

Department of Medieval Studies
of the Central European University

**The Uses of Pragmatic Literacy
in the Medieval Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia
(from the State Foundation to the End of the Sixteenth Century)**

Goina Mariana
PhD thesis

Budapest,
August 9, 2009

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction	4
1.1 A note on sources	7
1.2 The language diversity within the Moldavian and Wallachian documents	9
Chapter 2. Social Changes and Dissemination of the Written Record.....	13
2.1 The first known occurrences of writing produced in the territories of Wallachia and Moldavia.....	13
2.2 The early period of state foundation: The scarcity of documents and their recipients ...	15
2.3 Changes in social structure and the multiplication of documents.....	21
2.4. Dissemination of written documents into lower social categories: Writing as a tool in changing and reinforcing social boundaries	27
2.5. New practices regulating the ownership of land: fraternal adoption and perfection. Women's right to land inheritance and its relation to writing.	36
Chapter 3. Foreign influence on the dissemination of literary skills in Moldavia and Wallachia: treaties and political letters.....	46
3.1 Moldavian and Wallachian political documents: treaties	47
3.1.1 The Medieval Principality of Moldavia.....	48
3.1.2 The Medieval Wallachian Principality	52
3.2 Moldavian and Wallachian political documents: Letters	56
3.2.1 Written documents as testimonies of political communication: Moldavia.	56
3.2. 2 Written documents as testimonies of political communication: Wallachia.....	58
3.3 The oral exchange of political information. Written documents and their function as a device of support	61
Chapter 4. Trade and its impact on the development of written culture	71
4.1 Commercial privileges and regulations	74
4.2 Trade conflicts.....	78
4.3 Use of written evidence to request goods for consumption.....	87
4.4 From the office of the prince to the registers of the merchants	95
Chapter 5. Diversification of documents' producers: urban, regional and local offices as issuers of documents. The involvement of the clerical milieu in the producing of (pragmatic) documents	104
5.1 Urban writing offices: Communication of the Moldavian and Wallachian urban offices with foreign institutions.....	105
5.1.1 The Moldavian evidence.....	106
5.1.2 The urban evidence from Wallachia.....	111
5.2 Wallachian and Moldavian urban institutions as producers of land charters	113
5.3 Regional institutions and high-ranking state officials: The involvement of Moldavian and Wallachian noblemen in the commissioning and production of documents.....	117
5.3.1 The Wallachian evidence.....	118
5.3.2 The Moldavian Principality.	123
5.4 Land charters commissioned by the Wallachian and Moldavian regional institutions and state dignitaries.	127
5.5 Documents produced at village level: Charters attesting rights to landed property.....	132
5.6 The role of clerical milieu as producer of pragmatic documents.....	136
Chapter 6 Who is writing? Literacy and scribes	142
6.1 Early Moldavian and Wallachian chanceries.....	142
6.2 Functionaries employed in the prince's chanceries during the early period: Their career, status, and family relations	145

6.3 The employees of the state chanceries and their practices after the turn of the sixteenth century	152
6.4 Education of the literate personnel.....	162
6.5 Scribes of the Latin documents who were active in the Moldavian and Wallachian state chanceries	167
6.6 The local sphere: The producers of the documents issued at the local level.....	170
Chapter 7. From the oral customs to the written word. Literacy versus illiteracy and quasi-literacy. Orality.....	177
7.1 Land disputes procedures: oral customs as opposed to written documents.....	177
7.2 Administrative communication: Written versus oral?.....	188
7.3 Last wills.....	194
Chapter 8. Conclusions	197
8.1 Land charters as promoters of pragmatic literacy	197
8.2 Foreign relations and trade: essential factors for the early written culture.....	200
8.3 The process of dissemination of written practices	203
8.4 Who was writing?.....	205
8.5 Oral culture/Literate culture.....	206
Bibliography.....	209

Chapter 1. Introduction

The aim of my thesis is to reveal and understand processes behind the appearance and dissemination of literacy in the medieval principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. I will focus on the social and cultural factors that contributed to the adoption and use of writing from the appearance of the state until the end of the sixteenth century.

The term literacy involves, but it is by no means limited to, the ability to read and/or write.¹ Following Simon Franklin, I start from the distinction between technical and cultural literacy. In my approach, I am less concerned with the former (“concerning some level of ability in reading and/or writing”) as with the latter, which “implies some level of familiarity with, and mastery of, cultural activities in which reading and writing are used.”²

My work concentrates on the appearance and dissemination of written documents, tracing what Michael Clanchy calls “the growth of the literate mentality.” I understand this literate mentality as the societal impact of the cultural literacy, broadly defined as “the sum of social and cultural phenomena associated with the uses of writing.”³ Therefore, by literate mentality I delineate the propensity of people to consider the use of writing for

¹On the subject of medieval literacy see Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979); Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Marco Mostert, ed., *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999); Petra Schulte, Marco Mostert, and Irene van Renswoude, eds., *Strategies of Writing: Studies on Text and Trust in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008); Richard Britnell, ed., *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West 1200-1300* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997); Jack Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); idem, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Arneved Nedkvitne, *The Social Consequences of Literacy in Medieval Scandinavia* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004). For regional contexts see Simon Franklin, “Literacy and Documentation in Early Medieval Russia,” *Speculum* 60 (1985): 1-38; Idem, *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c. 950-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Anna Adamska, “The Introduction of Writing in Central Europe (Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia),” in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 165-92; Erik Fügedi, “Verba Volant...Oral Culture and Literacy among Medieval Hungarian Nobility,” in *Kings, Bishops, Nobles and Burghers in Medieval Hungary*, ed. J. M. Bak. (London: Variorum Reprints, 1986), 1-25; István György Tóth, *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000); Karl Heidecker, ed., *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000); Catherine Holmes and Judith Waring, eds., *Literacy, Education and Manuscript Transmission in Byzantium and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

² Franklin, *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus*, 3.

³ Ibidem, 4.

communication and record, as opposed to other oral, customary means.

As from the fourth century until the second half of the fourteenth century there are no traces of written records within the territories of these two medieval principalities, why, when and how did their inhabitants begin to get accustomed with the use of writing instead of other traditional means of communication and record keeping?⁴ In short: What accounts for the adoption and growth of a literate mentality in medieval Wallachia and Moldavia?

In these terms, the study will not be limited to a survey of those who technically mastered (to a certain degree) literary skills but will trace the changes in the dominant cultural models that paved the way for the use of written documents by many, in a social context dominated by oral practices.

Following Clanchy again, I suggest that the best way of studying these cultural and social changes is to focus on “the development of literacy for and from practical purposes of day-to-day business rather than creative literature.”⁵ In the same vein, Arnvéd Nedkvitne endorses this thesis stating that practical literacy (or administrative literacy, in his terms) “reveals the social consequences of literacy most clearly.”⁶ My choice has been to concentrate on documents issued for pragmatic purposes. This choice has been reinforced by the fact that this type of documents has not yet been approached in Romanian historiography.

I have chosen to study Moldavia and Wallachia due to their relatively parallel cultural and political development. Both states appeared by the mid-fourteenth century, unusually late for Southeastern Europe (as compared to the states neighboring them, whether Catholic or Orthodox). They share the same Romance language and Greek-Orthodox religion, and the organization of their states, societies and churches have strong similarities as well. This said,

⁴Nedkvitne, *The Social Consequences of Literacy in Medieval Scandinavia*, 242.

⁵Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 3. On the conceptual distinction between pragmatic versus literary documents see also Richard Britnell, who defined as pragmatic documents those that “contributed to some legal or administrative operation and were produced for the use of a particular administrator or property-owner” as opposed to literary manuscripts that “had the capacity to instruct, edify or entertain an indefinite number of readers.” See Britnell, *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West*, 3.

⁶Nedkvitne, *The Social Consequences of Literacy in Medieval Scandinavia*, 11.

my thesis highlights the differences and similarities in the reception and dissemination of written culture in the two principalities.

The time frame covered is mainly the period between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries. The starting point was defined by the period of creation of state institutions and the use of written documents in the territories of the Wallachian and Moldavian principalities after a great hiatus that lasted for almost ten centuries.

Almost until the end of the sixteenth century, the main bulk of surviving material from the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were issued at the level of the central state chancery. Urban, regional, or village documents survive only exceptionally. The type of surviving documents produced at the level of the princes' chancery deals almost exclusively with charters attesting land possession, foreign relations and trade. Thus, I chose to structure my work around these three domains incorporating the use of writing.

My argument is developed through six chapters. I begin in chapter 2 by focusing on the major source of written documents from the period: charters and writs attesting land ownership. Chapter 3 contains analyses of the role of literacy in maintaining foreign relations and in exchanges of information and intelligence with the states and *burgs* in the region. Chapter 4 contains a survey of the correspondence involving trade and market exchanges.

With chapter 5, I introduce a diachronic dimension, focusing on the dissemination of written practices in time and among various social strata. When, how and why did documents begin to be produced among lower level social groups, other than the prince's chancery? Chapter 6 contains a survey of the scribes, the active producers of documents in the two societies. In chapter 7, I explore the inter-relations and interdependence between oral and written cultures in the two principalities. I focus on court records, wills and administrative correspondence to show how written culture reinforced and functioned next to, or actually displaced, oral customary practices. I end with chapter 8 delineating the main conclusions of

this thesis.

1.1 A note on sources

No urban or state archives have survived from the medieval Romanian principalities; the earliest extant archives date from the nineteenth century.⁷ Monasteries were the only local institutions that preserved their own (and some laymen's) documents from medieval times; and very few documents were preserved in private hands. Thus, mainly documents attesting land ownership and its official transactions such as land charters, writs and administrative letters from the territories of the two principalities survive. The remainder of the documents that have come down to us from foreign archives consist mainly of political and commercial letters. Moreover, throughout the entire researched period, these letters are preserved as one-sided correspondence: documents sent by Moldavians and Wallachians have survived, while those addressed to them are lost.

Out of this situation, two main categories of sources were available to me:

- land titles preserved on the territory of the principalities that for convenience will be termed 'internal' documents from now;
- letters preserved in foreign archives, which I refer to as 'external' documents.

I am aware that in this survey, the use of written documents contain a bias through the filtering effects of time and preservation practices; some written documents, such as registers maintained by the prince's treasury or by monastic institutions, were, it appears, not perceived as important and not a single one of them survived, although they are mentioned in other contemporary sources. Land titles issued at the urban, regional and local level were perceived as having only a provisional value as well and required subsequent confirmation through the prince's chanceries. Consequently, the low number of local documents attested today does not reflect the actual number of documents once produced. Even charters issued in the princely

⁷ Ioan Bogdan, *Documente Privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească în sec. XV și XVI*, vol.1 (1413-1508) (Documents concerning Wallachian relations with Hungary and the town of Brașov during the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries) (Bucharest: Socecu and Company, 1905), XXV.

chanceries, whose survival was of utmost importance for their owners, were frequently lost, as shown by the production of subsequent documents re-confirming ownership. In order to overcome the problems raised by preservation bias I correlate indirect evidence with the data from extant documents (including their format and style).

I have based my findings on the analysis of edited sources. The bulk of Moldavian and Wallachian material has been edited in several editions. The most reliable is the edition of the charters preserved in Romanian archives, *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, which roughly comprises the entire Wallachian collection of charters – from the fourteenth century to the reign of Michael the Brave (1593-1601).⁸ Unfortunately, the Moldavian collection assembled in *Documenta Romaniae Historica* does not extend beyond the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504). Consequently, for the periods uncovered by the *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, I used *Documente de Istorie a Romaniei*. I have also surveyed small editions of documents published in various periodicals that come to complement the edition of *Documente de Istorie a Romaniei*.⁹

As concerns the documents preserved in the foreign archives, I have used the Hurmuzaki and Veress collections.¹⁰ Special attention was paid to the part of the Hurmuzaki

⁸For Wallachia see Petre Panaitescu, Damaschin Mioc, Ștefan Ștefănescu, Ioana Constantinescu, et. al., eds., *Documenta Romaniae Historica B: Țara Românească* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1975), vols. 1-8, 11 (henceforth DRH B). See also Ion Ionașcu, L. Lăzărescu Ionescu, Barbu Cămpina, Eugen Stănescu, D. Prodan, eds., *Documente privind Istoria României* (Documents concerning Romanian History) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1953), vol. 5, 6; (henceforth DIR B); for Moldova see Constantin Cihodaru, I. Caproșu and L. Șimanschi, eds., *Documenta Romaniae Historica A: Moldova* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1980), vols. 1-3 (henceforth DRH A); for the sixteenth century see Ion Ionașcu, L. Lăzărescu Ionescu, Barbu Cămpina, Eugen Stănescu, D. Prodan, eds., *Documente privind Istoria României* (Documents concerning Romanian History) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1952), vols. 1-4 (Henceforth DIR A).

⁹The documents were mainly edited in such periodicals as *Studii Revista de istorie*, *Romanoslavica*, *Analele Stiintifice ale Universitatii "Al. I. Cuza"*. See, for instance, Nicolae Grigoraș, Ion Caproșu, "Documente moldovenești inedite din secolele al XVI-lea și al XVII-lea" (Unedited Moldavian documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), *Studii Revista de istorie* 21.2 (1968): 243-55; Ioan Caproșu, "Documente moldovenești din secolele al XV-lea - al XVII-lea" (Moldavian documents from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries), *Analele Stiintifice ale Universitatii "Al. I. Cuza" Istorie* 37 (1991): 171-204; P. Mihail, "Documente inedite ale cancelariei moldovenești din veacul al XVI-lea (Din Arhiva Metohului Sf. Mormânt din Constantinopol)" (Unpublished documents of the Moldavian chancellery from the sixteenth century), *Studii Revista de istorie* 17.2 (1964): 335-62; 3; Lucia Djamo, "Documente slavo- moldovenești inedite din secolul al XVI-lea - al XVII-lea" (Unedited Slavo-Moldavian documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), *Romanoslavica* 10 (1964): 447-56.

¹⁰Densușianu, Nicolae, Densușianu, ed. *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Colecția Hurmuzaki*

collection edited by Iorga, which includes political, juridical, commercial, and personal letters exchanged by Wallachian and Moldavian subjects with Transylvanian burgers and issued in Latin, German or Hungarian. For the Slavonic letters, I have mainly used the works edited by Ioan Bogdan¹¹ and Grigorie Tocilescu.¹²

1.2 The language diversity within the Moldavian and Wallachian documents

More than half a dozen languages were used for writing within Wallachian and Moldavian documents during the medieval period. The earliest two Wallachian and one Moldavian documents were produced in Latin. However, Slavonic settled in as the state language in both Romanian Principalities. Accordingly, the documents concerned with internal needs, both charters or administrative documents, were issued in Slavonic.

The foreign correspondence of the Moldavian princes was conducted almost exclusively in Latin, especially during the fifteenth century.¹³ Moldavian noblemen generally followed the princely use of languages. Consequently, Latin was dominant in their letters. Out of seventy-one surviving letters only ten were produced in Slavonic.¹⁴ In addition to Latin and Slavonic, Moldavian princes (and noblemen as well) used sometimes German in their

(Documents concerning the history of the Romanians. Hurmuzaki Collection), vol. 1-3. With *Supplement I* containing documents for the years 1518 to 1819 collected and ed. by Grigore Tocilescu and Alexandru I. Odobescu, vols. 1-4 . and *Supplement II* containing documents for the years 1510 to 1703 collected and ed. by Ioan Bogdan, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Academia Română, 1900)); Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*. (Documents concerning the History of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia) (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1933), vols. 1-6.

¹¹ Ioan Bogdan, *Documente și regeste privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și Ungaria: în secolul 15 și 16* (Documents and *Regesta* concerning Wallachian relations with Brașov and Hungary: The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) (Bucharest: Atelierul Grafic I.V. Socecu, 1902). See also idem, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*,

¹² Grigorie Tocilescu, *534 documente istorice slavo-romane 1346-1603* (534 Slavonic-Romanian historical documents) (Vienna: n.p., 1931).

¹³ Mihai Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte de Ștefan cel Mare* (Moldavian documents before Steven the Great) (Iasi: Viața românească, 1932), vol. 2, no. 179 (1433, March 15), no. 187 (1434, Apr.21), no. 200 (1436, June 9).

¹⁴ The first surviving letters date from the reign of Stephan the Young (1517-1527). See Cluj State Archives, Fond POB, Document no. 552 (Catalog number 665); Three documents are surviving from the reign of Petru Rareș, (see Ioan Bogdan, *Documente moldovenesti din sec XV si XVI în arhivul Brașovului* (Moldavian documents from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the town archive of Brașov) (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socecu, 1905), no.22 (1530), no.23 (1530), no.24 (c.1531-2), while all the others survive from the second half of the century, from short reigns such as those of Ștefan Lăcustă, Bogdan Lapușneanu, and Ioan the Terrible, See Tocilescu, *534 documente istorice slavo-române 1346-1603*, no. 505, no. 506, no. 508, no. 509, no. 510.

administrative, commercial, and private letters.¹⁵ In contrast, with few exceptions, the entire communication with foreign entities issued from Moldavian urban centers was redacted in German until the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁶

Conversely, Slavonic dominates the large majority of the extant documents in Wallachia in both external as well as internal communication needs. Even correspondence concerning foreign relations was mostly carried out in Slavonic and seldom in Latin.¹⁷ The correspondence from Wallachian noblemen was almost exclusively in Slavonic, as out of a 115 documents only four written in Latin survive.

After the mid-sixteenth century, the language configuration expanded as documents in vernacular Hungarian, Polish, Greek and Romanian began to be issued in Moldavia and Wallachia. Presumably, the movement was stimulated by the use of vernacular languages abroad, under the influence of the Reformation. For instance, Petru the Lamé (1574-1577, II 1582-1591) in his thirty surviving letters employed Latin, German, Greek, and Hungarian. The charters he commissioned were in Slavonic, while his personal notes were written in Romanian.

