

Chapter 1

The Appearance of Vassal States and “Suzerainty” in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of Wallachia and Moldavia

MAYUZUMI Akitsu

Introduction

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, before the start of the full-scale advance of the Western Powers into the region, Eurasia was under the rule of four different polities: the Qing Dynasty, the Mughal Empire, the Russian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. Particularly important in the context of world history is the existence of the Ottoman Empire, which for 600 years from the end of the 13th to the beginning of the 20th century occupied parts of the three continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe in the western portion of Eurasia.

The Ottoman Empire had risen from a Turkic nomadic group in Anatolia, which around the end of the 13th century began to expand its sphere of influence in the turbulent region of western Anatolia under the leadership of Osman Gazi, and by the mid-14th century had advanced as far as the Balkans, bringing one Christian polity after another under its control.

One important moment in the development of the Ottoman Empire was the conquest in 1453 of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, not only for becoming the Muslim ruler of a Roman imperial capital that had existed since the 4th century, but also for bringing the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and thus a significant Christian community, under the undisputable control of the House of Osman. Therefore, this conquest provided the Ottoman Empire with the legitimacy to rule as the successor of Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire [Fujinami 2013b: 56–7].

Thus gaining both legitimacy in governing a Christian population and a strong geopolitical base, the Ottoman Empire continued to expand, eventually gaining control over the holy cities of Mecca (or *Makkah*) and Medina (or *Madīnah*) at the beginning of the 16th century, which lent it special status and authority as the central polity of the “Islamic World”.¹ Then under the reign of Süleyman I (r. 1520–66), a centralized system

¹ Regarding the concept of “the Islamic World”, since the appearance of the research done by

of governance based on legal and bureaucratic institutions was established, while continuing its direct aggression in Europe, conquering Hungary and encircling Vienna. By the end of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire was ensconced in bases throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe, exercising hegemony over the western part of Eurasia.

However, such a system of governance which brought about both security and prosperity for the Empire was forced to change and evolve as soon as it ceased to expand territorially after Süleyman's reign, introducing a new governance mechanism from the 17th century on in the form of the tax farming (*iltizâm*) system, which would greatly transform the society. On the foreign relations front, as well, by the end of the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire had lost a great deal of its captured territory in Europe, and then during the second half of the 18th century, rivals from Western Europe and Russia began to gain the upper hand and advance into Ottoman lands. In response, the Empire was forced to modernize, first in its military establishment, then in such areas as political institutions and ideology by introducing Western European ideas and forms of organization. However, one of the ideological elements thus making way into the Empire, i.e. nationalism, finally brought it into collapse after World War I, by instigating centrifugal movements on the part of the various ethnic groups all over the Empire.

What enabled the Ottoman Empire to maintain its rule over such a vast territory for almost 600 years was none other than the adoption and effective functioning of various mechanisms for governing such diverse populations leniently but firmly enough. They were mechanisms of pragmatic governance that could be accepted by all subjects and were rationally suited to all regional conditions throughout the Empire. The style of rule adopted by the Ottoman Empire, with its centralized political hierarchy under the Sultan, but ever attuned to reality on the ground has been characterized by Suzuki Tadasshi 鈴木董 [1992] as “soft despotism”, for the myriad ways in which the central government exercised its control over specific regions; or rather, for the level of diversity in the relations between the center and the periphery. That is to say, there were regions which the central government ruled with an iron hand and regions the Empire controlled indirectly through local elites; moreover, even in the case of military conquest, there were regions that were allowed to continue under their pre-conquest social orders and institutions.

In general, such relatively autonomous, flexibly governed regions have been rath-

Haneda Masashi 羽田正 [2005], a debate has arisen over the suitability of such a spatial determination; notwithstanding, in the present chapter, the term will be used to refer to the sphere of influence over society dominated by Islam during the period in question. In general, it overlaps the “Abode of Islam” (*Dār al-Islām*) and includes parts of the “Abode of War” (*Dār al-Harb*) where Muslims, while exerting a certain amount of social and cultural influence, coexist with other cultural entities, with the boundaries among them not clearly defined.

er heedlessly referred to as “vassal” or “dependent” states under Ottoman suzerainty. However, such terminology merely reflects a perception based on observations by Europeans of reality on the ground, while in what way the Ottoman Empire itself actually perceived such regions has not been sufficiently taken into account. In fact, at least during a certain period of its history, the Ottoman Empire had no clear concept of “vassal”, “dependent”, or “tributary” state, thus making it impossible to perceive itself exercising “suzerainty” over them.

Based on such a premise, the present chapter will focus on two so-called Ottoman “tributary states”, the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, which today form parts of Romania, place them in the context of the Ottoman imperial order and trace changes in their relationship to the Empire accompanying the advance of Russia and various European states into the Balkans during the last half of the 18th century, in order to examine the appearance of the term “suzerainty” during that time in world history, in hope of uncovering some clues about the issue within the Ottoman Empire.

1. How Ottoman Suzerainty Worked in Premodern Times and the Position of Wallachia and Moldavia

1. 1. The Characteristic Features of Ottoman Imperial Rule

It is needless to repeat that the Ottoman territorial rule over its empire, varying according to the situation in each region under its control, was a style of governance very different from a modern nation-state exercising “sovereignty” over members of a “realm” clearly demarcated by national boundaries and based on the sole rule of law enforced by the sovereign government. Despite the existence of principles of governance based on *sharī‘a* (Islamic law), in order to supplement it, Muslim rulers would implement *qānūn* (secular law) based on the situation or custom existing in specific regions of their realms, meaning that the Empire had always been characterized by multiple systems of law. In terms of institutions as well, the workings of the central government differed from region to region; for example the Timar system, which formed the nucleus of Ottoman military, land, and tax collection institutions in the classical period, was during the reign of Süleyman implemented in part of Hungary, Rumeli (the Balkans), Anatolia (except its eastern portion), and Syria, all of which combined accounted for less than half of the entire Empire at that time.

