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SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS
GIURGIU UNDER THE OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATION
15TH-19TH CENTURIES

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SUMMARY

The relations between the Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire have been a predilection research topic for the Romanian historiography, generating a plethora of interest directions, which made their mark in the historical research. Remarkable personalities of the 1848 revolution, such as Nicolae Bălcescu and Mihail Kogălniceanu were among the first historians of the Romanian-Ottoman relations, as they also had deep insight on the mentality of their contemporary epoch and of the previous ones. Furthermore, they were relentless militants for the research of the Romanians' past.

However, the first place in the preoccupation of the Romanian historiography of the 19th century was not taken by the relations of the Romanians and the Porte, but the proclamation of the individuality and ethnic uniqueness of the Romanians, which aimed at justifying the political existence of the Romanian state. Therefore, even if beginning with the end of the 19th century, the relations between the Romanians and Ottomans were treated in a sum of Romanian historical writings, being however "contaminated" both with the romantic spirit of the epoch and a certain Euro-centrist position. Particularly after the World War I, they were followed by valuable historical contributions that, with minor exceptions, insisted on the political and military issues, deemed highly important from the perspective of Romania's consolidation. Still, barriers in the approach hindered the complex study of the Romanians' relations with the Ottoman Empire or the northern territories of the Danube, which were administered by the Ottomans.

Gradually though, the Romanian historiography in its ensemble, overcame many of these obstacles, inaugurating in the second half of the 20th century a vast research and capitalization program of the Turkish-Osman sources referring to the history of the Romanians. So, starting with 1964-1966, the thorough research in the archives and libraries of Turkey, alongside the old Ottoman source funds in other countries, began. This facilitated the opening to new research directions and the fundamental study of less known or erroneously presented aspects of the past, mainly centered on the political-military aspects, supplemented with the economic-commercial ones.

The true pioneers on the road in this field were the Turkologists, who elucidated many of the questions of the Romanian historiography, either in their syntheses or case studies focusing on a particular historical period or a specific aspect of the Romanian-Ottoman rapports, or even document collections that resulted in the reconsideration of a segment in the Romanian history.

Hence, a series of materials referring to many aspects of the bilateral relations were published, clarifying or deepening the topics pertaining to the juridical status of the Romanian principalities in relation with the Ottoman Empire, to the economic relations between them, the position of the voivodes with regard to the Ottoman Porte, the condition of the Romanians in the Ottoman territories or the status of the territories north of the Danube that were under the Ottoman rule.

Naturally, among the research topics one can also find Giurgiu under the Ottoman administration, but the interest elements referring to the town and the *kaza* were studied punctually, with no systematic approach. Moreover, the first historical works concerning Giurgiu or the area of Vlașca appeared late, being focused on the post-1829 period, a year that represented the reintegration of the town to Wallachia.

An article published in the seventh decade of the 19th century, signed by Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu is among the first works dealing with the history of Giurgiu. The article erroneously considered the Genoese as settlers of the town and fortress of Giurgiu. It was followed by a paper signed by Dimitrie Cârlițeanu presented general interest aspects, with no particular reference to the period of the Ottoman administration. Highly interesting are two papers signed by Ion Boldescu, the schoolmaster of Giurgiu, which offer interesting details on the town and the surrounding areas, from the period to 1829, relying on local oral sources.

Among the general interest volumes that referred to the history of the town and the neighboring areas - that also included aspects from the Ottoman rule period, is the one published by Scarlat Stăncescu, former mayor of Giurgiu, alongside a geographic dictionary elaborated by H.H. Antonescu-Remuși.

Also worth mentioning among the works referring to the period of the Ottoman administration in Giurgiu are the studies signed by Professor N.A. Constantinescu. His first material on the topic, *Raiatele turcești, cu deosebită privire la raiaua Giurgiu* [The Turkish *rayas*, particularly the *raya* of Giurgiu] approached for the first time the question of the Ottoman possessions in the Wallachian territory. The data were accurately presented, completed with an interesting cartographic material (including a detailed map of the Giurgiu *kaza*). The second study, *Cetatea Giurgiu – originile și trecutul ei* [The Foretress of Giurgiu - its origins and past] is just as important, as it focused mainly on the Isle of St. George.