After the mid-sixteenth century, the Moldavian principality continued to remain attached to the language conventionally used in the area. Hungarian seems to have been brought into written practices as a gradual substitution for Latin. Out of twenty-one letters addressed by the Moldavian state and urban officials to the Transylvanian burg of Bistrița in the second half of the sixteenth century, eight were issued in Hungarian,¹⁸ six in German,¹⁹

¹⁵ For instance, Petru Rareș' inquiries about his family left behind in Transylvania during his exile were recorded in German. See Nicolae Iorga, *Acte și scrisori din arhivele orașelor ardelene (Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu)* (Documents and letters from the Transylvanian urban archives (Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu), in *Documente de istorie a României. Colecția Hurmuyaki*, vol. 15. 1 (1358-1600). (Bucharest: Academia Română, 1911), no. 733 (1540, Febr. 2), no. 738 (1540, June 23), no. 742 (1540, Sept. 12).

¹⁶ See for instance, Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 617 (1529, Sept. 5).

¹⁷ From the state foundation to the reign of Mihnea the Turk (1577-1583), out of the entire surviving princely correspondence concerning foreign affairs and trade, only 128 letters are in Latin, and the rest (360) in Slavonic.

¹⁸ See Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1000 (1559, Apr. 29), no. 1012 (1559, Nov. 1), no. 1295 (1589, July 13), no. 1307 (1592), no. 1456 (1600), no. 1454 (the letter is not dated, Iorga dated it by mistake to the end of the fifteenth century, most probably it was written by the end of the sixteenth century).

six in Romanian²⁰ and only one in Latin.²¹ The Moldavian princes and noblemen began using Hungarian especially from the reign of Peter the lame (1574-1577, II 1582-1591).²² Presumably, the use of Hungarian by the Moldavian princes and noblemen was stimulated by its broader use in the area, as it is known that the Transylvanian princely chancery used Hungarian for its diplomatic correspondence with the Danubian principalities as well as with the Ottoman Empire.²³

Consequently, as has been noted, Romanian was seldom employed in Moldavia. Moldavian documents in Romanian began to be issued at the urban level together with German documents in the last years of the sixteenth century.²⁴ It seems that by the end of the century, vernacular scribes were the easiest available literate personnel at the urban level at least in certain Moldavian towns. By the end of the sixteenth century, Polish began to be employed as well in the foreign documents issued by Moldavian princes and noblemen. This is especially true for those princes and noblemen with close cultural and political relations with the Polish state, such as Prince Ieremia Movila (1595-1600) or Chancellor Stroici.

In Wallachia, language use continued to be more restricted up to the end of the sixteenth century. The use of Slavonic switched towards an early and broad use of Romanian. The first extant letter in Romanian was issued in the Wallachian town of Campulung, in 1521,²⁵ almost half a century earlier than the first Romanian documents issued from Moldavia. Conversely, the first Wallachian document written in Hungarian is attested only

¹⁹Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 998 (1559, April 22), no. 1002 (1559, May 6), no. 1015 (1560, only date of the year), no. 1106 (1564, Febr.4), no. 1303 (1591, July 18-28), no. 1312 (1592, Sept.26).

²⁰Three letters were issued by urban institutions, two by military administrators of Suceava town, and one by a private citizen. See Gheorghe Chivu, Alexandru Mareș, eds. *Documente Românești din secolul al XVI-lea* (Romanian documents from the sixteenth century) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1979), no. 110 (1600).

²¹Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no.1210 (1572, July 30). The Latin letter was written by the princely scribe Stephanus Literatus.

²²The first Hungarian princely letter was issued during Lapusneanu's reign, in 1558. It was addressed to Bistrița and was a letter of thanks for the gifts he had received. See Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 99; Moldavian noblemen used vernacular Hungarian from 1559, See Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1000 (1559).

²³Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol. 3, VII.

²⁴Three surviving letters were issued in Suceava and one each from the town of Neamț (Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1457) and Cotnari. See *ibidem*, 1458.

²⁵Chivu, *Documente Românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 87.

from 1579.²⁶ Only in the last decade of the sixteenth century, mainly under the reign of Michael the Brave, the use of a variety of documents written in various languages broadened in Wallachia. For instance, in the surviving sixteen letters commissioned by the Wallachian prince in 1598, ten documents were issued in Hungarian, four in Latin, one in German,²⁷ as well as a signed note in Romanian.²⁸ Correspondingly, in the twenty-five notes, receipts and letters issued by Wallachian noblemen, German, Hungarian, Romanian as well as Greek and Slavonic languages were employed. For instance, the ten surviving documents commissioned by Ban Mihalcea, a man of Greek origin, were produced in German (2) and Hungarian (8). Also, he frequently signed in Latin, Greek and Romanian.²⁹ Furthermore, vernacular Romanian was often used in informal notes and receipts made by the prince³⁰ and his dignitaries.³¹

Thus, the diversity of the languages employed in Moldavia is attested in Wallachia only during the reign of Michael the Brave (1593-1600). The fact that the personal archive of Michel the Brave was preserved in Vienna may explain this exceptional situation. Nevertheless, the characteristics of these documents suggest that vernacular languages had only recently begun to have been used as the language of record: the protocol and eschatocol³² remained in Latin (for the letters written in Hungarian) and in Slavonic (for those written in Romanian).³³

²⁶ Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol. 2, no.136 (1579).

²⁷ Nicolae Iorga, ed., *Acte relative la Războaiele și cuceririle lui Mihai Voda Viteazul* (Documents related to the wars and conquests of Michael the Brave) in *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. Colecția Hurmuzaki*, vol. 12 (1594-1602), (Bucharest: n. p., 1903), no. 506, no. 525, no. 526, no. 531, no. 533, no. 544, no. 548, no. 556, no. 560, no. 564, no. 575, no. 596, no. 599, no. 634, no. 635.

²⁸ Chivu, *Documente Românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no.17.

²⁹ Iorga, *Acte relative la Războaiele și Cuceririle lui Mihai Viteazul*, no. 800, no. 847, no. 1154, no. 1155, no. 1270, no. 1296, no. 1300, no. 1333, no. 1342, no. 1389.

³⁰ Chivu, *Documente Românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 17 b, no. 21, no. 24, no. 26, no. 27, no. 40, no. 43, no. 46, no. 51, no. 52, no. 53, no. 53b, no. 54, no. 57.

³¹ Chivu, *Documente Românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 20, no. 23, no. 35, no. 37, no. 43b, no. 45, no. 47, no. 49.

³² Closing protocol.

³³ Even more, the address of the Hungarian documents was sometimes written in Latin and Slavonic, thus a single document could employ three languages. See, for instance, Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, No. 1280.

Chapter 2. Social Changes and Dissemination of the Written Record

2.1 The first known occurrences of writing produced in the territories of Wallachia and Moldavia

After the withdrawal of the Romans from the territories of the medieval Romanian Principalities, there is no evidence for written endeavor up to the mid-fourteenth century. The first surviving instances of writing produced in the territory of Wallachia are a couple of graffiti dating from 1351³⁴ and a funerary inscription from 1364 recorded on the tombstone of the Wallachian Prince Nicolae Alexandru.³⁵ Conversely, in Moldavia, no surviving written evidence antedates the land titles produced in the princely chancellery; apparently the early churches and tombstones did not bear any writing.³⁶

Monastic scribal activity began in Wallachian monasteries only with the Serbian monk Nicodim, who, presumably after the battle of Nicopolis, established himself on the left bank of the Danube.³⁷ His first known manuscript, a Slavonic Gospel book, was copied in Wallachia in 1405. In Moldavia, the first extant manuscript is of a slightly later date: it was

³⁴The first known Wallachian graffiti, relating to the death of Prince Basarab at Câmpulung in September 1, 1351 was found in the Curtea de Argeș church. See Constantin Bălan, *Inscripții medievale și din Epoca modernă a României. Județul istoric Argeș (sec. 14 – 1848)* (Medieval and Modern Romanian Inscriptions. The historical district of Argeș) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1994), 53.

³⁵The first funerary inscription dating from November 16, 1364 (6873) was found on the tombstone of Nicolae Alexandru, the second Wallachian prince. It was located in the church of Câmpulung. See Nicolae Iorga, *Scrisori domnești* (Princely letters) (Vălenii de Munte: Neamul Românesc, 1912).

³⁶According to Șimanschi and Ignat, the funerary inscriptions began to be employed in Moldavia only from the first decades of the fifteenth century, during the reign of Alexandru the Good. For more information see Leon Șimanschi and Georgeta Ignat, “Constituirea cancelariei statului feudal moldovenesc” (The foundation of the Moldavian state chancellery), *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie A.D. Xenopol* 9 (1972): 115; Mihai Berza, *Repertoriul monumentelor și obiectelor de artă din timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Repertory of monuments and art objects from the time of Stephan the Great) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1958). See also Nicolae Iorga, “Contribuții la istoria bisericii noastre” (Contributions to the history of our church), *Analele Academiei Române* 2.34 (1911-1912): 453-87; Ioan Bogdan, “Inscripțiile de la Cetatea Albă și stăpânirea Moldovei asupra ei” (The inscriptions from Cetatea Albă and its Moldavian rulership), *Analele Academiei Române* 2.30 (1907-1908): 311-61.

³⁷See Emil Turdeanu, *Études des littératures roumaine et d’écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 85.

copied in 1424 by the Moldavian scribe Gravrîil, son of Uric.³⁸

The origins of written culture in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia are closely connected to state formation. It was the prince's chancellery that introduced the use of documents for pragmatic purposes in both principalities. The surviving documents are almost exclusively related to the transfer of property rights and consist of charters confirming land ownership. The charters were produced by the chancellery and validated by the princes' authority. As Jack Goody has noticed: "Of all the legal procedures that writing affects, the changes involved in the tenure of land by the registration of title are some of the most far-reaching for society as a whole."³⁹ The first extant charter was issued in Wallachia in 1369 (thirty-nine years after the first Wallachian ruler Basarab achieved independence according to the fourteenth-century Hungarian chronicle).⁴⁰ An interpolation in a charter from 1618 however indicates that charters were already issued from 1351-1352, the first year of the reign of the second Wallachian prince, Nicolae Alexandru.⁴¹ The first surviving Moldavian charter was produced in 1384.⁴²

In the following, I shall identify governmental institutions that used the written word in relation to land ownership, the purposes of their use, and the contexts that required it. I intend to explore the set of factors that led to the proliferation of written records and to survey the ways in which writing reached various social strata.

³⁸Fifteen religious manuscripts, copied by Gavriil, son of Uric, are surviving from Moldavia. In the first half of the fifteenth century he established the Moldavian calligraphic tradition, of a strong Bulgarian influence. See Turdeanu, *Études des littératures roumaine et d'écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines*, 86.

³⁹ Goody, *Logic of Writing* 154.

⁴⁰ Gheorghe Popa-Lisseanu, ed., *Cronica pictată de la Viena* (The painted chronicle from Viena) In *Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. 11. (Bucharest: Biblioteca Română, 1937), 22, 76, 89. See also Martin Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 92; Neagu Djuvara, *Thocomerius-Negru Vodă, un voievod de origine Cumană la începuturile Țării Românești* (Thocomerius Negru Vodă, a prince of Cuman origins at the foundation of the Wallachian state) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007). For the first surviving charter see DRH B, vol.1, no.1.

⁴¹DRH B, vol.1, no.2: c.1351, Sept. 1-1352, Aug. 31 (6860); In the medieval Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, charters were usually dated according to the old Byzantine Chronology, from the creation of the world. The first Wallachian graffiti give 1351 as the year of death of the first Wallachian Prince Basarab. See Constantin Bălan, *Inscripții medievale și din Epoca modernă a României. Județul istoric Argeș (sec. 14 – 1848)* (Medieval and early modern Romanian inscriptions. The historical county of Argeș (14th century to 1848). (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1994), 53.

⁴² See DRH A, vol.1, no.1.

2.2 The early period of state foundation: The scarcity of documents and their recipients

During the first period of state formation, up to the 1430s, the number of known charters is low in both principalities. In Moldavia, the princely chancellery seems to have got off to a better start since during the long and stable reign of Alexander the Good (1400-31) two, three or four charters have been preserved per year. The number of Moldavian documents expands constantly over time as indicated in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Moldavian charters as compiled in the *Documenta Romaniae Historica A Moldova*, vols. 1-3, and *Documente de Istorie a Romaniei A*, XVI, vols. 1-4.⁴³

Reigns	Dates	No. of documents	Average of documents issued per year
Before Alexander the Good	1384-1400	9	1
Alexander the Good	1400-1431	95	3
Ilie	1432-1433	16	8
Stephan (first reign)	1434-35	23	12
Joint reign of Ilie and Stephan	1436-1442	79	13
Stephan (second reign)	1443-1447	47	12
Petru II	1447-1448	17	13
Alexăndrel	I 1448-1449, II 1452-1454.	32	16
Bogdan	1450-1452	8	4
Petru Aron	1454-1456	21	11
Stephen the Great	1457-1504	493	10
Bogdan, the Blind	1504-1517	68	5
Stephan the Younger	1517-1527	96	10

⁴³Documents that have been questioned as later falsifications have not been integrated into the table.

Petru Rareș	I 1527-1538, II 1541-1546	275	17
Stephan Lăcustă	1539-1540	10	10
Iliaș Rareș	1546-1550	51	13
Alexandru Lăpușneanu	I 1552-1561, II 1564-1568	132	11
Ioan Iacob Heraclid	1562-1563	10	10
Bogdan Lăpușneanu	1568-1572	78	13
Ioan the Terrible	1572-1574	37	19
Peter the lame	I 1574-1577, II 1578-1579, III 1582-1591	441	34
Iancu the Saxon	1579-1582	83	28
Aron the Tyrant	I 1591-1592, II 1592-1595	74	21
Stephan Răzvan	1595, May- July	11	22
Ieremia Movilă	1595-1600	160	32
Michael the Brave	1600	8	16
Moldavian charters issued by the prince's chancellery until the end of the sixteenth century		2374	

In Wallachia, the low number of documents is constant until the reign of Radu the Fair (1463-1474). Later, the number of documents slowly increased, but the fifteenth century evidence is still scarcer than in Moldavia.⁴⁴

Table 2. Wallachian charters as compiled in *Documenta Romaniae Historica B Wallachia*, vols. 1-8, vol.11, and *Documente de istorie a Romaniei*, vols. 5, 6. Uncertain documents are not counted.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Documents that have been questioned as later falsifications have not been integrated into the table.

Reigns	Dates	No. of documents	Average of documents issued per year
Vladislav I	1364-1377	4	0.4
Dan I	1383-1386	1	0.3
Mircea the Old	1387-1418	28	1
Mihail	1418-1420	6	3
Dan II	I 1420-1421, II 1421-1423, III 1423-1424	18	4.5
Radu the Bald	I 1421, II 1423, III 1424-1426	2	0.5
Alexandru Aldea	1431-1433	8	4
Vlad Dracul	I 1436-1442, II 1443-1447	21	2
Vladislav II	1449-1456	14	2
Vlad the Impaller	I 1448, II 1456-1462	8	1
Radu the Fair	1463-1474	24	2
Basarab the Old	I 1473-1474, II 1475-1476, III 1476-1477	8	3
Basarab the Young	I 1477-1481, II 1481-1482	17	3
Vlad the Monk	1482-1495	72	6
Radu the Great	1495-1507	99	8
Mihnea the Bad	1508-1509	10	10
Mircea III	1509-1510	3	3
Vlad the Young	1510-1512	27	13.5
Neagoe Basarab	1512-1521	113	12.5
Radu from Afumati	I 1522-1523, II 1524-1525, III 1525-1529	89	15
Vladislav III	I 1523, II 1524, III 1525	15	5
Moise	1529-1530	22	22
Vlad the Drown	1530-1532	44	22
Vlad Vintila	1532-1535	64	21
Radu Paisie	1535-1545	180	18
Mircea the Shepard	I 1545-1552, II 1553-1554, III 1558-1559	187	21
Petrașcu the Kind	1554-1558	85	21
Peter the Young	1559-1568	237	26

Alexandru Mircea	1568-1577	516	57
Mihnea the Turk	1577-1583, II 1585-1591	643	53
Petru Ear-ring	1583-1585	52	26
Stephen the Death	1591-1592	41	41
Alexander the Evil	1592-1593	22	22
Michael the Brave	1593-1600	364	52

The low number of charters attesting land ownership during the early period is presumably due to the customary law that governed Wallachian society.⁴⁵ The growth of written records occurred later in Wallachia than in Moldavia. Although the number of documents began to multiply slowly at the end of the fifteenth century, it was only by the reign of Peter the Young (1559-1568) that the recorded increase in the documents number is of significance. Moreover, by the end of the reign of Mikhail the Brave (1593-1599), the number of Wallachian documents expanded almost ten times compared to the end of the previous century, outnumbering the number of the Moldavian ones.

A distinction between the two principalities is that in Wallachia, during the early period, the main beneficiaries of written documents were ecclesiastical institutions. Charters issued until the end of the reign of Prince Vlad Dracul (1436-1442), II (1443-1447) almost entirely concerned land/goods/money donations to the first Wallachian monasteries: Tismana, Vodița, and Cozia, or to the monasteries on Mount Athos. Only by the mid-fifteenth century did the number of documents issued on behalf of laymen begin to increase. It is also possible that monastic institutions had a greater capacity for document storage and that a large part of the documents possessed by laymen were subsequently lost. The consistent pattern during the early period, however, suggests that it was usually monasteries and not laymen who were the beneficiaries of written land titles.

⁴⁵ See also Cristina Codarcea, *Société et pouvoir en Valachie (1601-1654). Entre la coutume et la loi* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002), 187.

