

From the Russian Occupation to the Reign of Alexandru D. Ghica. The Features of a Political Transition

Cosmin MIHUȚ

"Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iași

E-mail: mihut.cosmin@yahoo.com

Cristian PLOSCARU

"Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iași

E-mail: cploscaru@yahoo.com

Article history: Received 2.11.2021; Revised 7.12.2021;

Accepted 28.12.2021; Available online 13.04.2022.

©2021 Studia UBB Historia. Published by Babeș-Bolyai University.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

Abstract: The appointment of the Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia presented Russian officials with serious dilemmas, whether they were the leaders of the Empire's foreign policy or of the occupation administration. In the end, a solution was adopted – the selection of the Princes by the Porte from a short list of candidates proposed by Russia – in line with Russia's strategic interests regarding the Ottoman Empire as a whole and despite Pavel Kiselev's proposals that the occupation should be prolonged or, in a transitional phase, that the civilian administration of the Princes should operate in parallel with a Russian military administration. The selection of Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica as the main candidate for Wallachia and his rapid investiture by the Sultan have several explanations, including his political profile convenient for both Powers, his activity as minister and head of the militia, his personal relation with Pavel Kiselev and his access to the sums of money required for his investiture in Constantinople. However, his insufficient political prestige in relation to the country's great boyar families, his image as a Prince submissive to the Russian will, skillfully used by his opponents, and the large debts he had accumulated, which he could not pay without generating several resounding financial scandals linked to the leasing of state revenues, were likely to herald the political crisis of the following years, the success of the opposition in undermining his regime and, finally, his dismissal after only eight years of rule.

Keywords: Statutory regime, Pavel Kiselev, investiture, Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica, financial obligations.

Rezumat: De la ocupația rusă la domnia lui Alexandru D. Ghica. Caracteristicile unei tranziții politice. Desemnarea domnilor Moldovei și Țării Românești i-a pus pe oficialii ruși în fața unor serioase dileme, fie că este vorba de diriguitorii politicii externe a Imperiului, fie de conducătorii administrației de ocupație. În cele din urmă, a fost adoptată o soluție – selectarea domnilor de către Poartă dintr-o listă scurtă de candidați propusă de Rusia – în acord cu interesele strategice ale Rusiei relative la Imperiul otoman în anbamblu și în pofida propunerilor lui Pavel Kiselev ca ocupația să fie prelungită sau ca, într-o fază de tranziție, administrația civilă a domnilor să funcționeze în paralel cu o administrație militară rusească. Selectarea lui Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica drept candidat principal pentru Țara Românească și rapida sa investire de către sultan au mai multe explicații, între care profilul său politic convenabil pentru ambele Puteri, activitatea sa ca ministru și șef al miliției pământene, relația personală cu Pavel Kiselev și accesul la sumele de bani necesare cheltuielilor impuse de investirea sa la Constantinopol. Cu toate acestea, prestigiul politic insuficient de pronunțat în raport cu marile familii boierești din țară, imaginea sa de principe supus voinței rusești, abil utilizată de adversari, și marile datorii acumulate, pe care nu le-a putut plăti fără să genereze câteva răsunătoare scandaluri financiare legate de arendarea veniturilor statului au fost de natură a anunța criza politică din anii următori, succesul opoziției în a-i submina regimul și, în cele din urmă, destituirea sa după doar opt ani de domnie.

Cuvinte cheie: Regimul regulamentar, Pavel Kiselev, investitură domnească, Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica, datorii financiare

The establishment of the Regulation regime in the Romanian Principalities was accomplished in multiple stages, whose features derive from the correlation between the international context, in touch with the Eastern question, and the clash of internal forces, separating the Russian officials led by Pavel Kiselev and supported by a part of the boyars from the “opponents” and the “dissatisfied”, who, for various reasons, hoped that the new reform, concerning all the internal institutions, would be a temporary experiment, either in the sense of a return to the old order of things or, on the contrary, to allow, through revisions, the accentuation of the modern and national character of the transformations initiated by the organic law.

The first stage of the implementation of the regime, troubled and full of uncertainties for the local elite, ended with the adoption of the Organic Regulation and its application, under Pavel Kiselev’s watchful

eye. Once it was validated in Petersburg, the plenipotentiary president, combining moderation and patience with insistence and firmness, managed to weaken the resistance of the Wallachian elite, as proven by the political conformism shown by most of the boyars in the second stage, that of revision and systematical implementation of the Regulation's stipulations (1832-1834). Of course, the moderation of the president, the uncertainty regarding the political future of the Principalities – whether they were going to be annexed or not – and, last but not least, the energies consumed in intrigues for obtaining the throne would, together, explain this state of things.¹ Furthermore, the president knew how to find a few supporters of the new regime among the great boyars, whom he promoted in offices of authority, and how to capably maneuver through the contrary interests of various boyar categories; he had an inspired political strategy, aiming to attract the “intermediary category”, namely the boyars of note from the counties and from the less influent branches of the “great families” in “important positions in administration and justice”, offering these boyars “new ways of enrichment, new careers” in the central and municipal administration.² Moreover, the international context, favorable to Russia, wasn't presenting too many hopes for a rebalancing of forces, from Austria, France or Britain.³ The Russo-Ottoman war of 1828-1829, ending disastrously for the Turks, alarmed the cabinets of the Great European Powers. In London, especially, there was a fear of new Russian annexations and even of an eventual dismemberment of the Ottoman empire,⁴ the British diplomats finding themselves forced to observe a situation that placed Turkey, “a weak and powerless state”, in a state of political dependency on Russia, resembling that of Poland, before the partition.⁵

* This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS - UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-1868, within PNCDI III.

¹ Jean C. Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l'occupation Russe (1828-1834). Le Règlement Organique, etude de droit public et d'histoire diplomatique* (Bucharest: Imprimerie de l'Indépendance Roumaine, 1904), 65–82.

² Arhivele Naționale ale României National Archives of Romania, henceforth ANR), *Achiziții noi, pachet CCLV/6, f. 1-2 (Notice sur les Boyards Moldaves)*.

³ J. A. R. Marriott, *The Eastern Question. An Historical Study in European Diplomacy*, fourth edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 232–243; Gh. Cliveti, *Concertul European. Un experiment în relațiile internaționale din secolul XIX* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2006), 760–763; Frederick Stanley Rodkey, *The Turco-Egyptian Question in the Relations of England, France, and Russia 1832-1841* (Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1924), 15–16.

⁴ Thomas Macknight, *Thirty Years of Foreign Policy. A History of the Secretaryship of the Earl of Aberdeen and Viscount Palmerston* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855), 115–120.

