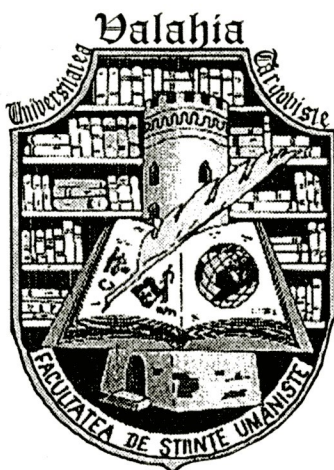


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THE OTTOMAN EXPEDITION FROM 1595 AND ITS EFFECTS ON WALLACHIA'S INHABITANTS

*Irina Cirstina**

Résumé

Les deux mois pendant lesquels les armées ottomanes ont possédé le territoire de la Valachie ont marqué très fort la vie quotidienne des habitants. Les effets de l'agression ne se sont pas limités seulement au territoire occupé; elles se sont ressenties dans tout le pays, en provoquant, tout d'abord, des massives mouvements de la population. Les autres conséquences ont été le pillage, la famine, l'esclavage. Ce dernier a affecté toutes les catégories sociales, mais surtout les paysans. La peur de la servitude a engendré partout un sentiment de solidarité, du moment que les documents parlent de véritables ententes entre les villageois pour s'aider réciproquement en cas d'esclavage.

À la fin du XVI^{ème} siècle toutes les sources internes parlent de la terrible famine, malgré des mesures adoptées par Michel le Brave pour le redressement du pays.

The two months in which the Ottoman armies owned the Wallachia's territory strongly influenced the inhabitants' daily life, the memory of this occupation lasting for a long time. The effects of the invasion didn't limit only to the invaded territory, but they were felt all over the country, causing, in the first stage, massive population movements (D.I.R., B, XVII, I 1951: 164; Fenesan 1980: 81).

It is well known that in autumn 1594, Michael the Brave couldn't pay back the Ottoman creditors the money borrowed by his predecessors because the population was no longer able to support the fiscal charges. In these conditions, causing the relations with the Ottoman Empire in the favourable conjunction offered by the Ottoman's war with the Holy League (1593-1606) was a risky solution from the political point of view, but a rational one from the economical point of view.

The Romanian "rebellion" affected both the Ottoman incomes and the development of the military operations in Hungaria. In this regard, Balthasar Walther (Mihai Viteazul in *constiinta europeana* ...1983: 272) wrote: "Murad ... couldn't stand any more the lack of grain from Transylvania and the two Wallachias, so useful also for sustaining the war in Hungary", informing us that only Wallachia gave each year "about one tone of gold, 20.000 sheeps, 2.000 horses, 10.000 big measures of wheat, the same quantity of barley, then a lot of butter, honey and others".

Although some historians (Murgescu 1997: 577) tried to accredit the idea that the army supplying prevailed in comparison with Istanbul, Stefan Andreescu (Andreescu 1997: 592) demonstrated that in spring 1595 Istanbul passed through a strong alimentary crisis as a result of the rebellion from the Low Danube. This fact is proved by the impatience with which the inhabitants of the capital waited the success of the expedition in Wallachia, by its systematic destruction, but also by the grand vizier Sinan pasha to discipline his soldiers. The last ones, after they took their preys, left the camp and went towards the Danube (Calatori ...1971: 523-533).

The anti-Ottoman campaign from winter 1594/1595 astonished the sultan and made him organize a strong offensive against the rebels.

The information from the Ottoman chronicles (Mihai Viteazul in *constiinta europeana* ...1983: 203-204) and the contemporary testimonies (Mihai Viteazul in *constiinta*

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européana ... 1983: 493) are proving the existence of a plan ment to transform Wallachia in an Ottoman province before Michael the Brave begun his antiottoman fight. This plan was not known by the lord who, in an audience offered to the Polish messenger Lubieniecki, in Bucharest, at 27th of July 1595, declared that he was informed by his spy network of the Turk intention of transforming the Romanian countries into pashaliks, for two reasons : first because they lost all the incomes they once had from Moldavia and

Wallachia "...and then because, when they will bring here their garrisons, for the Tartars it will be casier to invade all the Christian parts".(Calatori ...1971: 498-499)

If Sinan pasha (Iorga 1937: 256,300) dreamed more to transform the two extracarpathian countries in to ottoman provinces (vilayet), the grand vizier Ferhat pasha, on the 14th of May 1595 (Constaniniu 1999:126), accomplished this dream theoreticly, abolishi ng the autonomy status of the two countries, It was the only momrnt in wich Wallachia and Moldavia got out from dar - al - ahd ("*The Hause of Peace*") and went into dar - al - Islam ("*The House of Islam*").

Two months later, Ferhat pasha, who was to lead the expedition against Michael the Brave, was discharged and executed, the grand vizier function being taken, for the fourth time, by Sinan pasha, who immediately crossed Danube into Wallachia leading a strong army.

The historian Ion Sirbu, trying to stretch a general immagine of the ottoman presence in the autumn 1595, wrote: "How many smoke clouds must have raised from the grains and hey, what a dense bloody fog must have filled the air behind them, what a distruction must have endured this poor Roumanian's country, when we know that Sinan stayed in it for more than two months" (Sirbu 1976: 212).

In our modest attempt to rebuild the atmosphere in the country and the results of the ottoman invasion over the inhabitants, gipsies, peasants, citadins, monks or boyards, we begin from the fact that, after Michael retreat in the mountain to strenghten its forces, the country lacked the army and the exertion of the boyard or lordly power. The referee, the ottomans had all the condition to impose their direct domination.