As to how the other part of the Empire was supposed to be ruled, in the regions under the direct control of the Ottoman government but not implementing the Timar system, forms of governance that existed before the Ottoman takeover remained intact in some places, while governors-general were dispatched from the center to rule over

others. These governance styles included Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, and Tunisia; and on the Empire's periphery, governance would be left to local powerful lineages appointed as hereditary governors, or the autonomy of certain small groups would be recognized—the former being applied to the Kurdish regions of eastern Anatolia and Lahsa Province (*Lahsa eyâleti*) spanning present-day Kuwait and Qatar, the latter to Eastern Orthodox monasteries of Mt. Athos in northeastern Greece, St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai, and the tribal regions of Montenegro and Albania.

The focus of this chapter is on the polities outside the areas ruled in such various forms, with their indigenous institutions of governance left intact, i.e. “vassal states” (*fuyōkoku* 附庸国 in Classic Chinese). Generally they have all been defined as “subordinate” or “dependent” states (*jūzokukoku* 従属国 or *zokkoku* 属国 in Classic Chinese) of the Ottoman Empire,² meaning that they were all performing some specified obligations for their “suzerain” in return for its protection and grant of a certain amount of autonomy. Of course there were polities fitting such a definition, which recognized the authority of the Ottoman Sultan and rendered taxes and other services to the Ottoman central government, in exchange for the maintenance of the status quo ante in their regions under the protection and supervision of the Empire. And such “vassal” status has been attributed to both Muslim and Christian polities—Fez (Morocco) and the Crimean Khanate among the former, Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Wallachia, Moldavia, Transylvania, as well as Mingrelia, Guria, and Abkhazia of western Georgia among that latter.

However, such polities and the Ottoman authorities did not define their relationships as those between “suzerain” and “vassal”. We cannot find any extant Ottoman source material from premodern times in which Wallachia, for example, declares itself in any way a “vassal state” of the Ottoman Empire. Rather, in the case of all of the above-listed Muslim and Christian “vassal states”, that status was determined by outsiders, like Europeans observing their local conditions, and those observations and conclusions have remained intact up to the present day.

As a matter of fact, it is extremely difficult to determine whether or not such designated “vassal states” were in fact part of the Ottoman Empire in any way, shape, or form. Take for example, cases in premodern times of neighboring polities which paid cash to the Ottomans in exchange for the cessation of hostile invasions. If one interprets such behavior as, from the Ottoman standpoint, an act of obeisance to the Empire's authority, then one would be able to conclude that at times in their history, the Eastern

² While not significantly different from such terms as “subordinate state” and “dependent state” in its meaning, the author chose to employ the rather old-fashioned term “vassal state” (i.e. *fuyōkoku*) in this chapter concerning the early modern era, because the term “dependent state” has been repeatedly used as the translation of the Classic Chinese concepts *zokkoku* or *jūzokukoku* in the modern and contemporary context.

Roman Empire, Habsburg Empire, and the Safavid Dynasty in Iran were in positions of dependency to the Ottoman Empire. Then there are such remote polities as Bukhara in Central Asia and Aceh on Sumatra, which on numerous occasions paid tribute to the Ottoman Sultans, placing itself in the Ottoman world order. Are we therefore supposed to include them, too, as de facto “vassal states” of the Ottoman Empire? Of course not, and it is for this reason that the designation “vassal state” is in effect limited to the polities which were smaller than the Empire in scale, adjacent to the regions under the Empire’s direct control, and involved in constant relations of rights and obligations with the central government in Istanbul. That being said, among that part of the Ottoman Empire which fits such a narrow definition of “vassal state”, there was plenty of diversity regarding the particulars of those relations of rights and obligations, as we shall see in the cases of Wallachia and Moldavia.

1. 2. The Status of Wallachia and Moldavia in the Ottoman Empire

It was during the 14th century that the Principality of Wallachia, just having established its independence from Hungary, became involved in a standoff with the forces of the Ottoman Empire as the latter advanced into the Balkans, eventually falling to them during the last years of that century and paying tribute to the victors. Meanwhile, in Moldavia, which had formed a state during the middle of that same century, the Ottoman army marched in around the mid-15th century, resulting in Moldavia’s suing for peace under the condition of paying tribute to the invaders. While it was in such a manner that both principalities became the subjects of the Ottomans, at first the subordination was only temporary, both polities proactively attempting to free themselves and defying the Empire by refusing to pay tribute; but neither could resist the military pressure applied by the Empire during its era of expansion, Wallachia succumbing to Mehmed II in 1462, Moldavia to Süleyman I in 1538,³ although both polities maintained their pre-conquest internal political institutions until the end of the 19th century.

However, it is difficult to categorically state that these two dates marked the incorporation of both principalities as territories of the Ottoman Empire, in the sense that they paid regular tribute not for avoiding military invasions but as a sign of permanent subordination. Moreover, since there is historiographical evidence of Wallachian princes and *boiers* (aristocrats) traveling to the Ottoman Court to conclude treaties with the Em-

³ To be more accurate, as was the case of Mihai Viteazul, prince of Wallachia during 1593–1601 and crowned prince of Moldavia and Transylvania in 1600, there were instances of resistance; however, these instances cannot be interpreted as a continuation of the resistance staged up until the middle of the 16th century.

pire during the early 16th century [Panaite 2013:14–5], final submission should probably be dated later than 1462, but exactly when is difficult to determine due to the loss of the said treaty. According to Romanian historian Viorel Panaite, the advance and crushing victories of the forces of Süleyman I in Belgrade, then Hungary, during the first half of the 16th century may well have been the determining factors in the final submission of the Wallachian ruling class, thus marking important turning points for both Wallachia and Moldavia [Panaite 2000: 335–9].

