that at a certain moment, being asked about the theme of their fair, Suceava, the municipal judge Borcila and starosta Gheorghe Tupilat admitted that “this country” came to be a “theatre of war, for the Poles, the Tatars, Russians, Swedish, Hungarians, etc. whenever they wanted to try their strength against the Ottoman Porte or whenever they were allied with it”<sup>100</sup>. Summing up, we can say that Suceava –just like Moldova– covered more phases in its historical evolution, the discontinuities being influenced by different factors, internal (some voivodes’ and boyars’ attitude, the removal of the capital to Iași) or external (the Ottoman policy, the actions of the neighboring states: Poland, Hungary, Russia). And, as the Moldavian-Ottoman relationships didn’t remain only within the bilateral area, it was logical and predictable that the history of Suceava follow the course of the general history. Its geopolitical position was an impediment in assuring a favorable politico-social and economic framework to the Suceava territory toward a cultural and economical prosperity.

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<sup>96</sup> *Călători cit.*, p. 389.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. VIII, p. 346.

<sup>99</sup> *Suceava cit.*, p. 361.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 470.