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THE BORDERS BETWEEN WALLACHIA AND THE GIURGIU KAZA, AN AREA OF CONFLICT AND COOPERATION ON THE IMPERIAL OTTOMAN DANUBE LIMES

ABSTRACT
When the Ottomans created a new territorial entity with fixed borders at Giurgiu, this was due to Sultan Kanum`s initiatives to centralize the Empire. The border between Wallachia and this new Ottoman region at Giurgiu dates back to 1544, but is later on confirmed by successive sources. Starting with the second half of the 16th century relations between the Ottoman authorities in Giurgiu and the rulers of Wallachia were not always conflictual. There were periods of cooperation and every act of transgression by Ottoman subjects on Wallachian soil were punished. At the same time, Romanian subjects tried to appeal to the Porte for help and protection whenever they were abused by Ottoman representatives, Christian or Muslim. As far as the Wallachian prices were concerned, the borders at Turnu, Giurgiu and Braila were a place for conflicts, violence, excesses and delinquents, largely because the area was lightly defended and lacked central authority. Giurgiu, a Muslim city on Christian lands, was however a tempting place for the inhabitants of Wallachia.

KEYWORDS: Ottomans; Wallachia; Danube; Giurgiu; Diplomacy.

In the Romanian Historiography, we have not ignored issues such as border disputes, but these are, of course, more common in the modern and contemporary works. For the Medieval Era however, the study of borders has been intermittent, without an exhaustive view on the area inhabited by the Romanian people. This was caused, on the one hand by the lack of documentary sources, and on the other by the state ideology when the studies were written. The subject of border analysis was sometimes in direct contradiction with the official line of the Historiography, which propagated the idea of a union between Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania going as far as the Middle Ages.
We should define the terms from the beginning. According to the contemporary sense, the *frontier* is a line drawn between certain points on the map, to define the limits for the territory of a state from other states, open seas or even cosmic space and going underground as far as modern means can reach. Frontiers are usually established through treaties between countries and naval frontiers through unilateral declarations. There are many types of borders: natural, geometric, astronomical, land, river, maritime and air borders[1].
In current tongue and broadly speaking *frontier*, *border* or *boundary* mean the demarcation line between countries, properties or settlements.

1 Petre Bărbulescu, Ionel Cloșcă, Nicolae Ecobescu, et al., eds., *Dicţionar diplomatic* (București: Editura Politică, 1979), 446.

Despite the fact that in the Middle Ages the term of *frontier* had a slightly different meaning that today, it is undoubtedly that even then there were well-defined limits for the territories of states, both from a military and a political sense. In the case of Giurgiu, the creation, its existence and its evolution were strongly influenced by its status as a fortress-town on the border, and only after that, we could add its economic dimension.

During the Sultan led expedition of Mehmed I, which some sources place in 1417 or in the autumn of 1419, (we actually argue it was more likely to have happened in the spring of 1420), the Ottomans conquered Giurgiu. Its walls were damaged and required substantial repairs.

From an Ottoman perspective, Giurgiu was an important outpost for the protection of their Danube borders. It could control the river passing and control the trade coming from Wallachia. Some recent discoveries point to the fact that there was a strategic element as well[2]. Both from a military and strategic point of view, the fortress, well defended by small isles and channels and close to the left bank of the river, was an excellent bridgehead for future campaigns. The Ottomans frequently attacked the territories north of the Danube, using the irregular troops of the Akinji.

All of these points in mind, it is clear that the Ottomans were interested in holding Giurgiu and its limitrophe territory. Thus, they instituted a very strict administrative status similar to that of their vast empire. The non-believers were tolerated, order preserved and economical profitability prioritized[3].

All of the known sources confirm that the conquest of Giurgiu did not mean the annexation of its hinterland. Despite this, the pattern of Ottoman conquests leads us to speculate that at first they only acquired the fortress on the island. Down the line, taking advantage of the inactivity of the Wallachian princes, they secured the outpost by expanding in the neighbouring regions. This slow but steady expansion made it necessary to have a written document, defining the borders between Giurgiu and Wallachia in the late Sixteenth Century.

This was similar to the way in which the Ottomans handled the larger bridgehead of Europa, earlier on, in the Fourteenth Century. In addition, this was their method of colonizing the Balkan countries, all done under a centralized policy based upon the superiority of their administrative skills compared to those of the local Balkan rulers[4]. To that we must add their religious tolerance, which was very important during those times. The Ottomans realised that a policy of the concessions towards the Orthodox Christians would allow them to accept Muslim rule and increase their revenue[5].