The reason why we do not know exactly when the payment of tribute to avoid wars changed into the obligation of permanent submission in exchange for the Empire's protection is the loss of all but one of the pre-17th century written "treaties" (*'ahdnâme*, or letter of contract) laying out the conditions of such a long-term arrangement. Furthermore, the one treaty that does remain involving Moldavia around the year 1480 does not touch upon any concrete rights or obligations, being a very short document that cannot be said to have comprehensively established a relationship with the Ottoman Empire once and for all [Guboglu 1958: 132, 165; Mehmed 1976: vol. 1, pp. 5–7]. This almost complete absence of diplomatic sources suggests that no such treaties existed in the first place, rather than their loss over the centuries. That is to say, Wallachia and Moldavia's relations with the Ottoman government were not laid out clearly in comprehensive contracts or treaties, but rather from the 15th century on originated from directives issued intermittently from the center to the two principalities, which finally developed into established protocol. The reason for such a possibility lies in the fact that there was no necessity for the Ottoman Empire to negotiate treaties over relations with the regions which it had conquered militarily and thoroughly incorporated into its political order. During the 16th century, concluding treaties with foreign polities only occurred when it suited the needs of the Empire, or when the Empire granted special privileges as in the case of capitulations.

Turning to the actual, substantive relations of the two principalities with the Empire, the Ottoman government demanded just about the same kind of obligations from both, although differing in both scale and number. In concrete terms, these obligations involved mainly remitting taxes called *jizyah* and *kharāj* (in Turkish *cizye* and *haraç*) to Istanbul, rendering various official and unofficial tribute to the Sultan, top government bureaucrats, and the like, recognition of newly appointed princes by the Ottoman Emperor, prioritized supply of food and other goods to Istanbul, supplying men and materiel in support of the Empire's military campaigns, full cooperation with the Ottoman government's diplomatic policies, and collecting and submitting information regarding the Christian world [Gemil 1991: 38; Maxim 1993: 243]. In exchange for the performance of such obligations, both principalities were guaranteed security and, at least on a formal basis, allowed by the Ottoman central government to maintain existing institutions of governance and the autonomy in their internal administration, such as the elec-

tion of their own prices, etc.

The principal taxes paid by the two principalities were the above-mentioned *cizye* and *haraç* levied only on non-Muslims, which the princes remitted to Istanbul every year. The substantial amount of these taxes gradually increased since the latter half of the 16th century, even if considering the change in the monetary value owing to inflation. In addition, the gifts which the princes sent to the members of the Ottoman imperial family and high-ranking officials (*peşkeş* or *pişkeş*) were also regarded as official taxes.

As the agricultural production of Wallachia and Moldavia was indispensable to Istanbul with its huge population, the two principalities were regarded as the supplier of food for the imperial capital, called “food storehouse” (*kilâr* or *kiler*) in the source materials. As a result, they were obligated to supply preferentially the Ottoman government with food and daily necessities they produced, which were purchased in the official prices (*narh*) lower than the market prices. This obligation is said to have been imposed around 1540 during Süleyman I’s reign [Maxim 1979; Gemil 1991: 220], supporting the argument that his reign constitutes a turning-point in the Ottoman relation with the two principalities. The other obligations include the participation in Ottoman campaigns, the payment of the special tax (*avârız*) to Istanbul, and the provision of food and necessities to the frontline.

Returning once again to the issue of “suzerain” and “vassal” states in the view of reality on the ground in Wallachia and Moldavia, it would seem that looking upon them as vassal states under the Ottoman suzerainty poses no significant problems; and in fact there are Western European sources dated at the beginning of the 17th century that describe them as “*tributaires*” of the Ottoman Empire [Panaite 2000: 469]. But again the terms “suzerain” and “vassal” as used in the research literature are concepts that developed later on in modern Europe. So in what manner did the Ottoman Empire itself perceive this rather ambiguous statue of Wallachia and Moldavia during the 16th and 17th centuries? The answer to such a question lies in their legal status within the context of the Islamic World, which must be prefaced by an overview of the Islamic worldview and its foreign relations during the period in question.

In the Islamic worldview, the world was seen as being divided into the “Abode of Islam” (*Dār al-Islām*) ruled by Muslims under *sharī‘a*, i.e. a territory where Muslims would be able to worship in peace and security, and the “Abode of War” (*Dār al-Ḥarb*), which was under the control of “infidels” and lacked the rule of *sharī‘a*. The former would confront the latter in a continuous “holy war” (*jihād*) until the entire world was incorporated into the Abode of Islam. In reality, however, in the expansion of Islam from the 7th century onward, there were times when the *jihād* against infidels had to be temporarily halted, and the relations between the two Abodes were normalized and legally systematized based on the experience of such periods of peace. Here, the international aspects of *sharī‘a*, called *siyar*, were conceptualized and systematized between the 8th

and 9th centuries by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī.⁴

In general, in the field of *sharīʿa* jurisprudence, there came to be formed four main schools of thought, each of which maintained its own interpretation of *siyar*; and one of the most important differences surrounded the question of whether or not there exists a third entity between the Abodes of Islam and War. For example, the Shāfiʿī school recognized such a third entity, calling it the “Abode of Treaty” (*Dār al-ʿAhd*) or the “Abode of Truce” (*Dār al-Ṣulḥ*), which referred to territories ruled by the infidels who concluded treaties or contracts (*ʿahd*) of peace with Muslims.