⁵ Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government, and Society 1815-1833*

In Kiselev's view, which he attributed to other Russian dignitaries in an official report to the Foreign Minister, the Egyptian issue that broke out in 1832, followed by a series of crises that troubled the Ottoman empire in the following decade, proved the incapacity of this state to reform itself, to strengthen its finances and internal structures, being destined to disintegrate. He also thought that this conclusion had to be formulated in British, French and Austrian cabinets as well. He assumed that in London, Paris and Vienna there was an "intimate conviction of the futility of their own efforts to stop the decadence of this state" and of the fact that the Ottoman empire could no longer play a significant role in maintaining the European balance of power, as a true counterweight to Russia's growing influence in the Orient.⁶ The battle which Kiselev envisioned, following in the footsteps of Adam Czartoryski, when he was Foreign Minister (1804-1806),⁷ and of Ioannis Capodistria,⁸ was to be for the influence and patronage over the work of substituting the Ottoman empire with "young states" in the Balkans and in the Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, a change in the Russian policy towards the Ottomans seemed absolutely necessary to him - from a policy that mostly focused on compliance with the existent treaties to a strategy meant to ensure Russia's patronage over the Orthodox subjects of the Porte. The first step had to be Moldavia and Wallachia, which the Turks considered "as good as lost", in a political, rather than a territorial sense, offering in exchange to waiver the war compensations and an alliance against the external and internal enemies of the Porte.⁹ Why the Romanian Principalities? Because the Russian influence here was consolidating, and the regime instituted through the Organic Regulations offered sufficient warranties for their control and, at the same time, a positive example on what Russian protection meant - a "constitutional" regime, order and stability, internal development etc..¹⁰

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 366. The comparison belongs to lord Charles Heytesbury, British Ambassador to Petersburg (M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923. A Study in International Relations* (New York: MacMillan, 1966), 72.

⁶ A. P. Zablotski-Desiatovski, *Graf P. D. Kiselev i ego vremja*, IV, p. 75 (Bucharest, 21 April 1832, *Kiselev's note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*).

⁷ *Vnešnjaja politika Rossii XIX i načala XX veka: dokumenty rossijskogo ministerstva inostrannykh del*, serija pervaja, 1801-1815, tom pervoj, 1801-1804, Moskva, 1960, p. 631-632 (26 februarie 1804, A. A. Czartoryski către S. R. Vorontzov); *Diplomaticheskiya snosheniya Rossii s" Frantsiey v" epokhu Napoleona I*, în *Sbornik russkovo istoriceskovo obcestva*, LXXXII, Petersburg, 1892, p. 268-275; 11/23 January 1806, Czartoriski's Memoir to Alexander I).

⁸ Ioannis Capodistrias, "Aperçu de ma carrière publique depuis 1798 jusqu'à 1822," *Sbornik russkovo istoriceskovo obcestva*, III (1868): 210-211.

⁹ A. P. Zablotski-Desiatovski, *Graf P. D. Kiselev i ego vremja*, IV, 77.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, IV, 82 (Kiselev to Nesselrode, 26 September 1832).

The designation of the Princes and the issue of the new regime

Before the fate of the Principalities was decided and the conditions for the withdrawal of Russian troops established, another two essential political aspects on which the future of the regime depended – the issue of electing the Princes and the procedures of *revision of the organic legislation*, an essential component of the internal autonomy, guaranteed by the Adrianople Treaty¹¹ – were somehow left in suspension.¹² Initially, the revision was attributed to an Extraordinary General Assembly, a solution preferred by the “reform committee”, as *it clearly results* from a report of Minciaky, which emphasized the disadvantages of this decision for Russia: the election of the Princes would generate intrigues and internal tensions, fueled by the consuls of other Great Powers, with unpredictable results, and the prerogative to revision the Organic Regulations would allow the boyars to alter, in time, the foundations of the regime.¹³ These observations, adding to the comments of Nesselrode and Kiselev regarding the risks of a premature withdrawal of Russian troops from the Principalities, before the Porte’s ratification of the Regulations and their implementation in the truly important points – the reorganization of the administration, the local militia, the courts and the regime of privileges – show that the transition to the rule of the Princes was to be extended for as long as possible. Regardless of the trajectory the Russian-Ottoman relations were to take, the issue of “electing” the Princes was important and had to be permanently in Russia’s attention, since in November 1830, Nesselrode informed Kiselev that the Tsar wanted “the election of the Princes [...] to be carried out in the time and *under the power* of the Russian occupation”, and, if necessary, the great boyars had to be informed, as a concealed threat, that the Russian officials “will protect the countries against the intriguers and the ambitious.” Thinking this Russian interest not in terms of political force,

¹¹ *Acte și documente relative la istoria renascerei României*, I, published by Ghenadie Petrescu, Dimitrie A. Sturdza și Dimitrie C. Sturdza (Bucharest: Tipografia Carol Göbl, 1888), 321 (*The Adrianople Treaty*, 14 September 1829).

¹² ANR, *Colecția microfilme Rusia*, roll 56, c. 379 (Minciaky to Kiselev; 2 April 1830).

¹³ *Ibid.*, c. 380-381. Minciaky proposed that the revision should remain the prerogative of a “special committee” made up of eight boyars, four for each Principality, appointed by the future Princes through the Administrative Council, and that the proposal for revision should be validated only by Russia and the Ottoman Empire, since even in the past the acts concerning the status of the Principalities, their privileges, hatt-i sherifs and firmans, “did not need the approval of the boyar assemblies, but these acts were nevertheless presented and read before the Princes and the divans.” (*Ibid.*, c. 382). In regard to the election of the Princes, he considered it necessary that all candidates be approved in advance by the two Courts, the Protector and the Suzerain, in order to verify their conformity with the provisions of the organic law (*Ibid.*, c. 383-384).

but of convenient procedures and able strategies, Pavel Kiselev, in order to prevent the Extraordinary General Assemblies of Revision to become a “nest of intrigues and traps” pending the election of Princes, opted to dissolve them after the revision, “and for electing the Princes to convene a new Assembly, composed according to a law that I will introduce in the Regulation.”¹⁴

