



Osmanlı Mirası Araştırmaları Dergisi / Journal of Ottoman Legacy Studies

ISSN 2148-5704

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Cilt 6, Sayı 16, Kasım 2019 / Volume 6, Issue 16, November 2019

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Romen Ülkelerinde Göçle Gelen Kültürel Etkileşim: Osmanlı Ürünleri ve Sosyal Değişim

Makale Türü/Article Types : Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article
Geliş Tarihi/Received Date : 29.10.2019
Kabul Tarihi/Accepted Date : 22.11.2019
Sayfa/Pages : 487-495
DOI Numarası/DOI Number : <http://dx.doi.org/10.17822/omad.2019.137>

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Atıf/Citation

Coman, Roxana, "Acculturation Through Migration in the Romanian Countries: Ottoman Products and Social Change", *Osmanlı Mirası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6/16, 2019, s. 487-495.



Osmanlı Mirası Araştırmaları Dergisi (OMAD), Cilt 6, Sayı 16, Kasım 2019.

Journal of Ottoman Legacy Studies (JOLS), Volume 6, Issue 16, November 2019.

ISSN: 2148-5704

ACCULTURATION THROUGH MIGRATION IN THE ROMANIAN COUNTRIES: OTTOMAN PRODUCTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Romen Ülkelerinde Göçle Gelen Kültürel Etkileşim: Osmanlı Ürünleri ve Sosyal Değişim

Roxana COMAN

Abstract: A visit in a few Romanian museums and collections would outline the diversity and numbers of artefacts from the Near East and the Ottoman Empire present in Romania. It is a well-known fact that Ottoman objects can be found in the Romanian countries starting from the 15th and 16th centuries, and this process of acculturation was intensified during the 18th century, mostly due to the Phanariot regime. 18th century local elite from Wallachia and Moldavia used various Ottoman objects: clothing, furniture, smoking paraphernalia (hookahs and Ottoman smoking pipes), jewelry, weapons, and so on. Moreover, they did so in an effort to belong, to become one with the Ottoman elite. By using similar clothing and importing various customs, Wallachian and Moldavian local elite manifested its desire to belong, and in the same time, its prestige because the Ottoman objects were internalized and they introduced new social norms in their society. For example, the clothes were a sign of social and political rank because the boyars were divided into three distinct classes, and the rank was signaled by their appearance. This paper aims to address the social changes produced by the imported goods from the Ottoman Empire brought by Armenian, Bulgarian, Turkish and Greek merchants during the fairs held in Bucharest and in Yassi.

Keywords: Romanian, Ottoman Empire, social change, Balkans, migration

Öz: Romen müze ve koleksiyonlarında yapılacak bir ziyaret, Romanya'da bulunan Osmanlı Devleti eserlerinin çeşitliliğini ve sayılarını göz önüne serecektir. Osmanlı objelerinin 15. ve 16. yüzyıllardan başlayarak Romen ülkelerinde bulunabileceği bilinen bir gerçektir ve bu konuyla ilgili olarak 18. yüzyılda, özellikle Phanariot rejimi nedeniyle yoğunlaştı. 18. yüzyılda Eflak ve Boğdan'daki yerel elit kesim, Osmanlı objeleri kullandılar: Giyim, mobilya, sigara gereçleri (nargile ve Osmanlı sigara boruları), mücevherler, silahlar vb. Dahası, bunu Osmanlı seçkinleriyle birlikte olmak için ait olma abası iminde yaptılar. Eflak ve Boğdanlı yerel elit kesim, benzer kıyafetleri kullanarak ve gelenekleri ithal ederek ait olma isteğini gerçekleştirirken, Osmanlı objelerini içselleştirdi ve toplumlarına yeni sosyal normlar getirdikleri için aynı zamanda Osmanlı'nın prestijini ortaya koydu. Aynı zamanda, kıyafetler sosyal ve politik düzenin bir göstergesiydi çünkü boyarlar ayrı sınıfa ayrılırdı ve rütbeleri rnklerinden anlaşırdı. Bu makale, Balkanlar ve Doğu'da düzenlenen fuarlar boyunca Ermeni, Bulgar, Türk ve Yunan ticarlar tarafından getirilen Osmanlı ithal mallarının neden olduğu toplumsal değişimleri ele almaya amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Devleti, sosyal değişim, Balkanlar, göç

The eighteenth century gave full expression to the mercantile expression that allowed the exchange and consumption of all kinds of goods for all social classes. Its ideology centered on the enforcement of a very specific way of life, tendentially hedonistic for the rich, and even the moderately poor.¹ The diverse ethnic groups present in the Ottoman cities had a contribution to this way of life: Bulgarians, Armenians, Greeks, Albanians, Serbians, Turkish, Romanians, etc. shared in this Ottoman way of life, thereby giving the impression of a unity across the Balkans, across the empire.