Therefore, from the standpoint of the Shāfiʿī school, Wallachia and Moldavia definitely fell into that third category vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire, with many of the later literature referring to them as such; however, historically, the Shāfiʿī school was never as influential as the Ḥanafī School in the Ottoman Empire, which did not recognize the existence of an Abode of Treaty in *siyar*. Consequently, as far as the Ottoman legal interpretation was concerned, Wallachia and Moldavia belonged to the Abode of War, with the words “*Boğdan dâr al-İslâm olmamağın*” (as not of the Abode of Islam) appearing in the historiography describing them.⁵ In actuality, with people of both principalities being overwhelmingly Eastern Orthodox, Muslims were in principle not even permitted to cross their boundaries (without special dispensation, in the case of merchants, for example). Therefore, as people of the two principalities were by no means fully acquainted with *sharīʿa* law, from a legalistic standpoint, the Christian vassal states under the Ottoman Empire were considered existing outside the Abode of Islam.

On the other hand, from the standpoint of the Ottoman administration, neither principality could have been looked upon as a part of the Abode of War. For example, in the Ottoman sources the residents of Wallachia and Moldavia were referred to with such terms as *reʿyâ* (subjects) and *zimmî* (or *ehl-i zimmat*; protected persons), while in general non-Muslims who belonged to the Abode of War and visited the Abode of Islam were called *mustaʿmin* (those who are guaranteed safety and were at first guaranteed provisional safety and protection (*amān*) by their Muslim rulers). Such non-Muslims were exempt from taxes, such as *jizyah* and *kharāj*, as long as they held that status; then as they became permanent residents, their status changed to *zimmî*, and they were obliged to pay taxes. Although Wallachia and Moldavia did not, legally speaking, belong to the Abode of Islam, their populaces were nevertheless dealt with as if they were.

In the case of the ruling classes of the two principalities, the Ottoman sources tell us that the most frequently used term for princes was “*voivoda*”, which derives from the Slavic term for military field commander, which developed the meaning “headman” or

⁴ The English translation of al-Shaybānī’s *siyar* was contained in the work of Khadduri [2001], who also conducted research on it [Khadduri 1955]. In Japanese, see [Koga 1991].

⁵ BOA, *Maliyeden Müdevver Defterleri*, nr. 17961, p. 39, in [Maxim 1977: 210].

“chieftain”. Within the Ottoman Empire, *voyvoda* was used in the same sense as *subaşı*, a person charged with the duties of maintaining law and order and collecting taxes in a town, then gradually developed the nuance of “the tax collector”, finally being used to indicate the tax collection officials administering the large-scale estates throughout the Empire. The princes of Wallachia, Moldavia, and sometimes Transylvania began to be referred to as *voyvoda* around the beginning of the 16th century [Panait 2013: 25], suggesting the Ottoman perception of their position not only as heads of state, but also as officials in charge of collecting taxes. Other terms referring to those princes included “*kulum*” (my servant) and “*harâc-güzâr*” (*kharāj* taxpayer), hardly rhetoric usually directed at the heads of state who were considered belonging to the Abode of War. In sum, within the extremely ambiguous Ottoman concept of “inside-outside”, Wallachia and Moldavia, technically members of the Abode of War, can be observed as having been treated on the ground no differently than the regions and states directly governed by the Ottoman government in the Abode of Islam.

In the Ottoman Empire of the 16th and 17th centuries, which believed in the superiority of the Islamic World through its military might, its relations with the “vassal states”, like those with Europe, reveals priority being given to power relations, placing reality before ideology and paying little attention to differences between the two. Rather than concluding formal treaties with these states, the Ottoman government preferred to rest relationships on customs that were to be followed no matter what. In other words, rather than exercising some form of “suzerainty”, the Ottoman governance of Wallachia and Moldavia was implemented through military superiority, which up through the 17th century neither the weaker forces of Western Europe nor the Russian Empire could interfere with.

It was only when the Ottoman Empire began to lose its competitive edge over its rivals that its relations with the two principalities, which had been determined solely by military might, began to change, in particular, amidst Russia’s southward advance during the 18th century.

2. The 18th Century as a Turning Point and the Rise of “Suzerainty”

2. 1. Ottoman Relations with Wallachia and Moldavia in the Face of Imperial Russia’s Emergence

Despite such developments in governance as the introduction of tax farming, the above-characterized relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the two Christian principalities of the Wallachia and Moldavia remained virtually unchanged until the end of the 17th century when the Empire went to war with the Holy Alliance, comprised of

Habsburg, Venice, Poland, and Russia, the last of which would be particularly influential.

It had been at the beginning of the 14th century that the Grand Duchy of Moscow, the predecessor of the Russian Empire, maintained a link with the Metropolitan of Kiev (or the Metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus'), who was a member of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Then during the mid-15th century when the Eastern Roman Empire was invaded by the Ottoman Army, the Duke of Moscow reacted to the proposed merger of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Roman Catholic Church in the hope of military aid from Western Europe by appointing his own metropolitan of Kiev, in effect making the Kiev bishopric independent from Constantinople and establishing the Russian Orthodox Church in 1448. After the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire, in 1472, it was the Grand Prince of Moscow Ivan III (r. 1462–1505) who married the niece of the last Eastern Roman Emperor (Ζωή or Sof'ia in Russian), thus inheriting the latter's line of succession. Both of these events formed the basis for Moscow to claim its leadership of the whole Orthodox world.

Consequently, at the beginning of the 16th century, there emerged a discourse in which Moscow would succeed Rome and Constantinople as "the Third Rome". However, from the viewpoint of both Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire it was merely a small polity situated on their peripheries, and for Orthodox Christians in the former realm of the Eastern Roman Empire (Anatolia, the Balkans, etc.), it was the Ottoman Sultan who held claim as the successor to the Roman Empire, by placing the patriarch of Constantinople under his control and expanding his authority far and wide, rather than the Grand Prince of Moscow, who barely began to declare himself the Emperor (*tsar'*) of Russia.