Therefore, we cannot state that they occupied the city and its hinterland all at once, or if this territory was annexed later on, as part of peace deal between the Turks

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2 Marian Coman, *Frontierele medievale ale Ţării Româneşti* (PhD Thesis Summary: Bucureşti University, 2011), 27.

3 Nicolas Vatin, *Ascensiunea otomanilor (1362-1451)*, in *Istoria Imperiului Otoman*, ed. Robert Mantran (Bucureşti: Ed. All, 2001), 40.

4 Halil Inalcik, *Imperiul Otoman. Epoca clasică (1300-1600)* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1996), 55.

5 Inalcik, *Imperiul Otoman*, 56.

and Wallachia. However, it is more plausible that they first got the city, which was then reinforced. We know the Ottomans aimed at the conquering the Moravia Valley, towards the Middle Danube to subdue the Serbian territories and then Hungary. Later on, after they had taken the city, the Ottomans slowly expanded in the surrounding territories. This was done in style of medieval border marches. Lastly, we have to take into account the supply needs of Giurgiu and its substantial garrison, which had to rely on the food being produced on the left bank of the river. We can explain in this manner the inclusion of Giurgiu and its "dependencies"[6] among the border fortresses of the Ottoman Empire, mentioned in the treaties with Hungary in 1479, 1503 and 1519.

We find a mention, albeit indirectly, about the border between Giurgiu and Wallachia in one of Vlad Ţepeş`s letter dated February 11, 1462. It was written in Giurgiu and the ruler describes the Turkish attempts of seizing the fortress. This was actually the start of his anti-Ottoman campaign[7].

The formation of a territorial entity at Giurgiu could be attributed to Sultan Suleiman the Lawmaker (*Kanum*) also known as "The Magnificent" [1494-1566]. He was the one that iniatied a centralized administrative system, which was to become the classical *eyelet*, *sancak*, *kaza* and *nahiye*[8].

The first mention of a stable ottoman possession in Wallachia comes from 1544, during the reign of Radu Paisie (or Radu of Argeş, son of Radu the Great, which ruled intermittently from 1535-1545). An ancient Wallachian chronicles said that «[…] during his rule the Turks took Braila, Giurgiu and Turnu»[9]. At his settlement the prince was represented by the great vornic (governor) Constantin Coadă and the Great Ban of Oltenia[10].

Another argument that proves this settlement was achieved in 1544 and not in 1546, as it was credited so far is the fact that the boyar Constantin Coadă held the title of great vornic between January 10, 1542, and February 28 1545[11]. We know he was present in this quality in the commission that made that settlement at Braila[12] and it

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6 Paul I. Cernovodeanu, "Cetatea Giurgiului. Studiu istorico-militar", *Studii şi materiale de muzeografie şi istorie militară*, 2-3 (1969-1970): 85.

7 Nicolae Iorga, *Scrisori de boieri. Scrisori de domni* (Vălenii de Munte: "Datina românească", 1932), 167.

8 Anca Popescu, "Vestigii ale organizării Dobrogei preotomane într-un defter din anul 1530", in *Vocaţia istoriei: prinos profesorului Şerban Papacostea*, eds. Ovidiu Cristea and Şerban Lazăr (Brăila: Istros, 2008), 506.

9 *Istoria politică şi geografică a Ţerei Românesci, de la cea mai veche a sa întemeere până la anulu 1774*, trans. George Sion (Bucureşti: Typographia Naţionale a lui Stefan Rassidescu, 1863), 136.

10 Sion, *Istoria politică*, 136.

11 Nicolae Stoicescu, *Dicţionar al marilor dregători din Ţara Românească şi Moldova (secolele XIV-XVII)* (Bucureşti: Edit. enciclopedică română, 1971), 45.

12 In a document of 1643 about Radu of Izvorani (Great Ban, August 30, 1535 and May 18, 1539), it is stated that he died at Istanbul, «when he was accused in the Empire with the vornic Coadă that he gave up on Brăila to the Turks». Stoicescu, *Dicţionar*, 95.