Table 3. The early Wallachian documents based on the type of recipients (in selected reigns)

Prince	Reign	No. of documents for monasteries	No. of documents for noblemen
Vladislav I	1364-1377	1	1 ⁴⁶
Dan I	1383-1386	1	none
Mircea the Old	1386-1418	21	7
Mihail	1418-1420	3	2 ⁴⁷
Dan II	I 1420-1424 II 1423-1424 III 1426-1431	6	6
Radu the Bald	I 1421, II 1423, III 1424-1427.	2	none
Aldea	1431-1436	6	none
Vlad Dracul	I 1436-1442, II 1443-1447	8	11
Basarab II	1442-1443	1	none
Vladsilav II	1447-1448, II 1448-1456	6	8
Vlad the Impeller	I 1448, II 1456-1462.	4	2
Radu The Fair	1462-1473	8	16
Basarab the Young	1477-1482	10	6
Vlad the Monk	1482-1495	28	44 ⁴⁸
Radu the Great	1495-1507	48	48
Neagoe Basarab	1512-1521	55	58 ⁴⁹
Mircea the Shepherd	I 1545-1552, II 1558-1559	51	138
Peter the Young	1559-1568	70	163

⁴⁶ The other two documents preserved from the reign of Vladislav I were issued on behalf of the Catholic community.

⁴⁷ One of the documents issued by Mikhal, son of Mircea the Old, was produced on behalf of Braşov traders. From Mikhal's reign onwards, Wallachian rulers often issued administrative documents on behalf of foreign traders which are not included in this table.

⁴⁸ Two documents issued in the chancellery of Vlad the Monk were written in regard to administrative issues concerning Braşov merchants (DRH B, vol.1, no. 182, and 183).

⁴⁹ Neagoe Basarab is known as one of the princes with a special interest and generosity towards ecclesiastical institutions, yet even during his reign more documents were issued on behalf of laymen.

As can be seen, after the turn of the sixteenth century, the number of documents issued on behalf of laypeople or clerical recipients was relatively similar, every prince endowing clerical institutions or laymen according to his political interest. Only gradually, especially from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, the number of documents issued to laymen came to significantly outnumber those for ecclesiastical institutions.

In Moldavia, in contrast, from an early period onwards, noblemen and not ecclesiastical institutions were the main recipients of documents confirming land ownership.⁵⁰ Until the end of the reign of Alexander the Good, 105 documents issued by the state chancellery are extant out of which only 25 charters were issued on behalf of monastic institutions.⁵¹

The difference between the number of documents commissioned by the Moldavian and Wallachian nobility allows me to stress the higher value Moldavian nobility placed on written documents as guarantors of land ownership. Why so? The early Moldavian nobility seems to have come from the Maramureş region of Transylvania.⁵² As newcomers, the recent owners of land properties in a conquered land, Moldavian noblemen were presumably keen to have extra proof of their legal rights to their land possessions. In addition, the fact that they secured their endowments in writing may have been influenced by practice in the Hungarian kingdom, more accustomed to use written records as proof of land ownership.⁵³

While historians agree about the foundation of the Moldavian state by foreign settlers,

⁵⁰ The documents are preserved in the state archives, but often it is not specified which monastery they were taken from. Unfortunately, during the nineteenth century, when the state archives were created and the collections were taken from the monasteries, the previous location of the documents was not always specified.

⁵¹ There are also two documents issued on behalf of the Catholic community of Siret by Petru I (1384-1391) DRH A, vol. 1, no. 1 and on behalf of the Armenian community by Alexander the Good (1400-1431). See DRH A, vol.1, no.14. The exception is the reign of Petru Aron (1454-1457). Twenty-one documents are extant from his short reign out of which noblemen received only eight charters (See DRH A, vol.1, no.40-61).

⁵² Henri Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor devălmașe românești* (Contributions to the study of Romanian communal villages), vols 1-3 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1998), vol. 3, 179. See also his shortened English version: Henri Stahl, *Traditional Romanian Village Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)s.

⁵³ Martin Rady indicates that there are well over 300.000 surviving individual legal and administrative documents relating to the Hungarian Middle Ages. See Martin Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (London: Palgrave, c 2000), 9.

the creation of the Wallachian state is still the subject of debate: whether it was created by local nobility or, similarly to Moldavia, was founded by foreigners.⁵⁴ In this respect, the extant documentary evidence and the differences between the number of early written records commissioned on behalf of Moldavian and Wallachian laymen suggest, in my view, that the Wallachian state was founded by the local nobility. The lack of charters written on behalf of Wallachian laymen thus might indicate that there were no major changes in land ownership and that the local lords continued to control their traditional estates, ownership being confirmed by customary law and oral memory rather than in written records. Possessing their land properties within large kindred, Wallachian noblemen did not yet perceive the need for written instruments.⁵⁵

2.3 Changes in social structure and the multiplication of documents

The dynamic of the growth of charters is different in Moldavia and Wallachia. During the fifteenth century, Moldavian charters outnumber those from Wallachia, which seems to rely more on oral customary law. Nevertheless, with the sixteenth century, the number of Wallachian charters increase to a point that by the end of the century, it outnumbers the extant Moldavian documents. What accounts for these dynamics?

My hypothesis links the different degree of growth in the number of documents to the social changes that affected the two societies during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The main element of change consists in the transition of land ownership from collective ownership within extended families kindred towards individual estates.⁵⁶ The fragmentation of land

⁵⁴For more information about this see Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor în Principatele Române* (Princely counsel and assembly of the estates in the Romanian Principalities) (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1995), 25. See also Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor*, vol. 3, 179.

⁵⁵For a similar phenomenon in neighboring Hungary see Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*, 64.

⁵⁶Stahl, *Traditional Romanian Village Communities*, 165.

property gave rise to a growing potential for conflict. It appears that written land titles began to be produced at a higher rate out of a need for legal security and protection.⁵⁷

According to Stahl, the depth of these social transformations was attested earlier in Wallachia than in Moldavia and had a more significant impact in the Wallachian Principality.⁵⁸ Consequently, the developments of written culture that these changes triggered is more evident and had a more salient effect on growth in the number of Wallachian charters. Thus, my focus on social changes as major factor for the spread of written charters accounts both for the parallel growth, and for the distinct dynamics illustrated in my survey of the data – see *Table 1* for Wallachia and *Table 2* for Moldavia.

In Romanian historiography, the expansion of the written record is normally related to the political situation in the period or to the strong or weak political position of noblemen within state authority.⁵⁹ Other factors, however, such as cultural tradition or social changes may also account for the presence and dissemination of written culture.⁶⁰

In order to defend my hypothesis, I will review the social transformations that occurred in Wallachian and Moldavian society during the period under review in order to show how they are reflected in the written evidence and how, in their turn, they stimulated the proliferation of documents. Social development in the medieval Romanian Principalities was

⁵⁷ See also Thomas Behrmann, “The Development of Pragmatic Literacy in Lombard City Communes,” in *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West, 1200-1330*, ed. Richard Britnell (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 40.

⁵⁸ Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor*, vol. 3, 178.

⁵⁹ In a recent book, the growth in the number of documents in the last part of Stephan’s realm is attributed solely to the political stability specific to the end of the fifteenth century (see Stefan Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior: O istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare (Princeps omni laude maior: A history of Stephan the Great)* (Putna: Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2005), 249, 250, 257). For the Wallachian chancellery as well, strong correlation is drawn between the political situation and the activities of the state chancellery (see Traian Ionescu-Nișcov, “Două documente inedite din prima jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea” (Two unpublished documents from the first half of the sixteenth century) *Romanoslavica* 5 (1962): 152. Damian Bogdan considers that the large number of documents written on behalf of Moldavian nobility reflect the strong political position they held within the state authority (see Damian Bogdan, ed., *Acte Moldovenesti din anii 1426-1502* (Moldavian documents during the 1426-1502 period) (Bucharest: n. p., 1947), 16.

⁶⁰ See also Anna Adamska, “Orality and Literacy in Medieval East Central Europe: Final Prolegomena,” in *Oral Art Forms and their Passage into Writing*, ed. Else Mundal and Jonas Wellendorf (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2008), 72; I am thankful to prof. Jozsef Laszlovszky for the useful discussions about this issue.

studied among others by Filitti⁶¹ Giurăscu⁶², Brătianu,⁶³ and more recently by Stahl⁶⁴ and Chirot.⁶⁵ In his research, Stahl focused on the dynamics and changes that occurred within the structure of the social classes. Consequently, as in my reading of the data, the changes in the uses of written culture are linked to a process of dissolution of traditional social categories, I will focus more closely on the developments covered by Stahl.

During the early period of the medieval Romanian Principalities, the ownership of land was collective. Extended families of Moldavian and Wallachian noblemen administered their land estates and dependent peasants in common. In the case of free peasants, it was the village community which collectively owned the land.⁶⁶

This land ownership configuration did not last. By the fifteenth century, due to demographic growth as well as for social, economic, and political reasons, the process of the disintegration of large family estates began. A movement from joint ownership of land property to land possessions by the individual or nuclear family can be observed.⁶⁷ For similar reasons, traditional communities of free villagers entered a complex and gradual transition from absolute joint ownership of communal property to individual land shares.⁶⁸ The same phenomena occurred during the twelfth and thirteenth century in neighboring Hungary.⁶⁹

The data and the secondary literature indicate a surge in the mobility of land estates, related to the transition from collective to individual land ownership. Land property began to

⁶¹ Ioan Filitti, *Clasele sociale în trecutul românesc* (Social classes in the Romanian past) (Bucharest: n.p., 1925).

⁶² Constantin Giurescu, *Studii de istorie socială* (Studies on social history) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1943); idem, *Despre boieri* (About noblemen) (Bucharest: Cartea Romaneasca, 1920).

⁶³ Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor în Principatele Române*.

⁶⁴ Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor devălmașe românești*.

⁶⁵ Daniel Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society: The Creation of Balkan Colony*. (New York: Academic Press, 1976). For the Romanian version used in my work see Daniel Chirot, *Schimbarea Socială într-o societate periferică* (Bucharest: Corint, 2002).

⁶⁶ For a more detailed definition and description of a village community see Stahl, *Traditional Romanian Village Communities*, 36-7.

⁶⁷ Stahl, *Traditional Romanian Village Communities*, 165. See also Chirot, *Schimbarea Socială*, 74, who explains the social changes mainly through the decline of commercial activities that produced the main income of the Danubian States and on increase in taxation as a result of the higher tribute paid to the Ottoman Empire. See ibidem, 65-79 and especially 70, 79.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, 63-76.

⁶⁹ Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*, 67.

accumulate in the hands of certain noblemen at the expense of other noblemen and free peasants,⁷⁰ as depicted by Filitti: “In the same class of noblemen, one can note a painful and continuous process of impoverishment of some and mounting of others.”⁷¹ The process mostly affected the lower nobility and the traditional communities of free peasants; for them the economic instability and fiscal policies of the sixteenth century had an almost annihilating effect.⁷²

During the same period, my survey of the data indicates an increasing number of laymen commissioning (collective or individual) charters to attest their rights to landed property. The types of extant documents suggest that Moldavians used written documents earlier and more regularly than their Wallachian counterparts. It seems that in Moldavia written documents were commissioned mainly to record land endowments or confirm the possessed land properties (presumably administered previously in an oral way). Gradually land transactions, especially between non family members (as a result of sell or donations), or replacement of lost or stolen documents are attested. From the turn of the sixteenth century, charters began to record the split of land estates (previously owned by large patriarchal families) into smaller estates belonging to nuclear families.

In Wallachia, the main type of extant documents suggest that many land titles were commissioned as a consequence of a dispute settlement, or as an attempt to avoid the state appropriation of private landed properties due to lack of male heirs (*defectus seminis*). Thus, in my reading of the data, in Wallachia, initially, mainly extraordinary issues were put into writing. It seems that the Wallachian trend to split traditional estates into nuclear family holdings (parallel with the Moldavian one) unleashed a process of land-acquisitions (legal or illegal). These forms of accumulation of land estates into great latifundia triggered a social

⁷⁰ Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor in Principatele Române*, 51.

⁷¹ Ioan Filitti “Evoluția claselor sociale,” (Evolution of the social classes) *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială* (*The archive for science and social reformation*), 232, apud Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor in Principatele Române*, 51.

⁷² Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor in Principatele Române*, 51.

conflict that at its turn stimulated the increase in the number of land charters.

The regular issues that prompted the commissioning of Moldavian charters, namely the transactions of land property, or the replacement of lost or destroyed charters, began to multiply in Wallachia only later, during the second half of the sixteenth century. Conversely, the process of land accumulation and social conflict over land that is manifest in the Wallachian charters does not appear in the Moldavian records up to the end of sixteenth century.

In Table 2.4, I present the types of extant charters issued to Wallachia's noblemen in order to illustrate the salience of disputes over land in the overall sum of documents. Given the small number of surviving documents, I do not present them as accurate statistics but rather as a point of reference.⁷³

Table 4. The Wallachian charters granted to noblemen, according to the conflict settlements mentioned, as edited in *Documenta Romaniae Historica B Wallachia*, vols. 1-8, vol. 11; *Documente de istorie a Romaniei*, vols. 5, 6. Uncertain documents are not counted.⁷⁴

Reign	Total number of charters issued to noblemen	Charters attesting disputes among landholders	Charters attesting disputes (percentages)
Radu the Great ⁷⁵ 1495-1507	48	14	29%
Mihnea the Bad 1508-1509	5	3	60%
Mircea III 1509	2	2	100%
Vlad the Young 1510-1511	14	4	29%
Neagoe Basarab 1512-1521	58	14	24%
Radu from Afumați 1522-1530	45	20	44%
Vladislav III 1523-1525	6	4	67%
Moise 1529-1530	7	3	43%

⁷³I am thankful to prof. Michael Clanchy for this observation.

⁷⁴ Documents that have been under question as later falsifications have not been integrated

⁷⁵ The first surviving dispute between laymen dates from the reign of Radu the Great.

Vlad the Drown 1530-1532	20	6	30%
Vlad Vintilă 1532-1535	24	9	38%
Radu Paisie 1535-1545	123	49	40%
Mircea the Shepherd 1545-1554, II 1558- 1559	138	65	47%
Petrașcu the Good 1554-1558	64	29	45%
Peter the Young 1559-1568	163	67	41%
Alexandru Mircea 1568-1577	404	141	34%
Mihnea the Turk 1577-1583, II 1585- 1591	468	122	26%
Petru the Ear ring 1583-1585	29	12	41%
Stephan the Deaf 1591-1592	25	8	32%
Alexander the Wrongdoer 1592- 1593	10	3	30%
Mikhail the Brave 1593-1600	245	51	21%

I argue that only as a consequence of the transition from collective to individual ownership and to the social conflict triggered by the changes in the land possession⁷⁶ Wallachia's number of documents increased. My argument is based on Rady: "Oral testimony prevailed, not only on account of widespread illiteracy, but also because there was little perceived need for written instruments."⁷⁷ As the result of changes in land ownership, the increased vulnerability of individual land possessions resulted in a rapid Wallachian transition "from memory to written record."⁷⁸ To continue with Rady's argument, the involvement of written documents as a proof of land ownership was not derived from "a special gift of

⁷⁶ I am thankful to prof. Laszlovszky for this observation. See also Warren C. Brown, ed., *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

⁷⁷ Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*, 64.

⁷⁸ I owe the expression to the classical book of Michael Clanchy.

literacy but from the very real fear of territorial depredation.”⁷⁹ Consequently, social transformation influenced not only the multiplication of documents produced on behalf of the top nobility but led to a further dissemination of the written record within various social strata.

2.4. Dissemination of written documents into lower social categories: Writing as a tool in changing and reinforcing social boundaries

During the great crisis of the accumulation of land estates into great *latifundia*, which deepened in the second half of the sixteenth century in Wallachia (based on surviving evidence), the harsh political and economic conditions reflected in higher taxation led to the gradual impoverishment of landholders.⁸⁰ The process affected comprehensively the lower nobility and traditional communities of free peasants.⁸¹ The pledge of a part of the estate as future inheritance in exchange for tax exemption, or different movable goods seems to have been seen as a solution. As in the Danubian principalities, kin relatives enjoyed the right of pre-emption, the practice of fraternal adoption⁸² (which transformed two strangers into blood brothers) began to be employed in order to facilitate the acquisition of landed property between non kin related individuals. People joined by brotherhood had the mutual rights to inherit land estates in the case that one of the parties failed to produce male heirs. As fraternal adoption belonged to the realm of uncustomary land inheritance and was granted through princely consent, it demanded the support of written evidence.⁸³ Consequently, from the reign

⁷⁹ Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*, 67.

⁸⁰ Chirot explains social changes mainly through the decline in commercial activities that had produced the main income of the Danubian States and the increase of taxation as a result of higher tribute paid to the Ottoman Empire. See Chirot, *Schimbarea Socială*, 70, 79. See also Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor în Principatele Române*, 51.

⁸¹ The documents often attest famine and general distress. See for instance DRH B, vol. 8, no. 34 (1576), no. 65 (1577), no. 68 (1577), no. 96 (1577), DRH B, vol. 11, no. 158 (1596).

⁸² See Stahl, *Traditional Romanian Village Communities*, and Gront, *Instituții Medievale Românești*, 31-70.

⁸³ See also Fügedi, “Oral Culture and Literacy Among The Medieval Hungarian Nobility,” 27.

of Mikhnea the Bad (1508-9) onwards, the practice of fraternal adoption, secured between various social categories, began to be often attested in the data.⁸⁴ Thus, the mention of people from lower social categories began to appear in the newly commissioned written documents next to wealthy noblemen. However, their presence was just restricted to mentioning them as mere witnesses and not as commissioners of documents.

Further on, the former acquisition of a plot of land in a village family of free peasants entitled noblemen through the same practice of fraternal adoption to new acquisitions and possessions.⁸⁵ Consequently, individual peasants together with village communities began to use the same methods as noblemen had formerly and secured their shares of land in writing.⁸⁶ Villagers increasingly began to be involved in the written practices no longer as mere witnesses but gradually as commissioners of documents attesting their possessions of their individual plots of land.⁸⁷ In so doing, they avoided the possibility of becoming blood brothers with powerful noblemen through the sale of a co-owner, thus protecting themselves from powerful “brothers” with the potential legal right to purchase their land and freedom. Apart from this, after the breaking-up of the estates, whole villages as well as individual landholders were able to purchase/repurchase individually or collectively their plots of land and consequently their freedom. As a result, local gentry, free and even dependent peasants began to be sporadically recorded as purchasers of land estates and commissioners of written documents.⁸⁸ Thus, village communities began using written document as a tool to defend their land property and their status.