Despite such differences in perspective, Moscow would soon rapidly expand its territory with such moves as the advance into Siberia and develop into a huge empire ruling over the greater part of northern Eurasia, and at the end of the 17th century the rise of Peter I (the Great, r. 1682–1725) would pose a serious threat to the hegemony of the Ottoman Empire. The appearance of Russian emperors, who claimed succession to the Eastern Roman Empire and declared themselves the protectors of Orthodox Christians, raised the hopes of Christian communities in the Balkans regarding liberation from their Muslim rulers, and from the 18th century on began to call for secession from the Ottoman Empire. For Russia, now advancing south, the Balkans were geographically its closest neighbors, and despite the Ottoman persistent control exercised over them up through the prior century, Wallachia and Moldavia were the first regions to feel the Russian impact, experiencing significant changes in their relationship with the Ottoman Empire after the 18th century.

2. 2. *The Advance of Peter I into Wallachia and Moldavia and Its Effects*

It was the failure of the Second Siege of Vienna in 1683 and subsequent wars between the Ottoman Empire and the countries of the Holy Alliance that marked a turnaround in the power relationships involving Western Europe, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire. With the conclusion of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 and the Treaty of Istanbul the following year, the Ottoman Empire lost a great deal of its territory in Europe, mainly in Central Europe including Hungary and Transylvania. In the war the Russian Empire was successful in capturing the strategic town of Azov (Azak in Turkish) at the mouth of the Don River in 1696, enabling it to advance further south into the Sea of Azov.

In the eyes of the ruling classes of Wallachia and Moldavia who watched the Russian victories, Peter I was in fact the protector of Orthodox Christians, and immediately after the capture of Azov, envoys were dispatched to Moscow from the two principalities to engage in secret negotiations concerning liberation from Ottoman rule [ИЧСР: vol. 3, pp. 114–21, 132–8]. Although both polities had remained under Ottoman rule in the treaties of Karlowitz and Istanbul, they continued their contact with Russia, until the Prut War of 1710 when Prince of Moldavia Dimitrie Cantemir (r. 1693, 1710–11) concluded a secret treaty with Peter in rebellion against the Ottoman forces.⁶ After advancing his army into Moldavia, Peter issued a manifesto to the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans urging them to support the Russian troops [ИЧСР: vol. 3, pp. 331–6], but very few responded, causing a lack of support that resulted in defeat at the hands of the Ottoman forces and a clear message from the Christians under Ottoman rule that the emperors of Russia could not yet replace the Ottoman Emperors. But it was only a matter of time before the rise of the Russian Empire and increasing expectations in the Balkans would be sufficient enough to shake the Ottoman Empire to its foundations from mid-century on.

Meanwhile, well aware of the above-mentioned situation, the Ottoman government attempted to tighten its hold over Wallachia and Moldavia with such measures as renouncing the imperial approval of locally elected princes by dispatching from Istanbul mainly Greek Orthodox aristocrats, known as Phanariotes (Φαναριώτες), to govern the two principalities. They possessed economic strength and rich knowledge on Western Europe deriving from their trade activities, and were incorporated into the ruling class during the latter half of the 17th century as language interpreters (*tercümân*) by the Ottoman government, which considered them more loyal than any local Danubian candidate.⁷

⁶ As to the text of the treaty, see [ИЧСР: vol. 3, pp. 323–6].

⁷ Phanariotes were installed as princes of Wallachia and Moldavia also for economic reasons. That is to say, the newly installed princes remitted gratuities to members of the sultan’s family,

Although the introduction of this system was to some extent successful in suppressing the centrifugal tendency of the ruling classes of the two principalities, the move also had serious side effects. That is to say, although of the same religion, the Phanariote governors dispatched from Istanbul, who were considered Greek speaking “foreigners” by the local *boiers*, tended to place their own people in positions of importance at the expense of the *boiers*, causing the latter to rebel against such “foreign” interference by once again approaching the Russian and Habsburg Empires. Moreover, in order to quickly recoup the huge bribes they had to pay Ottoman government officials for their appointments, there were Phanariotes who exceeded the normal “exploitation” allowed in the two tributaries, causing serious fiscal difficulties for all classes of the populace and increasing expectations towards their fellow Christians in Russia to deliver them from Ottoman rule.

Despite the growing Russian influence in the two principalities from the end of the 17th century through to the first half of the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire managed to maintain its relations with them, stabilizing its vacillating rule over them. However, this Ottoman relations with the two principalities were bound to change with the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War in 1768.

2. 3. *The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca as the Turning Point*

Having experienced a significant shrinkage in its territory during the last years of the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire managed not to suffer anymore defeats at the hands of either the Russian or Habsburg Empires up through the first half of the next century, and was even able to recover some of what it had lost. Then in the aftermath of its defeat in the Russo-Turkish War, the peace treaty signed in 1774 became an important starting point for intervention in Ottoman affairs by the countries of Europe—that is, the so-called “Eastern Question”.

From the very onset of the War in 1768, the Ottoman forces were overwhelmed by the Russians, who established a position of strength in a very short time. The following year the Russian Army marched into Moldavia, then Wallachia, occupying their respective capitals of Iași and Bucharest and gaining the loyalty and cooperation of not only the *boiers*, clergy, and local populace, but also the Phanariote princes who were expected loyal to the Ottomans.

Seeing Russia gaining the upper hand in the Crimean Khanate, the other Ottoman

leading figures at the court, and high officials of the Sublime Porte, and the appointment of Phanariotes with direct access to the ruling class in Istanbul was expected to speed up the payment of tribute owed by the two principalities.

tributary, and its naval victories in Aegean Sea, the countries of Western Europe, in particular Prussia and the Habsburg Empire, fearing Russia’s rapid advance south, strongly urged the Ottoman Court to make peace with the enemy, while at the same time demanding that Russia return the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia to their Ottoman “suzerain”. Consequently, due to such international pressure, the Russians were forced to return the two principalities, but in order to leave in place the possibility of a future revival of their influence there, demanded various conditions during the peace negotiations, resulting in Article 16 of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca which contains ten provisions regarding the two polities, the most important of which were probably Items 8 through 10, which read as follows.

