



## **SOME VIEWPOINTS ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SAINT MARTYR PRINCE CONSTANTIN VODĂ BRÂNCOVEANU AND TSAR PETER I THE GREAT**

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**Abstract.** Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714), Prince of Wallachia, and Peter I the Great (1682-1725), Tsar of the entire Russia, are remembered as two European personalities of remarkable importance. Their relationship was indirect, as they never had actually met. Nevertheless, in their foreign politic both were united by a common aspiration towards to blow the Sublime Porte. By his actions the Romanian voivode aspired to maintain the independence of his state. In its turn, the tsar was looking to conquer the Istanbul and to get into control over three continents.

Constantin Brâncoveanu continued the political path of Șerban Cantacuzino, his uncle and the former voivode of Valachia (1678-1688). In the same time he benefited from the modern organization of the princely chancellery that ensured him links throughout Europe. Also, the prince Brâncoveanu used the Orthodox Church. He organized a secret meeting in 1707 in Bucharest. Valachian and Orthodox Church leaders attended that meeting. Its purpose was to set up a military campaign against the Ottomans with the help of the Russian tsar. In case of victory the latter was to become a theoretical leader of the Balkan Peninsula. The plan was not completed. The tsar regarded the Cantacuzene family members as his main allies in Valachia. In 1706 the tsar Peter I wrote in a commanding tone to the prince Constantin Brâncoveanu asking him to appoint Mihai Cantacuzino as the head of the army. Then, in June of 1711, he offered help and asylum to the voivode nephew Toma Cantacuzino, which had betrayed the Ottomans. Subsequently prince Brâncoveanu had not helped the tsar in the Stănilești battle (June 1711). Russia was defeated by the Ottomans. Peter I angrily called Brâncoveanu "Judas". The relationship between the two of them were broken.

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**Key words:** Constantin Brâncoveanu, Peter the Great, princely chancellery, Russia-Valachia diplomacy

The present paper deals with the relations between two major personalities in the history of Europe and, by extension, in universal history: Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714), Prince of Wallachia, and Peter I the Great (1682-1725), Tsar of the entire Russia<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, for a great part of their rule, they were contemporaries. Both were concerned with leading an active foreign policy, which should be convenient for their peoples.

Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu sought to continue and develop the policy that his uncle, Șerban vodă Cantacuzino (1678-1688), had initiated in southeastern Europe. The latter had succeeded in establishing the principle of political balance. It was a great achievement which guaranteed the territorial integrity and political autonomy of Wallachia<sup>2</sup>.

Peter I the Great pursued a different plan<sup>3</sup>. He wished to turn the Tsarist Empire from a huge Eurasian terrestrial power into a great universal power bordering the seas and oceans of the world. It is to this end that he acted and reacted either by wars<sup>4</sup> or by way of diplomacy<sup>5</sup>.

1 I have used this word because the official title of Russian monarchs read Tsar of Great Russia, Little Russia and White Russia.

2 Cf. R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Rolul orașului București în politica balcanică a lui Șerban Cantacuzino*, in "București, Revista muzeului de Istorie al Municipiului București", IX/1972, pp. 129-136.

3 The foreign policy programme of Peter the Great is known as "Peter the Great's plan". It was attributed to the tsar who was said to have made it during his reign. Research has shown that, in fact, Peter I the Great did not draw up any plans during his reign. The writing bearing this title is due to the Polish Michał Sokolnicki (1797). The text was put into circulation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the French journalist Charles Louis Lesur, from whom it was taken (cf. Boris Mouravieff, *Le Testament de Pierre le Grand, légende et réalité*, Éditions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1949, passim; Simone Blanc, *Histoire d'une phobie: le Testament de Pierre le Grand*, in "Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique", vol. 9/1968, no. 3-4, pp. 265-293; Paul Cernovodeanu, *Contribuții de istorie românească și universală*, Editura Dorul, Aalborg, 2002, pp. 264-265).

4 *The Northern War* (1700-1721), in which Russia fought against Sweden and gained access to the Baltic Sea, is such an example; during the same war, while pursuing King Charles XII (1697-1718), Russia engaged in the fight against the Sublime Porte, but suffered a defeat concluded by the peace of Vadul Hușilor (the Pruth), resulting in the loss of both Azov and access to the Black Sea. Finally, the tsar also involved in the war against Persia (1722-1723). The outcome of this war was a temporary gain of northern Azerbaijan, with the cities of Baku and Derbent; however they were to be returned to Persia in 1735 by Tsarina Ana Ivanovna.

5 Tsar Peter I had the merit of modernising *Posolsky Prikaz* (= the department of envoys) and creating a network of Russian diplomatic relations across the world; it is true, some Russian diplomats were not well chosen, as was the case of Count Pyotr Andreievich Tolstoy who, as a representative in Istanbul, was bought by Constantin Brâncoveanu who 'lent' him large amounts of money: cf. *Istorigeskie sviazi narodov SSSR i Rumânii b XV-naceale XVIII v. Dokumentî i materialî b treh tomah*, tom III, 1673-1711 / *Relațiile istorice dintre popoarele U.R.S.S. și*

In his foreign policy<sup>6</sup>, Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu had an outstanding adviser: his maternal uncle, Seneschal Constantin Cantacuzino<sup>7</sup>. The latter understood the need to pursue the existing principle, that of political balance in southeastern Europe, which had recently been reintroduced and enforced by his brother, Prince Șerban Cantacuzino<sup>8</sup>. To acquire better efficiency in international relations, the Seneschal modernised his main working instrument, the princely chancellery<sup>9</sup>.

Seneschal Constantin Cantacuzino was heeded by his nephew, Constantin Brâncoveanu, an orphan since the age of one<sup>10</sup>, who had been brought up and educated by his uncles, brothers of his mother Stanca – Șerban vodă, Constantin the Seneschal and Mihai the spathar Cantacuzino. In fact, the prince himself confessed: “*Eu tată n-am pomenit de vreme ce am rămas mic fără de tată, fără cât pe dumnealui Constandin (stolnicul) l-am cunoscut părinte în locul tătâne-meu* (roughly translated as *I have no father to remember for I have been fatherless since childhood, it is Constantin the Seneschal I have known as a father instead of my parent*)”<sup>11</sup>.