As one can observe, the issue of designating the Princes seemed to be of the utmost importance. The election of Princes through legitimising electoral procedures implied, in his opinion, great risks, because *the old aristocracy obviously interested in returning to the previous state of things*, with the purpose of maintaining its power, the corrupt mores and exclusive privileges, all while being unaware that the dangerous events from 1821 could repeat themselves. That is why the “honorable exceptions” had to be promoted, namely the boyars that favored the “new system” of government and understood its advantages, for the state, for the society in general and for the future of the aristocracy itself. For all of these reasons, the durability of the organic legislation, after the designation of the Princes, was vital – thought Kiselev – for the stability of the Principalities’ future, as well as for the Russian interests in the region. The most secure guarantees were required, especially because the Porte staked everything on delaying the ratification of the Regulations and the swift designation of Princes, hoping to use the “evil produced by the confrontation of caste interests,” in the competition for the throne, to weaken and even undermine the new organization. This interesting, lucid, in some places a masterly synthesis, is completely edifying on the intentions and the plans of the plenipotentiary president.¹⁵ These observations came in addition to the requests he formulated in a letter to Buteniev, eloquent for his political agenda, and expressed concerns regarding an imminent and imprudent nomination of Princes: the appointment hatt-i sherifs had to contain clear guaranties concerning the full compliance to the Organic legislation, of the “administrative and legislative measures adopted by the provisional government” and not included in the Regulation, *the high officials, meaning those from the Administrative Council, were not to be changed by the Princes for a*

¹⁴ Alexandru Papadopol Calimah, “Generalul Pavel Kisselev în Moldova și Țara Românească 1829-1834, după documente rusești,” *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, series II, IX (1886-1887): 92-93. The President was aware that the “general lack of sympathy for reform,” which would “touch [the] interests of all classes,” demanded its immediate application, otherwise “it will remain only a written theory, and will have power only in the parts of it in which the *disturbing aristocracy would find its profits*” (emphasis added) (Ibid., 92). See also Filitti, *Les Principautés Roumaines sous l’occupation Russe (1828-1834)*, 79-82.

¹⁵ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* (Colecția Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki supliment I₄), 394-395.

period of time. The Russian embassy had to publicly and firmly express the idea that the persons who were to be designated by the Porte also needed Russia's consent,¹⁶ and had to comply with a set of publicly announced requirements of the Protective Power in order to block the Phanariot intrigues from Constantinople as much as possible.¹⁷ At the same time, we think his entire demonstration provides a fairly good explanation for why Kiselev's preferences inclined towards potential candidates who contributed to the implementation of the reforms before the elections for the first General Assemblies, namely Constantinică Palade in Moldavia¹⁸ and Alexandru D. Ghica in Wallachia, both commanders of the newly established local militias. If in Moldavia the premature death of Constantinică Palade¹⁹ forced Pavel Kiselev to support other candidates, in Wallachia, Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica was to become Prince – his service as “minister”, his personal relation with the plenipotentiary president and his connections in influential political and financial milieus from Constantinople ensured his victory.

A successful candidacy. The reasons for the designation of Alexandru D. Ghica

In the years of the Russian occupation, Alexandru D. Ghica was perceived as an unselfish person, having a proper education, with the reputation of a righteous man, which made a part of the “general opinion” to favor his candidacy for the throne. Towards Kiselev he acted properly, within the limits of maintaining his own dignity.²⁰ He fitted the dignitary profile well, namely that of a “new man”, a profile which the plenipotentiary president appreciated, and with which he sought to surround himself during the occupation: with a slightly better education

¹⁶ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* (Colecția Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, supliment I₄), 396 (Kiselev to Buteniev, 2 April 1832).

¹⁷ A. P. Zablotski-Desiatovski, *Graf P. D. Kiselev i ego vremja*, IV, 73 (Kiselev to Buteniev, 2 April 1832).

¹⁸ Constantin Gane, *Trecute vieți de doamne și domnițe*, II, ed. by Victor Leahu (Iași: Junimea, 1972), 119, 122; A. F. Mirkovich, M.F. Mirkovich. *Fedor Iakovlevich Mirkovich: Ego zhizneopisanie sostavlennoe po ostavlenным ego zapiskam, vospominaniyam blizkikh liudei, i podlinnym dokumentam*, II (St. Petersburg: Voennaia tipografiia, 1889), 210 (Mircovici to Kiselev, 18/30 August 1830).

¹⁹ Constantinică Palade was one of the few boyars described by I. P. Liprandi in a positive manner, as an “honest” boyar with “some vision” and “a well-founded way of thinking” (ANR, *Colecția microfilme Rusia*, roll 34, c. 467–468).

²⁰ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, vol. XXI, *Corespondență diplomatică și rapoarte consulare austriace (1828-1836)*, published after the copies from the Romanian Academy by Ion I. Nistor (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1942), 525 (Timoni to Metternich; 23 August 1833).

than most of the boyars, proving energy, detached, at least apparently, from the old boyar political practices, favoring reform and, especially, devoted to the Power engaged in the process of bringing order in the country's administration. Alexandru Ghica was efficient in completing his tasks and proved probity, which, to the second man in the Russian administration, Minciaky, seemed something not at all common in the Principality. He had a good education, but not too much "spirit"; however, he came to know and understand the affairs of the country through his numerous activities.²¹

By earning Kiselev's trust, he managed to prevail over several other strong candidates. He was preferred to George (Iordache) Filipescu, the member of a family with a long tradition of attachment to Russia, the son of the Great Treasurer Constantin who was more than once close to obtaining the throne of Wallachia.²² In his turn, he "seemed to breathe only for Russia"²³; during the occupation he enjoyed Kiselev's benevolence, and showed complete obedience by proving much zeal in carrying out his orders, from the office of Great Vornic. He received the honor of a Great Cross and hoped to ascend to the throne at the right moment, helped or "guided", as contemporaries observed with malice, by his wife Ecaterina, "a smart and ambitious Moldavian"²⁴ (daughter of Emanoil Balș, Russian colonel and knight, and of Zamfira Razu),²⁵ in whose salons, frequented by Russian officers, all sorts of intrigues were being planned or unraveled. Although he was an "esprit borné et sans culture," a sort of honesty and an "amour propre" led him towards good actions, proving openness in regard with the reforms proposed by the Protective Court.²⁶ However, these qualities were unfortunately diminished by the frivolity of his character and by the powerful influence exerted by his wife, who used to "prendre une part active dans les affaires publiques."²⁷ His intentions were encouraged even by Kiselev, who suggested, in August 1833, during a confidential conversation, that the time had come "to assert himself

²¹ ANR, *Colecția Microfilme Rusia*, roll 5, f. 640 (*Liste de fonctionnaires en activité*).

²² Octav-George Lecca, *Familiile boierești române. Istoric și genealogie* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1899), MDCCCXCIX, 221.

²³ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, vol. XXI, 523 (Timoni to Metternich; 23 August 1833).

²⁴ I. C. Filitti, *Domniile Române sub Regulamentul Organic 1834-1848* (Bucharest: Librăriile Socec, 1915), 8.