is known that he was a trusted member of Radu Paisie's inner circle.
When he took the reign, Mircea Ciobanu (1545-1552, 1553-1554 and 1558-1559) had to agree to the new borders in 1546[13]. The hostility of the boyars towards him seems to come from this agreement and the fact that he used this to blame the vornic Coadă as the main culprit for the territorial losses two weeks after he took the throne[14]. The same opinion about Coadă's blame was shared by the Ban Mihail Cantacuzino. He thought that «[…] it was the Vornic Coadă the one that split these cities [Braila, Giurgiu and Turnu] when they were given to the Turks. History also says that he was one of the traitors that worked towards this loss»[15].
In this context its worth mentioning that the exact borders of the Giurgiu Kaza must be analysed with an eye on the bigger picture. During the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566) the Ottoman foreign policy was changing drastically with a new offensive to the European Centre[16]. It was not a coincidence that the settlement of borders between Giurgiu and Wallachia coincided with the conquest of Tighina (1538) and the occupation of Braila (1538-1540) and their conversion into kazas. It was also during the time of the creation of the pasalik of Buda (1541). Along the Danube, there was now a strong defensive belt for the Ottomans.
We cannot state the length of the Giurgiu kaza, as it was settled in 1544. We can agree with Constantinescu however. He stated that the Ottomans followed the Sub-Danube terrace as a frontier between Giurgiu and Wallachia. It was even stated that they wanted to control the Danube meadows, which is about 15-20 km from the river[17]. The length of the meadows varied in time and their height was 60-65 m compared to the riverbank[18].
This assertion is backed by logical arguments, especially since in the Middle Ages borders tended to be settled on geographical structures, such as rivers, mountains etc.[19]. Both in the Eastern and Western worlds the idea of borders was not connected with fixed lines.[20] Instead, the relied on relative terms, unlike the Roman limes, for

13 Ion Heliade Rădulescu, *Elemente de historia românilor sau Dacia și România*, (București: Typographia Statului, 1869), 187.

14 Stolnicul Constantin Cantacuzino, *Istoria Ţării Româneşti*, ed. Mihail Gregorian (București: Editura Minerva, 1984), 111.

15 Sion, *Istoria politică*, 136.

16 Tasin Gemil, "În faţa impactului otoman", in *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi (București: Editura Academiei, 1978), 136.

17 N.A. Constantinescu, "Întinderea raielelor cu deosebită privire la raiaua Giurgiului", *Anuar de geografie și antropogeografie*, 2 (1911): 70.

18 Constant Nițescu, "Monografia regiunii sud-estice a judeţului Vlaşca. Contribuţiuni la cunoaşterea caracterului agricol-tehnic şi social-economic al regiunii", *Buletinul agriculturii (Supliment)*, 2 (1928): 10.

19 Ioan Marian Ţiplic, "Hotar, graniță și/sau frontieră în Evul Mediu timpuriu", in *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis*, 2 (2003): 156.

20 Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Dicţionar tematic al Evului Mediu occidental* (Iași: Polirom, 2002), 138.

example[21].
It is worth remembering that all other borders rectifications between Giurgiu and Wallachia happened from East to West, but not from North to South, which is exactly where the border followed the Danube terrace.
The "initial" borders between Giurgiu and Wallachia can be identified to some degree through Selim II`s firman (edict) granted to the ruler of Wallachia, Alexandru Mircea [1568-1577]. This firman confirmed the borders settled thirty years before that.
Four years later, another firman of Murad II (1574-1595) enforced the same borders, based on the findings of a "special commission"[22]. This was during the reign of Mihnea Turcitul (1577-1583, 1585-1591) in Wallachia[23]. The documents asked that the borders, «as they were done before that» should be respected by the Turkish authorities in Giurgiu. This proves that there were some border disputes. To settle the conflicts and establish fixed borders and to put the border markers (*direk*)[24], the Wallachians sent some representatives, such as Ștefan. The Turks were represented by Behram bin-i-Abdullah, Casâm voivode, bin-i-Casim, Sinan bin-i-Mustafa, Mehmed bin-i, Behram bin-i-Yusuf. From Giurgiu came Ali bin-i, Yahya bin-i-Ali, Hasan bin-i-Ali, Elias bin-i-Piri, Davud bin-i-Hadâr. The judge (cadiu) of Cernavodă, Ahmed Efendi, was the one that settled the matter.
The border settlement started in:

> the Eastern part of Giurgiu, in front of the Danube, in the area called Talambă-cu-Bogazi[25], among the reeds, at the mound called Kuciuk Hislarlîk[26]; then they placed a sign at the mound called Beliclerbași[27], also known as Straja[28]; then they placed a sign at that mound, and coming back from there they marked the lake called Chiriva-Golu[29] and placed another marker at the public road (Tarik-i-am). This road starts at the markers and goes to Marotin[30]; then they marked a place

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21 Dan Horia Mazilu, *Lege și fărădelege în lumea românească veche* (Iași: Polirom, 2006), 295.

22 Mihail Guboglu, ed., *Catalogul documentelor turcești*, vol. I (București: Direcția generală a Arhivelor Statului din RPR, 1960), doc. 86, 43.