Ever if the ottoman's first measure was the system of population registering, the chronicler Abdul Kadir telling as that the land was "rich and prosperous" (Rotman 1976: 242), the millitary and strategic aspect prevailed in the organization of the conquered teritory. This fact is proved by the decision taken by the war council in 28th of August 1595, held in Bucharest. At that time it wad decided the strenghtening of the main strategic points, the most important ones being Bucharest and Targoviste. The Wallachia egalet was given to the vizier Satirgi Mehmed pasha who was to be helped by ten beys, each one leading a certain region (Rotman 1976: 243).

As we can see , the Ottomans really ment to instalate themselves on the romanian land. This measures didn't had any real effect over the inhabitants due to the short period of occupstion. But we surely can 't say the same thing about "the strict order to destroy all the villages and to captore all the men they could catch"(Calatori ... 1971: 532), given by the grand vizier to his army. Noteing all the important measures applied during the expedition, Sinan pasha wrote: "...we told our armies and aventuries to rob the land of Wallachia and from here wi got an endless row of slaves" (Calatori ... 1971: 604).

As Abdul Kadir, direct participant at these events, wrote, one of the most affected aveas was Bucharest : "All the villaces and communes around Bucharest were devastated. There were so many slaves and praies (...). Taking so many flocks of slaves they emptied tye city of Bucharest" (Fenesan 1980 : 82). Concerning Targoviste it seems that the greater

part of the inhabitants fled when Michael the Brave retreated to Stoenesti (Mihai Viteazul in *constiinta europeana...* 1983: 178).

Other contemporary testimonies, this time European ones, prove the unprecedented robbery of the conquerors. The Spanish Diego Galan, being held captive by the Turks, notes how the Ottomans "...entered everywhere, destroying and putting fire to crops ..., the soldiers enslaving so many Christians that they didn't know what to do with them anymore ... making the price of a slave to decrease to three coins from three silver reals; they paid the same price for a woman with two children in her arms ... this was the fate of the ploughmen who didn't want to flee into the mountains". Concerning the cattle, the same witness says that the pashas made incursions everyday and gathered cattle, especially cows, "so many that you could see them everyday crossing the bridge toward the Turk's land ... the cow and mares were so many that a cow cost four reals, a calf two reals, and a good horse six reals. As for the small cattle ... these one didn't have any price" (Calatori ... 1971: 532 548 588 589).

The consequences of these destructions, especially of the crops, began to be felt even by the conquerors: "a bread was more expensive than a cow, there was no one left to pick the wheat and the other grains still standing, because the ploughmen disappeared or were taken prisoners. When bread began to lack, all the others became superfluous... Many Turks and slaves died. They ate meatloaf and then drank water... fact that brought about thousands of stomach diseases and fevers... The two months abundance was hardly paid because in this expedition died 4000 people... As for slaves, everyday one hundred of them unknown to patterns and went to their hospodar to tell him about the troubles of his subjects ..." (Calatori ... 1971: 533)

The internal documents complete the sad show offered by the effects of starvation which devastated Wallachia few years after 1595. Because of it entire villages subjected themselves after "the Turks robbed Wallachia" (D.I.R., B, XVI, VI: 275 - 276). An interesting document is the one from 28th of May 1596 from which we find out that Stan the boyard from Savesti bought a half of the village upper Botenii from a certain Paraschiv, for 2800 aspers. All who could buy on the basis of protest refused because "then was a bad hunger and great need of all people because of Sinan pascha and nobody wanted to buy" (D.I.R., B, XVI, VI: 213 - 214).

The slavery affected all the social strata, but mostly the peasants. Next to losing the land, the documents also note the physical suffering of these people. It's the case of Negre, who leaves his brother, Nedea, his lot ("ocina") from Frumusani because he took care of him when he was ill, after he escaped from slavery from the Tartars, "cut and full of worms" (D.I.R., B, XVII, I: 67).

Plenty of documents talk about imprisoning women and unwed families. Efreim, the bishop of Ramnic, releases a certain Mircea the Serbian "to be in peace and free from his wife named Raica the Serbian ... because she was enslaved by Ismaelits together with his children" (D.I.R., B, XVII, I: 69).

The fear of slavery gave birth to a feeling of solidarity, because the documents talk about agreements between the villagers to help one another in case of enslavement. Here is an example: Maria and Tudora from Negreasca fraternize with Ivan "on this time of slavery and need, to look after his need and him after ours till death and, if one of us happens to be enslaved, the one who remains free ...ransom the one enslaved" (D.I.R., B, XVII, I: 98 - 99).

Even if to a small extent, the slavery could also touch the boyards, but for them money was not such a big problem: lady Neaga, Mitre boyard's wife "ended up enslaved in

the hands of the Turks”; the boyard Dumitrache Chirita “worked hard until he managed to free lady Neaga from slavery”; in exchange Neaga sold him half of the Grozavesti village.(D.I.R., B, XVII, I: 13)

Sometimes even the monks from monasteries were caught. Such a thing happened at Gherghita monastery where “the cursed Tartars” also enslaved the monks.(D.I.R., B, XVII, I: 85 – 86)

During the two months of occupation, the Turks enslaved 20.000 christians (Mihai Viteazul in constiinta europeana ... 1983: 280), from which approximately “8.000 souls, women and men ... although shaved on the head after the Turk tradition” (Calatori ... 1971: 593) were freed when the enemies were driven away from the country, at the end of October.

Despite the measures taken by Michael the Brave to rebuilt the country, it was so badly devastated, that the longest and densest villages on this fertile land and from the mountain, abundant in all kind of fruits and wines ... bavely have today <1597> here and there a house or a destroyed church ...”(Mihai Viteazul in constiinta europeana ...1983 282)

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