¹ Maurice Cerasi, "The Formation of Ottoman house types: A comparative study in interaction with neighboring countries", in *Muqarnas*, no. 15 /1998, p. 132.

Mary Louise Pratt uses the concept of contact zones where cultures meet and clash, with one culture being the dominant one, easily observed in the cases of multiethnic empires such as the Ottoman Empire. When they are surrounded by several different cultures, the process of transculturation initiates during which subordinate cultures evolve by taking things from the dominant culture, where the metropolis dictates and the rest of the empire follows.²

However, the social changes of the urban elite in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th are not the product of transculturation, but rather of acculturation with merchants and craftsmen being the main agents. According to IOM Glossary on Migration, acculturation is 'A series of changes in cultural mores (ideas, words, values, norms, behaviour, institutions) resulting from direct and continuous contact and interaction between groups of different cultures, particularly through migratory movements or economic exchange, the media and other channels.'³

The cities and villages in the empire participate in one way or another in this way of life, mostly because goods and people moved between them creating networks, exchanging ideas and sharing a common way of life. What is truly interesting to observe is that it's not only about a simple rapport between metropolis, i.e. Istanbul, and the rest of the empire, but an acculturation created as a result of the trade networks and the links between various cities and different merchants travelling within the empire and in Central Europe. Maria Christina Chatziioannou's research about the trade networks of various Greek merchants, networks that linked cities from the Ottoman Empire from different provinces and the Ottoman Empire with Central Europe, via Vienna and Leipzig, is most compelling.⁴

Some authors speak of the existence of an Ottoman merchant class that was significantly influenced by the contact with Western markets and products.⁵ To some extent, we can observe that European demand for cotton cloth gave a boost to weaving in cities such as Edirne, Salonica and Shkoder as well as a number of smaller Balkan towns such as Verria, Elassona and Trnovo (in Thessaly), and to the east at Ankara, Bursa, Tokat, Antakya, Diyarbekir, going as far as Aleppo, and Baghdad, especially in the beginning of the 18th century. Because, by the end of the century, the Ottoman Empire was mainly exporting raw materials.

Founding and developing various craft associations, somewhat similar to the European equivalent of guilds, that continued to use traditional methods of crafting and to work side by side in the same streets, had a major contribution to the creation of the Ottoman-Turkish house and to urban development. The Ottoman authorities encouraged this type of settlements because it was easier to collect taxes or requisition supplies when needed. Moreover, it led to a certain cohesion among the merchants and producers and to a dialogue that went beyond the professional and commercial relationship.

Halil Inalcık and Donald Qataert state that the social life of craftsmen wove together multiple identities: association with other craftsmen working in the same market-place, membership in a militia, religious fraternity or parish, residence in a particular quarter along with relatives of the same ethnic background.⁶ In Rumelia merchants were acting as intermediaries for village products sold in towns, regional fairs, and distant ports or markets

² Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone" in *Profession*, 1991, Modern Language Association, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25595469>, accessed on August 2019.

³ IOM Glossary on Migration, 2nd edition, published by International Organization on Migration, 2011, accessed on August 5 2019.

⁴ Maria-Christina Chatziioannou, "Greek Merchant Networks in the Age of Empires (1770-1870)", in Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Gelina Harlaftis & Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou (eds), *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005, pp. 371-382.

⁵ Ed. Halil Inalcık, Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 698-704.

⁶ Halil Inalcık, *ibidem*.

which specialized in international trade. Due to the prosperous commerce and the exchanges between the various regions of the empire, there was an increase in housing demands.