²⁵ *Familiile boierești din Moldova și Țara Românească. Enciclopedie istorică, genealogică și biografică*, I, Abaza-Bogdan, coord. Mihai Dimitrie Sturdza (Bucharest: Simetria, 2004), 255.

²⁶ ANR, *Colecția Microfilme Rusia*, roll 56, c. 116 (*Notice caractérogaphique de Boyars Valaques*).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, c. 117.

properly in Petersburg and Constantinople.”²⁸ The important administrative position of its leader ensured power and influence for the Russophile party of Filipescu, which, among its members, included Alexandru Filipescu, who was ingenious and able, with good relations among the Russian officers, always involved in plots and political combinations, depending on his interests.²⁹ In his turn, he had hopes for the throne. He was in his early 60s and had a rich experience in maneuvering the most delicate political issues, always ready to join whoever promised him the most advantages.³⁰ He had rendered important services to the Protective Power, was always in the proximity of Kiselev and maintained close connections among the Russian officers from Bucharest, whom he hoped to use for creating favorable circumstances when the time came.

Another candidate was the elder brother of Alexandru D. Ghica, the former Prince Grigore. “With no education”, but gifted with a natural intelligence, he was able enough to live quietly, enjoying his significant wealth. Strongly challenged by the self-exiled great boyars, Grigore Ghica was perceived with reluctance by the Russian officials and considered a “Turk”, in the sense that he always sought to satisfy the Porte’s interests without openly violating those of Russia.³¹ The distinctive features of his character were, in the eyes of the Russian officials, a certain firmness which often “dégénère en opiniâtreté” and “une dissimulation” that prevented a clear understanding of his sincerity in regard to his position towards the projected improvements and the abolition of abuses.³² Moreover, his divorce from Maria Hangerli, obtained with great efforts from the Patriarch Antim of Constantinople and his marriage, in February 1832, to Eufrosina Săvescu, a young woman from a “family without ancestors and estates” was frowned upon by the boyars and added to the arguments of the Russophiles Iordache Filipescu, Alecu Filipescu Vulpe, Grigore Băleanu and Alecu Villara (general controller in the department led by Iordache Filipescu³³) who were working hard against his candidacy.

²⁸ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, vol. XXI, 523 (Timoni to Metternich; 23 August 1833).

²⁹ Minciaky describes him succinctly but rather accurately: he “has some talents, very active and with many skills,” which do not spare him from “the reproach of always using intrigue to achieve his goals” (ANR, *Colecția Microfilme Rusia*, roll 5, c. 639).

³⁰ ANR, *Colecția Microfilme Rusia*, roll 56, c. 117 (*Notice caractérogaphique de Boyars Valaques*).

³¹ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, vol. XXI, 524.

³² ANR, *Colecția Microfilme Rusia*, roll 56, c. 114-115 (*Notice caractérogaphique de Boyars Valaques*).

³³ *Ibid.*, roll 5, c. 646.

Two other candidates, with strong arguments in their favor, were the brothers Gheorghe Bibescu and Barbu Știrbei. Among the most educated boyars from Wallachia, they studied in France, they were young, energetic, ambitious, they held substantial material resources and, most importantly, they were devoted to Russia, being involved in the reforms conducted by Kiselev from important administrative positions.

In February 1834, only three of these candidates were still in the race: Grigore Ghica, Alexandru Ghica and Gheorghe Bibescu.³⁴ Of all three, the former Prince had the least chances because he was not well liked by the Russians and did not fit the profile of the Prince which Kiselev considered suitable to continue his work in Wallachia. Compared to Alexandru D. Ghica, Gheorghe Bibescu was much richer, more educated, but, at the same time, he had an unbridled ambition combined with a proud and unwise behavior because of which he had very few friends and many enemies.³⁵

The testimonies of his contemporaries construct two largely opposed images of Alexandru D. Ghica - that of the candidate to the throne, another of the Prince in charge of his administration, a beautiful star "à son lever, et comme il a pâlé en si peu de tems."³⁶ This is unsurprising, as the initial enthusiasm gradually fades and the unfulfilled expectations transform into criticisms. However, Alexandru D. Ghica managed in a short period of time to produce serious complaints, from the natural ones of the former opponents in the race for the throne to those of the Russian officials who preferred him for this position. Even the "unbiased" ones, once satisfied with his appointment, began to see him differently. In the first years of his reign, a series of tense moments revealed the fragility of his position, constantly under the pressure of the Russian Consulate and "attacked" on several occasions in the Assembly. The challenges risen from the implementation of the Regulation's stipulations, the permanent, acquisitive pressure of the Russian officials and the lack of a solid political base among the boyars determined him to take several measures that produced a strong dissatisfaction towards his administration.

Although he was animated by the desire to do good, the weakness of his character, the lack of initiative driven to immobility in some matters - as in that of the country's finances, for example -, the influence of his

³⁴ *Correspondence respecting the organization of the Danubian Principalities 1828-1836* (Printed for the use of the Foreign Office, 1878), 150 (Blutte to Lamb; 17 February 1834).

³⁵ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, vol. XXI, 543 (Timoni to the Internuncio; 2 May 1834).

³⁶ *Correspondence respecting the organization of the Danubian Principalities 1828-1836*, 169 (Colquhoun to Palmerston; 26 October 1836).

elder brother Mihail, the appointment of his relatives in important offices, since he had a large but poor family, represented true arguments which his adversaries used to compromise his image.

Shortly after taking the reins of power, on 28 July 1834, the Prince was presented, along with the usual congratulations for ascending the throne, with a set of instructions transmitted from Petersburg for the prevention of any “*mésentendu*” in governing the Principality. On this occasion, Minciaky made him aware that the mission of the Russian Consulate was to oversee “*la stricte exécution*” of the Organic Regulation.³⁷ A strong recommendation was made to unite all the legislation adopted during the Russian occupation, which the Sultan had just sanctioned through a *hatt-i sherif*,³⁸ not just the basic texts, but also the stipulations in detail, established during the presence of the Russian troops in the Principality.³⁹ Kiselev’s efforts had to be continued by a committee formed of intelligent people, without the slightest delay. The paths to follow in the first years of reign were drawn clearly. The changes “*de redaction*” introduced by Buteniev did not alter “*le dispositif du texte*” in any way, but were merely formal and had to be introduced in the definitive form of the Regulation, together with the dispositions added by the Assembly, with Kiselev’s consent, during 1832, 1833 and 1834.⁴⁰ The faith of the final version of the text was made clear to him now, one copy was to be sent to the Metropolitan and one to the Russian Consulate. The Regulation was not to be published entirely – for the moment, only excerpts that could interest the public, the articles regarding the rights and obligations “*de la classe industrielle et agricole*”, the ones regarding the justice system were to be made available, but only after Petersburg’s approval.⁴¹ Regarding the paragraph added by Buteniev to the Organic Regulation before submitting it to the Porte, “*en forme de conclusion*” (which will be later known as the “*additional article*”), the tone of Minciaky was very reassuring. This addition was compliant to the true interests of the Principality and only referred to the fundamental dispositions of the Regulation (the rights and prerogatives of the Prince, the attributions of the Assembly, the collection of taxes, the rights and the obligations of the “*agricultural class*”, the organization of municipalities, of the militia, the quarantines). In secondary issues, which could have necessitated completions or changes, the Prince was entitled to intervene, with the help of the Assembly.⁴²

³⁷ ANR, *Fond Ghica Alexandru Dimitrie*, File 12, f. 2v.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, f. 3v.