⁸⁴See DRH B, vol. 2, no. 63 (1509), no. 137 (1515), and especially no. 196 (1520), See also DRH B, vol. 4, no. 144 (1543), DRH B, vol. 5, no. 47 (1555), no. 315 (1565), no. 320 (1565), DRH B, vol. 6, no. 233 (1570), DRH B, vol. 7, no. 52 (1571).

⁸⁵See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 11, no. 125, no. 129, no. 130. In some cases high state dignitaries and the prince himself recorded in a single charter their numerous purchases of villages from peasant communities and individual peasants who sold themselves together with their strip of land, see *ibidem*. no. 186, no. 189, no. 314, no. 337, no. 338, no. 339.

⁸⁶ DRH B, vol. 5, no. 223, no. 252, no. 262.

⁸⁷ DRH B, vol. 4, no. 76, no. 117, no. 142, DRH B, vol. 5, no. 111.

⁸⁸ DRH B, vol. 7, no. 135, no. 161, no. 251.

However, it is a difficult task to establish when exactly local gentry and free peasants⁸⁹ began to confirm their land ownership in writing. One crucial difficulty of dealing with Romanian medieval documents also consists in the fact that sources usually do not attest the social categories of the individuals. Free peasants are seldom mentioned by their status *moșneni, răzeși, judeci, megies, judeci* (all of them attesting the status of free landowner).⁹⁰ Only the ranks of noblemen who acted in state service were recorded. In these circumstances only contextual information such as the quantity of land purchased and the paid prices may provide certain information related to the status of the persons involved.⁹¹ Sometime in the disputes, harsher treatment applied to certain groups, likewise indicating that they belonged to the class of free peasants.

In Moldavia, indirect evidence such as testimonies recorded during disputes, mention the existence of documents concerning the land property of free peasants and lower nobility from the times of Stephan the Great (1457-1504) and even Alexander the Good (1400-1431).⁹² Yet none of these documents is preserved until the early sixteenth century in Wallachia and even as late as the last quarter of the sixteenth century in Moldavia.⁹³ Moreover, various data from the recorded procedures of the disputes indicate that free peasants were not accustomed using written documents even in the middle of the sixteenth

⁸⁹ There is an extensive dispute about the difference between local gentry and free peasants in the Romanian historiography. Giurăscu argued that all land owners, regardless of the size of their land estates, were noblemen, see Giurăscu, *Studii de istorie socială*, 254; while Stahl connects small land holders to the class of free peasants given their way of life and the practice of working their land personally. See Stahl, *Sate devălmașe*, Vol. 3, 211). Similarly, George Brătianu, basing his statements on the definition given by Cantemir in the eighteenth century, also considers them as free peasants; see Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor*, 52.

⁹⁰ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 4, no. 172. It should be mentioned that some of the terms like “megieș” and “răzeș” are very confusing since they are used to indicate the proximity to a certain group, a type of neighborhood, in earlier periods, while in the later period (from the end of the sixteenth century) the term was used to denominate the social status of free peasants. For more information about this see Stahl, *Contribuții la Studiul satelor devălmașe*, vol. 3, 214-6.

⁹¹ For instance, in a collective charter issued in 1498 by Radu the Great several laymen with their sons received confirmation of their purchased land. The high number of beneficiaries and the apparently small piece of land and low amount of money paid for the purchase indicate rather low noblemen or free peasants (DRH B, vol.1, no. 288).

⁹² DIR A, vol. 3, no. 494.

⁹³ In Moldavia, craftsmen and merchants are earlier attested in documents. As early as 1484 a goldsmith confirmed his newly bought land property in the state supreme office in the prince’s chancellery. See DRH A, vol. 2, no. 262.

century. The fact that during disputes the peasants mentioned older lost charters might rather be an indication of the value attached to written records and an acknowledgement of their importance than the existence of written documents at the village level before the early sixteenth century.⁹⁴

Only from the early sixteenth century does the direct evidence point to individual peasants and peasant communities that gradually became involved in written procedures as active commissioners of written documents. Wallachian peasants are attested earlier in the preserved evidence. Differing social realities created a notable difference between the involvement of Wallachian and Moldavian documents: the data indicate that during the sixteenth century, changes in land ownership had a deep impact on Wallachian society as the nobility there was in a more advanced stage of segregation and individualization of land property.⁹⁵ Accordingly, they appealed earlier to usage of written land titles than their Moldavian counterparts.

From the early sixteenth century, Wallachian village communities began to be recorded as recipients of written confirmation of their land estates or as settling disputes with other village communities.⁹⁶ Especially, after the middle of the sixteenth century, when a great movement of landed property can be noticed, the Wallachian peasant communities next to individual peasants became quite active in commissioning written charters. In most of the cases yet, they are recorded as collective vendors of their common property.⁹⁷ However, in certain cases, not all the members of the village community sold their estates together with the entire community; In this case, they individually confirmed their land in writing, thus again

⁹⁴See Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁹⁵Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor*, vol. 3, 178.

⁹⁶DRH B vol. 2, no. 183, DRH B vol. 4, no. 64, no. 117, no. 172, DRH B Vol. 4, no. 323.

⁹⁷See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 8, no. 20, no. 30, no. 52, no. 57, no. 64 (1577), no. 66, no. 88, no. 117, no. 123, no. 127, no. 132, no. 174, no. 175, no. 182, no. 203, no. 215, no. 230, no. 237, no. 252, no. 282 (1579); DRH B, vol. 11 no. 121, no. 125, no. 129, no. 130, no. 131, no. 146, no. 151, no. 172, no. 173, no. 189, no. 192, no. 238, no. 256, no. 282.

acting as commissioners of written documents.⁹⁸

As in the medieval Romanian Principalities, only landowners could preserve their free status, a precise clause had to be made to put in that the land sales were *only* partial. As peasants struggled to retain a small piece of land so that they might keep their traditional status,⁹⁹ written documents validated by the prince's seal might have been perceived as more trustworthy than oral accounts.

The fact, that land properties were not always easy to purchase and forceful seizures of landed property belonging to the smaller holders was often practiced,¹⁰⁰ further stimulated active involvement of individual peasants in the commissioning of written documents. Villagers began disputing recorded land transactions and claiming back their land and free status. Consequently, after the first quarter of the sixteenth century, dispute settlements of free villagers with noblemen¹⁰¹ or with monastic institutions¹⁰² begin to be overwhelmingly attested. As litigation over land was further recorded in a written charter, peasant communities were often recorded among documents commissioners.¹⁰³ Decision about forfeited land and the free status of the villagers, however, were but seldom reversed, especially in the second half of the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁴ In some cases, despite having lost the process, certain monastic institutions promised that they would bestow some pieces of land upon villagers as an act of charity if they were obedient enough.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, villagers were very obstinate about defending their land and rights and hence in getting involved with the commissioning of written records. Some of the Wallachian villagers initiated several disputes at the regional and

⁹⁸ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 11, no. 147, no. 186, no. 205, DIR B, vol.6, no. 131 (1591).

⁹⁹ See, DRH B, vol. 5, no. 11, no. 303, no. 331.

¹⁰⁰ DRH B, vol. 11, no. 87, no. 230.

¹⁰¹ DRH B, vol. 3, no. 14, no. 15, no. 25, no. 33, no. 27, no. 128, no. 127, no. 132, no. 148, no. 155, no. 167, no. 169, no. 196. See also DRH B, vol. 11, no. 176, no. 367, no. 368.

¹⁰² DRH B, vol. 3, no. 16, no. 23, no. 59, no. 62, no. 125, no. 126, no. 165, no. 170, no. 171, no. 176, no. 182, no. 186, no. 203.

¹⁰³ See also DRH B, vol. 7, no. 156, DRH B, vol. 8, no. 129; DRH B, vol. 11, no. 176, no. 367, no. 368.

¹⁰⁴ In the first part of the century, there were still records when villagers won the process. Between 1525 and 1536, only two out of twelve disputes recorded between noblemen and free villagers were won by the free villagers, DRH B, vol. 3, no. 127, no. 148 (1533).

¹⁰⁵ DRH B, vol. 3, no. 176.

princely levels. The struggle of the villagers from Radovanul as a group¹⁰⁶ as well as the individual members who claimed they had not sold their shares of land together with the others,¹⁰⁷ is perhaps most documented of the cases that encouraged proliferation of the usage of written documents at the village level, as thirteen documents commissioned by the Radovanu village community do survive.¹⁰⁸ For instance, the Priest Oprea, a member of the Radovanul village community struggled for two years after his land sale was recorded.¹⁰⁹ Four surviving charters indicate that he recurrently initiated court disputes claiming that he had not sold his share of land.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, he lost his land and free status as he was unable to provide a set of witnesses to certify under oath the righteousness of his claims. The only improvement that he could achieve was to make the monastic institution of Coșuna pay more money for his land share. In certain cases, such an outcome could lead to such a degree of peasant wrath that they murdered the winner of the process and forcefully took the charters by which he had supposedly won the process.¹¹¹ Thus, written documents were perceived by peasants as adverse instruments used by their social enemies as means of expropriating their land and annihilating their status. They were, most probably, more feared than understood or possessed.

However, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, written proofs of land possessions were the first things to be requested by the princes during the disputes,¹¹² even or especially if the plaintiff had a lower status.¹¹³

Given the low number of charters commissioned earlier by free peasants, the

¹⁰⁶ DRH B Vol.11, no. 203 (1596), no. 385 (1600), no. 405 (1600), no. 412 (1600).

¹⁰⁷ DRH B Vol.11, no. 153 (1596), no. 202 (1596), no. 279 (1598).

¹⁰⁸ DRH B Vol. 11, no. 331 and no. 338.

¹⁰⁹ DRH B Vol.11 no. 60 (1594).

¹¹⁰ Three times in front of Craiova ban: no. 152 (1596), no. 202 (1596), no. 279 (1596), and once in front of Prince Michael the Brave: no. 153 (1596).

¹¹¹ DRH B, vol.8, no. 21 (1576). For more information about this see Anna Adamska and Marco Mostert, "The 'Violent Death' of Medieval Charters: Some Observations on the Symbolic Uses of the Documents," in *Ecclesia, cultura, potestas: Studia z dziejów kultury I społeczeństwa*, ed. Paweł Kras (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2006), 704.

¹¹² See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 5, no. 201 (1585-6), DRH B, vol.11, no.170 (1596).

¹¹³ DIR B, vol. 5, no. 201 (1585-6), DIR B, vol. 5, no. 300 (1587).

assumption of the existence of written records at the level of free villagers or even at the level of small noblemen cannot be justified. In many cases, the acting princes destroyed the documents provided by the lower social groups during the procedure for the dispute.¹¹⁴ Occasionally, noblemen's charters encountered the same fate when they disputed their estates with monastic institutions.¹¹⁵

One of the explanations for this may lie in the fact that smaller land holders, when trying to get property confirmed in writing, did so at the local level, conforming to a less rigorous standard with the help of parish priests. For these types of document, it was difficult to prove authenticity, as they lacked its most characteristic marks such as a certain formulary, the prince's seals, and signatures in later periods. Moreover, it is known that the most numerous forgeries were recorded among the locally drawn documents¹¹⁶

Moreover, even if the peasants were allowed to use oral testimony to substantiate their claims, it was hindered by the request that only noblemen could be entitled to act as witnesses in a dispute. Once again, it seems that Wallachian customary law was more similar to the regulations observed in Catholic Transylvania than in Orthodox Serbia. The fifteenth-century Serbian regulation, recorded in Dushan's code, indicates that similar social categories were required to act as witnesses during disputes,¹¹⁷ while Werbőczy's *Tripartitum* states that "(...) the oath of an non-noble person or a peasant, being of inferior status, has no force and is not admitted as evidence for or against a noble."¹¹⁸

All in all, as my data indicate, decisions were almost without exception in favor of

¹¹⁴They are attested from the middle of the sixteenth century; although in the earlier disputes villagers might get through the processes more easily (see, for instance, DRH B, vol.4, no. 146). Later on, their charters are declared "imbued with lies" and in some cases are menaced with capital punishment. See DRH B, vol. 4, no. 209. See also for false charters DRH B, vol.6, no. 250 and for charters turned apart during the disputes DRH B, vol. 8, no. 23, no. 160, no. 220, no. 239, no. 243, no. 247.

¹¹⁵Charters are declared false and are consequently destroyed. See DRH B, vol. 6, no. 106, no. 190.

¹¹⁶See Chivu, *Documente Românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, 23.

¹¹⁷*Dushan's Code: The Code of Serbian Tsar Siphon Dushan. The Bistritza transcript.* (Beograd: Bajat, 1997), 91, No. 147.

¹¹⁸See Stephen Werbőczy, *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary. A Work in Three Parts.* Edited by János M. Bak, Péter Banyó, and Martin Rady (Idylwild, CA: Charles Schalacks, Jr., 2005). See also Fügedi, "Oral Culture and Literacy Among the Medieval Hungarian Nobility," 13.

noblemen It seems that arbitrary rule dominated and the value of written proof was differentiated depending on the social status of the defendants: in the disputes of a peasant and a nobleman, for instance, the testimony of the latter counted, while in a dispute between a nobleman and a monastery, usually the testimony of the monastery was what counted.¹¹⁹ It might be that the scarcity and social imbalance in access to written documents were employed by the privileged classes to favor their kinsmen. The literacy divide was used as a tool to reinforce (and expand) social boundaries. As Jack Goody has noted:

The introduction of written title into a society where rights and duties were held orally had a far-reaching effect which was particularly devastating for those without access to the new media (writing). The powerful members of the society took the land by force and by the value given to the written acts provided a widely used mechanism for legitimising the transfer of land to those who commanded, directly or indirectly the means of communication.¹²⁰

While the presence of Wallachian peasants is preserved in the court records from the early sixteenth century, Moldavian peasants as a body seldom secured written documents from the central chancellery during the same period. Up to the middle of the sixteenth century, Moldavian peasants are missing from the chancellery record. Afterwards, there are documents that register collective land purchases for rather small amounts of money, which may attest the status of local gentry or free peasants.¹²¹ Only later, in the third quarter of the sixteenth century did Moldavian local gentry and free peasants begin recording their individual land transactions in writing. Yet, only seldom did they use the central chancellery to dispute their common property with the local noblemen or to record their purchases.¹²² The central chancellery in Moldavia during the sixteenth century remained almost exclusively a

¹¹⁹See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 6, no. 190.

¹²⁰Goody, *Logic of Writing*, 81.

¹²¹See, for instance, DIR A, vol. 2, no. 29 (1552), when the prince's servants Nicoara and his cousin Toader and their sister Odochia purchased the sixth part of one third of the village for one-hundred-thirty Tatar zloti. See also DIR A, vol. 2, no. 74, no. 119, no. 215.

¹²²One of the few disputes is recorded in 1585. See DIR A, vol. 3, no. 355.

record office in the service of the higher nobility and later of the courts,¹²³ while local gentry and free peasants recorded their land transactions at the local level, possibly because of lower costs.¹²⁴ Moreover, in Moldavia, individual purchases, confirmation or reconfirmation of the estates are recorded rather than the disputes of a collective body of peasants, who struggled for their common property as in Wallachia.¹²⁵ The whole sale disposal of estates is also seldom attested. The land property of the Moldavian peasants does not seem to have been endangered yet, or at least not to such extent as to make villagers feel the need to secure their land in writing in the prince's chancellery. According to Stahl, the absence of Moldavian court records belonging to free peasants was related to the fact that few villages in Moldavia enjoyed the rights of traditional Wallachian free village communities. The Moldavian peasants, having been colonists of the princes after the state foundation, enjoyed fewer rights from the outset and struggled less than their Wallachian counterparts.¹²⁶ Nonetheless, the fact that even peasants from the traditional villages of the Campulung and Vrancea regions with known liberties and rights did not commission any written documents may indicate that Moldavian villagers were not yet threatened by the noblemen during the sixteenth century.¹²⁷ After the third quarter of the sixteenth century, as written means of document production moved down from the central to the local level, the fact that Moldavian gentry and free peasants began recording their individual land transactions in writing may testify to their acknowledgement of the importance of written procedures. Nevertheless, their absence from the record produced in the central office beside fewer recorded disputes may indicate relative

¹²³From the reign of Iancu the Saxon (1579-1582) lower court servants began to record their land transactions in the prince's chancellery. See, for instance, DIR A, vol. 3, no. 190 (1580), no. 387 (1586) DIR A, vol. 3, no. 266 (1583), DIR A, vol.3, no. 271 (1583), DIR A, vol.3, no. 386 (1586), DIR A, vol. 3, no. 394 (1586-1589).

¹²⁴See, for instance, DIR A, vol. 3, no. 13, no. 201, no. 309; Chivu, *Documente Românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 81.

¹²⁵DIR A, vol. 4, no. 188 (1596).

¹²⁶Stahl, *Traditional Romanian Village Communities*, 134.

¹²⁷Only later did Moldavian peasants dispute their land and status with Moldavian state and noblemen. In a dispute from 1801, the villagers from Vrancea were declared to belong to the state since they did not have any written document stating that they were free. They won their case only in 1817. See Stahl, *Traditional Romanian Village Communities*, 144.

social stability and the absence of incentive to issue costly documents at a central level. Presumably, the slower pace of increase in Moldavian documents during the sixteenth century, compared to the Wallachian principality, may also be explained by the less sharp social struggle there.