As Maurice Cerasi has put it, the creation of the typical Ottoman-Turkish house during the 18th century has been linked with the development of the middle and upper class townspeople in the urban economical and lifestyle framework.⁷ This, in turn, meant that members of the Slavic, Macedonian, Greek, Armenian, and so on, have adopted a similar lifestyle that also included building their houses following the same zeitgeist. Also, the circulation of various goods in a somewhat unified market provided by an empire that wasn't so adamant at having well-marked and protected borders also may have led to a lifestyle found in most of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

The urban elite, in which merchants and craftsmen undergo a significant growth in both numbers and importance in the 17th and 18th century, is the key factor in understanding the syncretic process that led to the creation of Ottoman-Turkish house. Moreover, merchants and craftsmen become a semi-nomadic segment of population, moving from one city/village to another, creating networks and cultural and economic exchanges between the Ottoman Empire and Central Europe.

The Kuciuk-Kainargi peace treaty with its economic implications had important consequences for the urban development of Bucharest, with merchants moving in from South of the Danube river, foreign legations and consulates opening in Bucharest and Yassy, and merchants building their homes towards the city limits to avoid paying rent for the land they built upon. Add natural disasters, epidemics, and wars and you get a continuous changing of the urban layout and houses being rebuilt and remodeled. However, the prosperous commercial ties with the Balkans and Central Europe and the presence in Bucharest of two major permanent fairs, and multiple ones that were organized seasonally, led to an increase in population, not only in numbers, but, also, in ethnic background.

There is a significant urban turn in the second half of the 18th century, merchants and craftsmen move from the Mogoșoaia street, that was directly linked with the commercial road for Brașov, to the city outskirts, making room for various boyar residences. Moreover, the homes that had Ottoman elements belonged to the wealthy merchants, and also to some of the boyars and were mostly found in the area surrounding the Princely court. Under the phanariots, the Romanian countries began to imitate even more the Istanbul trends and the main consequence was an accelerated economic growth and a demand for the products that were fashionable among the Istanbul elite. The rulers granted various economic privileges to the guild masters and merchants and, even founded some manufactories. Therefore, it was no surprise that there is an affluence of Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Bulgarian, Aromanian, Albanian, Jew, German, French, and even Venetian merchants and craftsmen setting shop in Bucharest or Yassy and even settling in various parts of the cities and creating whole districts, or mahala.

Following the Ottoman administrative organization for merchants and craftsmen into *ruset* or *isnaf*, in the main cities of the Romanian countries there are documents attesting their existence from the end of the 17th century, a practice generalized in the second half of the 18th century. At the end of the 18th century there are 51 guilds attested and documented.⁸ Additionally, some crafts were introduced in the Romanian countries as a consequence of the demand for certain products that were far too expensive because they were imported from faraway regions of the Ottoman Empire (e.g. the Aleppo, Damascus).

⁷ Maurice Cerasi, *idem*, p.116.

⁸ Ștefan Ionescu, *Bucureștii în vremea fanarioților*, Editura Dacia, Cluj, 1974, p. 47.

The existing correspondence between the merchant house founded by Hagi Pop in Sibiu and merchants from the Romanian countries testifies to their ethnic background and the commodities exchanged and demanded. For example, letters from 1814 to 1818 are addressed to the following merchants in some of the cities from Wallachia: Pitești correspondence with Andreitso Hagi Zenos, N. și C. Zapaniotti, Ianachi Dem. Russi, Gh. Mihail, (1814); in Argeș with Ioniță Lazarovici, P. Nanu, Paraskevas Ioannu (1814). In 1818, the Hagi Pop merchant house exchanged letters with Abraham de Lion, Isaac Elias Kohen, Moses Sissu et Comp., I.G. Nikolopolu, St. Ioan, Hatzi Stauris, Apostol Georgiu, Aratun Dilanoglu, Sarkis, Asadur, Anevov, Michael Daniel, St. I. Moscho, I. Dim. Russu, Luca Garabet, M. Cornescu, Efraim Nachmias, I. Cealicovici, Velea Pavlovici, Sch. Friedmann, C. Piga, C. Cuciuchi, Gh. M. Papadopulo and Statie Constantin, Garabet Melicovici, Marchand, Ianachi Moscho, Gh. Paapa, Isaac Kohen brothers, all merchants from Bucharest.⁹ The majority of this correspondence is dedicated to observations about various merchants arriving in the Romanian countries and the commodities that were sold and bought, notes on prices and the existence of fairs in different cities of Wallachia and Moldavia.