8. *Cizye* to be remitted to Istanbul will be collected by deputies dispatched every two years, with no other tax imposed on the two principalities. They will enjoy rights identical to those granted under Sultan Mehmed IV [r. mid-17th century].
9. Both principalities will be granted the right to have representatives stationed in Istanbul.
10. The Russian representatives stationed in the Ottoman Empire will be allowed to express his opinion concerning conditions in the two principalities.

The content of the 1774 Treaty was based mainly on a draft submitted by the Russian delegation during the negotiations conducted in Bucharest the previous year. In that draft, the Russians demanded, instead of those stipulated in Items 8 and 9, that both principalities be taxed once every three years and that they be allowed to set up consulates in Istanbul, as in the case of the Republic of Ragusa. Ragusa, which held the same status of “vassal state” as Wallachia and Moldavia, had not been obliged to pay yearly taxes, and was thus even more loosely governed by Istanbul than the two principalities.⁸ Therefore, Russia, aiming to maintain a foothold in the two principalities, demanded the same treatment of them as Ragusa in order to further weaken the Ottoman government’s control over them. Although the language regarding Ragusa would be stricken from the final Treaty text, it is interesting to note that the Russians selected, from among the flexible, diversified relationships between the Ottoman government and its vassal states, that of Ragusa to be adopted as a model for Wallachia and Moldavia.

Regarding Item 10, which reads:

It is agreed that the Russian representative stationed in the Ottoman Empire will be allowed to express his opinion concerning conditions in the two principalities, and

⁸ On Ragusa-Ottoman relations, see [Biegman 1967; Фрейденберг 1984].

that [the Ottoman Empire] will duly heed it with due reverence for an amicable and venerable state.⁹

The fairly ambiguous wording probably implied for the Ottoman side that its authorities were to lend an ear to any Russian concerns, but were by no means bound in any way to act upon them, while the Russian side may have interpreted the clause as any failure of the Ottoman government to heed its warning would result in an infraction of the Treaty's provision.

Even in the face of defeat, at a time when it was still believed that the Ottoman Empire and the Abode of Islam were as before superior to the Abode of War, the above-mentioned wording of the Treaty was not probably interpreted as significant; but in reality, this item in the Treaty would later be utilized by the Russian Empire to intervene in the affairs of Wallachia and Moldavia and influence the rights and obligations of the two polities vis-à-vis the Ottoman government that had been in place since the 16th century. As the author discussed in the other occasion [Mayuzumi 2008], the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was also extremely significant for the Ottoman vassal states in the Balkans, in particular, and Ottoman international relations, in general, for after its conclusion, what were previously regarded as internal issues regarding the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia now became issues of international import, as the countries of Europe attempted to intervene in those affairs, representing an important turning point in the history of the Ottoman Empire.

2. 4. *Towards the Stipulation of the Ottoman Relations with the Two Principalities*

And so, let us look at the problems that arose between the two principalities and the Ottoman Empire after the conclusion of the 1774 Treaty that would offer opportunities for Russian intervention. What first catches one's attention are the edicts issued by the Ottoman government to the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia at that time. About a half-year after the signing of the Treaty, in December 1774, the Ottoman government issued edicts reflecting the contents of Article 16 of the Treaty,¹⁰ in addition to a comprehensive explanation of the rights and obligations of both principalities,

⁹ [Дружинина 1955: 346]. Its original Russian text is as follows. "Soglashaetsia takzhe, chtob po obstoiatel'stvam oboikh sikh kniazhestv ministry Rossiiskogo imperatorskogo dvora, pri Blistatel'noi Porte nakhodiashchiesia, mogli govorit' v pol'zu sikh dvukh kniazhestv, i obeshchaet vnimat' onye s skhodstvennym k družeskim i pochtitel'nym derzhavam uvazheniem."

¹⁰ Arhivele statului ale României, *Documente istorice*, DLXXXI/65a, 66a. 65a issued to the prince of Moldavia, 66a to the prince of Wallachia; both documents are copies of the originals.

These edicts even went so far as to refer to such minute subjects concerning the two principalities as: the handling of lawsuits between Muslim and Christian subjects; the prohibition of Ottoman subjects' entry into the principalities except chartered merchants, and their construction of winter huts for livestock (*kışlak*) there; and the prohibition of Ottoman commanders or emissaries coercing the subjects of the principalities into providing supplies, food, and horses, a feature that was missing from the relationship prior to the outbreak of the War in 1768. Then in another set of edicts issued in July 1776 just prior to end of the postwar two-year tax moratorium granted to the two principalities, specific amounts of *cizye*, *idiyye* paid twice a year at the beginning of a new year and the end of Ramadan, and gratitude to leading figures at the Ottoman court were laid out in detail for both Wallachia and Moldavia.¹¹ Whether or not there was any involvement of Russia in the issuance of these edicts is not clear, but their contents, especially that of 1776, were later agreed upon in 1784, first by Russia, then by the Habsburg Empire,¹² thus making the relationships between the Ottoman Empire and its two vassal states determined by the edicts internationally binding.