It was in those circumstances that the seneschal housed, in the chambers of the princely palace, on the underground floor, the chancellery of the country. He did so because he needed it to be near the throne. Thus, he could rapidly and precisely respond to any call of the prince. Then, he could immediately attend the reception of ambassadors, with whom secret discussions were conducted.

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*România în veacurile XV – începutul celui de-al XVIII-lea. Documente și materiale în trei volume*, vol. III, 1673-1711, editorial committee: I. S. Grosul, A. C. Oțetea, Ed. Nauka/Știința, Moscova, 1970, p. 201, doc. no. 55 (in which Brâncoveanu shows Golovin that he gave Tolstoy 30,000 *efinci*), as well as 290, doc. no. 96 (in which Brâncoveanu shows Gavriil Ivanovich Golovkin that he sent 4,000 to Tolstoy, the Istanbul envoy). Further to be cited as *Istoriceskie sviazi*.

6 Cf. Radu Ștefan Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului Constantin Cantacuzino*, București, 1982, p. 212 and the following; Paul Cernovodeanu, *În vârtoarea primejdiilor. Politica externă și diplomația promovate de Constantin Brâncoveanu 1688-1714*, Ed. Silex, București, 1997, *passim*.

7 Cf. Radu Ștefan Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului...*, p. 212 and the following.

8 Idem, *Rolul orașului București în politica balcanică a lui Șerban Cantacuzino*, loc.cit., pp. 129-136. Before Șerban Cantacuzino, the policy of balance in southeastern Europe was applied by Radu cel Mare (1495-1508) and Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521) (cf. R. Șt. Vergatti, *Radu le Grand – un voivode valaque méconnu*, in “Revue Roumaine d’Histoire”, tome XLVII, 2008, nos. 1-2, Janvier-Juin, pp. 16-29; idem, *Neagoe Basarab. Viața. Domnia. Opera*, Editura Episcopiei Argeșului și Muscelului, Curtea de Argeș, 2009, *passim*).

9 Cf. Radu Ștefan Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului...*, ed. cit., pp. 233-240.

10 Brâncoveanu remained an orphan when he was less than one year old, his father, Papa Brâncoveanu, having been killed by Seimeni in March 1655 (cf. *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești. Acte și scrisori*, published by Endre Veress, vol. X (1637-1660), București, 1938, p. 287).

11 Cf. *Istoria Țării Românești de la octombrie 1688 până la martie 1717*, compiled by Constant Grecescu, București, 1959, p. 12 (further to be cited as *Anonimul Brâncovenesc*).

Clerks with nice calligraphic handwriting were chosen to work in the chancellery. They were supposed to write easily, without mistakes, letters composed by all rules of the protocol of the age, which were to be sent abroad.

The Seneschal was extremely careful and strict in interpreting and composing letters. He would use well-prepared and carefully chosen people. A lot of them had been trained during special courses held at the Princely Academy of Sf. Sava. There they learned the languages used to communicate and the art of diplomacy, the science of composing a message<sup>12</sup>.

Of those who worked in the chancellery, let us mention Nikolaus Wolf and Andreas Wolf, both specialised in Latin and Polish, "Polack clerks"<sup>13</sup>, Giovanni Candido Romano (Ioan Frâncul or Ioan Romanul)<sup>14</sup>, specialised in Italian, Latin and in drawing up calendars, the Jewish Anton Maria del Chiaro, also specialised in Latin and Italian, used as secretary of the prince<sup>15</sup>, Peter Grienner, doctor Bartolomeo Ferrati, used for Latin and German<sup>16</sup>. There also were brothers Theodor and David Corbea, both from Scheii Brașovului, used for Latin, Hungarian and Slavonic<sup>17</sup>, chiaus Afenduli of Istanbul<sup>18</sup>, well acquainted with the

12 Cf. R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului*, ed. cit., pp. 233-240.

13 Serviciul Municipiului București al Arhivelor Naționale (= S.M.B.A.N.), *Condica brâncovenească* – mss. 705, f. 182 v.-183v.; *Călători străini despre țările române*, vol. VIII, editor in charge Maria Holban, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1983, pp. 119-120; *Inscripțiile medievale ale României, I. Orașul București*, published by Alexandru Elian, Constantin Bălan, Haralambie Chrică, Olimpia Diaconescu, București, 1965, p. 220, no. 46, p. 221, no. 48; Ștefan Ionescu, *Epoca brâncovenească. Dimenisuni politice, finalitate culturală*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1981, p. 113.

14 Cf. Emil Vârtosu, *Foietul novel. Calendarul lui Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu, 1693-1704*, București, 1942, pp. V-XI; Nicolae Vătămanu, *Medici și astrologi la curtea lui Brâncoveanu*, in "Viața medicală", XIII/1967, no. 1, pp. 51-56; N. A. Ursu launched the assumption, though not confirmed by other sources, that metropolitan Teodosie was Ion Românul (in "Cronica", XVII, 1982, no. 33, 14 August); *Călători străini...*, vol. VIII, ed. cit., p. 133.

15 Also see his biography in *Călători străini...*, vol. VIII, ed. cit., p. 364 and the following.

16 Ibidem, pp. 398-400; C. Giurescu, N. Dobrescu, *Documente și regeste privitoare la Constantin Brâncoveanu*, București, 1907, p. XIV; N. Vătămanu, *Dohtori și pățimași până la 1800*, Ed. Științifică, București, 1974, pp. 154-158; it is also to be mentioned that Bartolomeo Ferrati's wife was a kin of the Cantacuzino family (Nicolae Iorga, *Medicul lui Constantin Brâncoveanu, Bartolomeo Ferrati*, in "Revista Istorică", vol. 28, (1932), pp. 12-13).

17 S.M.B.A.N., *Condica brâncovenească* – mss. 705, f. 509 v.; Gr. Crețu, *Cel mai vechi dicționar latino-românesc de Teodor Corbea*, in "Voința națională", XXII, 15 Oct. 1905 (extras); Scarlat Struțeanu, *Frații Corbea, doi umaniști ardeleni la Curtea lui Constantin Brâncoveanu*, in "Ramuri", Craiova, XXXIII (1941), no. 1-2, pp. 40-55; Ștefan Meteș, *Din relațiile noastre cu Rusia. Frații David și Teodor Corbea din Brașov...ca diplomați și scriitori*, in "Mitropolia Ardealului", nr. V/1960, no. 11-12, pp. 836-862; Gh. Cardaș, *Teodor Corbea, poet și traducător al Psaltirei, „vel pisar și canțelar” al împăratului Petru cel Mare*, in "Mitropolia Olteniei", XIX/1967, no. 1-2, pp. 28-44; Paul Cernovodeanu, *O familie de diplomați români din Transilvania la cumpăna dintre veacurile XVII și XVIII. Corbea din Șcheii Brașovului*, in "SMIMed", XXIII, 2005, pp. 145-158.