23 Guboglu, *Catalogul*, vol. I, doc. 86, 43.

24 Hagop Siruni, "Acte turcești privitoare la hotarele dunărene ale Țării Românești", *Revista arhivelor*, V/1 (1942): 144.

25 Unidentified; it could be Talâmbaciu or Glâmbocelul, a stream that runs in to the Argeș river, Siruni, "Acte turcești", 161-65.

26 Unidentified.

27 Unidentified.

28 The name of that mound could come from a permanent border point of Wallachia. Nicolae Stoicescu, *Curteni și slujitori. Contribuții la istoria armatei române* (București: Editura Militară, 1968), 316-17.

29 Lake Criva.

30 Today Frasin, Giurgiu County.

called Suniia[31]. It was agreed that fish in Lake Chiriva to go to Giurgiu with no interference from Wallachia. The deserted places in the Romanian side of Lake Chiriva belonging to Wallachia, they agreed they should be left as pastures for them with no interference from Turks. Also, the Turkish Raias will be allowed to bring their cattle to Lake Chiriva for watering.Going back to the markers put on the public road to Marotin and at the place they call Sulin[32], they marked the valley near the village called Cosova[33] the Romanian places will belong to the Romanian areas and the places near Giurgiu to the city. It was settled that the fields would not be confused and that the places shall we be owned by the former owners. They marked the place where this valley joins Cosova and the road called Calea Banului[34]; they also marked this road at its ends. Then they marked the villages of Ului[35] and Paraipani[36] and Yenige Koi[37] of Wallachia and at the road that turns East from this village. Going back to the mark at the end of this road towards the lake known as Mihri golu[38], they reinforced the old marks there. New markers were added on the shores of Lake Mihri and on the road leading to the Danube; the fish here was to go to Giurgiu[39].

In 1669, during the reign of Antonie Vodă of Popești (1669-1672), a new border was agreed for the «restoration of the older borders»[40]. In those times, «the estates of the country around Giurgiu are offended and breached by the people of that town»[41]. Gheorghe Băleanu, former Ban of Oltenia and current *mare vornic*, helped establish the new border, alongside Radul Crețulescu, former *mare logofăt* (chancellor) and

31 Unidentified.

32 Unidentified.

33 Probably Coșoveni or Onceasca, a hamlet of the village of Bălănoaia, «placed on the hills of the Danube, from Stănești». P.S. Antonescu-Remuși, *Dicționar geografic al județului Vlașca* (București: Stabilimentul grafic Socecu., 1890), 82.

34 Because the road (or "calea") Banului apears as a border element in this settlement at Turnu, Giurgu and Braila, we have to admit the hhypothesis that in the Ban of Oltenia must have been in the first commission, Cf. Constantinescu, "Întinderea raielelor", 71. The road to Banul also appears as a border element in a Ottoman document of 1819, under the same name, but in Turkish *Eski Ban Yolu*.

35 Unidentified.

36 In 1872 this hamled was called Arasche, after the name of the owner of the estate. Today its part of the Vedea commune, Giurgiu County. Cf. Antonescu-Remuși, *Dicționar geografic*, 226

37 Could be Enichiom or Zlatum, «a valley with reeds in front of the village of Gostinu». Antonescu-Remuși, *Dicționar geografic*, 116.

38 The lake of Mahâru, near the village of Slobozia, Giurgiu County, is quite a large one: at the start of the XX century it had about 890 ha. Cf. Grigore Antipa, *Regiunea inundabilă a Dunării. Starea ei actuală și mijloace de a o pune în valoare* (București: Inst. de Arte grafice Carol Göbl 1910), 15.

39 Siruni, *Turkish documents*, 144-45.

40 Cf. Constantinescu, "Întinderea raielelor", 73.

41 Sion, *Istoria politică*, 98.

other boyars and dignitaries. The Turkish side was represented by Hussein Selam-Agais, special envoy from the Sultan, Mehmed Efendi Endreneli, the *cadiu* of Rusciuk and other *cadii* from Giurgiu and Rușava – Haselim Efendi Ghiumulginali. They started from the «estates of the Radu-Vodă monastery, Paraipanii and Recenii, north of Giurgiu, from the bank of the Danube straight to the estate of Odiovoaia, where they set a stone. From there beyond the pond[42], at the mound that we call Mihnea Vodă`s; from there on the valley towards the Ban`s road, at the ends of the estates we call Stepănești (Stănești?), Gurbanul, Oțești (Onceşti), Cossoveni, Frătești and Șirmănești (Daia), up untul Știubeiul near the lake and from thereto the Danube, at the mouth of that water called Cumasca[43], where they set a stone right on the river banks. The teritories before those stone were left to the country. And the people of Giurgiu were not to cross those stones, because the *cadii* agreed that was the just border»[44].