Alexandru Ghica had to carefully observe any sign that could indicate an eventual tendency among young spirits “de se livrer à l’entraînement des idées liberales, de les inviter à suivre les progrès de l’opinion publique dans les Principautés.”⁴³ He was to keep a watchful eye and to prevent any encouragement of subversive ideas, the rules for censure established by Kiselev were, in this regard, models to follow without exception, within the limits of which the journals from Iași and Bucharest were to appear further. They had to offer to the youth education a moderate impulse and “d’arreter de tout leur pouvoir l’esprit d’innovation et de trouble, qui pourrait se manifester dans des têtes inexperimentées avides de donner à leur Pays une existence politique differente de celle que lui assurant ses institutions actuelles fondées sur les traités.”⁴⁴ It was as clear as could be that the “national independent administration”, guaranteed by the Treaty of Adrianople, could only function in the Russian sphere of influence. The Prince’s freedom of action, now surrounded by “determined adepts of Russia”, who, for all kinds of favors, obtained written recommendations from Kiselev,⁴⁵ was dramatically limited. His situation was indeed delicate, as for all the political issues he had to seek the advice, “constantly every night”, of Minciaky, entitled by the British consul, Blutte, the “Dictator of Hospodars”.⁴⁶

Initially, the boyars’ discontent, besides envies and rivalries, was generated by a certain aversion towards a leader with military background, who, in the political context of the moment, represented an instrument of the Protective Power. The Russian occupation continued without troops through Alexandru D. Ghica’s administration, and the financial difficulties that marked the beginning of his reign accentuated his dependent position, for which his enemies constructed, by discursive means, a strategy to weaken his legitimacy, depicting him as a “Russian Pasha”.⁴⁷

The financial and political complications of the investiture. The premises of a failed reign

Alexandru Ghica’s ascension to the throne, but also the difficulties he faced since the beginning of his reign cannot be explained only through his involvement in the implementation of the new regime and the good

⁴³ Ibid., f. 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid., f. 4.

⁴⁵ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, vol. XXI, 543.

⁴⁶ *Correspondence respecting the organization of the Danubian Principalities 1828-1836*, 184 (Blutte to Lamb; 1 September 1834).

⁴⁷ Felix Colson, *De l’état présent et l’avenir des Principautés de Moldavie et de Valachie* (Paris Cosse Et G.-Laguionie Paris Pougin 1839), 63.

collaboration with Kiselev, or by his compliance with the Russian interests and interventions in domestic politics. Certain connections among great merchants and their Constantinopolitan clientele, the relations with several Phanariots with ties to high Ottoman dignitaries have to be taken into consideration. Especially the financial and political consequences of the support in obtaining the throne were most significant, preventing Alexandru Ghica from stabilizing his reign, from having access to the necessary resources. One of the persons who facilitated his connections in these milieus, important for obtaining the investiture of the Sultan, was Eufrosina Suțu, the wife of the last Phanariot Prince of Wallachia. She moved to Bucharest in the spring of 1830 and married her daughter to the baron Ștefan Meitani, the future business partner of Spathar Alexandru Ghica and in whose houses Pavel Kiselev resided.⁴⁸ In fact, Eufrosina Suțu, born Callimachi, was related to Alexandru Ghica. Her mother, Elena, born Ghica, was the aunt of the future ruler of Wallachia, after her grandfather, Dimitrie Ghica.⁴⁹ Eufrosina Suțu was the one who obtained, for Alexandru Ghica, the support of the influent Nicolae Aristarhi in Constantinople, repaid later with the office of capuchehaia, which brought him a quasi-diplomatic statute and new possibilities of enrichment. She must have also mediated, with the help of Nicolae Mavros, several loans that ensured the necessary sums in Constantinople. The revenues of the salt mines of Wallachia, a means by which the future Prince chose to guarantee the payment of a considerable part of the contracted loans was to lead to a resounding bankruptcy and great complications for the Prince.

Over time, the revenue of the salt mines represented a significant source of money for the Prince and, after the adoption of the Organic Regulation, for the Treasury. The extraction of this important resource, present in large quantities in the subsoil of the Principalities had, despite the rudimentary means of exploitation, a high lucrativeness. Protected by monopoly, the lease of salt extraction apparently represented an easy way of enrichment, arousing the interest of a wider range of entrepreneurs. Some, as Gheorghe Opresanu and Alecu Villara, got richer, while others were ruined. One such case is that of baron Ștefan Meitani, whose bankruptcy had profound implications for the incomes of Wallachia's Treasury and for the political consequences which marked the early years of Alexandru Ghica's reign. Originating from Adrianople, Meitani had a fulminant business ascension. Between 1819-1820 he was a shop boy, in 1823 he opened a small shop in Bucharest, and only two years later he

⁴⁸ *Memoriile Principelui Nicolae Suțu*, 105, 127.

⁴⁹ *Istoria Românilor*, VII₁, 974, figure 4 (*Ghica*).

became baron of the Austrian empire.⁵⁰ In many regards, his course resembled that of other Greeks or Macedo-Romanians who had become rich from trade and usury, having had important working points in the Principalities, under the protection of the acquired quality of Austrian subjects. The year of his ennoblement found him as secretary of Gheorghe Sakelarie,⁵¹ Austrian baron as well and consul of Prussia for six months between 1816-1817. Sakelarie was from Zagora (Macedonia) and together with his younger brother, Constantin, made their fortune in late-18th century Vienna. Later, they founded a “bank” and a house of import-export trade in association with George Meitani, the brother of Ștefan. Together they became the correspondents for Europe and the “businessmen” of the last Phanariot Princes of Wallachia, as well as of the Obrenović family from Serbia. They obtained their baron titles from the Austrian imperial chancellery, which delivered them a diploma dated 1819 and common coats of arms.⁵²