Turkish Osman Arabic, Pashtu and Farsi, the Greeks Niccolo da Porta<sup>19</sup> and Spiridon<sup>20</sup>, experts in Medieval Greek and Latin and in encrypting and decoding written messages.

Some of them were no mere clerks. They were also sent as envoys of the Cantacuzino family and of Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu. Gheorghe Castriotul and the Corbea brothers were remarkable messengers in Russia. Panaiot Radu and Pătru Damian were also sent as envoys to Russia, to Posolsky Prikaz<sup>21</sup>.

The list of those used in the chancellery created by the Seneschal, inherited and developed by Prince Brâncoveanu<sup>22</sup>, could go on. Many were used for foreign relations of Bucharest with Istanbul, Vienna, Rome, London, Russia, Crimea<sup>23</sup>, Poland, etc. The network of diplomatic and family connections was vast, which was proved by the prince's extensive correspondence numbering 282 known letters<sup>24</sup>. If we add the Seneschal's epistles that are partially known<sup>25</sup>, we obtain and even ampler picture of Wallachia's foreign relations at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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18 Cf. Ion Ionașcu, *Despre cronicarul Afenduli din Țara Românească*, in "Studii. Revista de istorie", XXII/1969, no. 5, pp. 875-885.

19 *Călători străini...*, vol. VIII, ed. cit., pp. 139-140; Mario Ruffini, *L'influsso italiano in Valachia nell'epoca di Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu (1688-1714)*, Munchen, 1974, pp. 136-174; Paul Cernovodeanu, *În vâltoarea primejdiilor...*, ed. Cit., p. 17.

20 *Istoriceskie sviazi*, vol. III, ed. cit., p. 201, doc. no. 55. To these we can add the names of several Transylvanian clerks specialised in the correspondence with the princes of Transylvania and with Buda (cf. Susana Andea, Avram Andea, *Erdélyi iródeák a moldvai és havasalföldi vajdai kancelláriákban a 17. században [=Dieci transilvani în cancelariile domnești din Moldova și Țara Românească în secolul al XVII-lea]*, in "Korunk", XI (2000), No. 7, pp. 86-93.

21 Cf. Constantin Șerban, *Legăturile stolnicului Constantin Cantacuzino cu Rusia*, in "Studii și articole de istorie", II/1957, pp. 237-254, here p. 243.

22 Cf. Ștefan Ionescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-122; Paul Cernovodeanu, *În vâltoarea primejdiilor...*, ed. cit., p. 16.

23 The connections of the Wallachian chancellery ensured by its leader, the seneschal Constatin Cantacuzino, in the name of the prince were also made through people that were part of the family. For instance, the seneschal Constatin Cantacuzino's sons: Radu Răducanu, who crossed Western Europe accompanied by Hrisant Nottaras; in 1700, Radu Răducanu and Chrysanthus Nottaras paid the best printing house of Padua, the Jesuit printing house, to impress the map of Wallachia (cf. R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului*, ed. cit., p. 196); the seneschal's older son, Ștefan, accompanied by Dionisie of Ianina, studied at Oxford between 1699-1705 (cf. Andrei Pippidi, *Putere și cultură în epoca lui Brâncoveanu*, în AIIAI, 25, 1988, 2, pp. 361-367); one should not neglect the connections maintained by the Cantacuzinos with the Crimean branch of their family, dating from the times of Demetrie Cantacuzino, a brother of the *Postelnic* Constantin Cantacuzino, Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu's maternal grandfather.

24 Cf. Paul Cernovodeanu, *Din corespondența diplomatică a lui Constantin Brâncoveanu* (I), in "Revista Arhivelor", an. LXII/1985, vol. XLVII, no. 1, pp. 78-80; idem, *În vâltoarea primejdiilor...*, ed. cit., p. 17.

25 Cf. R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului*, ed. cit., p. 240 and the following.

The analysis of the correspondence shows, without a doubt, that there were connections up north as far as Stockholm and London, to the west as far as Paris, south as far as Bologna, Rome (Vatican), Milano, Padua, Venice, to the east reaching Moscow, Warsaw, Cracow, Baturin<sup>26</sup>, Kiev, Tiflis, Erevan, Teheran, Damascus, etc.<sup>27</sup>

The seneschal would send messages of greater importance through his close relatives or people he trusted and were devoted to him. Thus, his nephew Pârvu Cantacuzino<sup>28</sup>, the son of his brother Drăghici<sup>29</sup>, was sent to Transylvania<sup>30</sup>, his sons Ștefan and Radu-Răducanu were rushed to Istanbul<sup>31</sup>, his nephew Toma was also sent to Tsar Peter I the Great in 1707<sup>32</sup>, and the Corbea brothers – Teodor, David and Matei – travelled several times to Moscow or to the Tsar's palaces or to Poland<sup>33</sup>. If the need arose, particularly when Russia was concerned, the correspondence was strictly supervised. More often than not, various encrypted formulas were used with the purpose of hiding messages or the identity of the carrier. Therefore, they made sure, on the one hand, that the messages would reach the destination and, on the other, that the messenger would not sell in information.

The seneschal, as the first diplomat of the country, knew how to receive his most outstanding guests<sup>34</sup>. In 1689, he greeted Count Kinski at Pitești, lodged him

26 A city located in the Zaporozh region of Ukraine; in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was the residence of the nationalist Cossack ataman Ivan Stepanovici Mazeppa (born 1639 – deceased 1709, ataman between 1687-1708); today, Baturin is merely a *stanitsa*.

27 Cf. R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului....*, ed. cit., pp. 233-240.

28 Cf. Nicolae Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova în sec. XIV-XVII*, Ed. Enciclopedică Română, București, 1971, p. 143.