As a matter of fact, of all the elements of interest of the period between the 15th and 19th centuries, most of the works published had as a central topic the fortress of Giurgiu, approaching the main aspects of its history, as well as the origin of the fortress's and town's name origin, the settlement period, its position and evolution through time. New works were

added to the previously mentioned ones chronologically signed by I. Barnea, Paul Cernovodeanu and Constantin Preda, later on by Paul Cernovodeanu, Radu Ștefan Ciobanu [Vergatti], Gheorghe Cantacuzino, Mihail M. Andreescu and particularly the military archaeologist Col. Dan Căpățână. The latter gathered between the covers of the volume *Bătălia de la Giurgiu – 1595* [The Battle of Giurgiu – 1595] the results of “his minute archaeological research from the island fortress” carried out between 1975 and 1998, with a hiatus between 1989 and 1993.

A referential work for the history of Giurgiu is the collective volume *Ilfov, file de istorie* (Ilfov, leaves of history), edited in Bucharest, in 1978, which brings together a series of highly valuable studies, of remarkable importance for the medieval history - and not only - of the town, signed by the Turkologists Valeriu Veliman, Mihai Maxim or the Bucharest researchers Maria Grigoruță and Ion Ionașcu.

Alongside the pre- and post-war studies referring to Giurgiu, starting with the seventh decade of the previous century, a series of studies and detail articles - very few. Among them we mention the micro-monograph signed by Professor Nicolae Ilinca and Dan Căpățână, which also presents certain aspects on the Ottoman administration of Giurgiu. Furthermore, we add to the list the materials elaborated by Emil Păunescu and Ancu Damian, historians of Giurgiu.

As expected, after the 1990s, a series of local history papers appeared with a different approach, signed by people who knew the places of Giurgiu and Vlașca, which completed through their volume and content the general historical picture of the period between the 14th and 20th centuries. The great majority focused on events that left a political or military mark on the town. There are only a few contextual approaches linked to certain aspects of the economic life of the Ottoman administration period, imagology or spiritual life.

Therefore, there was need for a systematic approach of the history of Giurgiu under the Ottoman rule, particularly since for the two Ottoman possessions in Wallachia, namely Brăila and Turnu, self-contained research was done on the period of their administration by the Ottoman Empire.

Given its position - a harbor on the Danube, knot on the route of many important commercial roads that linked the Romanian Principalities with the Balkan Peninsula, fairly close to the capital of Wallachia -, Giurgiu played an important part in the Romanian history, but did not benefit from a special and thorough historical research, particularly for the medieval period.

Because the proposed topic, Giurgiu under the Ottoman administration (15th to 19th centuries) extends over a period of more than four centuries, the paper is structured in four

chapters dedicated to fields deemed major in Giurgiu's evolution. Through corroboration, our goal was to offer a consistent image of the period between the first decades of the 15th century - when the fortress of Giurgiu was conquered by the Ottomans, and 1829-1830, when following the Treaty of Adrianople (1/14 September 1829), the *kaza* was retroceded to Wallachia.

Starting from the importance of the political and military factors of the period studied, the first chapter of the thesis, with the title Political-military evolution, begins with a short preamble referring to Giurgiu's situation until the subjection to the Ottomans, then continuing with the moment of its conquest by the Ottoman Empire (1419-1420) and the oscillation between the Christian and the Muslim world until the second half of the 15th century.

The third part of the first chapter refers to the military and political situation of the Middle Danube between mid-15th century and the end of the 16th century, including the great battle of Giurgiu in 1595, followed by the *kaza* role in the period between the anti-Ottoman war led by Michael the Brave and the conflicts of the 18th century.

The last two sub-chapters deal with the Ottoman possession of Giurgiu during the Russian-Austrian-Ottoman wars of the 18th century, when the town suffered considerable loss, but also with the period from the Peace of Svishtov and the Treaty of Adrianople, referring to the interval for the re-integration of the former *kaza* in the Wallachian territory.