The association of Gheorghe Meitani with the Sakelarie brothers integrated Ștefan in a veritable network spanning from Constantinople to London (built through connections with merchants from Rusciuc, Silistra, Brașov, Vienna, Trieste, Livorno, Marseille) which operated the trade of coins and bills, loans and the export of numerous types of goods from the Principalities (suet, wool, animal hides, salt, grain, linen seeds, pressed cheese, butter, honey, wood).⁵³ After having been the personal banker of Prince Grigore Ghica for several years, Ștefan Meitani decided in 1827 to enter into a large enterprise, obtaining from the Princely chamber the leases for salt extraction and customs for a three-year period.⁵⁴ In normal conditions, they should have brought him substantial incomes, but the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war led to the temporary interruption of the salt export across the Danube and to a shortage of transportation means, used now for the needs of war.⁵⁵ The solution he found in order to deal with his losses was to ask plenipotentiary president Pahlen to reduce his financial

⁵⁰ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, vol. X, *Rapoarte consulare prusiene din Iași și București (1763-1844)*, collected, annotated and published by Nicolae Iorga (Bucharest: Acad. Rom. și Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice, 1897), 320, note 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 320 (Krechely to von Miltitz; 13 March 1825).

⁵² Mihail-Dimitri Sturdza, *Dictionnaire historique et genealogique des grandes familles de Grèce, d'Albanie et de Constantinople*, 2^e edition revue et augmentée (Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1999), 189.

⁵³ For more details in this regard, see “Casa Comercială “Ioan Hagi Moscu și Ștefan I. Moscu” din București,” in Dumitru Limona, *Negustorii “greci” și arhivele lor comerciale*, ed. Loredana Dascăl (Iași: Editura Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2016), 303–390.

⁵⁴ Dumitru Vitcu, “Falimentul Casei Meitani,” *Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis. Anuarul Muzeului Județean Vaslui*, V–VI (1983–1984): 242.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

obligations to the state or to be granted the income of the salt extraction for a another five years.⁵⁶ He obtained, with the consent of the new president, Pavel Kiselev, who resided in his houses from Bucharest, a concession for another three years with an annual rent of 3 802 000 lei, followed by the adjudication of a contract for “the pavement of Bucharest” for the price of 1400 000 lei, in 1830.⁵⁷ Determined to recoup his losses, Ștefan Meitani also succeeded in obtaining a three-year lease on the Moldavian salt (1 February 1830 - 1 January 1833) for 605 000 lei a year, for which he must have given serious guarantees to the Russian officials. This way, he avoided the competition of Moldavian salt on the foreign market, creating all the prerequisites for consistent earnings, a prospect that was also advantageous for the treasuries of the two Principalities that had been affected by the reduced profitability of this lease since the beginning of the war. Leaving the technical and administrative aspects of the salt mines to the two men he had appointed in Moldavia and Wallachia, Meitani concentrated on selling the salt on foreign markets, especially in the Balkans, where he had long-standing connections with Southern Danube merchants.⁵⁸ But he was about to make a serious mistake that eventually resulted in bankruptcy. In order to recover the previous losses and to pay the debts to the two treasuries, he exported heavily on credit, thus flooding the market South of the Danube with salt. The natural consequence of this imprudence was a fall of its price, which led to a shortfall in the collection of the sums owed by his collaborators, and inevitably placed Ștefan Meitani in the impossibility of paying the quarterly instalments to the two treasuries.

His financial difficulties led to the seizure of his estates for the rent of 1831, the value of which only covered his debts to the treasury of Wallachia. Until his death in April 1834, the baron tried by various means to meet these pecuniary obligations - he went from being a great creditor to a debtor, receiving, in 1832, the complaints of his Wallachian partners (Gheorghe Opreanu, Lazăr Calenderoglu, Scarlat Petrovici).⁵⁹ The failure of this undertaking had repercussions on the treasury of Wallachia, which had to recover five million lei in 1833 and which, in relation to the same institution in Moldavia, presented guarantees and was thus liable.⁶⁰

In addition to the financial complications caused by the bankruptcy of the Meitani house came the debts of Alexandru D. Ghica to Ștefan

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 243.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 244.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See Constantin Broșteanu, *Salinele noastre. Studiu istoric, juridic și economic asupra exploatăreii salinelor și monopolului săre la romani și români după documente literare, epigrafice legislative și economice* (Bucharest: Tipografia G. A. Lăzreanu, 1901), 531-534.

Moscu, made on the occasion of his trip to Constantinople in 1834, to obtain the Sultan's investiture.⁶¹ During the May-July period spent in the Ottoman capital, Alexandru D. Ghica also tried to obtain a postponement of the tribute payment; however, because the Porte refused his request, he was forced to contact the Constantinopolitan partners of Moscu. Thus, P. N. Mavrocordat bought for the Prince silverware worth 100 000 groshen, used for the gifts he was to make to the Ottoman officials, and Zaharia Zaharov advanced him 150 000 groshen, of which 100 000 for Nicolae Aristarchi.⁶² The reimbursement of these sums was assumed, through receipts, by Moscu. Meanwhile, in Bucharest, the latter was negotiating with baron Simon Gh. Sina of Vienna for a loan that would allow the prince to pay the annual tribute of 2 000 000 lei to the Porte. The guarantee with the revenues of the salt extraction and customs leases, as well as with the incomes of Brăila, Giurgiu and Turnu, convinced baron Sina to offer the necessary sums, made available in two instalments – 63 500 guildens through Moscu and 26 700 guildens through George Oprescu.⁶³ It was Moscu who had obtained the agreement of the treasury so the loan could be made through Sina.⁶⁴ The repayment of these sums would create a series of complications for the treasury, for the Prince, but also for Ștefan Moscu who would have to unravel them, widening the range of creditors. In order to cover the deficits of the treasury left by the bankruptcy of the Meitani house and by the inability to recover the sums owed to it by the salt merchants from South of the Danube, the solution found was an additional tax in the amount of three groshen per family for the previous year, which was adopted a year later, after the installation in Bucharest of the Russian consul Piotr Rückman, who approved this measure contrary to the Regulation.⁶⁵ The documents in Ștefan Moscu's archive reveal how part of the money collected from this tax was used from October 1835 onwards. From the counties of Săcuieni, Prahova, Slam-Râmnic, Buzău and Brăila, 225,448 groshen were collected, which covered a debt to D. Zamfiropol made in Constantinople on behalf of the Prince.⁶⁶ This allowed Nicolae Aristarchi to obtain, at the beginning of 1836, 300 000 groshen used as an advance for the tribute owed to the Porte, from the same Zamfiropol, who was invited not to wait for the expiry of Moscu's receipts and to request the money in his account from Pop and Sina in Vienna.⁶⁷ Because the Porte

⁶¹ ANR, *Fond Ghica Alexandru Dimitrie*, File 197, f. 1.