29 Banul Mihai Cantacuzino, *Genealogia Cantacuzinilor*, published by N. Iorga, București, 1902, pp. 111-112; N. Iorga, *Documente privitoare la familia Cantacuzino, scoase în cea mai mare parte din arhiva D-lui G. Gr. Cantacuzino*, Inst. Minerva, București, 1902, p. 77; *Istoria Țării Românești 1290-1690. Letopiseșul Cantacuzinesc*, critical edition by C. Grecescu and D. Simonescu, București, 1960, p. 170 (further to be cited as *Letopiseșul Cantacuzinesc*).

30 *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești. Acte și scrisori*, published by Endre Veress, vol. XI (1661-1690), București, 1939, p. 270.

31 Cf. R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului....*, ed. cit., p. 237.

32 Ibidem, p. 266; Toma Cantacuzino was also sent to Istanbul in 1703 (N. Stoicescu, *Dicționar....*, ed. Cit., p. 145), to Edirne in 1704 (Al. A. C. Stourdza, *Constantin Brancovan, prince de Valachie 1688-1714. Son règne et son époque*, vol. III, Paris, 1915, p. 99, 104), to Brașov in 1709 (N. Stoicescu, *op. cit.*, p. 145).

33 Cf. Gheorghe Georgescu-Buzău, *Un diplomat român la Moscova la începutul secolului al XVIII-lea, David Corbea*, in *Relații româno-ruse în trecut*, București, 1957, pp. 42-62; also see *infra*, note 17.

34 The seneschal received his guests in accordance to those written by Neagoe Basarab in his Teachings to his son Theodosie, the chapter on envoys and wars, in *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie, versiunea românească de la Curtea de Argeș. Originalul slavon în facsimil. Transcrierea și traducerea fragmentelor de acad. Gheorghe Mihăilă*, published by

in his own residence of Afumați and then accompanied him to the prince<sup>35</sup>. Two years later, he welcomed Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli. He provided useful information for the Viennese diplomat to use in his work on the Lower Danube. He received in exchange a writing of theologian Paolo Signeri<sup>36</sup>. In 1702, he gave lord Paget the siege plan of the city of Petrovaradin, which was a form of assistance provided to imperials and, at the same time, of intellectual espionage practised by the seneschal. The old chancellor of Bucharest received, in exchange, “haine francești din stofă de Englitera (western clothes made of English fabric)”, a telescope (“*conochiale*”) and a precious diamond ring<sup>37</sup>. The lord’s companion, pastor Edmund Chishull, was given a map of Wallachia for which he received valuable books<sup>38</sup>. During these meetings, where talking was face to face, the seneschal and the prince would exchange information. Sometimes, the newspapers the seneschal would receive were extremely important. They completed the daily universe of what was known in the chancellery of Bucharest<sup>39</sup>.

Secret messages from the Wallachian chancellery, which were not supposed to be disclosed to malevolent meddlers, were sent in code<sup>40</sup>. Usually the code was simple: vowels replaced each other or special “keys” were used. Those who were initiated found it easy to work with the cipher. Niccolo da Porta, a secretary and librarian of the seneschal, was one of the specialists<sup>41</sup>.

In order for the correspondence to arrive safely, ingenious methods were employed. Thus, whenever the seneschal’s or his nephew’s (the prince’s) letters needed to securely cross the lands dominated by the nationalist Cossack ataman Mazeppa, his capital, Baturin in order to reach the Posolsky Prikaz in Moscow, various hideouts were used. Usually, a hole was made along the axis of the pole of the carriage or coach that carried the messenger. It was in this hole that the rolled letter was introduced<sup>42</sup>.

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Dan Zamfirescu, Editura Eparhiei Argeșului și Muscelului, Curtea de Argeș, 2009, pp. 193-219, 284-297

35 Cf. R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului...*, ed. cit., p. 238.

36 Ibidem, p. 239.

37 Ibidem.

38 Ibidem.

39 Ibidem, pp. 160-161.

40 Cf. R. Pava, *Criptogramele din însemnările de taină ale lui Constantin Brâncoveanu*, in “SMIMed”, IV/1960, pp. 507-517; Al. Mareș, *Din istoria criptografiei românești: cifrul cancelariei brâncovenești pentru corespondența în limba polonă*, in “Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Al. D. Xenopol”, Iași, XIV/1987, part I, pp. 335-341.

41 Ion Neculce wrote: “Constantin Duca Vodă had with him a Greek from the Country of the Franks, namely Nicolae Deporte, a learned cunning man skilful in decoding letters” (emphasis added) (cf. Ion Neculce, *Cronica copiată de Ioasaf Luca, Manuscrisul Mihail*, edition supported by Zamfira and Paul Mihail, Editura Litera, București, 1980, p. 60).

42 Cf. R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului*, ed. cit., p. 236 and following.

Naturally, the people's imagination did not stop here. The same methods, sometimes even more sophisticated, were also used by those of the Posolsky Prikaz, of which the talented Artamon Sergeyevich Matveyev was initially in charge<sup>43</sup>. He was succeeded by chancellors Count Feodor Alekseyevich Golovin and Gavriil Ivanovich Golovkin. The last two carried on a somewhat extensive correspondence with Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu and the Seneschal Constantin Cantacuzino<sup>44</sup>. Connections between Moscow and Bucharest were facilitated by the presence of Nicolae Miclescu the Spathar in the Posolsky Prikaz<sup>45</sup>. He was the main translator of letters in Romanian, Slavonic, Greek and Latin, sent from and to Bucharest particularly to the seneschal and the patriarchs of the Nottaras family, such as the letter addressed by the seneschal to the chieftain David Corbea: "*The Holy Patriarch (Dositheos Nottaras, author's note) wrote the sovereign (the tsar, author's note), I gave this letter to your brother to give it to him; all these letters are coded by Gheorghe Castriotul; you shall translate them together with his lordship the spathar (Nicolae Miclescu the Spathar, author's note) and you shall send them where needed; as soon as your brother arrives, he will require the boyar to make a new code that you will have to send me through your brother*"<sup>46</sup>. Alongside Nicolae Miclescu the Spathar, the Corbea brothers from Brașov also came to Moscow, as permanent residents, sent by the seneschal and the prince<sup>47</sup>. As expected, they would also ease the Romanian-Russian relations, by translating and communicating information.