In the 18th century Bucharest, Turkish cavafs originating from different cities, especially from Veliko Tarnovo, aimed at dominating the shoe manufacturing market in the Romanian countries, but they met the resistance of local manufacturers and various laws and edicts given by the Phanariot princes in an attempt to limit the growing numbers of foreign merchants and products and encourage local production.¹⁰ Nonetheless, that didn't put a stop to the affluence of products coming in from various parts of the Ottoman Empire. The local elite's taste and vanities, combined with an effort to adhere to trends that originated in Istanbul dictated the demand for certain products. These products were mainly fabrics, jewelry, raw ingredients, tobacco, coffee, fruits, spices, wines, etc., products that were associated with the same hedonistic lifestyle that can be observed in other parts of the empire.

The clothes worn by the Wallachian and Moldavian elite and wealthy merchants were made with fabrics imported from both Western Europe (England, France, Netherlands, Russia) and the Ottoman Empire (mostly Tokat and Riza, a village near Trabzon).¹¹ Before the peace treaty of Kucuk Kainargi (1774), the Wallachian and Moldavian markets were monopolized and controlled by Ottoman subjects. In 1745 the Catholic Bishop of Nicopole, Antonio Becich, notes that in Bucharest alone the presence of 500 Turkish merchants.¹²

The Romanian countries's imports from the Ottoman Empire were mainly directed at symbols of status such as expensive spices, fruits (figs, citruses, almonds, etc), raisins, șerbet, halva, lokum, coffee, tobacco, destined to be consumed during feasts and banquets thrown by the boyars for various occasions.

However, coming in on second place of most demanded and successful imports from the Ottoman cities were textiles, especially since clothing was not only a symbol of social status, but of their rank in the administration.

Using the cotton from Rumelia, Moreea, or Smyrna, the linen from Misir, Angora wool, silks from Bursa, Aleppo, Manisa, fine textiles (cabadicos, chembric, hasa, humai, mermeri)

⁹ Nicolae Iorga, *Scrisori de boieri și negustori olteni și munteni către casa de negoț sibiiană Hagi Pop, publicate cu note genealogice asupra mai multor familii*, București, Atelierele grafice SOCEC& Comp, Societate anonimă, 1906, pp. 85-8.

¹⁰ Tudor Dinu, *Bucureștiul fanariot. Administrație, meșteșuguri, negoț*, vol. 2, București, ed. Humanitas, 2017, p. 199.

¹¹ V.A. Urechia, *Istoria Românilor, curs făcut la Facultatea de Litere din București dupe documente inedite*, seria 1786-1800, volume II, Tipografia și Fonderia de Litere Thoma Basilescu, București, 1894, pp. 238-46.

¹² *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. IX, ed. by Maria Holban, ed. Academiei Române, București 1997, p. 235.

from Diyarbakir, Şam, Tokat¹³, boyars were manufacturing their *anteri*, *giubea*, *şalvari*, *kaftans*, completing their looks with a significant amount of jewelry and their customary ornate dagger worn in their Cashmere shawls at their waist. The clothes worn by the boyars and local elite in the Romanian countries were directly influenced by the ones worn by members of the Ottoman administration, more specifically the *Dragoman*. The wives of Phanariot rulers and boyars were keeping up with the fashion in both Istanbul and Western Europe, corresponding with each other and with their trusted merchants, buying the fashionable products.¹⁴

Art historian Adrian-Silvan Ionescu analyzes the impact of clothing norms and customs from the Ottoman Empire on the behavior and ceremonial attire and norms of the Wallachian and Moldavian boyars.¹⁵ The most distinctive consequence of the local boyar's choice to adopt the Ottoman clothing and, of course, of the new Phanariot regime was the dividing the boyars into three distinctive classes and giving them specific roles in the Wallachian and Moldavian administration. Aside from the importance of the offices they occupied, these classes were efficiently marked by the clothing the boyars wore. These differences in attire consisted mainly in some furs that could only be worn by the first-ranked boyars and the prince (e.g. sable fur), the dimension and the shape of the *işlic* (*başlık*), the colour of the *giubea* and the *anteri*. Coffee and tobacco, along with *şarbat* and *baklava* and jams, can always be found in the notes made by different foreign travelers to the Romanian countries as the customary commodities used for greeting guests. Although not the most reliable source, foreign travelers' accounts always note the abundance of food and reveal a pantagruelic amount of courses in banquets thrown by boyars and Phanariot rulers. Moreover, these foreign envoys tend to consider the local cuisine as an Ottoman cuisine due to various recipes that were brought by the Phanariots and the merchants in the Romanian countries.