Even so, it seems that this settlement of 1669 was breached right after Constantin Brâncoveanu was dethroned (1714). The «elders say that people of Giurgiu extended their lands and crossed the border from the East and from the West, making *senete* and *ciftlicuri*»[45], meaning estates. Furthermore, starting with the first reign of Nicolae Mavrocordat (1715-1716, 1719-1730) there were increasing cases of Ottoman and breaches into Wallachia from the Danube *kazas*. They entered in official positions or as simple individuals[46].

Another settlement was made on July 13 1764 and it is recorded in an Ottoman document of July 1802[47]. It was done during the reign of Ștefan Racoviță (1764-1765):

> North of the Gura Gârlii, which was shut by Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu with șarampoaie (stakes), the border runs from the village belonging to the people of Giurgiu which we call Braniștea to Știubeii, at the estate of Șerbatesci[48] near a lake. Fromthere it goes into the Ban`s road to Zăgazu, where we find the borders of the Odiovoaiei estate, called today Mihnea Vodă`s, through the river bed of the Pârâu up until Balta and from there straight to the banks of the Danube[49].

Alongside this new settlement, we find other agreements on the line of the Danube

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42 Probably the pod of Mahâru.

43 A small arm of the Danube, near the hill and forest of Penciu. It flows near the villages of Băneasa, Meletie and Pietrele.

44 Sion, *Istoria politică*, 98-9.

45 Sion, *Istoria politică*, 98-9.

46 Maria Matilda Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Despre regimul supușilor otomani în Țara Românească în veacul al XVIII-lea", *Studii*, 14/1 (1961): 89.

47 Mustafa A. Mehmet, ed., *Documente turcești privind istoria României*, vol. III: *(1791-1812)* (București: Editura Academiei, 1986), doc. 106, 164-65.

48 Probably Șerpătești, today Daia, Giurgiu County.

49 Sion, *Istoria politică*, 89-90.

between Wallachia and the Ottoman Empire[50] concerning some estates. The last known settlement was in 1796, a small one. The Wallachian Prince was represented by the *great paharnic* Vintilă Prejbeanu and Alexandru, ex *mare medelnicer*. They focused on the Western borders of the *kaza*, on the lands of the Paraipani estate.
Besides the settlements that concerned the border between Giurgiu and Wallachia, there were some other minor border agreements. From the correspondence of Mustafa Pașa, *muhafâzul*[51] of Giurgiu and the Prince of Wallachia, Alexandru Șuțu in 1819 we find that the two parties agreed to cooperate in draining some neighbouring lakes. There were some agreements for (or between) the estates of Daia in Wallachia and the village of Oinak Koy (Oinac) of the Giurgiu *kaza*[52].
Therefore, broadly speaking, until 1829, the limits of the Giurgiu *kaza* were the same as in the sixteenth century: starting from Arsache, passing Hodivoaia, Stăneșți, Bălănoaia, Frățești, north of Oinac and Braniștea, reaching the Danube beyond the stream of Comasca, near Gostinu[53].
Other indicators of the borders of Giurgiu in the Middle Ages are represented by Daia and Hodivoaia (Odivoaia)[54], where some *Captaincies* existed[55] with border duties, tasked with looking out for the borders of Wallachia and follow the Prince`s orders during war[56]. At Daia and Hodivoaia, border settlements («two hours away from the fortress of Giurgiu»[57]) there were some quarantine zones, to protect the people of Wallachia from contagious diseases such as plague, like in 1825[58].
Some settlements near Giurgiu which were mentioned in the border agreements were not part of the *kaza*. The village of Marotin (Frasin) was not part of the *kaza*, as stated by a document in March 19 1779 from the Metropolitan Church of Un-

50 Mihail Stăncescu, "O delimitare de moșie la hotarul Țării Românești în 1764", *Revista arhivelor*, 1 (1924): 131-32.

51 "Muhafâz" (*muhafız*): the one that guards and protects; the commander of a town.

52 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, doc. 1381, 272-73.

53 Scarlat A. Stăncescu, *Din trecutul orașului Giurgiu* (București: Institutul modern de Arte Grafice Unirea, 1935), 28.

54 The importance of the Hodivoaia marginal Captaincies is also given by the fact that for small cases, the captain had the right to sue for Vlașca County. Cf. Sion, *Istoria politică*, 35.