Another crucial issue in the transformation of structures of ownership from extended families to nuclear families in Wallachia is raised by the problem of women's right to inheritance. I will cover the specific dimension of the relationship between customary law, writing and women's right (or lack of it) to inherit land in the following section.

2.5. New practices regulating the ownership of land: fraternal adoption and perfection. Women's right to land inheritance and its relation to writing.

Changes in the structure of land ownership also led to the issue of land succession since in Wallachia customary law did not consider that female offspring could legally inherit land property. The issue of the inheritance rights of female offspring in Wallachia was a highly debated issue in Romanian historiography. In a recent study of Wallachian social history, Cristina Codarcea claimed that a mixture of Slavonic and Roman law led to a specific Wallachian land inheritance practice in which there was equality between the first generation of male and female siblings.¹²⁸ Conversely, Henry Stahl claimed that Wallachian women were not entitled to inherit land property as according to "a practice that has its roots in the village customs and in the unwillingness of the peasants to accept foreigners into their close communities, girls take their dowry in a cart."¹²⁹ Basing my analyses on fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century's documents, I support Stahl's opinion about the inequalities of male and female siblings as rightful land inheritors in the Wallachian customary law. Still, I claim that

¹²⁸Cristina Codarcea, *Société et pouvoir en Vallachie (1601-1654) entre la coutume et la loi* (Bucharest : Editura Enciclopedică, 2002), 191.

¹²⁹"Fetelor li se dă zestre cu carul." See Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor*, vol. 2, 116.

the pattern of male partible inheritance of family landed property was a foreign influence as the practice was common in certain European regions such as Scandinavia, Normandy, or Germany.¹³⁰ Most probably, the practice reached the Wallachian Principality via Hungary as, with a gap of several centuries, the Hungarian pattern of social organization and land inheritance can be found in the Wallachian record.¹³¹ In Wallachia, as in Hungary, the land property of a nobleman who died without male heirs (*defectus seminis* - default of issue) became the property of the prince.¹³² The documentary evidence attests princes' appropriation of the land estates belonging to noblemen without male heirs.¹³³ As noblemen's influence grew against the central power, they began disputing the right of the state to inherit their landed possessions. As a consequence, certain practices such as *prefection* (*praefectio in filium*)¹³⁴ or *fraternal adoption* (fraternization over the land)¹³⁵ were used to promote the daughters of noblemen without legitimate male heirs to the status of sons or brothers over the estate and thus become potential land inheritors. Again, in Romanian historiography, such practices were considered to be of a "native type."¹³⁶ I, however, claim that it is much more probable that these practices (such as those regulating the oral testimony in the court) were influenced from Hungary. Both the practice of *praefectio in filium* and *fraternal adoption* are

¹³⁰ Robert Layton, "Functional and Historical Explanations for Village Social Organization in Northern Europe," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1.4 (1995): 710; See also Jennifer C. Ward, "Noblewomen, Family, and Identity in Later Medieval Europe," In *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 248-9.

¹³¹ See Stephen Werbőczy, *The Tripartitum*, I, 89. See also Erik Fügedi, *The Elefánthy: The Hungarian Nobleman and His Kindred* (Budapest: CEU Press, 1998); Martin Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*.

¹³² Early documents contain the clause "prădalică să nu fie" (may the *pradalica* not be applied). Stahl defines the clause as "concerning the state renunciation of its rights to take over belongings left without heirs prădalică in the framework of agnatic inheritance rights." See Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor*, vol. 3, 182-204; idem, *Traditional Romanian Village Communities*, 151-4.

¹³³ Although rare, the practice is attested in the Wallachian documents during the fifteenth century. For instance, in 1482, twelve noblemen came before the prince and declared a property to be without heirs (*prădalică*). The prince bestowed the land on his governor, who in his turn, donated it to his servants, see DRH B, vol. I, no. 181.

¹³⁴ In Romanian "punerea fetei în loc de fiu" or "îmbărbătarea femeii."

¹³⁵ In Romanian "frăție de moșii."

¹³⁶ See Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor*, vol. 3, 185. He affirms that noblemen, being influenced by the traditional practice of common family-based land ownership, retained the same mental structures and tended to artificially recreate a larger family that would allow them the right to dispose personally of their land possessions. See also Gheorghe Gront, *Instituții Medievale Românești Înfrățirea de moșie. Jurătorii* (Medieval Romanian Practices: Brotherhood over the land. Oath taking), (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1969), 34.

also attested in Hungarian customary law.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, although in Hungary the practice of *praefectio in filium* is abundantly documented, fraternal adoption seems to have been earlier and more often attested in Wallachia. Moreover, from an early period, fraternal adoption was used not on to grant a female the status of land inheritor¹³⁸ but also to secure a non-customary land succession between various family members.¹³⁹

In order to be valid the practices required the prince's confirmation. Thus, after the partition of collectively owned family estates, Wallachian noblemen came before the prince to turn their daughters for the purpose of law into sons thus granting them the status of legal heirs of their landed property. As the new forms of land inheritance came into action "not by inheritance or blood-right but by the force of royal favor,"¹⁴⁰ they requested to be confirmed by written records produced by the princely chancellery.¹⁴¹ Consequently, one of the factors that led to the first growth in the number of Wallachian land charters in the last decades of the sixteenth century seems to be correlated with the employment of practices of *prefection* (*praefectio in filium*) and *fraternal adoption*, aiming to avoid the loss of estates due to *defectus seminis*.

*Table 5. The Wallachian charters granted to noblemen, according to the practices of preflection and fraternal adoption, as edited in Documenta Romaniae Historica B Wallachia, vols. 1-8, vol.11; Documente de istorie a Romaniei, vols. 5, 6. Uncertain documents are not counted.*¹⁴²

¹³⁷ See Fügedi, *The Elefánthy*, 27; Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*, 107. I am thankful to prof. János M. Bak for the interesting discussions about this issue.

¹³⁸ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 122 (1463), no.175 (1480), no. 195 (1485), no.206 (1487).

¹³⁹ Up to the reign of Radu the Great there are only four documents surviving. The first one dates from 1437-8. See DRH B, vol.1, no.84. See also DRH B, vol.1, no. 111 (1453), no. 133 (1453), no.143 (1473).

¹⁴⁰ I borrowed here the expression of Erik Fügedi. See Fügedi, *The Elefánthy*, 27.

¹⁴¹ This practice was supported by religious rituals and secular banquets where the large number of guests were intended to serve as future witnesses in potential disputes. This did not prove to be a sufficient obstacle, however, and further disputes are attested (see, for instance, DRH B, vol. 8, no. 308). Then the parties again had to go through a prince's trial to cancel previously made agreements. The record attests that, at least in some cases, the prince preserved the agreements regardless of the fact that one of the parties had renounced the "adopted brother." (See DRH B, vol. 5, no.119). For more information about the practice and about rituals accompanying it see Codarcea, *Société et pouvoir en Vallachie*, 192-201, 340-50.

¹⁴² Documents that have been under question as later falsifications have not been integrated.

Reign	Total number of charters issued to noblemen	Charters attesting fraternal adoption and perfection	Charters attesting fraternal adoption and perfection (percentages)
Vlad Dracul 1437-1441	11	1	9%
Vlad II 1449-1456	8	1	13%
Radu the Fair 1463-1474	16	3	19%
Basarab the Young 1477-1482	7	1	14
Vlad The Monk 1482-1495	42	10	24%
Radu the Great 1495-1507	48	24	50%
Mihnea the Bad 1508-1509	5	1	20%
Mircea III 1509	2	0	0%
Vlad the Young 1510-1511	14	1	7%
Neagoe Basarab 1512-1521	58	9	15%
Radu from Afumați 1522-1530	45	14	31%
Vladislav III 1523-1525	6	1	16%
Moise 1529-1530	7	1	14%
Vlad the Drown 1530-1532	20	4	20%
Vlad Vintila 1532-1535	24	5	21%
Radu Paisie 1535-1545	123	23	19%
Mircea the Shepherd I 1545-1554 II 1558-1559	138	19	14%
Petrașcu the Good 1554-1558	64	8	13%
Peter the Young 1559-1568	163	30	18%
Alexandru Mircea 1568-1577	404	50	12%

Mihnea the Turk I 1577-1583 II 1585-1591	468	66	14%
Petru the Ear ring 1583-1585	29	3	10%
Stephan the Deaf 1591-1592	25	3	12%
Alexander the Wrongdoer 1592-1593	10	0	0%
Mikhail the Brave 1593-1600	245	11	4%

As can be seen, in the first half of the sixteenth century the practices of *prefection* and *fraternal adoption* were seldom recorded in the data. The earliest attested cases are from 1437-1438 and 1451.¹⁴³ However, the first attested practices of fraternal adoption are employed between male relatives. Only from the reign of Radu the Fair (1463-1474), the practices are used to turn daughters into sons (for the purpose of law) or to fraternize with them so that they could become land inheritors.¹⁴⁴ They began to be more often attested from the reign of Vlad the Monk (1482-1495),¹⁴⁵ while throughout Radu's the Great reign they constitute half of the surviving documents.

Initially, during the fifteenth century, the evidence indicates that only highest state officials and their immediate relatives were able to use written documents and to commission a princely decision to avoid *defectus seminis*.¹⁴⁶ Among the first known official, who transformed the status of his daughter into a son for the purpose of law, thus entitling her to inherit his landed property through the practice of *praeffectio in filium*, was a brother-in-law of a chancellor, Stroe. The chancellor, in his turn, was "promoted" as the brother of his niece and

¹⁴³ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 84 (the document is preserved in a late translation and is undated). The first original document is preserved from 1453. See DRH B, vol.1, no. 111.

¹⁴⁴ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 122 (1463), DRH B, vol. 1, no. 175 (1480).

¹⁴⁵ See DRH B, vol.1, no. 195 (1485), no. 204 (1487), no. 230 (1492), no. 244 (1493), no. 245 (1494), no. 255 (1495). See also Gronț, *Instituții Medievale Românești*, 34.

¹⁴⁶ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 1, no. 296 (1500). The status of *jupan* indicates the high social standing of one of the noblemen. See also DRH B, vol. 1, no. 244 (1493).

a potential inheritor of the fortune in case of her death. It might be that this was the price Stroe paid for legalizing his daughter, as the charter mentions that the prince had forgiven the taxes to be paid in the form of a horse.¹⁴⁷ Presumably, chancellors had facilities in commissioning documents, as they remained pioneers in registering the extraordinary practices of land inheritance as previously they had been the first commissioners of regular land charters.

During the sixteenth century, the number of parents willing and apparently able to request a written document that would entitle them to grant their daughters the proper status of legal inheritors multiplied.¹⁴⁸ Between the reign of Radu the Great (1495-1507) and Mircea the Shepherd 49 surviving documents attest the two practices out of 305 documents commissioned by noblemen. Moreover, the increasing number of written charters began to reveal a frequent use of the practice of filial adoption, not only by heirless parents, but also by various kin-related people. Brothers and sisters,¹⁴⁹ husbands and wives,¹⁵⁰ next to different relatives¹⁵¹ turned each other into reciprocal brothers through princely favor to secure the desired inheritance of their family estates. For instance, in the first extant land charter commissioned by a high Wallachian official, ban Drăghici and his wife Vlădaia, it was stated that before the law, they became blood brothers over their fortune, which consisted of twenty-five villages, Gypsy slaves, and movable goods.¹⁵² Thus, the princely authority endorsed by the written testimony entitled the wife of ban Drăghici to keep her husband's estates.¹⁵³

Next to the practices of perfection and fraternal adoption, from the reign of Radu the Great (according to the data), princely documents were issued to record endowment of

¹⁴⁷ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 175 (1480).

¹⁴⁸ See for instance, DRH B, vol. 2, no. 24 (1504), no. 27 (1504), no. 37 (1505), no. 124 (1514), no. 137 (1515), no. 144 (1516), No. 175 (1518), No. 196 (1520).

¹⁴⁹ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 5, no. 220 (1561).

¹⁵⁰ DRH B, vol. 5, no. 27 (1554), DRH B, vol. 7, no. 180 (1574).

¹⁵¹ DRH B, vol. 5, no. 245 (1562). See also DRH B, vol. 11, no. 295 (1598), when Lupul gave his land property to his nephew Manea in exchange for his assistance during his life and religious services afterwards.

¹⁵² DRH B, vol. 7, no. 180 (1574).

¹⁵³ Ibidem.

daughters with land properties as dowry.¹⁵⁴ The written records of landed property donated as dowry multiply only from the second half of the sixteenth century,¹⁵⁵ apparently at the expense of the documents recording the practices of perfection and fraternal adoption that turned the daughters for the purpose of law into sons or brothers, so they could become potential land inheritors. My hypothesis is that after more than a century of usage of the above mentioned practices, the validation of female offspring as inheritor of land property became more customary. Nevertheless, the inclusion of land estates into dowry seems not to have constituted an accepted part of the customary law; it had to be put in writing, and it had to be authenticated by the prince's chancellery.

However, the practice of fraternal adoption continued to be employed: only from the reign of Peter the Young (1559-1568), there are 30 documents surviving. Yet, the practice was recorded more often to secure an uncustomary land transaction between various family members than to turn the daughters without male siblings into potential land inheritors. Moreover, after the turn of the sixteenth century, the practice of fraternal adoption began to be employed as well by non kin related individuals to facilitate the acquisition of land property from lower social strata.¹⁵⁶

The application of the practices of *perfection* and *fraternal adoption* facilitated the access of Wallachian women to the process of land transaction and subsequently to written practices. The first cases of female requests for written confirmation of their land estates are contemporary with the earliest attestation of practices that would guarantee women the right to inherit and own land. Wallachian women did not commission any document prior to the end of the fifteenth century (1499). The first case is that of a noblewoman, *jupanita* Stana, wife of Chamberlain Deatco, who came before Prince Radu the Great to become a "blood

¹⁵⁴ DRH B, vol.2, no. 25 (1504).

¹⁵⁵ See for instance DRH B, vol. 7 no. 195 (1574).

¹⁵⁶ See the previous paragraph, mainly pages 19-20. For the frequency of the practice of adoption of brothers up to the middle of the seventeenth century, see Codarcea, *Societe et pouvoir en Vallachie*, 193, 194.

brother” of her sister and thus, grant her the status of heir to land.¹⁵⁷ I note that the document was not issued as a consequence of *defectum seminis*, as Stana’s son is mentioned in the record. It was rather a testament that allowed Stana to dispose freely of her land property and grant her sister the inheritance of her purchased lands. Only with her sister’s death would Stana’s son be the heir.

During this time, written wills were seldom employed. However, the more common oral will seems to have been insufficient legal proof to grant a non-traditional land inheritance. In this context, the practice of fraternal adoption might be considered a transition from oral to written testaments. Later, it might be seen as starting a practice that lead to the implementation of new writing practices in Wallachia.

The practices of *prefection* and *fraternal adoption* are not attested in Moldavia..¹⁵⁸ Land titles attest equality between male and female heirs.¹⁵⁹ Consequently, after changes in the structure of land ownership, genres of documentary evidence changed to a lesser extent. From the last two decades of the fifteenth century, partitions of previously joint holdings between family members began to be attested.¹⁶⁰ Their number began to multiply, especially at the turn of the sixteenth century,¹⁶¹ recording a significant growth in the second and third decade of the sixteenth century.¹⁶² Single charters were drawn for the entire family in the male line, indicating separate possessions for all individual family members.¹⁶³

Further on, from an early period, women are attested as commissioners of written

¹⁵⁷ DRH B, vol 1, no. 294 (1499).

¹⁵⁸ The practice of *defectum seminis* is also attested in the Moldavian documents; however, only in cases when an ill land owner left no child, male or female.

¹⁵⁹ There are a couple of exceptions during the sixteenth century which led Henri Stahl to consider that the right to confiscate land properties which had fallen into intestacy was part of the Moldavian state as well (see Stahl, *Traditional Romanian Village Communities*, 154). On the contrary, other historians argue that Moldavian males and females had equal rights in inheriting land. See Matei Cazacu “La famille et le statut de la femme en Moldavie (XIV-XIX siècles)” *Revista de istorie Sociala*, 2-3 (1997-1998): 9, 10. Possibly, the Polish practice of equality between male and female inheritors influenced Moldavian inheritance rights.

¹⁶⁰ See DRH A, vol. 3, no. 105, no. 109, no. 111.

¹⁶¹ See DRH A, vol. 3, no. 114, no. 123, no. 128, no. 273; DIR A, vol. 1, no. 123.

¹⁶² See DIR A, vol.1, no. 146, no. 209, no. 210, no. 230, no. 233, no. 238, no. 242, no. 243.

¹⁶³ See notes 124 and 125.

records confirming or donating their land property. Initially, their documents were confined only to the highest social level. It was mainly mothers or wives of the ruling princes, who could secure their donations in the chancellery of the prince.¹⁶⁴ In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, noblewomen are recorded more often as active commissioners of written charters in the central chancellery, selling,¹⁶⁵ buying,¹⁶⁶ confirming or reconfirming their existing land property.¹⁶⁷ For instance, in 1477, Muşa, wife of Vindereu, came before the prince to ask for a new charter that confirmed her possessions in her village, Vinderei, since her old charters had been destroyed during the Ottoman raids.¹⁶⁸ With the transition from joint ownership of the land to individual estates, women similarly used the written word to divide their family land property.¹⁶⁹

* * *

As can be seen, up to the beginning of the sixteenth century, especially in Wallachia, written culture was very limited. Throughout the sixteenth century, slowly during its first half, and more consistently during the second, changes in land ownership greatly influenced the spread and dissemination of written culture in the medieval Romanian Principalities. This process eventually affected all social strata, not only the nobility. Consequently, documents not only display a significant increase in numbers, but a parallel gradual dissemination into new social categories. While, in Moldavia, social changes led rather to a proliferation and dissemination of already existing customs of using written records, in Wallachia it seems that only the implementation of new practices of land inheritance led to a dissemination of a written form of record storage. The fact that new land practices required the princely consent and the production of a written record was a *sine qua non* condition stimulated the transition

¹⁶⁴ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 181; DRH B, vol. 3, no. 49.