Later on in 1787, when the Ottoman Empire again went to war against the Russian and Habsburg Empires, the conflict was finally ended with peace being made with the latter in 1791 on the banks of the Danube at Svishtov and with the former at Iași at the beginning of 1792. Based on what was stipulated in the Treaty of Iași concerning Wallachia and Moldavia, the Ottoman government compiled *kanûnnâme* (law codes), which comprehensively determined the rights and obligations of the two principalities with twenty-eight articles, once again the first document of its kind in the long relationship between the Ottoman Court and its two principalities.¹³

Then in 1802, the Ottoman government, under pressure from Russia, issued another “edict” to Wallachia and Moldavia, informing them of agreements reached in negotiations with the Russians, in actuality therefore, the text of a treaty with Russia regarding the two principalities. Addressed directly to the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia, the “edicts” contained summaries of all previous edicts pertaining to the Ottoman relations with the two principalities, issued under the diplomatic agreements with Russia in 1774, 1784, and 1792, followed by the new agreements reached between the two

¹¹ BOA, *Cevdet Tasnifi, Eyâlet-i Mümtâze*, nr. 1015.

¹² [*Muahadat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 2–4; Cevdet Paşa 1855–84: vol. 3, pp. 334–5], Arhivele statului ale României, *Documente istorice*, DLXXXI/92.

¹³ The Ottoman government issued for each region under its control *kanûnnâmes*, which were the compilations of *kanûns* specifically geared to the particular conditions on the ground, for the purpose of supplementing *sharī'a*. As to these particular *kanûnnâmes* for Wallachia and Moldavia, See [Mehmet 1967].

Empires on that occasion. These documents¹⁴ stated in even more concrete, detailed form than the previous *kanûnnâme* the relations between the Ottoman government and the two principalities, including the stipulations that allowed Russia's increasing intervention in the affairs of the latter, such as its partial involvement in the appointment and dismissal of the princes, and would determine their relations for the next thirty years until the conclusion of the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829.

Now after two centuries of ambiguity, lack of documentation, and relatively arbitrary freedom of action in its relations with Wallachia and Moldavia, within a span of just three decades, external demands to clearly lay those relations out in print and make the ensuing rights and obligations of the parties concerned internationally binding had produced a series of edicts and *kanûnnâmes* to that effect and created a diplomatic environment in which the Ottoman Empire was forced to come to terms with the modern concepts of "suzerain" and "suzerainty".

2. 5. *The Appearance of "Suzerainty" in the Ottoman World*

As mentioned above, up until the early 19th century there is no trace in the Ottoman historiography of any reference to Ottoman relations with Wallachia and Moldavia involving a "suzerain" ruling over "vassal states", and this absence extends to all parts of the Ottoman Empire, whether directly or indirectly governed. Rather, the Ottoman government administered its empire flexibly based on local conditions, including geographical location, economic function, and the presence or absence of an effective, cooperative ruling class, thus defying any strict categorization along "suzerain-vassal" lines.

To give one example, the Ottoman historical sources refer to the status of Wallachia and Moldavia with such terms as *memleket*, *vilâyet*, and *eyâlet*, the latter two having the meaning of "province" (e.g. *Bosna eyâleti*), implying that so-called "vassal states" were frequently dealt with in the same fashion as directly governed provinces.

One more informative example is the phrase "*mefrûz 'ül-kalem ve maktû 'ul-kadem min-küll 'il-vücûh serbest olup*" (separated from the Ottoman administration, which is forbidden to intervene, and free to act in all affairs), which is seen from time to time in the extant sources, most frequently in documents pertaining to the Kurdish region of eastern Anatolia, whose provinces by no means resembled "vassal states", but were rather under a form of direct Ottoman rule that allowed a good deal of autonomy.

However, come the turn of the 19th century, the term "suzerainty" (*siuzerenitet*, *suzeraineté*) began to appear in the texts of treaties concluded between the Ottoman

¹⁴ For more details, see [Селях 1961; Mayuzumi 2012].

Empire and foreign polities. Tracing the way in which the term actually appeared would involve an exposition on its development in the countries of Europe, including an exhaustive examination of all European diplomatic sources related to the Ottoman Empire, a task which is beyond not only the scope of the present chapter, but also the expertise of its author. So let a few early examples suffice.

To begin with, the term’s first appearance in a treaty concluded between the Ottoman and Russian Empires seems to have been a treaty signed in 1800 regarding the independence of the Septinsular Republic (Respublika semi ostrovov, Cezâir-i seba, Επτάνησος Πολιτεία; so-called the Ionian Republic), the seven principal islands of the Ionian Archipelago originally ruled by Venice, then taken over by France in 1796, and finally occupied by the Russian and Ottoman naval fleets in 1799 and jointly governed by the two empires. The Ottoman language version of Article I of the treaty reads,

...The great Emperor of the Ottoman royal family and those who qualify as his illustrious descendants as the suzerain (سوزین *suzin*) of the aforementioned Republic, will rule over it, protect it, and be obeyed by it, while the aforementioned Republic, as vassals (واسال *vasal*) of the Sublime Porte, will submit to that authority and be ruled and protected...¹⁵

Despite the errors in transcription, the “*suzin*” and “*vasal*” in the Ottoman text clearly refer to the European terms, “suzerain” and “vassal”, with description of their implication in Ottoman. This explanatory mode of expression gives us an impression that the Russian side tried to elucidate to the Ottoman counterpart the meaning of two foreign terms. Incidentally, the Russian version does not contain any term for “suzerain”, using instead “*Verkhovnyi vlastelin*” (supreme ruler).

At the time the Treaty was signed, the Ottomans and Russians were allied against France’s invasion of Egypt, and thus mutually agreed to station troops in the Ionian Islands in order to secure the Republic and maintain its constitution and their special privileges there, with the Russians armed forces actually taking charge of the defense of the Islands. For the Russians, the Ionians provided them with an important military base of operations for its envisaged advance into the eastern Mediterranean. It was in this way that the Septinsular Republic came to be ruled by the authority of the Ottoman Emperor, while under the de facto Russian occupation. It is worth noting that the term Ottoman “suzerainty” began to be officially employed in this situation.

¹⁵ [Muahedat Mecmuası: vol. 4, p, 29; Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 2, pp, 36–41]. The Russian and French versions are contained respectively in [ПСЗРИ, т. 26, с. 88–92; Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 2, pp. 36–41]. The term “*suzin*” seems to be a mistranscription of the French “*suzerains*”.