⁶² Limona, *Negustorii "greci"*, 374.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 375.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Filitti, *Domniile Române sub Regulamentul Organic 1834-1848*, 175.

⁶⁶ Limona, *Negustorii "greci"*, 375.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

pressed for full payment of the tribute, Moscu had to take another loan of 367 500 groshen from Zaharov and 320 500 groshen from Spandoni.⁶⁸ This way, it was possible to pay the obligations to the Porte, at the cost of Moscu's indebtedness to a number of Constantinopolitan bankers, his solvency becoming dependent on the extent to which he could obtain the sums for which he received guaranties from the treasury.

Moreover, there were Alexandru D. Ghica's personal debts to Moscu, which were always in arrears.⁶⁹ Despite the agreement to return the money immediately after his installation on the throne, the Prince failed to keep his promise and had to renew his obligations with additional interest.⁷⁰ A balance sheet drawn up by Moscu for the period from 10 April 1834 to 18 December 1835 shows that out of the sum of 2 289 300 groshen obtained for Alexandru Ghica, he still had to return 1 382 406 groshen.⁷¹ To this amount 21 056 groshen of the 214 287 groshen credited between 2 June 1833 and 5 April 1834 were added.⁷² For these sums, Alexandru Ghica had guaranteed with all his estates in Wallachia, as well as the three in Moldavia, Grozești, Praguri and Cordeni, which he was trying to sell to Spiridon A. Pavlu from Iasi, through Moscu.⁷³

The first years of Alexandru D. Ghica's reign were marked by complications caused by the Meitani bankruptcy, which would find a temporary improvement in 1836, following a visit the Prince made to Milos Obrenović at his Poiana estate. The two agreed that the Serbian Prince would take over the salt export monopoly in the Balkans for two years, and a year later would also take over Meitani's six million lei debt to the treasury.⁷⁴ But a new crisis was to erupt on 3 May 1837, with the bankruptcy of the Moscu trading house, which had, beyond its immediate financial consequences and the blow to commercial transactions, a significant political impact on the reign of Alexandru D. Ghica. This resounding bankruptcy was linked to the financial problems of Christofor Sakelarie, who, having failed to recover from the Russian authorities the debts for 20,000 oxen given in 1828 (at a price of 3 guldens per head),⁷⁵

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ ANR, *Fond Ghica Alexandru Dimitrie*, File 197, f. 1.

⁷⁰ Ibid..

⁷¹ Limona, *Negustorii "greci"*, 376.

⁷² Ibid., 377.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 376.

⁷⁴ *Analele Parlamentare ale României*, tom VII, part I, *Obicinuita Obștească Adunare a Țerei Românești*, legislature II, session I (IV) - 1837 (București: Imprimeria Statului, 1896), 86 (*Discursul Domnesc la deschiderea sesiunii Obșteștii Adunări, 18 martie 1837*).

⁷⁵ J. A. Vaillant, *La Roumanie ou histoire, langue, littérature, orographie statistique des peuples de la langue d'or, Ardialiens, Vallaques et Moldaves, résumés sous le nom de Roumans*, tome II (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1844), 367.

found himself in 1834 unable to pay his own debts and turned to Moscu, who obtained from his Viennese partners 200 000 florins in exchange for Sakelaris's claims against the Russian government, amounting to 140 392 rubles.⁷⁶ Through this agreement, the financial stability of the house of Moscu came to also depend on the recovery of the Russian administration's debts to Sakelarie for supplies during the occupation. Having put his credit to the benefit of the Wallachian Treasury, of Alexandru D. Ghica and for his friend Christofor Sakelarie, Moscu, in his turn, went bankrupt,⁷⁷ after having issued the most receipts on his account between 1834 and 1836.⁷⁸

A report by the General Assembly to the Prince highlights the incalculable impact of a bankruptcy that could compromise the entire country:

"It could not be a more unfortunate and pitiful situation for all the people in this Principality, for, as Your Highness knows, people had faith in the significant estates and wealth of Moshu, and [...] rich and poor, they have their money deposited in his house, and suddenly find themselves threatened with losing their entire savings, especially the poor and widows who have no other hope left."⁷⁹

Against the backdrop of these financial complications, an important political issue, which had been brought to Alexandru D. Ghica's attention since the early days of his reign, still lingered. The drafting and validation of the final version of the Regulation was delayed during Ghica's first years on the throne of Wallachia also due to the "conciliatory spirit" of Minciaky, who tried to harmonize the Prince's behavior with the requirements of the Court of Petersburg, having to constantly intervene to ensure compliance with the Regulation's provisions and even to protect him from certain complaints that could have been made against him.⁸⁰ As a result of this attitude, some of even the most useful decisions were taken against his

⁷⁶ Limona, *Negustorii "greci"*, 374.

⁷⁷ In 1837, two Viennese firms left under protest two policies of Moscu's house worth 46 000 florins, for which Baron Sina offered to help him with money in exchange for a distraint on many of his properties, but the other creditors did not accept it, so Moscu had to declare bankruptcy on 3 May 1837 (ANR, *Colecția Microfilme Anglia*, roll 9, f. 24-27; Colquhoun to Palmerston; 5 March 1838).

⁷⁸ Limona, *Negustorii "greci"*, 372.

⁷⁹ *Analele Parlamentare ale României*, tome VII, part I, 688 (*Raportul Adunării către Domn relativ la falimentul căminarului Ștefan Moshu*; 4 May 1837).

⁸⁰ *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, vol. XXI, 606 (Timoni to Metternich; 26 June 1835).

advice.⁸¹ A tense moment between the two was generated by Alexandru D. Ghica's insistence not to allow Moldavian salt to be transported upstream on the Danube – for obvious reasons – invoking a firman prohibiting Ottoman subjects on the upper right bank of the river from buying salt from Moldavia, a decision of the Porte which, from Minciaky's perspective, did not prohibit "foreign nations" from transporting salt on the Danube.⁸² In the summer of 1835, the relations between the two became almost hostile, because of the Prince's persistence in certain "preconceived notions", his suspicious nature, but above all because of the delay in resolving urgent matters. These inconveniences put him in the unpleasant situation of having to take action against the hospodar, which proved uncomfortable for Minciaky, who had begun – as he confided to the Austrian consul Timoni – to press for his release from the post in Bucharest.⁸³

As the difficult financial legacy of the Russian occupation, the hesitations of the Prince and Minciaky's conciliatory attitude made it difficult to effectively implement essential provisions of the Organic Regulation, the Protective Power realized the need for a more vigorous conduct and appointed baron Piotr Rückman to the Bucharest post. His mission was not to appease the differences between the Prince and the Assembly, in which an "opposition spirit"⁸⁴ on financial issues was taking shape, but to adopt the final text of the Regulation and maintain political order and peace in the country. By the time he took up his post in October 1835, Alexandru D. Ghica had not shown encouraging signs in this regard. Since his arrival, Rückman worked to bring things this way, steadily, determinedly, with a strong hand, but always tactlessly.