¹⁶⁵ DRH A, vol. 3, no. 65, no. 66, no. 71.

¹⁶⁶ DRH A, vol. 3, no. 184, no. 195, no. 206, no. 217.

¹⁶⁷ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 219, no. 228, DRH A, vol. 3, no. 94, no. 211, no. 230, no. 231 et passim.

¹⁶⁸ See DRH A, vol. 2, no. 209.

¹⁶⁹ DRH A, vol. 3, no. 168, no. 175.

from oral to written procedures. Additionally, the strengthening of the defensive role of the charters as probatory evidence during potential disputes was one of the essential reasons for the increasing number of charters.¹⁷⁰ Oral testimonies became gradually less accepted; instead, written documents were required by the princes during disputes. Thus, free peasants and the lower nobility facing the menace of the high nobility had to use similar methods of record storage as their rivals did. In their need to hold on to their landed positions, they replaced old and traditional oral memories with the new written practices. Consequently, only as a result of changes in the land ownership did the number of Wallachian documents begin to be comparable and even exceed the documents issued in the neighboring principality. Accordingly, it seems that social transformation, new social practices as well as social injustice, served as catalytic movements that led to a faster implementation of written ways of recording.

¹⁷⁰ Thomas Behrmann, "Pragmatic Literacy in Lombard City Communes," in *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West 1200-1300* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 128. See also Britnell, *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West*, 12.

Chapter 3. Foreign influence on the dissemination of literary skills in Moldavia and Wallachia: treaties and political letters

In this chapter I address Moldavian and Wallachian documents that attest foreign relations with neighboring powers. I shall consider when documents sent abroad first emerged, which issues were covered in writing, and who participated in their emission. Subsequently, I shall try to scrutinize how foreign relations influenced the usage of written culture in these two Danubian Principalities.

From the creation of the state up to the end of the reign of Michael the Brave (1593-1600) 832 Moldavian and 726 Wallachian letters addressed to foreign institutions are preserved.¹⁷¹ They consist mainly of political and trade-related letters. Throughout the entire period researched these letters are preserved as unilateral correspondence, a factor which enhances the difficulties of interpreting them. The documents addressed to Moldavia and Wallachia were very rarely preserved, although often an indirect record brings to light their previous existence.¹⁷² The lack of urban or state archives up to the nineteenth century in any of the Moldavian or Wallachian towns might account for this situation.¹⁷³ Moreover, copies of the issued documents do not seem to have been recorded in the archives of the foreign

¹⁷¹The archival record has not been edited systematically. There are no reliable critical editions of Wallachian or Moldavian letters. The edited versions are rather focused on certain periods, areas, or languages. Among the most important editors of the Transylvanian corpus of material produced in Latin and German is Nicolae Iorga, see his *Acte și scrisori din arhivele orașelor ardelene (Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu)*. The main corpuses of Wallachian and Moldavian Slavonic letters were edited by Ioan Bogdan, see his *Documente și regeste privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și Ungaria*, and idem, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească în sec. XV și XVI*, vol.1 (1413-1508). Moldavian foreign letters were also published by Mihail Costăchescu in several collections of material organized according to the most important princely reigns. See for instance Mihail Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*. A project for a complete critical edition of the documents that circulated among Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia remains incomplete and does not go beyond the first volume, see *Documenta Romaniae Historica D. Relații între țările române* (Relations among the Romanian countries) D, Vol.1 (1222-1456), ed. Ștefan Pascu, Constantin Cihodaru et al (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1977) (henceforth: *Documenta Romaniae Historica D*). For the edition of the documents issued during the sixteenth century in Romanian see also Gheorghe Chivu, Alexandru Mareș, eds. *Documente Românești din secolul al XVI-lea*; The few unedited documents from the Bistrița town archives are preserved in the Cluj State Archives, Fond POB.

¹⁷² See, for instance, Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 920, no. 967, no. 974. See also Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol. 1, no. 27 (1542, Sept 10).

¹⁷³ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, vol.1, XXV.

countries and towns with which the Danubian Principalities conducted political or economic relations.¹⁷⁴

The lack of domestic archives makes the extant record greatly dependent on foreign archives. Moldavian letters survived mostly in the urban archives of Bistrița and Brașov, and Wallachian letters mainly in the archive of Brașov. Few instances of Wallachian letters are preserved in the town archives of Sibiu,¹⁷⁵ where most of the Wallachian collection has been lost.¹⁷⁶ Other corpuses of Moldavian political letters are attested in Polish,¹⁷⁷ Hungarian, Austrian and German archives.¹⁷⁸ Wallachian letters are only sporadically preserved in the archives of Western European states.¹⁷⁹ The only political correspondence by Michael the Brave (1593-1600) is preserved in German, Austrian, or Polish State archives.¹⁸⁰

3.1 Moldavian and Wallachian political documents: treaties

During the early period of the Moldavian and Wallachian states, written evidence that attests foreign relations is sporadic. In Moldavia, up to the reign of Alexander the Good (1400-1431), external documents indicate the same paucity as the internal ones, as only nine

¹⁷⁴ Ibidem..

¹⁷⁵ For the edition of Slavonic letters from the urban archives of Sibiu see Petre Panaitescu, ed., “Documente slavo-române din Sibiu (1470-1653)” (Slavo-Romanian Documents from Sibiu (1470-1653), *Studii și Cercetări* 32 (1938): 1-44; Silviu Dragomir, ed., “Documente nouă privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Sibiul în secolii XV și XVI” (New documents concerning Wallachian relations with the town of Sibiu during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), *Anuarul Institutului de istorie Națională al Universității Regele Ferdinand I din Cluj*, 4 (1926-27): 37-59.

¹⁷⁶ Bogdan, *Documente și regește*, V.

¹⁷⁷ Ioan Bogdan, ed., *Documente culese din arhive si biblioteci polone* (Documents from the Polish Archives and Libraries), in *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Colecția Hurmuzaki* (Documents concerning the history of the Romanians. Hurmuzaki Collection) Supplement. 2, Vol. 1 (1510-1600) (Bucharest: n.p., 1893).

¹⁷⁸ It was edited by Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*. Vols 1-6. and by Nicolae Densușianu, ed., *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vols. I.2 (1396-1450), vol. II.1 (1451-1575), vol. 2.2 (1451-1510), vol.3.1 (1576-1599).

¹⁷⁹ Among the few is a declaration of submission from the Wallachian Prince Radu Paisie (1535-1545) to Emperor Ferdinand I from Jan 7, 1543,. See Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. 2.1, no. 210 (1543). See also a political letter written by the Wallachian Prince Mihnea the Turk to the Transylvanian Prince Cristophor Bathori in 1579, published by Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol. 2, no. 136.

¹⁸⁰ It was edited by Iorga, *Acte relative la Războaiele și Cuceririle lui Mihai Viteazul*; Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol. 5, 6; Bogdan, *Documente arhive biblioteci polone*, Suppl.2.1.

documents have survived. A preponderant number of the first surviving documents consist of treaties of fidelity and political agreements made by Moldavian princes and noblemen to King Vladislav of Poland.¹⁸¹ The surviving Wallachian evidence is even less significant, as during the entire fifteenth century, it encompasses only five extant treaties signed between Wallachia and other states. Thus, due to the small number of political treaties, particularly from the Wallachian principality, and especially to their restricted circulation, the impact of foreign treaties on the dissemination of written culture seems to have been rather negligible. Even if more documents might have been previously attested, their reception or producing seldom involved a large social segment. The fact that treaties were among the first surviving Moldavian and Wallachian documents, however, helps to trace the first instances of written evidence that appeared in the Danubian principalities and what form they took.

3.1.1 The Medieval Principality of Moldavia

Based on the extant evidence, the number of Moldavian foreign documents began to increase gradually during the reign of Alexander the Good (1400-31). Up to the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504), there are 78 attested Moldavian external documents out of which 36 are treaties and agreements between Moldavian princes or candidates to the throne with neighboring powers, especially Poland.¹⁸² The profusion of the early Moldavian political treaties and agreements might be explained through the political instability of the early Moldavian state.

During the unsettled period that surrounded the reign of Alexander the Good (1400-1431), each prince or future prince was eager to acquire or secure his political power through

¹⁸¹ See Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no. 162 (1387), no. 163 (1387), no. 165 (1393), no. 166 (1395), no. 167 (1395), no. 170 (1400).

¹⁸² The entire collection is published in Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no. 162-no. 235. Only three treaties are known from the Polish indirect record, see Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 1.2 (1346-1450), no. 578 (1442), no. 593 (714), no. 609 (1447).

agreements with neighboring states. Later, only princes with a dynamic political policy, like Stephan the Great or Petru Rareș, concluded treaties of alliances in this frequency. From the reign of Stephen the Great, for instance, there are seven treaties that were signed with Polish kings¹⁸³ and Lithuanian princes.¹⁸⁴ The alliances concluded with the Hungarian king, Mathias, are revealed by a treaty, which seems to have been issued in two copies on two different dates. The Moldavian copy was issued at Iași on July 12 and the Hungarian copy a month later, on August 15, 1475¹⁸⁵ in the Hungarian capital, Buda.¹⁸⁶

Rareș, during his assertive politics in Poland and Transylvania, also signed several treaties with Polish and Hungarian kings.¹⁸⁷ After the first part of Rareș reign, however, as the political influence of the Ottoman Empire grew stronger in Moldavia and Wallachia, the number of political agreements signed with Western powers decreased. Between the reigns of Petru Rareș and Ieremia Movila five treaties were signed by Moldavian princes with Polish kings¹⁸⁸ and one with the Transylvanian prince, Ioannes Zapolya.¹⁸⁹

As mentioned, most of the early Moldavian political treaties were signed with Poland,¹⁹⁰ and only sporadically with Lithuania or Hungary.¹⁹¹ The pattern of the first preserved Moldavian treaties of vassalage suggests that the Polish written tradition and political and cultural influences were dominant in Moldavia during the early period. The first

¹⁸³ Five of them were signed with the Polish king Cazimir, see Ioan Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, (Documents of Stephan the Great) (Bucharest: Socec & Co, 1913), vol.2, no. 129 (1462, March 2), no.131 (1462, March 2), no. 135 (1468, July 28), no. 167 (1485, Sept.16), no. 178 (1499, July 12).

¹⁸⁴ Ibidem, vol. 2, no. 178 (1499, July 12), no. 179 (1499, Sept.14).

¹⁸⁵ Ibidem, vol. 2, no. 146 (1475, July12).

¹⁸⁶ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. 2.1 (1451-1575), no. 11 (1475).

¹⁸⁷ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, Vol. 3.1 (1510-1530), no. 410 (1527); Bogdan, *Documente arhive bibliotecii polone*, no. 63 (Febr.23, 1539,). For the Hungarian treaty see Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 2.1, no. 66 (April 4, 1535).

¹⁸⁸ Bogdan, *Documente arhive bibliotecii polone*, no. 63 (Febr. 23,1539,), signed by Petru Rareș and Ștefan Lacușă and Polish King Sigismund Augustus in 1569, and no. 66 (1539, signed by Ștefan Rareș and Sigismund). For the alliances signed with the Polish King Sigismund Augustus by Alexandru Lăpușneanu in 1569 and his son Bogdan in 1570 see Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 2.1, no. 573 (Oct 2, 1569,), no. 578 (Jan 31, 1570,). The last Moldavian treaty was signed between Ieremia Movilă and the Polish King Sigismund III on Aug. 27, 1595.

¹⁸⁹ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 2.1, no. 221. It was signed by Ilie (Rareș) on Aug 26, 1548.

¹⁹⁰ See, for instance, Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no. 165 (1393), no. 171 (1402), no. 177 (1411).

¹⁹¹ Ibidem, no. 220 (1450), no. 224 (1453).

Moldavian documents embrace the Polish tradition of documents' structure, language usage, and dating. The Moldavian princes pledged to perform *auxilium et consilium* to their Polish suzerains similar to other Catholic princes.¹⁹² Moreover, the elements of oral tradition such as rituals and oath taking likewise seem to have been borrowed from the kingdom of Poland. For instance, the first surviving foreign document, a treaty of vassalage signed between the Moldavian Prince Petru Mușat and Vladislav, king of Poland, on May 6, 1387, was dated according to the Catholic saint's day on *vigilia translationis beati Stanislai martiris atque pontificis, anno domini millessimo tricentesimo octogento? septimo*.¹⁹³ Further, it specified that the oath was taken according to the Eastern Church's tradition: (...) *ritum et consuetudinem orientalis ecclesie lignum vite in manibus domini Cypriani metropolitani Kyoviensis ore proprio osculantes*. The ritual of touching and kissing the Cross of the Savior, often recorded in early Polish-Moldavian treaties,¹⁹⁴ was not recorded in any other contemporary Moldavian documents, neither external nor internal. Probably this ritual was influenced by Polish and Lithuanian practices as it seems that in the Polish-Lithuanian tradition, engaging in a treaty of alliance meant kissing the Holy Cross, as in some documents the expression of *kissing the Cross* was used as a substitute for a treaty of alliance.¹⁹⁵

Elements of oral tradition, such as oaths and maledictions, were recorded next to seals and witnesses in almost all Moldavian-Polish Treaties. In certain documents some details were recorded about the ritual, and apparently the text recorded the oath verbatim.¹⁹⁶ In early Moldavian Polish treaties, the ritual of taking an oath on the Holy Cross was common. Afterwards, beginning with the reign of Stephan the Great, documents seldom record or even mention it. Out of seven extant treaties of alliance and letters of fidelity between Poland and

¹⁹² Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no.181 (June 3, 1433.).

¹⁹³ See Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no. 162 and for the treaty signed by the noblemen on the same date, no.163.

¹⁹⁴ See, for instance, the treaties signed on May 25, 1411, Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no. 177.

¹⁹⁵ See Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no. 176 (1498).

¹⁹⁶ Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no. 201 (September 19, 1436).

Lithuania and the principality of Moldavia during Stephan's reign, the documents mention the ritual of kissing the Cross only once.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, through time, the custom of taking the oath on the Holy Gospel, common for Moldavian internal documents, also appears in external documents. In a document addressed by Stephen the Great to the Lithuanian Knez Alexander in 1496, the ritual of swearing the oath on the Holy Cross is mentioned along with one taken on the Bible.¹⁹⁸ After the reign of Stephan the Great, the ritual of kissing the Cross disappeared from Moldavian foreign documents altogether,¹⁹⁹ even if the support of oral culture and religious elements such as God's help continued to be invoked for the reinforcement of written agreements.²⁰⁰

Written culture and its outcomes, written documents, began to find their way sporadically into oral rituals; in a treaty of alliance signed between Moldavian dignitaries and Sigismund, the Polish king, the Moldavian noblemen took an oath on the written document itself.²⁰¹

The languages of choice, besides the format of the documents, indicate similarly the early influence of Western culture. The language of the first treaties was Latin. Yet, as early as 1393, Church Slavonic began to be employed in the foreign treaties and agreements.²⁰² Despite the switch to the Slavonic language, Western influence was still present. During the fifteenth century only two other treaties were written in Latin.²⁰³ It seems that after the early period all the Moldavian copies of the political agreements were recorded in Slavonic, the

¹⁹⁷ Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no. 129 (March 2, 1462.).

¹⁹⁸ Ibidem, no. 174 (1496).

¹⁹⁹ Bogdan, *Documente arhive bibliotecii polone*, Supplement 2.1, no. 63 (1539, Feb.20). The treaty was signed between the Polish King Sigismund Augustus and Petru Rares.

²⁰⁰ See, for instance, Bogdan, *Documente arhive bibliotecii polone*, no. 137: oath of Bogdan Lăpușneanu to the Polish King Sigismund August on Oct. 2, 1569; see also the last Moldavian treaty signed between Sigismund III and Ieremia Movilă, Moldavian prince, on Aug 27, 1595 (Bogdan, *Documente arhive bibliotecii polone*, no. 176).

²⁰¹ Mihai Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Bogdan Voievod (1504-1517)* (Moldavian documents from the reign of Bogdan Voievod (1504-1517) (Bucharest: Fundația Regele Carol I, 1940), no. 75 (Jan.22, 1510).).

²⁰² It was signed between Roman and Vladislav on Jan. 5, 1393, see Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, no. 177.

²⁰³ Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, no. 181 and no. 230, written by Prince Ilie to Vladislav (June 3, 1433,) and by Peter Aron, on June 29, 1456, to Cazimir, the Polish king.

established state language. The dating of the early treaties similarly records a deviation from Western dating from the birth of the Savior to the Eastern one, calculated from the creation of the world. Initially, scribes used the Western and Eastern calendars simultaneously as, for instance, when the treaty of Voivod Iliăș was signed: “In Suceava from the birth of Christ 1433, June 5. Ghedeon wrote in the year 6941.”²⁰⁴ Afterwards the copies secured for the Moldavian princes were dated only according to the Eastern tradition.²⁰⁵

3.1.2 The Medieval Wallachian Principality

According to the extant evidence, the Wallachian state concluded few political treaties. Among the few surviving treaties of alliances and political agreements from Wallachia, most of them were signed before the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Thus, based on the surviving written evidence, Wallachia acted mainly as a province, exchanging foreign documents at a lower level than the Moldavian principality, mostly with the urban administrations of Transylvanian towns. This situation might be related to the fact that Wallachia enjoyed a relatively short period of political independence, as after the reign of Mircea the Old (1386-1418) Ottoman influence was stronger. Possibly, as a consequence, due to the perceived confidentiality of the information certain issues in the political relations between the Wallachian state and Hungarian or German officials might have been dealt with orally. Wallachian envoys at the court of the Hungarian court are often mentioned in the data. Chancellor Tatul, for instance, is attested as a messenger of Radu Paisie to the Hungarian king.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ “Ou Suchava, po(d) leaty rojdeastva H(s)va a leat I u l g, I u (u) e. Gedewn pisa lea(t) s tz m a.” See Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, no. 183.