55 In the middle of the Seventeenth century there were ten *Captaincies* in the area of Vlașca County, with 120 servants at Cacaleți (Izvoru), Călugăreni, Podul Doamnei (both close to Videle), Frăsinești, Găești, Hodivoaia, Izvor, Udeni and Meri (close to Găești). The border *Captaincy* at Hodivoaia had 23 servants. Cf. Olga Cicanci, "Informaţii despre organizarea administrativă şi fiscalitatea în Ţara Românească (1764-1765) în opera lui Atanasie Comnen Ipsilanti", *Studii*, 19/2 (1966): 11/353-12/354).

56 Nicolae Stoicescu, "Despre organizarea pazei hotarelor în Țara Românească în sec. XV-XVII", *Studii și materiale de istorie medie*, 4 (1960): 218.

57 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, doc. 1999, 401.

58 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, doc. 1999, 401; doc. 2234, 447-48; doc. 2235, 448.

gro-Wallachia during a divorce settlement between one Stana and her husband, Istrate, both from that village[59]. If Marotin were a part of the *kaza* the situation would have been settled by the *cadiu* from Giurgiu[60]. Similarly, the villages of Prundu, Puieni and Pietrele were on Wallachian territory at the end of the Eighteenth century having Church estates (Puieni was a part of the St. George monastery and Pietrele of the Cotroceni one, both from Bucharest) or noble estates, as was the case of Prundu under the lordship of the *vornic* Racoviță.

During the Sixteenth-Nineteenth centuries the abuses done by Ottoman subjects in the territories considered Wallachian were treated as such and punished. Romanian rulers felt within their rights to appeal to the Sultan for protection whenever Ottoman subjects breached their territories (be it Muslims, Christian, Turks, Tatars or otherwise). To counteract these acts, the Sultans often issued decrees to the Danube *kazas* to stop such activities[61].

The Prince Mihai Racoviță (1730-1731, 1741-1744), for example, asked the Great Vizir Seyyid-Hassan Paşa in 1744 to stop the breach of the Wallachian borders and of its lakes formed by the Danube`s overflow[62].

Many of these conflicts were caused by agriculture. In 1768 Sultan Mustafa III (1757-1774) order the *vali*[63] of Oceakov, Mustafa Paşa and the *nazâr*[64] of Silistra to settle the boundary disputes between Wallachia and the *kaza* of Giurgiu caused by sowing. The same document warned the Paşa of Oceakov that the claims of the people of Giurgiu were unfounded, prohibiting them to sow, gather wood or otherwise infringe on the territories of Wallachia[65]. The Sultan`s decision was enforced immediately, announcing to the people of Giurgiu, called *raial*âi[66] or *serhatlâi*[67] that they mustn't sow or cut the wood from the land of Wallachia[68].

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59 Constanţa Vintilă-Ghiţulescu, *În şalvari şi cu işlic. Biserică, sexualitate, căsătorie şi divorţ în Ţara Românească a secolului al XVIII-lea* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2011), 401.

60 There are some opinions, based on oral sources that claim that Daia and Marotin (Frasin) were actually a part of the Giurgiu *kaza*. Cf. Ion Boldescu, *Monografia oraşului Giurgiu* (Giurgiu: Institutul Grafic Ulpiu Stănculescu, 1912), 67.

61 Viorel Panaite, *Pace, război şi comerţ în Islam. Ţările Române şi dreptul otoman al popoarelor (secolele XV-XVII)* (Bucureşti: Ed. All, 1997), 349.

62 Valeriu Veliman, *Relaţiile româno-otomane (1711-1821). Documente turceşti* (Bucureşti: Directia generala a Arhivelor Statului din RPR, 1984), doc. 110, 278.

63 "Vali": governor, the ruler of a province (vilayet or eyalet).

64 "Nazâr" (*nazir*): supervisor or the ruler of city.

65 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, doc. 254, 77.

66 From "raia" (turk: *re'âyâ*), which literally means "herd". Until the Seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire recognized by this only the non-Muslim. After that, it included Muslims.

67 From "serhad" (*serhat*): border, frontier. "Serhatlâi": people on the fringes, frontiermen.

68 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 77, doc. 255.