43 *Istoriia o nevinnom zatocenii bliznego boiarina Artemona Sergeevicia Matveeva*, published by N. I. Novikov, Moskva, 1776, pp. 33-34; S. A. Belokurov, *O Biblioteke moskovskih gosudarei v. XVI stoletii*, Moskva, 1898, p. 69-74; N. M. Rogojin și col., *Oko vsei velikoi Rosii. Ob istorii russkoi diplomatičeskoj sluzbi XVI-XVII vekov*, Moskva, 1989, pp. 146-179; O. A. Belobrova, *Matveev Artemon Sergeevici "Slovari knjnikov"*, vîp. 3, pt. 2 (XVII v.), Skt. Petersburg, 1993, pp. 341-343; R. Șt. Vergatti, *Nicolae spătarul Miclescu. Viața, călătoriile, opera*, Ed. Paideia, București, 1996, pp. 140, 142; Nicolae Miclescu the Spathar taught Greek to Artamon Sergeyevich Matveyev's son (cf. A.S. Matveyev's letter to Tsar Feodor in the summer of 1677, in *Istoriia o nevinnom....*, ed. cit., pp. 33-34).

44 *Istoriceskie sviazi....*, vol. III, ed. cit., passim.

45 Cf. R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului....*, ed. cit., p. 257; a copy of the Seneschal Constantin Cantacuzino's letter of 1697 is preserved at the Romanian Academy Library, the Manuscript section, Ms. Rom., n. 5148, f. 205.

46 Cf. Al. A. C. Stourdza, *Constantin Brancovan, prince de Valachie 1688-1714. Son règne et son époque*, vol. III, ed. cit., p. 76; perhaps the most eloquent example is the secret delivery to Bucharest of the China travel journal, which belonged to the tsar. Aware that the Tsar's commands had been violated, Nicolae Miclescu the Spathar addressed a letter to Chrysanthus Nottaras and another to the seneschal, demanding that secrecy of the manuscript delivery should be kept. The work of Nicolae Miclescu the Spathar was translated by monk Michael of Byzantium, in the sanctums of Radu Vodă Monastery of Bucharest, the copying being concluded in March 1696 (cf. *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor culese de Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki*, vol. XIV/1, published by N. Iorga, București, 1915, p. 304; Demostene Russo, *Studii critice*, București, 1910, pp. 91-92).

47 See *infra*, note 17, note 33.



During the first part of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu's and Tsar Peter I's reign, the relations between them were poor. It was but natural. Brâncoveanu's policy was then western-oriented, towards Sancta Lega, particularly towards the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation<sup>48</sup>. A war had been fought between the Sancta Lega and the Sublime Porte, from which Wallachia had had high hopes. The seneschal's intellectual espionage practised in favour of the imperials is a proof of this. As part of this activity, the seneschal sent the Austrians valuable information regarding the fights, as the battle plan of Petrovaradin<sup>49</sup>. The war ended with the peace of Karlowitz (16/26 January 1699)<sup>50</sup>. The peace treaty was extremely important for it mentioned the "*Oriental problem*". From then on, diplomats and politicians showed that "the sick man of Europe", i.e. the Sublime Porte, could no longer dominate all the territories they owned on the land of Japheth. Consequently, the European powers demanded a redistribution of these territories once controlled by the Crescent<sup>51</sup>.

The diplomats' conclusions were extremely important to Wallachia whose future fate depended on them. To attain a more advantageous international status, Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu deemed it necessary to turn to Russia, too. Obviously, the prospects of the Empire of the Tsars were to include the Romanian territories under its sphere of influence or conquest.

However, at that moment, the Tsarist Empire was still far. It did not share a border with the Romanian countries<sup>52</sup>. In 1688, Tsar Peter I, who had just become of age and freed himself from the tutelage of his sister Sophia and his brother Ivan V, sought to turn towards the West. He had somehow been in contact with the achievements of the well-structured western civilisation through "Red Sloboda" – the foreigners' quarter in Moscow. Nicolae Milescu's report on China and those he had seen in the oriental quarter of Moscow – "Kitay-gorod", did not appeal much to the tsar. He was more interested in Western Europe, spending some time in the Low Countries and Germany. Upon his return, he tried to employ his plan of turning Russia from a great terrestrial power into a universal one. With this

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48 Paul Cernovodeanu, *În vârtoarea primejdiilor...*, ed. cit., pp. 16-17, 18, 19, 20.

49 Idem, *Un croquis du siège de la forteresse de Petrovaradin (1694) appartenant au sénéchal Constantin Cantacuzino*, in "Revue des études sud-est européennes", XIV/1976, no. 4, pp. 591-601.

50 Walachia was represented by capuchehaia Ianache Porphyrita, who was unofficially accompanied by the Seneschal Constantin Cantacuzino; the Wallachian representatives attended these talks due to the good relations between Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu and his father-in-law, grand dragoman Alexander Mavrocordatos (cf. Paul Cernovodeanu, *În vârtoarea primejdiilor...*, ed. cit., p. 23).

51 Cf. Paul Cernovodeanu, *Le journal des travaux du Congrès de Karlowitz (1698-1699)*, in "Revue des études sud-est européennes", XIX/1981, no. 2, pp. 325-354.

52 Ukraine (that was still partially dominated by Poland) and the steppes lying north of the Black Sea (controlled by the khans of Crimea and the sultans of Istanbul) interposed between the Romanian Countries and the Tsarist Empire.

purpose in mind, he sought to gain access to the sea. First, his actions were directed towards the Baltic Sea, therefore he started the Northern War or the war with Sweden (1700-1721) and was successful. He won the second battle of Narva (1704) and then he founded Saint Petersburg. During the same period, on 13/23 July 1700, he signed a separate peace with the Ottomans at Istanbul because he had left the talks of Karlowitz. It was a triumph for the tsar and the Posolsky Prikaz: he had gained the city of Azov and some access to the Black Sea<sup>53</sup>. Under those circumstances, pan-Slavism, present and known ever since Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich (1645-1676), imposed even more forcefully<sup>54</sup>.

Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu was aware of the new situation. Though busy and preoccupied with the northern war, the tsar started to show interest in Bucharest. He did so for Constantin Brâncoveanu and his people in Istanbul had assisted the tsar's ambassador Emilian Ignatievici Ukraințev in successfully concluding the peace talks on 13/23 July 1700. Then Russia gained the city of Azov and direct access to the Black Sea. As a result, on 10/20 August 1700, Tsar Peter I awarded the Order of St. Andrew to Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu<sup>55</sup>. Moreover, starting with the same year, the relations became so tight that Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu sent a permanent delegate to Moscow, namely the Greek Panaiot of Rhodos<sup>56</sup>. In 1702, a secret meeting took place in Bucharest. Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, the patriarch of Jerusalem Dositheos Nottaras, his

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53 At the talks, Russia was represented by Emil Ignatievici Ukraințev. Brâncoveanu supported the Russian efforts and, consequently, he received the Order of St. Andrew from the tsar and was promised asylum in Russia in case he was dethroned. To maintain the good relations between the chancellery of Bucharest and the Posolsky Prikaz, Brâncoveanu sent the Greek Panaiot of Rhodos to Moscow (cf. *Istoriceskie sviazi...*, vol. III, ed. cit., pp. 139-141, doc. 39, pp. 151-152, doc. 42, pp. 153-155, doc. 44, pp. 158, 161, doc. 45, pp. 162-163, doc. 46; L. E. Semionova, *Stabilirea legăturilor permanente între Țara Românească și Rusia la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea și începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, in "Romanoslavica", Istorie, V/1962, pp. 38-40; Ștefan Ionescu, *Epoca Brâncovenească*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1981, p. 96.

54 For the Croatian Juraj Križanić, the creator of pan-Slavism, his life in Russia and relationship with Nicolae Milescu the Spathar, see S. A. Belocurov, *Iurii Krijanič v Rosii*, Moskva, 1901, pp. 3-129; idem, *Iz duhovnoi jizni moskovskogo obščestvo, XVII v.*, Moskva, 1902, pp. 226-232.

55 *Istoriceskie sviazi*, vol. III, ed. cit., pp. 151-152, doc. 43: "In 1700, the month of August, the 20<sup>th</sup> day, at the order of his majesty and great knez Peter Alexeyevich, autocrat of entire Great, Little and White Russia, boyar Feodor Alekseyevich Golovin commanded that a knight cross and a dagger hilt and gold clasps with diamonds for the belt of that dagger be made at the armory and sent to the prince of Wallachia and that a sapphire be put on the dagger hilt... (...)... it shall be done in haste"; L. E. Semenova, *Stabilirea legăturilor diplomatice permanente între Țara Românească și Rusia la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea și începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, loc. cit., pp. 29-51, here pp. 38-39, translating the document "he ordered that a *Knight Cross* and a sword with a hilt, clasps at the sword belt, ruby in nests should be made at the armory and sent to the Wallachian prince".

56 The permanent resident Panaiot arrived in Moscow on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1700 (cf. *Istoriceskie sviazi*, vol. III, ed. cit., pp. 154-155, doc. 44).

nephew Chrysanthus Nottaras and the Cantacuzino brothers – Constantin the seneschal and Mihai the spathar attended. During the reunion, a secret plan with 34 “directions” was drawn up. It stipulated the possibility of Southeast European Orthodox peoples taking up arms and gaining independence from the Sublime Porte<sup>57</sup>. The condition for success lay in the help provided by the tsar. In order to draw him into fight, he was promised to be made leader of Pan-Orthodoxy<sup>58</sup>. It was a promise based on reality: Russia was the greatest orthodox power in the world. In its turn, the Orthodox Church had to take action in order to draw into war all orthodox peoples of Southeast Europe. Here, a significant part was going to be played by Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem. Through the sermons delivered by priests, he was to draw all Christian peoples of Southeast Europe. Various promises were being made, especially to the tsar, to maintain the balance of forces in the Balkan Peninsula: should the plan succeed, the tsar was to remain a nominal leader, to re-establish the Byzantine Empire and, possibly, to restore the Cantacuzinos to the throne and Wallachia was to gain its independence. Thus, the threat of Vienna, the domination of Istanbul were rid of and theoretical nominal protection of the tsars of Saint Petersburg was instated.

Unfortunately, the rupture between Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu and his Cantacuzino uncles, the Seneschal Constantin and Mihai the spathar, hindered the plan. In fact, not even the tsar could be easily deceived by the ideal, somewhat phantasmal, plans drawn up and presented at the secret reunion of those gathered in Bucharest. The discord in the ruling family of Wallachia, long known and shown in images<sup>59</sup>, obvious through facts<sup>60</sup>, also gained notoriety in Moscow. When he learned about the disturbances of Bucharest, chancellor Golovkin

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57 Cf. L. E. Semenova, *op. cit.*, loc. Cit., p. 41; the text of the letter containing this plan is rendered in *Istoriceskie sviazi...*, vol. III, ed. cit., pp. 184-191. The letter was presented to Moscow to the Posolsky Prikaz for Tsar Peter I on 6 December 1702 by chieftain David Corbea.

58 Ibidem.

59 The rupture between Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu and his uncles, Constantin the seneschal and Mihai the spathar, was first highlighted by the painter Constantinos and his students in the votive painting of the church of Hurezi Monastery. In it, the seneschal Constantin Cantacuzino has his head turned from the prince, scornful rebuking look and lips arched in a rictus full of grief and remonstrance. The painter rendered the same grief, though less accentuated, in the expression on Mihai the spathar Cantacuzino's face, in the same votive portrait. The painter had obviously heard a rumour that was circulating among the courtiers; he probably had the consent of the founding prince of the church when he painted the anger on the two Cantacuzino brothers' faces (cf. Agnes Terezia Erich, Radu Ștefan Vergatti, *Noutăți aduse în civilizația românească de epoca brâncovenească*, in “Muzeul Național”, no. 23/2011, pp. 27-47).