²⁰⁵ See, for instance, Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 305-6.

²⁰⁶ Tocilescu, *534 documente*, no. 337.

The largest number of official treaties are preserved from the reign of Mircea the Old (1386-1418), when four treaties were signed with the king of Poland, Vladislav,²⁰⁷ and one with the king of Hungary, Sigismund.²⁰⁸ The first treaty dates from 1389²⁰⁹ and together with the subsequent three they are basically reciprocal agreements with the king of Poland against the Hungarian King Sigismund.²¹⁰ Several lost treaties are suggested by indirect evidence, for instance the treaty of alliance signed between the Wallachian king, Dan II, and Sigismund, the Hungarian king, in 1426.²¹¹ Sporadically, as subjects of the Hungarian king, Wallachian princes concluded peace treaties with the town of Braşov and the County of Bistriţa.²¹² The evidence from the sixteenth century reveals only three other Wallachian treaties, two concluded with the Hungarian King Vladislav,²¹³ and one with the German Emperor Ferdinand I.²¹⁴

Almost all the surviving Wallachian documents were issued in Latin. The only treaty in Slavonic was signed by Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521) with the Hungarian king in 1517.²¹⁵ The Wallachian Latin treaties follow the characteristics of contemporary Hungarian documents and differ from the extant Wallachian Slavonic treaty which was written in the South Slavonic tradition.²¹⁶ The Wallachian Latin treaties also have several distinctive features as a group. The treaties that indicate a Wallachian town as the place of drafting differ

²⁰⁷ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. 1.2, no. 258 (1389); see also *Documenta Romaniae Historica D*, no.75. It was confirmed on Jul. 6, 1391, and May 17, 1411, see *ibidem*, no. 78, no. 115.

²⁰⁸ *Documenta Romaniae Historica D*, no. 87 (1395, March 7).

²⁰⁹ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* 1.2, no. 258 (1389).

²¹⁰ *Documenta Romaniae Historica D*, no. 79 (1391), no.115 (1411). Next to them, there is a reference to a treaty of alliance signed by Dan II with the Hungarian King Sigismund in 1426. See *Documenta Romaniae Historica D*, no. 147.

²¹¹ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 1.2, no. 445. There is also a treaty of vassalage signed in 1396 between a Wallachian pretender, Vladislav, considered as son of Mircea the Old with the Hungarian King Sigismund. See Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol.1. 2, no. 316, also note 1.

²¹² See *Documenta Romaniae Historica D*, no. 133 (1421), no.338 (1456).

²¹³ It was signed by Radu the Great (1493-1508). See Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no.327 (1507, Dec. 3) and by Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521) in 1517. See Bogdan . *Documente și regeste*, no.153 (1517, March 17).

²¹⁴ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor* , vol. 2.1, no.210 (1543, Jan.7).

²¹⁵ Bogdan . *Documente și regeste*, no.153 (1517, March 17). There was also a Slavonic peace agreement signed in 1421 with the urban administration of the town of Braşov.

²¹⁶ See, for instance, *Documenta Romaniae Historica D*, no. 115 and 133.

from the Wallachian treaties that were issued outside of Wallachia. For instance, in the Wallachian treaty from 1496²¹⁷ issued at Arges and in the one issued at Giurgiu in 1411,²¹⁸ the scribe employed a full invocation: *In nomine Domini Amen*, and a titulation that does not use *Dei gratia*, which is closer to the internal Wallachian state documents. The documents that were issued abroad, on the contrary, omit a full invocation and use *Dei gratia* in the titulation, which more closely resembles the structure of the contemporary documents employed by the Hungarian and Polish kings.²¹⁹ This might attest that Wallachian princes, while abroad, used Hungarian and Polish subjects as scribes of their variants of the treaties.²²⁰

The early Wallachian treaties are puzzling in regard to the elements of oral tradition used, such as rituals of oath taking. Oral rituals are not mentioned in the Wallachian treaties, neither with the Polish nor the Hungarian kingdom. The only guarantors of these agreements are the documents themselves and the princely seals: *In cuius rei testimonium firmitatemque perpetuam, literas nostras presentes dedimus privilegiales pendenti<s> et autentici sigilli nostri maioris munimine roboratas*.²²¹ Conversely, in the few Slavonic treaties produced in Wallachia, witnesses, an oath endorsement, and traditional Wallachian maledictions specific to the internal documents were employed to reinforce these agreements.²²² This omission is peculiar and cannot be attributed to the cultural tradition since oaths were recorded regularly in the area during this period. The treaties concluded with Hungary or Poland and with other Christian and non-Christian states record or at least mention the rituals of oath taking, especially during the early period. The extant treaties from the Moldavian principality likewise usually endorse the agreements through elements of oral tradition. For instance, in

²¹⁷ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 1.2, no. 316.

²¹⁸ Ibidem, no. 391.

²¹⁹ See, for instance, *Documenta Romaniae Historica* D, no. 75 (1390), no.79 (1391); cf with the treaty of alliance concluded by the Hungarian King Sigismund with Vladislav, the Polish king, in 1412. See Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 1. 2, no. 401.

²²⁰ Confer, for instance, no. 391 from Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor* , vol.1.2 with no. 79, ibidem.

²²¹ *Documenta Romaniae Historica* D, no. 75 (1390). See also no. 115 issued in 1411.

²²² They are recorded in 1421, see *Documenta Romaniae Historica* D, no. 115, as well as in a sixteenth-century document. See Bogdan, *Documente si regeste*, no.153 (1517, March 17).

the treaty from 1453 between Ioannes Corvinus and the Moldavian Prince Alexandru the agreements are supported by vows on God and the Holy Trinity.²²³ The Moldavian Prince Rareș, likewise, while endorsing a treaty of vassalage to the German Emperor Ferdinand I, reinforced his pledges through ...*Deum vivum, qui coelum et terram creavit, et sancta ejus Evangelia, sacrasanctamque crucem, perque gloriossimam ejus matrem virginem Mariam, et omnes sanctos Dei...*²²⁴ Even in the diplomatic treaties concluded between Hungary and Poland with the Ottoman Empire, the extensive Christian vows are not missing. For instance, Vladislav II, concluding a treaty with the Turkish Sultan Baiazid in 1503, reinforced their agreements: ...*per deum vivum Qui celum et terram creavit et per gloriosam eius Genitricem, virginem Mariam ac per quatuor Evangelistas...*²²⁵ Moreover, in other Wallachian treaties, Slavonic and Latin alike, the agreements are also reinforced by extensive oaths.²²⁶

Thus, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with rare exceptions, written political agreements were reinforced by oral rituals.²²⁷ The omission of such rituals in the early Wallachian treaties with either the Polish or Hungarian kingdom is exceptional and might be due to specific circumstances. Almost until the end of the sixteenth century, most written political agreements between different states were perceived as non-functional without the extra support of more customary elements or oral tradition. As Goody states, “there was no sanction of a legitimate force to support the taken agreement stated in the international treaties, they had to be backed up by non-legal or non-political means such as oath and blessings.”²²⁸ It seems that initially the rituals were influenced by Catholic practices, regardless of the fact that the documents explicitly invoked the Eastern religious tradition.

²²³ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, Vol. 2.1, no. 1 (1453).

²²⁴ Ibidem, Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, Vol. 2.1, no. 66.

²²⁵ Ibidem, no. 24.

²²⁶ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, Vol. 2.1, no. 210 (1543, Jan 7).

²²⁷ Besides the exceptions discussed above, two treaties were concluded between the Hungarian King Sigismund and Polish King Vladislav where oaths were omitted or just briefly mentioned, see Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 1.2, no. 401 (1412). See also *ibidem*, no. 221.

²²⁸ Goody, *Logic of Writing*, 102.

Later, the regular rituals employed from an early period in the internal documents, oaths taken on the Holy Gospel, appeared more regularly in external Moldavian documents.

In addition, foreign treaties indicate that in the Moldavian and Wallachian principalities the formation of written tradition was significantly influenced by the practices employed in the Polish and Hungarian chanceries, especially during the early period. Western influence and practices seem to have been dominant in the early Moldavian and Wallachian treaties. Later, as the fluctuations between Western and Eastern Christian tradition were settled by a strong affiliation to the Byzantine Church, the Western influence was gradually coupled with a South Slavonic one in Moldavia. The Wallachian evidence, although sporadically endorsing the same hypothesis, is rather sparse for drawing accurate conclusions; however it indicates that during the early period the Hungarian written tradition was dominant.

3.2 Moldavian and Wallachian political documents: Letters

Besides treaties, the political contacts of the Danubian principalities are witnessed by political letters. According to the evidence, foreign communication consisted of a fusion of written documents and oral exchange of information. The first exchanges of diplomatic letters are attested simultaneously with a certain type of document in which written instruments were used just to endorse and confirm oral speech. The interplay of written and oral communication in the exchange of political information is examined below.

3.2.1 Written documents as testimonies of political communication: Moldavia.

Up to the end of the fifteenth century, when written culture was very restricted, political letters constitute most of the surviving material. From the entire reign of Stephan the

Great (1457-1504) 75 out of 122 letters addressed political issues. Moldavian political letters are focused on regional politics as well as on broader European topics such as a concerted, unified response to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. During the reign of Stephen the Great documents were exchanged with various Christian powers from the Moldavian chancery. For instance, in 1475, Stephan the Great wrote to the Western kings asking for military help in his fight against the Turkish menace and boasting about his victories against the Ottoman Empire.²²⁹ Two surviving documents indicate an exchange of letters with Pope Sixt IV asking for military help²³⁰ or informing him about his alliances with Eastern powers.²³¹ Next to the documents exchanged with Western states, quite an active political correspondence was conducted locally with the administration of Transylvanian towns, especially, first with Braşov and later with Bistriţa. The local documents revolved mostly around the exchange of intelligence about the whereabouts of the Ottoman forces and their preparation for war, or about the political situation of neighboring Wallachia, whose princes began to be instruments of the politics of expansion of the Ottoman Empire.²³²

The first reign of Petru Rareş (1527-1538) and his political activities resulted as well in frequent letters exchanged with the Hungarian and Polish kings, or with Transylvanian towns. For instance, thirty-nine letters commissioned by Prince Rareş are preserved in the town archives of Bistriţa²³³ and three in Braşov.²³⁴ Another body of fifteen letters attest his political contacts with the Polish and Hungarian kings Sigismund I and Ferdinand I. The Hungarian king pleaded for Rareş' support in his fight against Ottoman expansion, and tried

²²⁹ See Bogdan, *Documente Stefan cel Mare*, no.143 (1475, Jan.25).

²³⁰ Ibidem, no. 142 (1474, 29 Nov.).

²³¹ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 8 (1376-1650) (Bucharest: n.p., 1894), No.12 (1474, Nov.24).

²³² See, for instance, Iorga, *Acte si scrisori*, no.147 (1475, Nov. 1), no.149 (1476, Febr. 18), no.150 (1476, June 5), no.151 (1476, June 11), no.152 (1477, Jan. 5), no. 153 (1477, Jan 27).

²³³ See Iorga, *Acte si scrisori*; See also Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol.1, no.30 (1542, Dec. 2)

²³⁴ Iorga, *Acte si scrisori*, no. 627 (1529, Oct. 25), no. 632 (1529, Nov. 3).

to serve as a mediator between Prince Rareș and the Polish king in their territorial dispute over the Pocutia region.²³⁵

Later on, after mid-sixteenth century, the number of Moldavian letters increased in number, especially during the reign of Alexandru Lapușneanu. However, political issues are exceeded by commercial and private concerns, as there are thirty-six political letters out of a hundred and twenty-one letters preserved.²³⁶ Indirect references suggest that more political letters were extant previously.²³⁷ Lapușneanu, protected by the Turkish sultan, undertook quite dynamic political activity in the area. The data confirm an active written communication with the Transylvanian prince and with the German Emperor, Maximilian II.²³⁸ Most of Lapușneanu's political letters, however, were exchanged with the Transylvanian towns and are focused on regional politics. For instance, eight letters were issued during June 1566,²³⁹ when Lapușneanu opposed a pretender to the Moldavian throne who was preparing an army at Borgus (Bargău), a place situated under the jurisdiction of the town of Bistrița.²⁴⁰ The data indicate that the Moldavian princes continued to undertake a dynamic political correspondence locally and regionally almost throughout whole the sixteenth century.

3.2. 2 Written documents as testimonies of political communication: Wallachia

²³⁵ Documents are published in Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, 2.1, no. 66 (1535, April 6), no. 68 (1537, Febr.24), no. 96 (1537, May 27), no.101 (1537, June 14), no.104 (1537, July 7), no.111 (1537, July 24), no.112 (1537, July 24), no.122 (1537), no.199 (1542, Sept. 17), no.208 (1542, Dec.6). See also Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol. 1, no. 26 (1542, Aug. 27), no.31 (1542, Dec. 8); The letter addressed the to Transylvanian Seculis is published in Bogdan, *Documente arhive biblioteci polone*, Suppl. 2.1, no. 82.

²³⁶ The majority of he documents are published in Iorga, *Acte si scrisori*. See also Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol. 1, no.189 (1554, Apr.23), no.190 (1554, Apr.28), no.203 (1556, Sept 29), no.206 (1557, May 7).

²³⁷ See, for instance, the letters written by Princess Isabella to the town of Bistrița assuring them of the friendship of Prince Alexander and confirming his recent letters. Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 973 (1557, Dec.15).

²³⁸ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*.

²³⁹ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 645, no. 646, no. 647, no. 648, no. 649, no. 650, no. 651); Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol.1, no. 320 (1566, June 14).

²⁴⁰ He was Stephan Mazga; see Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 645 (1566, June 10) and note 1.

Wallachian political letters varied somewhat from the Moldavian ones. My data reveal mainly a regional correspondence exchanged with the urban administrations of the Transylvanian towns. As the dominance of the Ottoman Empire grew stronger in Wallachia, the Wallachian principedom was sold by the Turkish officials to whoever offered the highest price. Consequently, the reigns of the Wallachian princes were usually short and unstable. Their authority was often challenged by local noblemen, foreign states, and particularly by the Ottoman rulers. The struggles of the princes to keep their position or to regain it make up the subject of most of the Wallachian political letters of the period. Another recurrent subject of the letters revolved around the exchange of intelligence or request for military aid against the Turks.

Thus, the Wallachian evidence, up to the reign of Michael the Brave (1593-1601), seldom testifies about an exchange of diplomatic and political documents at the state level. Moreover, although political letters are attested earlier in Wallachia than in Moldavia,²⁴¹ Wallachian princes addressed political issues less often. Up to the end of the reign of Radu the Great (1496-1508) there are 102 political letters out of 274 surviving letters. Later, after the turn of the sixteenth century, the number of political letters varies from prince to prince, depending presumably on their preoccupations and interests. However, as a general rule, Wallachian political letters throughout the sixteenth century continued to be infrequent and manifest a strong local character. Only exceptionally as, for instance, during the reign of Radu Paisie (1535-1545), there is some evidence that testify about diplomatic relations between Wallachia and the Transylvanian princes or Polish and Hungarian kings.²⁴² Afterwards, the extant letters record mainly administrative issues.

²⁴¹ The first political letters are extant in Wallachia from the reign of Aldea (1431-3) and in Moldavia only from the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504).

²⁴² Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 779 (1542, Oct. 2); Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol. 1, no.15 (1535, June 8).

In the two Romanian Principalities, a revival of political documents is recorded only during the last years of the sixteenth century. The participation of the Moldavian Prince Aron Voda (1591-1595) at the Christian Configuration initiated by Pope Clement VIII against Muslim expansion led to frequent political letters.²⁴³ The correspondence of Michael the Brave in Wallachia, and Ieremia Movila' in Moldavia is more significant. The dispute over the Moldavian throne between Michael the Brave and the acting Moldavian Prince Ieremia Movila (1596-1607), supported by the king of Poland, is particularly well documented.

Ieremia Movila had close relations with Poland that unfold in a noteworthy correspondence for a Moldavian prince. From 1595 to 1600 84 Moldavian letters commissioned by Prince Movila have survived and most of them (67) are addressed to the Polish King Sigismund III or to the Polish chancellor Zamoyski. Another twenty-six letters attest his contacts with the Transylvanian town of Bistrița.²⁴⁴

Despite the scarcity of earlier records, the Wallachian political correspondence of Michael the Brave at the end of the sixteenth century was remarkable. Two hundred and thirty-eight letters attest his relations with the German emperor and the Hungarian and Polish kings. This means that only during Michael the Brave's reign (1593-1600), the Wallachian political correspondence with Western kings and princes was able to equal and even to exceed the number of Moldavian documents.

The abundance of items in the Wallachian political record from the end of the sixteenth century might be explained by the fact that the personal archives of the Wallachian Prince Michael the Brave were preserved abroad. However, the multiple Western relations of

²⁴³ Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol.4, no. 28 (1594, Jan. 1), no. 56 (1594, Aug. 15), no. 57 (1594, Aug. 16), no. 64 (1594, Sept. 15), no. 79 (1594, Oct. 31), no. 97 (1594, December).

²⁴⁴ The political contacts of Prince Movilă with the town of Bistrița and Transylvanian officials seem to have been rather sporadic, as only five extant letters addressed political issues. See Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 867 (1596, Apr. 2), no. 1391 (1597, July 29), no.1411 (1599, June 23); Iorga, *Acte relative la Războaiele și Cuceririle lui Mihai Viteazul* Vol.12, no. 747 (1599, Oct. 26). The letter addressed to Stephanus Szuhay, bishop of Vac, is published in Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*, vol. 5 (1598, May 24).

Michael the Brave doubtlessly stimulated the assimilation of foreign practices of writing and the employment of written documents for various affairs, political as well as administrative at least at the princely level. The exchange of political letters remained more restricted in Wallachia than in Moldavia, however, both quantitatively and in the quality of language up to the last decade of the sixteenth century.