Despite this, in 1774 the Princial Chancellery told the Ottoman authorities that the people of Giurgiu occupied 17 estates that used to belong to Wallachia[69].
Although the Turks restricted the entry into Wallachia for the people in the *kazale*, during the reign of Alexandru Moruzi (1793-1796) and Constantin Hangerli (1797-1799) there were some people from Giurgiu roaming the Romanian villages from Vlașca County, stealing produse from peasants or plowing their fields. In May 1796 some 15 hutts made by Ottoman subjects from the *ciftik* of Hagi Minus-aga were demolished. Constantin Hangerli ordered the *inspravnic* from Vlașca County to prevent the people of Giurgiu to cross the borders[70].
In 1801 the *capucheia* of the Wallachian ruler from Istanbul pointed out in a document (*takrir*) from April 15 adressed to the Chancellery of the Great Vizir that the *serhat* of Wallachia near Giurgiu are being overrun by the people of the *kaza*. The dignitary showed that, although there were strict orders to settle the borders, they were not enforced[71]. In July 1802 he pointed out to Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) the repeated violation of the Wallachian border by Giurgiu. He asked for the copies of former orders to enforce the borders and the issue of another one to settle the grievance:

> Any strong advice that is given, despite ilustrious orders issued for the removal of the intruders that attack the borders of Wallachia and ocupy our estates, breaching the Imperial borders at the Danube, as in the serhats on Wlach soil, it is clear that at this moment some of the inahbitants of Giurgiu are disrespecting the established borders and are occupying Wallachian lands. This calamity makes the raia of Wallachian very upset as is the case with the owners of the estates. It is also apparent that even though there will be new ordersi issued, they will be without effect if we do not extract from the chornicles the old border lines established between Giurgiu and Wallachia [...][72].

Selim III replied in October 18-27 1802 with a *hatișerif* in which, among other things, he ordered that none would enter Wallachia except on the basis of a *teșcherele*[73], since there were some many violations from the *sethatâli*. This new document had to be issued by a *zabit*[74] without infringing on the Romanian *raiale*. Also, the *aiani*[75] on the Danube, from Turnu, Giurgiu and Brăila were ordered not to sent their *mubașiri*[76] into Wallachia to cause problems there[77]. In August-September 1806 the

69 Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Despre regimul", 17, doc. 103.

70 Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Despre regimul", 13, doc. 99.

71 Alexandrescu-Dersca, "Despre regimul", 158, doc. 669.

72 Mehmet, *Documente*, vol. III, 164-65.

73 "Teșcherea" (*tezkere, tezkire*): letter, permit.

74 "Zabit": one that rules, officer, leader, commander.

75 "Aian" (*a`yan*): notable figure, leader of a small community or a region.

76 "Mubașir" (*mübașir*): civil servant acting for the state or in place of a dignitary.

77 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 166, doc. 705.

capuchehaia came back with a new complaint with similar issues[78].
It's worth remembering that the Ottoman central authorities and those in Giurgiu assured the rulers in Bucharest that the old boundaries will be respected. As commanded by Sultan Ahmed III (1703-1730) on November 18/27 1714, the Ottoman authorities on the Danube were ordered to respect the sanctity of the Wallachian borders[79]. Another example is the letter of 1751, signed my Mir Mustafa, Hasan and Selim, voivodes[80], *aiani* and *agale*[81] of Giurgiu who promised that in peace times the Ottoman soldiers would not cross into Wallachia or cause any damage there[82]. The situation repeated itself in 1822; a report (*inha*) on October 14 from Mehmed Salih, *mufah*âz of Giurgiu, was sent to the ruler of Wallachia, Grigore Ghica. It in it was said that in the future only *capalnâi* merchants[83] with official documents and the people of Giurgiu would be fined if they didnt refrain.[84] The *molla* of Rusciuc, es-Seid Mustafa, acted in a similar manner which proves that the people in Giurgiu were crossing illegally into Wallachia, as did the ones in Rusciuc, south of the Danube[85]. Two years later, on September 13 1824, the *naib*[86] of Giurgiu, es-Seid Feizullah, told the Porte that he received the imperial firman ordering him to stop the crossings into Wallachia, except for the *capalnâi* and *serhatlâi* merchants. He assured his superiors that measure will be taken to prevent future border problems[87].
It is noteworthy that after each new appointment of a dignitary in Giurgiu, he would sent letters of recommendation to Bucharest, always accompanied by gifts, as was the Oriental tradition. Mehmed, the new Aga of the Janissaries did just that on March 28 1824, when he sent to Grigore Ghica a letter expressing his wishes to cooperate[88]. After being named *muhaf*âz of Giurgiu, Husein Paşa also sent a letter to the same Wallachian ruler on March 27 1825, calling for good relations[89].
We mustn't consider the relations between Giurgiu and Wallachia as constant bickering; there were moments of cooperation. On February 19 1826 the *mufahâz* of Giurgiu, Mustafa Paşa, sent a new letter to Ghica, in which he stated that he was

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78 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 175, doc. 752.

79 Veliman, *Relaţiile româno-otomane*, 94-6, doc. 16.

80 "Voievod" (*voyvoda*): administrator of a Vizir`s estate.