The works of the first session of the second legislature of the Assembly, which opened on 18 March 1837, were marked by two major issues – the revision of the Regulation and the investigation of the financial state of the country. On 30 June, Constantin Gr. Ghica, Emanoil Băleanu and Ion Câmpineanu, submitted to the Assembly, on behalf of the Financial Commission, a detailed report which showed that the accounts submitted by the financial controller did not correspond to those of the Treasury.⁸⁵ According to Article 51 of the Regulation, the Assembly had the task of examining, through commissions, the accounts of the revenues and

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 642 (Timoni to Metternich; 14 March 1836).

⁸⁵ *Analele Parlamentare ale României*, tome VII, part I, 354–361 (*Raportul comisiei financiare asupra acestor socoteli*, 30 June 1837).

expenses of the treasury and of all the other houses of the country, as well as the accounts of other officials for the various branches of the administration entrusted to them.⁸⁶ Thus, at the beginning of each session, the Prince had to provide the Assembly with the financial records of the previous year. The financial controller (who was assisted by two heads of table⁸⁷) was called upon under Article 136 of the Organic Regulation⁸⁸ to make a detailed investigation of the income and expenditure “incurred during the previous year” by the treasury and other departments, in order to draw up a “public table” submitted to the Prince, who in turn made it available to the Assembly for investigation. The Financial Commission’s analysis showed that “the Government proved little concern” about the accuracy and veracity of the financial report and made several recommendations. The sums of certain revenues discovered by the Assembly as early as 1832, 1833 and 1834 and neglected by the Treasury were to be entered in the budget as revenue; the “arrears” at the end of the year were not to be entered in the income and expenditure paragraphs for the following year, and loans, which had hitherto been made at interest rates of up to 18%, were not to be made unless “some delay should occur [...] in the collection of the revenue”, contained in the budget decided by the Assembly and the Prince. Any loan, even for unforeseen expenses, could not be “valid by any means, unless it was first given to the consideration” of the Assembly, and after “its consent, it would take the Prince’s approval.”⁸⁹

These attacks on Alexandru D. Ghica’s administration highlighted the incapacity of his ministers and predicted difficulties in validating the final form of the Regulation. Since it was clear that such an important issue could not be left solely to the reluctant occupant of the throne, in the summer of 1837, the Russian official found the right opportunity to impose changes in the Administrative Council by making way for more capable, loyal figures with experience accumulated during the occupation. Barbu

⁸⁶ *Regulamentele Organice ale Valahiei și Moldovei*, Vol. I, *Textele puse în aplicare la 1 Iulie 1831 în Valahia și la 1 Ianuarie 1832 în Moldova*, Paul Negulescu, George Alexianu (Bucharest: Intreprinderile “Eminescu”, 1944), 10–11.

⁸⁷ The public control had to check every expenditure of the state in the course of the year as follows: the first table prepared the registries and distributed them to the departments of the ministries, to the county councils and to the other officials, they were sealed and all receipts of money and expenditures were recorded; then, all the registries passed to the second table, which was to examine them and “certify that the expenditure was in fact made and in accordance with the contracts or instructions which may have been given concerning it” and with an approximate account of the sums which should have been spent (Ibid., 36–37).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ *Analele Parlamentare ale României*, tome VII, part I, 358.

Știrbei was appointed chief of Justice, Alecu Ghica Barbă Roșie⁹⁰ to Finances, Constantin Cantacuzino Secretary of State, Costache Bălăceanu chancellor (*logofăt*) of the Faith, Costache Suțu Head of Control, Iordache Filipescu was elevated to the rank of Great Ban and appointed President of the High Divan, and Grigore Băleanu was appointed to a post created especially for him, President of the Extraordinary Administrative Council.⁹¹ The new ministers were now tasked with supporting the fight in the Assembly for the adoption of the “additional article”. However, what the Russian consulate had tried to present to the Prince, since the summer of 1834, as a natural conclusion, which Buteniev had considered appropriate to introduce before submitting the Organic Regulations to the Porte, was to arouse unexpected reactions in the Assembly from several deputies who understood the meaning of the “additional article” for the true interests of the country in a manner that was different than that of the Russian officials.

Conclusions

The appointment of the Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia presented Russian officials with serious dilemmas, whether they were the leaders of the Empire’s foreign policy or of the occupation administration. In the end, a solution was adopted – the selection of the Princes by the Porte from a short list of candidates proposed by Russia – in line with Russia’s strategic interests regarding the Ottoman Empire as a whole and despite Pavel Kiselev’s proposals that the occupation should be prolonged or, in a transitional phase, that the civilian administration of the Princes should operate in parallel with a Russian military administration. The selection of Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica as the main candidate for Wallachia and his rapid investiture by the Sultan have several explanations, including his political profile convenient for both Powers, his activity as minister and head of the militia, his personal relation with Pavel Kiselev and his access to the sums of money required for his investiture in Constantinople. However, his

⁹⁰ Alecu Ghica Barbă Roșie had an interesting perspective on “the good he wanted for the country”. According to his opinion, formed by observing the “governments” of Alexandru D. Ghica, “the nation was too vicious to govern itself”, for this it would have been necessary to establish “a great monarchy”. However, noting that Austria was indifferent to Wallachia and that the influence of Russia, “as important as the once powerful Rome”, was constantly growing, he saw “nothing more salutary for Wallachia than to become definitively Russian, because, in fact, in secret, it already was”. (ANR, Colecția Microfilme Austria, roll 99, pachet CVI (Haus-Hof und Staatsarchiv-Wien, Staatskanzlei, Netenwechsel) c. 668 (Alcibiade Tavernier to Wernhardt, General Commander of Transylvania; January 1836).

⁹¹ Filitti, *Domniile Române sub Regulamentul Organic 1834-1848*, 48.

insufficient political prestige in relation to the country's great boyar families, his image as a Prince submissive to the Russian will, skillfully used by his opponents, and the large debts he had accumulated, which he could not pay without generating several resounding financial scandals linked to the leasing of state revenues, were likely to herald the political crisis of the following years, the success of the opposition in undermining his regime and, finally, his dismissal after only eight years of rule.