The second chapter, *The Administrative structure of Giurgiu*, is divided into two large sub-chapters, the first consisting of the Ottoman administrative-territorial structure. The main institutions of the Ottoman central administration are studied, then the local Ottoman administrative-territorial structure. Closely related to these are the main military and administrative functions in the Giurgiu *kaza* and their attributions, with particular examples of the kadi (*kadi*) and the kadi deputy (*naib*), the fortress commander (*dizdār*), the military commander or governor of the region (*muhafiz*), the architect (*mi'mar*), the voivode (*voyvoda*), the intendents (*emini*), and the law enforcement bodies and military troops. Last but not least, we present the princely representatives of Giurgiu (*kapu-kethudaları* sau *kapu-kehâyaları*), close to the Ottoman provincial administration. The chapter is not concluded before presenting the situation of the frontiers, including the settlement of the borders between the *kaza* of Giurgiu and Wallachia, as well as the problems which occurred when the borders were trespassed.

The third chapter of the thesis covers *The Economic Life*, emphasizing the fact that alongside the political and military life, the economic dimension of the *kaza* played a key-role in Giurgiu's evolution, as the Ottomans paid great attention to the economic activities.

Presenting the aspects related to the general characteristics of the economic life in Giurgiu comprises the activities pertaining to the scaffold of the city, the details referring to its positioning, a presentation of the civilian and military scaffolds, the port's incomes, the transiting merchandise, and the types of ships that passed through Giurgiu. The third chapter is dedicated to the naval constructions and repairing works, seen that the data attest the fact that in Giurgiu, beginning with the 17th century, a genuine dockyard was active, building civilian and military ships, both for the Ottomans – in their great majority, and the Wallachian princes.

In the fourth sub-chapter, we present the commercial life, underlining the trade with animals, fats, and other animal products, cereals, salt, fish, bee products, alcoholic beverages, textiles, wood, timber, and general products.

The last sub-chapter consists of aspects related to the rural world and the agrarian relations in the Giurgiu *kaza*, which were extremely important. We emphasized the hinterland of the city, the *ciftlik*, the villages, the shepherd hutches and *kişla*-s, their production and exploitation methods, their names (relevant including for establishing the majority ethnical element), the Ottoman land property system in the *kaza*, directly linked to the Timariot system, which was applied in the entire Ottoman state, etc.

The fourth chapter, *Demographic, Ethnic and Religious Realities*, is dedicated to the aspects pertaining to Giurgiu's population and society. The first sub-chapter consists of the different theories for the name of the town, continuing with two other characteristics, consecrated to Giurgiu's urban evolution and the depictions of the town, emphasizing the outlining of the structural and architectural elements. The fourth sub-chapter presents the dynamics of the population and its ethnic structure in different periods, including the perspective of the relationships of the *kaza* inhabitants (Romanians, Ottomans, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Albanians, Jews, or Roma), being followed by the elements linked to the hygienic-sanitary activity, very important in the Ottoman society that followed the Oriental traditions and practices.

The sub-chapter before last is reserved for the elements of the religious life inside the *kaza*, including the Muslim, Christian, and Mosaic halidoms. If things are rather clear concerning the Muslims, meaning that they had the same rights as anywhere else in the Empire, the status of the Christian inhabitants of Giurgiu, identical to the one of the other Christian inhabitants of the Empire, was regulated until 1829 by the prescriptions of the Quran, the basis of the entire Islamic law, with no clear intentions of assimilation, nor subjection to the Ottoman or Islamic laws. Not least, still from a religious perspective, the situation of the Armenians and Jews is also presented.

The last chapter of the thesis comprises toponymic aspects related to Giurgiu and the territory of the *kaza*, underlining the fact that together with the influences of the Turanian peoples, one can appreciate that under the Ottoman administration of Giurgiu, the Ottomans “intervened”, too, in the place’s toponymy, yet in a more contained manner. Even if after 1829, on the background of the efforts made for a more rapid reintegration of Giurgiu to Wallachia, these influences were systematically deemed for elimination, they survived nonetheless for a considerable period in the collective mentality of the inhabitants.

In the current stage of the Romanian historiography, where the works referring to the relations of the Romanian Principalities with the Ottoman Empire cover a vast area, the topic referring to the past of a *kaza* north of the Danube, Giurgiu, still remains a subject of great interest, both from a general perspective and from the point of view of the local history.