60 *Anonimul Brâncovenesc*, ed. cit., pp. 120-121; Constantin Brâncoveanu did not attend the sanctification of the Church and the Colțea Monastery Complex that was the work of his uncle, Mihai Cantacuzino the spathar (cf. Radu Ștefan Vergatti, *Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu și Cantacuzinii*, in vol. *Constantin Basarab Brâncoveanu*, culegere de studii, Craiova, 2004. 342-359). On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1706 he relieved Mihai the spathar of his position (cf. *Istoriceskie sviazi...*, vol. III, ed.cit., p. 262, doc. 87).

exclaimed, “what a scandal is going on there”<sup>61</sup>. And the tsar, who did not know Brâncoveanu personally, had a similar reaction. It was natural. He was an autocratic monarch, who could not understand the opposition of the nobility to the prince’s will. Russia had also known a current of the traditionalist, conservative nobility that had tried to oppose him, but had been offered free meal and accommodation in Siberia. Inquiring about the situation, the tsar thought, due to the information received through different channels, that he could count more on the Cantacuzinos. Such being the circumstances, he sent Brâncoveanu an imperative uncompromising letter which defined the relation of power the tsar thought existed between him and the prince of Wallachia: “*From the great ruler, to prince of Wallachia. My lord, faithful to us and gracious! As we have long been aware of the numerous loyal services you have done to us, especially of your faithful and sedulous fervour and effort to the good of all Christianity, which pleases us most and hope from you in the years to come, having a devoted skilful servant in Mihail Cantacuzino your spathar, who is your kinsman and friend and whom we have to this day cherished for his loyal fervour and service to us. And today, against all our expectations, some news was brought to us (causing great wonder), that you have deprived Mihail of his position and we very much doubt there is a reason for that. And if this were true, we wish, for our sake, you restored Mihail as spathar and showed him your merciful kindness, which we would regard as a sign of deep and loyal appreciation and deference to us and we shall always try to reward you with our mercy. Peter. From Lublin, July 10, 1707*”<sup>62</sup>.

The tsar’s words did not make an impression on Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu. He maintained the decision taken on 2 February 1706, when he had relieved his uncle, old spathar Mihail Cantacuzino, of his position. Instead, on 1 September 1706, the prince appointed his nephew, the handsome and charming Toma Cantacuzino, spathar<sup>63</sup>.

The following year, on 2 September 1707, David Corbea, who had returned to Moscow due to the tsar’s insistence, was appointed imperial emissary<sup>64</sup>. He

61 Cf. Goldenberg Samuel Ardeleanu, *Știri privitoare la istoria țărilor române în corespondența împăratului Rusiei Petru I*, în “Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Medie”, I/1950, p. 207.

62 *Istoriceskie sviazi...*, vol. III, p. 262, doc. 87.

63 Nicolae Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova în secolele XIV-XVII*, București, 1971, p. 165; R. Șt. Ciobanu (Vergatti), *Pe urmele stolnicului...*, pp. 267-268; Anton Maria del Chiaro, în *Călători străini despre țările române*, vol. VIII, ed. cit., pp. 387-389.

64 Cf. Goldenberg Samuel Ardeleanu, *Știri privitoare la istoria Țărilor Române în corespondența împăratului Rusiei Petru I*, loc.cit., pp. 216-218, no. LXXXVIII; Peter I’s patent for David Corbea’s employment as court counsellor (20<sup>th</sup> April 1707) in *Istoriceskie sviazi...*, vol. III, ed.cit., pp. 255-256, doc. 82, pp. 258-259, doc. 84; In a letter addressed to chancellor Feodor Alekseyevich Golovin, on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1704, Nicolae Milescu the spathar wrote about David Corbea that “the chiaus was a valuable man”, but he could become a powerful enemy if he were to turn against the Russians and work for the Turks, which would be dangerous, for one had to take

immediately went on a special mission to Warsaw, and from there he would continue his journey to Hungary. There he was supposed to discuss the possibility of getting assistance from Francis II Rákóczi. Before his departure, David Corbea received assurances that his son, Sebastian, would be well taken care of and protected, being given a house in “Kitay-gorod”<sup>65</sup>. Only then did David set out. He did not go far from Moscow; as he was considered the Cantacuzinos’ man, Brâncoveanu’s long hand reached him and thus he died on the way<sup>66</sup>.

In 1708-1709, a plot of the Cantacuzinos supported by Francis II Rákóczi and a part of the great Transylvanian nobility, aimed to replace Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu<sup>67</sup>. However, the tsar did not support them. He thought that any attempt of replacement would be wrong. Under those circumstances, based on a vague mention in Neculce’s chronicle<sup>68</sup>, it was assumed that the tsar and prince Constantin Brâncoveanu concluded a secret treaty<sup>69</sup>. Later research proved that the Moldavian chronicler recorded a mere rumour that had no documentary basis<sup>70</sup>.

The tsar’s victory of Poltava on 27 June/8 July 1709, when the army of the Swedish king Charles XII (1697-1718) was crashed, increased the tsar’s fame and prestige among the peoples of Southeast Europe. Consequently, the new prince of Moldavia, Dimitrie Cantemir (19 March-8 April 1693; 23 November 1710-11 (16) July 1711), concluded an alliance with Tsar Peter I. He was hopeful. A war was to be waged between Russia and the Sublime Porte. In this war, Dimitrie Cantemir committed to be a firm ally of Tsar Peter I.

Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu replied with caution and moderation to the tsar’s requests. He knew that any misstep could put an end to his wire dance, could lead to a tragic ending. Therefore, he settled his military camp in the village of Albești, near gura Urlaților<sup>71</sup>. The place was well chosen. He could start from

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into consideration his influence on the Romanians, Bulgarians, Serbs and Francis II Rákóczi as well his relations with the Cantacuzinos of Wallachia (cf. I. N. Mihailovski, *Očerki žizni i službe N. Spathariia v Rosii*, extracted from *Sbornik obscestva pri istatche K. N. Bezborodko*, Nejin, 1897, pp. 37-38; apud R. Șt. Vergatti, *Nicolae spătarul Milescu*, ed. cit., p. 267).

65 Cf. *Istoriceskie sviazi*..., vol. III, ed. cit., pp. 262-263.

66 Cf. Al. A. C. Stourdza, *Constantin Brancovan, prince de Valachie 1688-1714. Son règne et son époque*, vol. III, ed. cit., pp. 189-190, doc. 217, 218; Gheorghe Georgescu-Buzău, *Un diplomat român la Moscova la începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, David Corbea, in “Relații româno-ruse în trecut”, București, 1957, pp. 42-62, here p. 62.