81 "Aga" (*ağa*): military leader.

82 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 59, doc. 173.

83 Merchants from Kapan (warehouse), tasekd with the resupply of the imperial capital markers and Danube cities with different items. Cf. Mustafa A. Mehmet, "O condică domnească din a doua jumătate a veacului al XVIII-lea scrisă în limba turcă, privind Ţara Românească", *Revista arhivelor*, 2 (1958): 249.

84 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 291, doc. 1462.

85 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 292, doc. 1470.

86 "Naib": a *cadiu*`s help.

87 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 385, doc. 1919.

88 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 387, doc. 1927.

89 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 398, doc. 1983.

informed of the Wallachian ruler`s visit to the village of Daia. The Prince greeted his envoy, returning from Istanbul. As a token of friendship, Mustafa sent the *cumbaragibașa*[90], Mehmed Aga and Ahmed Aga, one of the *aga* of the city fortifications[91]. A few days later, on February 25, the *muhafâz* of Giurgiu invited the Prince to «visit for a few days and strengthen our friendship»[92].

The Ottoman authorities in Giurgiu had to contend with illegal border crosses themselves. Some Wallachian subjects crossed the frontiers of the *kaza*. In 1826 a few gypsies fled Wallachia to Giurgiu and «after they committed robberies here as well», they fled the city even though the Prince of Wallachia demanded they return[93]. In the Eighteenth Century some couples are mentioned fleeing to Giurgiu, where they could get married without the restrictions they had to endure in Wallachia. Giurgiu was definitely seen a refuge from the authorities in Bucharest. At the start of the Eighteenth Century, Maria Cantacuzion, a relative of the Prince, Nicolae Mavrocordat (1715-1716, 1719-1730) left Wallachia for Giurgiu to get married with Constantin Zaguriano, a Greek noble from the court[94]. In 1786, one called Gheorghe with his partner, Maria, from the village of Ștefanda, Vlașca County, fled to Giurgiu and married there. They ended up staying for five years[95]. Similarly, Petco and Neaga, from Singureni, also found refuge in Giurgiu, married there and even had a child in the city[96]. These all mean that there weren't any major problems for the Wallachians to cross into the territory of Giurgiu.

As a result, Giurgiu, a city run the Muslims, but with a majority of population of Christian faith, offered some temptations. From a private life point of view, the freedoms there were quite appealing. Indirectly, the people of Wallachia found different ways to reach the *kaza*, some of them actually owning properties in the city. Interestingly, the *serhatlâi* of Giurgiu were more strictly regulated and prevented to roam the territories to the north.

For the Princes of Wallachia, the area around Giurgiu was seen as turbulent region, characterized by delinquencies and excesses. The area was lightly defended and the central authority there was scarcely represented[97]. The Ottoman authorities found that it was in their interest to cooperate with the Wallachians in keeping the central decrees in effect. In an address on November 30 1822, the *aian* of Rusciuc, en-Seid Mustafa, announced to the Prince of Wallachia that he took all measure to stop all suspects, Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs or Albanian, to cross into Romanian lands. Mustafa also wanted the speedy arrival of a *capuchehaie* at Giurgiu to help him in

90 "Cumbaragi-başâ": from *cumbara* (big bomb, shell) and *baș* (leader); the gunnery commander in a garrison.

91 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 434, doc. 2161.

92 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 434, doc. 2163.

93 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 436, doc. 2171.

94 Vintilă-Ghițulescu, *În șalvari și cuișlic, 125.*

95 Vintilă-Ghițulescu, *În șalvari și cuișlic*, 365-66.

96 Vintilă-Ghițulescu, *În șalvari și cuișlic*, 366.

97 Mazilu, *Lege și fărădelege*, 296.

protecting the border[98].
One year later, the *muhafâz* Salih Mehmed told Ghica that he took coercitive actions against 30 Muslims and 4-5 Serbs who all grazed their horses on Romanian lands, terrifying the border villages[99]. In 1826 some horses are mentioned, stolen from Wallachia and sold at Giurgiu[100].
Evidently, there were some abuses on the other side. Ahmed, an aide to the *muhafâz* of Giurgiu sent a letter to Grigore Ghica. In it he asserted that one Iorgu, the captain of Hodivoaia, is disturbing the Muslims of Giurgiu, curses and beats them. Ahmed could not explain such an attitude, since the Muslims were warned to be on their best behavior when they travelled into Wallachia[101].

98 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 302, doc. 1512.

99 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 328-29, doc. 1637.

100 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 436, doc. 2171.

101 Guboglu, *Catalogul documentelor*, vol. I, 459, doc. 2293.

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