Coffee and tobacco were mostly consumed in cafes and coffee shops, where the social met the political, coffee acting as a pretext for boyars to gather and debate the current affairs. Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu notes the similarity in the social and political roles of cafes from the Romanian countries (the laws passed by Nicolae Caragea to limit their role and numbers) with the ones in Istanbul (the edicts issued by the sultans).¹⁶

In conclusion, the Ottoman influence in the social, economic, and political aspect of the local elite in the Romanian countries can be seen as the consequence of an acculturation process. This process was somewhat accelerated by the Phanariot regime, but the definitive agent was the presence of merchants from the Empire in different cities from Wallachia and Moldavia who traded in products originating from the Ottoman Empire and Central Europe. These migratory merchants were the link and the agents behind the social dynamics of the 18th century urban elite in the empire, their homes expressing their cosmopolitan way of life. Additionally, this cosmopolitan way of life was adopted by other social classes, such as local nobility, as is the case of the Romanian countries.

¹³ Tudor Dinu, *idem*, p. 305.

¹⁴ Nicolae Iorga, *Documente grecești privitoare la Istoria Românilor, c. 1560-c.1820.*, colecția Hurmuzaki, vol. XIV, București 1936, p. 252.

¹⁵ Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Modă și societate urbană*, București, edt. Paideia 2006, pp. 75-8.

¹⁶ Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, *Patimă și desfătare. Despre lucrurile mărunte ale vieții cotidiene în societatea românească (1750-1860)*, București, edt. Humanitas, 2017, pp. 303-4.

Illustrations:



Pirpiri, 18th century, Textile and fashion accessories collection, Bucharest Municipality Museum



Plate, 17th century, Ottoman workshop, Decorative arts collection (Ceramics), Bucharest Municipality Museum



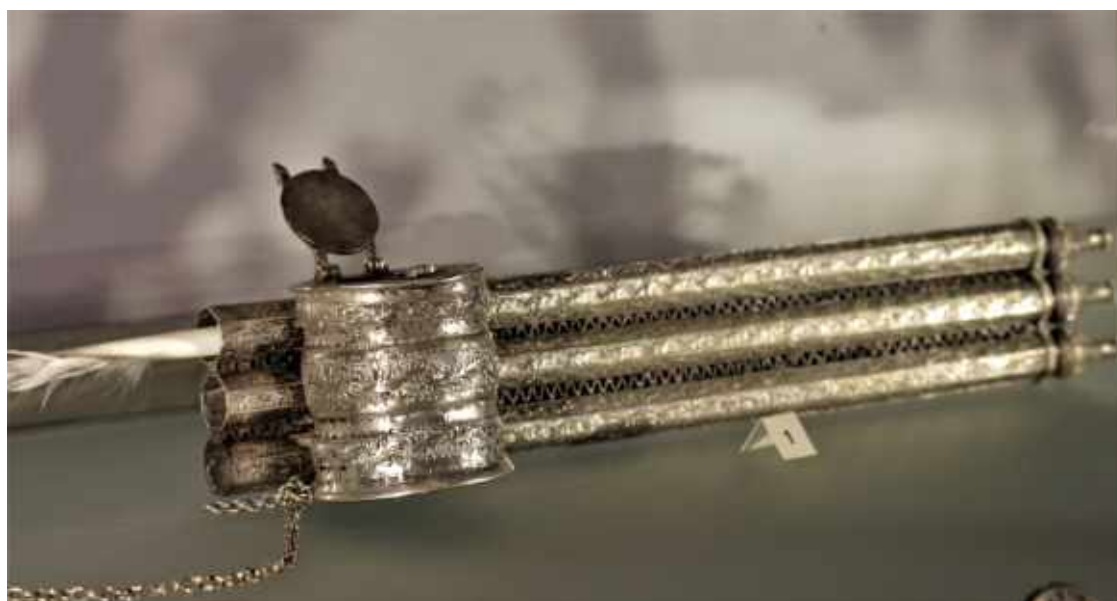
Coffe pot, and zarfs, 18th century, bronze and pretious stones, Decorative arts collection (Metalworks), Bucharest Municipality Museum



Pafta, 18th-19th century, silver and mother-of pearl, Textile and fashion accessories collection, Bucharest Municipality Museum



Snuff box, 18th century, silver and fabric, Textile and fashion accessories collection, Bucharest Municipality Museum



Inkwell, worn at the waist, 18th century, Decorative a (Metalworks) collection, Bucharest Municipality Museum

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