67 Cf. Paul Cernovodeanu, *A Havasalföldi és Moldvai vezető körök magatartása a kuruk felkeléssel szemben*, in vol. *Rákóczi – Tanulmányok*, Budapest, 1980, pp. 258-262.

68 Ion Neculce, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, in *Opere*, published by G. Ștrempel, București, 1982, pp. 483, 525.

69 Cf. *Istoria României*, vol. III, București, 1964, p. 210.

70 Cf. L. E. Semionova, *Stabilirea legăturilor diplomatice permanente între Țara Românească și Rusia*, loc.cit., p. 48; Paul Cernovodeanu, *În vâltoarea primejdiilor...*, ed. cit., p. 30.

71 Radu logofăt Greceanu, *Istoria domniei lui Constantin Basarab Brâncoveanu voievod (1688-1714)*, published by Aurora Ilieș, București, 1970, p. 179.

there either to support the tsar, to withdraw to Transylvania or to just wait. After a short visit to Iași (25 June/6 July 1711), the tsar decided to fight the unfortunate battle of Stănilești. There, the Russians led by the tsar and field marshal Boris Petrovich Sheremetev were defeated by the grand vizier Mehmet Baltadji. However, in the meantime, the commander of the Russian cavalry, General Karl Ewald von Rönne, had successfully attacked Brăila<sup>72</sup>, whose fortifications had been neglected, left to decay<sup>73</sup>. Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu's nephew, Toma Cantacuzino, had joined the Russian troops. Leading a part of Brâncoveanu's army, the cavalry, he had fled the princely camp with the knowledge of his uncles, Constantin the seneschal and Mihai biv-vel the spathar. It was an act of high treason against the prince and the sultan, especially since it occurred on the eve of the Stănilești battle. Great spathar Toma Cantacuzino was accompanied by Ghinea the chiaus, Mihalache the captain, Toader and Gavrilă Corbea, great seneschal Mihalcea Cândescu.<sup>74</sup> Following the triumph of Brăila, Russo-Romanian troops had to retreat, though, at the order of the tsar that had been defeated. Romanian boyars, led by Toma the spathar, that had taken part in the conquest of Brăila, fled to Transylvania and then to Russia where they were granted asylum and estates. The tsar, who had escaped the danger of captivity due to Tsarina Catherine I<sup>75</sup> and who was angry about having been defeated, blamed Brâncoveanu for this failure, calling him Judas. In turn, the sultan, displeased with the partial victory, declared the Wallachian prince *traitor*. Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu, feeling betrayed and uncertain, gave the Ottoman Turks, without pay, food for the army and a large sum of money and returned the Tsar the money he had received before the battle of Stănilești. Obviously, the prince was right to do so. He was thus saving his throne, life and family. He had no other solution, for he had been betrayed by the Cantacuzinos. The latter had also overreached themselves as they had had too much confidence in the tsar. According to what Dimitrie Cantemir wrote in *Evenimentele Cantacuzinilor*, prince Constantin Brâncoveanu affirmed he would punish them: "I shall show the entire world who

72 Cf. [Gavril Ivanonici Golovkin], *Știre amănunțită despre ce s-a petrecut zi de zi între armata de război a Majestății Sale Țarul și cea turcească din 10 iun[ie] 1711*, in Ionel Căndea, *Brăila 1711. Documente și studii*, Muzeul Brăilei, Ed. Istros, Brăila, 2011, pp. 2-40; [idem], *Jurnal veridic și relateare, despre cele petrecute între armata Majestății S[ale] Țarul și cea turcească, de la 30 mai st[il] v[echi] 1711*, in Ionel Căndea, *Brăila 1711*, ed. cit., pp. 42-95; Ionel Căndea, *Asediul Brăilei din 1711. Două puncte de vedere contemporane*, in idem, *Brăila 1711*, ed. cit., pp. 115-122.

73 Cf. Mihai Maxim, *Brăila 1711. Noi documente otomane*, Muzeul Brăilei, Ed. Istros, Brăila, 2011, p. 75.

74 Cf. Radu Greceanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-181.

75 Cf. Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII et histoire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand*, Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, Fils et Cie., Paris, 1860, pp. 406-407; the account of Danish admiral Just Juel in *Călători străini...*, vol VIII, ed. cit., p. 446.

Brâncoveanu and his family are and who the Cantacuzinos and their family are. I will do so that in your homes and your courts the blood of the Cantacuzinos flow up to the knees”<sup>76</sup>.

After the Ottoman troops’ victory of Stănilești and Tsar Peter I’s embarrassing defeat, the relations with Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu broke up for good. There could no longer be a bridge linking the two monarchs. However, Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu sought to maintain some communication relations with Russia. Through knez Dmitri Mikhailovich Golitsyn, the governor of Kiev, he informed the Posolsky Prikaz about the stage of negotiations aiming at the ratification of the peace signed by Ottomans and Russians on 12/23 July 1711 at Vadul Hușilor. With great difficulty was the peace treaty finally acknowledged after the signature of the last pact, at Edirne, on 5/16 June 1713<sup>77</sup>. It was obvious at that point that the two, Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu and Tsar Peter I the Great, had had only a momentary collaboration that could not last, though, for they had different goals. Brâncoveanu aimed to preserve the existence of his country, while the tsar was after the conquest of Wallachia. The analysis of documents prompts us to assert that the holy martyr prince Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu clearly understood, during the latter part of his reign, the impossibility of using the military power of the great orthodox state Tsarist Russia as a shield and liberating force. To the prince of Bucharest it became obvious that the tsar’s coming here would have meant replacing one rule with another. In such conditions, Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu chose, as much as he could, to preserve the good relations with Istanbul, which provided a shield against Russia’s advance and ruling intentions as regards the Romanian Countries and Southeast Europe.

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76 Dimitrie Cantemir’s work was a political pamphlet not meant to be published (*Operele principelui Dimitrie Cantemir, tom III*, București, 1872, p. 6); also see the recently published edition entitled *Scurtă povestire despre stârpirea familiilor lui Brâncoveanu și a Cantacuzinilor*, published by Paul Cernovodeanu, Alvina and Emil Lazea, Mihai Caratașu, in Dimitrie Cantemir, *Opere complete*, supervised by Virgil Cândea, tome VI, 2, București, 1996.

77 Radu Greceanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-196.





## PART TWO

### MISCELANEA

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