The next Ottoman diplomatic source to contain the term “suzerain” would be regarding the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia and the rights concerning them enjoyed by the Ottoman and Russian governments, respectively. Based on the previously discussed “edict” of 1802, later negotiations would lead to a number of amendments. Then in the Peace Treaty of Adrianople, the term “suzerain” was first used to define the Ottoman relations with the two principalities, beginning with Article 5.

Wallachia and Moldavia are ruled according to special conditions determined under the suzerainty (verkhovnaia vlast', suzeraineté, tebaiyet) of the Sublime Porte and are also guaranteed protection by the Russian Empire... [Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 2, pp. 168–9; *Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, p. 73].

Here again, “suzerainty” is being used within the context of formal subjugation to the Ottoman Court, while the Russian government guarantees the arrangement on the ground, as in the case of the Septinsular Republic. In fact, in the treaties concerning only the two principalities, which were concluded simultaneously with the Treaty of Adrianople, more definite limits were imposed on the Ottoman government’s authority than before; and as seen in the governorship over them by Count Pavel Dmitrievich Kiselev during the Russian occupation of the 1830s, Russian continued in the role of de facto protector as stipulated by the Treaty of Adrianople. In sum, the appearance of the Ottoman Empire as “suzerain” was accompanied by gradual nominalization of its rule over the two principalities.

As the above analysis of the treaties concluded between the Ottoman Empire and Russia until the first half of the 19th century has shown, the term “suzerainty” was employed to signify the rule of the Ottoman authority, in contrast to the de facto rule of Russia.

Although the treaty establishing the Septinsular Republic did not draw much attention in terms of the definition of “suzerainty”, in his *Elements of International Law* (1836), legal expert Henry Wheaton does touch upon the Treaty of Adrianople, citing Ottoman relations with Wallachia and Moldavia as a classical case of a suzerain-vassal state relationship. Afterwards, the concept of suzerain-vassal relationship came to spread through the European powers’ advance throughout the globe, the circulation of their concepts of international law, and the translation of Wheaton’s opus into local languages, until it influenced diplomatic issues even in East Asia.

Conclusion

The characteristic feature of governance exercised for over 500 years by the Ottoman

Empire over its vast territories spreading over three continents was its flexibility in adapting to different situations on a region-by-region basis, from regions like the Balkans and central Anatolia, where the Ottoman central government had put the Timar system firmly in place, to regions like Ragusa, where the only relationship lay in the payment of yearly tribute to Istanbul. In the present chapter we have examined the so-called "vassal" states which maintained power structures from before the Ottoman conquest, taking up the concrete examples of Wallachia and Moldavia, where the above-mentioned flexibility was clearly evident in the form of legal ambiguity and lack of any direct rule. And for those polities that were not directly merged into the Empire's governance apparatus, the Ottoman *modus operandi* was only perceived as the most rational, no issues being raised concerning its character as "direct" or "indirect", despite the fact that both people from the countries of Western Europe and those in modern and contemporary times looked upon them as "vassals" of an Ottoman "suzerain".

It goes without saying that both for the Ottoman central government and its "vassal" states there was no need to put their "suzerain-vassal" relationship in formal writing during the era up through the 17th century, when there existed no rival to Ottoman power and authority, leaving open the possibility that the government in Istanbul would make changes in their arrangements whenever the situation demanded. In this chapter we have shown that Wallachia and Moldavia were not exceptions to that way of doing things, with no written agreements regarding their relationship with the Ottomans in their possession, thus leaving open the possibility that the central government in Istanbul introduced significant revisions in accordance with its own prerogative, as in the case of the introduction of the Phanariote system in the early 18th century.

On the other hand, the early 18th century was also characterized by the rise of the Russian Empire claiming to be the successor to the Eastern Roman Empire and guardian of Orthodox Christianity, which first advanced into the Balkans, formerly the core of the Orthodox Church, and finally met the Ottoman Empire on the battlefield in 1768 demonstrating its military superiority. After the war, the peace treaty of 1774 finally laid out in no uncertain terms the nature of and limits to the relationship between the Ottoman government and the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, setting the stage for a Russian advance across their boundaries.

That Russian advance would not only give rise to intervention by the Habsburg Empire at first and then by Britain and France, but also lead the Balkans to become the target of the "Eastern Question". It was within this international atmosphere that the Ottoman Empire came to grips with the modern terminology defining its position as "suzerain" to its "vassal" states.

For example, within the context of the Russian Empire's military occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia, while the Ottoman Empire nominally governed them, the confrontation with the term "suzerainty", which had first appeared in a treaty dealing with

the Ionian Septinsular Republic, continued in the case of Wallachia and Moldavia with the conclusion of the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829. It declared Ottoman “suzerainty” over the two principalities, but for their people under Russian military occupation, the Ottoman authority no longer resembled that of the Roman Empire.

In fact, the word “*Roma*” for them would take on a whole different meaning, for during the mid-18th century, ideas were introduced from the neighboring Habsburg possession of Transylvania which linked the “Latinness” in their languages and culture to the Roman Empire and Latin World in the past, gaining significant strength by relating themselves with the unification movements in Wallachia and Moldavia. “*Roma*” in such ideas did not include “Greekness” which had accompanied the Ottoman term “*rûm*”, thus turning their attention away from Istanbul towards the Latin nation of France. Then in 1859, when Wallachia and Moldavia merged, their national identity was expressed in the term “*Roma*” or “*Roman*”.

It is ironic that the Ottoman Sultan’s authority as a “Roman Emperor” among his multi-layered universalities was invalidated in the 19th century by the international recognition of its “suzerainty”, enabling Wallachia and Moldavia to free themselves from its authority, seeking the other “*Roma*”.