3.3 The oral exchange of political information. Written documents and their function as a device of support

Next to political letters, in the Moldavian and Wallachian principalities a special type of correspondence was used, written to endorse the oral information delivered by envoys:²⁴⁵ *fidere adhibere velitis creditivam tamquam ab ore nostro prolatis*.²⁴⁶ These schematic letters, presumably *letters of credence*,²⁴⁷ unfold in the record when written communication began to diversify slowly. I am addressing them along the political letters although there are no direct indications about the subject matter they were related to. It is unclear what type of information was perceived as too sensitive or confidential to be trusted to writing. However, given the historical context I am assuming that they were related to political issues.

In Moldavia, letters of credence were extensively attested up to the reign of Lapușneanu (1552-1561, second reign 1564-1568)²⁴⁸ and his son Bogdan (1568-1571), with a special importance during the reign of Petru Rareș and his son Ilias Rareș. In Wallachia, unlike Moldavia, they continued to be recorded throughout the sixteenth century, until the end of reign of Michael the Brave (1593-1601). This indicates that from the early fifteenth century in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, the exchange of information was based on the

²⁴⁵ Bogdan, *Documente Stefan cel Mare*, no.147 (Nov.1, 1475).

²⁴⁶ Ibidem., no.153 (1477, Jan. 27). See also ibidem, no.168 (1487, Dec.17).

²⁴⁷“ See Donald E. Queller, “Thirteenth-Century Diplomatic Envoys: *Nuncii et Procuratores*” *Speculum* 35 (1960): 196-213, 199. See also Pierre Monnet, “Pouvoir comunal et communication politique dans les villes de L’Empire à la fin du moyen âge, “ *Francia* 31 (2004): 121-40.

²⁴⁸ Ibidem, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 922 (1553, Sept. 3), no. 1040 (1560, Oct. 31), no. 1042 (1560, Nov.1), no. 1049 (Febr. 18, 1561), no.1121 (1564, June 18).

interplay of oral and written communication. The oral exchange of information was gradually replaced by written exchange in Moldavia, while in Wallachia the documents attest the continuing use of writing and oral communication simultaneously up to the end of the researched period.

Thus, up to the second half of the sixteenth century a significant number of Moldavian documents attest the exchange of information via oral speech, while written documents were employed only to confirm the authority of the sender. During the reign of Petru Rareș, for instance, twenty-one out of fifty-seven political letters were written just to endorse the messengers and require their words to be credited, *fidem creditivam adhibere velitis*.²⁴⁹ Their large number and formulas seem to indicate that oral exchange of information was regular.

According to the activities and preoccupations known for the Moldavian Prince Petru Rareș, the information delivered orally might have been related to political issues. However, the oral exchange of information seems to have been used only locally with the administration of Transylvanian towns, as letters addressed to the king of Hungary or Poland do not mention any oral information. The difference suggests that only intelligence information might have been carried through oral communication.

The written confirmation of oral messages continued during the short and insignificant reigns of the sons and successors of Petru Rareș.²⁵⁰ Twenty-four letters are extant from the reign of Iliaș, out of which there is only a single specific political letter, while five other letters are written confirmations of an oral, presumably political and confidential, message delivered by various messengers.²⁵¹ Later, even if an exchange of information via oral speech

²⁴⁹ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 745 (1542, Nov. 24). See also *ibidem* no. 742 (1542, Nov. 23); no. 743, no. 744, no. 745, no. 746 (1542, Nov. 24); no. 749 (1542, Nov. 25).

²⁵⁰ His successor was his oldest son Iliaș, who reigned from 1546 to 1551. After his conversion to Islam, he was replaced by his youngest brother, Stephen (1551-1552), who, after several months of reign, was killed by Moldavian noblemen, possibly fearing the same Islamic sympathies.

²⁵¹ See Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 854 (1547, Febr. 13), no. 861 (1547, June 22), no. 864 (1548, March 18), no. 869 (1548, July 2), no. 892 (1550, Dec. 13).

was still sporadically employed, it was recorded as an extra item of information to a regular administrative or commercial letter.²⁵²

In Wallachia, prince Aldea (1431-33) was among the first to conduct an active political correspondence with the Braşov administration. Along with the direct and often colloquial style of his political letters, there was confirmation of additional information that was to be delivered orally.²⁵³ Prince Aldea, however, seldom employed separate letters of credence. Usually the oral message was mentioned as an addition to a political or administrative letter.²⁵⁴

By the last quarter of the fifteenth century, during the reign of Basarab the Old and Basarab the Young, letters of credence multiplied. They were utilized especially in the political and private correspondence of Basarab the Young, when, similar to Moldavia, Wallachian letters of credence adopted a stereotypic form.

As mentioned, after the mid-sixteenth century, Moldavian data indicate a transition from the oral exchange of information to a written one. Messengers began to be attested mostly as carriers of written letters. From Lapuşneanu's reign on, references to an oral exchange of information were seldom recorded. *Cito* and *raptim* are added to letters of credence several times, which may indicate that in certain situations oral communication might have been required by the lack of time or lack of scribes and not by previous practices.²⁵⁵ The last surviving Moldavian letter referring to an exchange of information orally dates from the reign of Bogdan Lapuşneanu (1568-1571).²⁵⁶ Allusions to an exchange of information via direct speech endured in the documents commissioned not by the princes, however, but by Moldavian noblemen.²⁵⁷

²⁵² Ibidem, *Acte şi scrisori*, no. 962 (1557, July 12), no. 978 (1558, Jan.23), no.1124 (1564, July 22).

²⁵³ Bogdan, *Relaţiile Ţării Româneşti cu Braşovulşi cu Ţara Ungurească*, no. 31.

²⁵⁴ Ibidem, no. 27, no.32.

²⁵⁵ Iorga, *Acte şi scrisori*, no. 1042 (1560, Nov. 1).

²⁵⁶ Ibidem, no. 1173 (1568, May 23)

²⁵⁷ Tocilescu, *534 documente*, no.523. The document is not dated.

Conversely, the frequency of attested letters of credence indicates that in Wallachia the exchange of information via direct speech of the messengers was regular. Sporadically, however, an exchange of information via letters began to be referred to. The first indications occur from the reign of Radu the Handsome (1462-1474);²⁵⁸ up to the end of the reign of Radu the Great two other references to written documents carried by messengers are extant.²⁵⁹ Twofold reference to oral and written exchanges of information became formulaic only in the middle of the sixteenth century, when the Wallachian princes always mentioned in their letters that they understood the received letters and utterances properly.

The switch from oral to written ways of communication and back makes me question whether the sensitivity of the substance covered in the letter was an objective requirement for the political letters or whether the exchange of information was going through a period of transition from mostly oral to mostly written.²⁶⁰ On the one hand, communication via direct speech may have endured due to a stronger Wallachian oral tradition. This, coupled with a lower number of early documents, suggests a more limited culture of writing in Wallachia than in Moldavia. On the other hand, the slow transition from oral communication to written documents might have been accentuated by an objective danger attached to the exchange of confidential information. For instance, Princess Isabella asked the citizens of Bistrița, “to guard the roads and to capture all letters.”²⁶¹ Furthermore, the oral tradition might have been maintained by foreign practices, as the exchange of information orally or in writing usually seems to have been reciprocal.²⁶² Certain documents indicate that contemporary German or Transylvanian officials also requested the delivery of information via speech. For instance, in a letter sent in 1552 from the Wallachian capital Târgoviște, John Tartler, a messenger of the German Emperor Ferdinand I asked the senate of the town of Brașov to send him a messenger

²⁵⁸ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 88 (1474).

²⁵⁹ Ibidem, no. 115 (1478-9), no. 159 (1491-2).

²⁶⁰ See for, instance, Bogdan, *Documente Ștefan cel Mare*, no. 156 (1479, Apr. 20), no. 157 (1480, Jan. 22).

²⁶¹ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 966.

²⁶² Ibidem, no. 1173 (1568, May 23)

so that he could inform the latter about his imperial mission at the Wallachian court. Besides, he similarly conveyed information via a Wallachian servant endorsed by a letter of credence.²⁶³

The format of letters of credence, although varying in time and space, was little more than a primary written confirmation of the oral speech delivered by the messenger. The information was conveyed through certain formulas. These were usually extensive in Moldavia and as a general rule short and less stereotypic (differing from prince to prince) in Wallachia. Occasionally, Wallachian formulas resemble the Moldavian ones: “(...) and what he would say to your highness, you shall believe as if we would have spoken mouth to mouth” (*ta vare elika izrechet k’ vasheiu vashoi milosti, a vi da ga veruete, kako da bikhmo govorili ustom k’ ustu*).²⁶⁴

According to the formulas used, it seems that Wallachian and Moldavian deliverers of oral information functioned similarly to the *nuntii* (messengers)²⁶⁵ used in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. They were granted full power to convey information in the prince’s name, taking the place of a letter and being the voices of their masters.²⁶⁶ The formulas of the text suggest that in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, messengers were seen as mere channels of transmission: ... *quitquit Vestris dixerit Amicitiiis ex parte nostri, fidem adhibere velitis creditivam, tamquam ab ore nostro prolati*,²⁶⁷ as for instance, one of the first letters of credence issued by a Moldavian prince specifies: Stephen the Great (1457-1504) recommended his messenger Oglindă to the citizens of Braşov. He, similar to other princes, required that the words of his messengers be credited, since they were his “truthful utterances.” The Wallachian Prince Vlad Dracul uttered the same desire, even when he

²⁶³ Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei şi Țării-Româneşti*, vol. 1, no. 124 (1552, Aug. 24).

²⁶⁴ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovul şi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 96 (1474-6).

²⁶⁵ Also called *ambassadors*, *legati*, *cursores*. See Monnet “Pouvoir communal et communication politique, 122.

²⁶⁶ See Queller, “Thirteenth-Century Diplomatic Envoys”, 199.

²⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 200.

addressed the Braşov citizens in a different language: “*A shto vi izrecet, da go veruete oti sont moi istinie rech’*”²⁶⁸

Moreover, messengers seem to have been used as channels of transmission not only of plain information but of oaths and vows.²⁶⁹ Wallachian letters often mention a princely request or delegation of truthful and authorized messengers, capable of taking an oath in the name of their rulers. The Moldavian letters also record the endorsement of certain decisions via oaths taken. The procedure is never spelled out, however, and it is unclear whether vows could have been taken via an intermediary, similar to Wallachia. The only details about an oath procedure are recorded in a Polish copy of a treaty from 1537, to be concluded with Moldavia. It mentions that a *iuramentum corporale* is a must.²⁷⁰ It is unclear, however, whether a *iuramentum corporale* was always required or only in the most important situations. The fact that the Moldavian evidence never indicates that oaths were taken via messengers may indicate that the Moldavian principality might have been influenced by Polish culture and at least for special situations a personal oath was required.

The status of the Moldavian and Wallachian messengers varied. The data disclose persons of various activities, such as noblemen, traders, and custom officials.²⁷¹ They could have been of different age and status, citizens of Bistriţa or Braşov, or native subjects. Often, important noblemen, high court dignitaries, and members of the state chancery are attested as envoys, carriers of oral information. They were used as instruments of communication, as “speaking letters,”²⁷² possibly due to an established tradition which was reluctant to trust confidential information to writing. In one of the letters commissioned by Iliăş (1546-1551), the Moldavian chancellor, Theodorus Boloş, fulfilled the function of a messenger. As the

²⁶⁸ “(...) and what he would tell you, trust him as these are my true utterances.” See Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 62 (1432-1446).

²⁶⁹ See Queller, “Thirteenth-Century Diplomatic Envoys, 200. Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 121.

²⁷⁰ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, vol. 2.1, no.106 (1537, July 15)

²⁷¹ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 854 (1547, Feb.13).

²⁷² See Queller, “Thirteenth-Century Diplomatic Envoys, 200.

position of chancellor in Moldavia was the highest among court dignities, Theodorus Boloş must have been of venerable status and age. Similarly, in Wallachia high state dignitaries were sent to Braşov to convey the prince's information as, for instance, the "true boyar, jupan [nobleman] and chamberlain Dumitru" sent by Basarab the Old to the Transylvanian Prince Istvan Bathory in 1474.²⁷³ It is known that during the fifteenth century in Wallachia the title of *jupan* was only given to the highest nobility. The courteous reference to him suggests besides his elevated court position a high princely esteem. Later, chancery scribes among the envoys of Moldavian or Wallachian princes were often recorded as producers of documents during their diplomatic missions.²⁷⁴ The frequency of the attestation of the scribes as messengers may indicate that foreign missions were one of their duties.

Unfortunately, no or only very incomplete data are recorded about messengers. For instance, nothing is known about a messenger sent by Petru Rareş to the town of Bistriţa, except for his youth: ... *missimus adolescens noster nomine Stan*, whose words were requested to be credited: *cuius verbis fidem dare velitis*.²⁷⁵

The many names of envoys mentioned in the letters from a relatively short time span suggest that special envoys did not exist at the Wallachian or Moldavian courts, but rather occasional persons were used as messengers. A fifteenth-century evidence indicates that Wallachian princes at least sporadically employed such occasional messengers to deliver their information. For instance, Vlad Tepes (1456-1462), sent a messenger to the Rucăr custom post with the request to inform the town administration of Braşov that the account about a Turkish attack was false. Relevant in this context are further instructions of the prince, who summoned the custom post to "let the man who had brought you this letter go unharmed to his house."²⁷⁶

²⁷³ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 88.

²⁷⁴ For more information about the facts see chapter 6 (scribes).

²⁷⁵ Iorga, *Acte şi scrisori*, no. 815 (1543, Oct.21).

²⁷⁶ DRH B, vol.1, no. 114. (c. 1457-1461)

Only uncommonly are the same envoys attested repeatedly. For instance, the servant Badea is referred to twice as messenger in the letters of Radu the Great.²⁷⁷ Given the lack of dating of the Slavonic letters, it is difficult to follow how long a messenger was employed. Additionally, the usage of only the messengers' Christian names makes any conclusion hazardous.

* * *

The language of the Slavonic Wallachian letters notes a significant difference from the Latin letters employed in Moldavia, as well as from the few Wallachian letters written in Latin. Especially early Wallachian Slavonic letters are often primary and colloquial. They suggest a frame of mind shaped by oral culture. Even if the written letters were used for the exchange of information, the information referred to was called "speech" and its transmission was referred to as "spoken." For instance, in a letter of around 1479, Basarab the Young, writing to the Braşov administration, stated that "he *talks* to them and asks how he can trust them since they keep his enemies among them."²⁷⁸ The word *rechi* ("utterance", words) seems to have been used frequently with a broad meaning of speech, action, and protection: "And again, for those enemies, your highness shall disclose ... whose words are protecting them." (*I Paki za tei vrajmashe, kako da mi iznaidesh tvoe milosti ... I chie rechi ikh okrotivat...*).

Especially during the fifteenth century, the colloquial language of the documents might suggest that they were written under direct dictation. For instance, Basarab the Young in one of his letters addressed to Braşov states twice that "he did not make peace for the nose of Laiota [meaning for Laiota's sake] but for the benefit of Christendom."²⁷⁹ Moreover,

²⁷⁷ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 80 (c. 1498) and no.191 (c. 1496-1507).

²⁷⁸ Ibidem, no.121 (c. 1479).

²⁷⁹ Ibidem, no. 134 (c. 1481).

words employed in the first political letters commissioned by Aldea endorse the assumption that there was no differentiation between spoken and written language and that the prince set up his letters as a direct verbalization to the recipient. Basarab the Young, urging the Braşov citizens to dispatch his enemies, acknowledged that “their stubbornness got stuck in his throat,” a formula that suggests an oral colloquial language.²⁸⁰

In contrast, in Moldavia the language of political letters was more literary. Colloquial, oral language and direct speech were seldom employed in princely letters. It is wrong to assume, however, that this difference was the outcome of a different frame of mind in which written culture took a more prominent role. The difference may be explained rather by a better institutional setting of the chancery and better trained scribes. The few Moldavian foreign Slavonic letters support this explanation that the Moldavian scribes were better trained.

The issue of documents possibly written under direct dictation opens the question of which languages the Moldavian and Wallachian princes actually spoke. Latin was most probably unknown to the Moldavian and Wallachian princes and most noblemen. Most Moldavian foreign letters were written in Latin, so it is hard to assume that they were written under direct dictation, as some of the Slavonic letters might suggest. However, whether Moldavian and Wallachian noblemen knew Slavonic, a foreign language, also remains a debatable subject.

* * *

Diplomatic relations, besides other external factors, influenced the establishment of written practices in the medieval Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. The characteristics of the Moldavian documents as well as their numbers indicate that written culture was more widespread in Moldavia than in Wallachia during the early period. The texts of early political documents suggest that political relations with Western countries influenced the formation of the early Moldavian written tradition.

²⁸⁰ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 91.

The increased number of Wallachian letters during the second half of the sixteenth century indicate that foreign relations stimulated the usage of written exchanges of information and established certain written practices. The first political letters from Aldea's reign written in a colloquial language, irrespective of the structure of the documents, stand in opposition to the letters issued by Michael the Brave (1593-1600) and support the idea of a gradual establishment of written practices in Wallachia. Politics-related documents indicate that initially the exchange of documents was stimulated mostly by extraordinary situations and became gradually routine, at least for the highest social strata. However, in Wallachia written documents did not replace the oral exchange of information with foreigners but rather coexisted with it.

Chapter 4. Trade and its impact on the development of written culture

The importance of commercial activities in the inception and development of the Danubian States has a long history in Romanian historiography. Iorga (1924), Papacostea (1999), among many others, saw the existence of the international trade routes crossing the territories of the Wallachian and Moldavian Principalities as one of the causes of the foundation of the state.²⁸¹ Before the development of state structures, urban settlements such as Baia in Moldavia or Câmpulung in Wallachia are recorded as active centers of trade.²⁸² In my reading of the data, trade not only influenced the foundation of state structures and institutions but also constituted an important factor to bring about the use and dissemination of written records.

This chapter focuses on the activities of foreign traders, their requests for written records, as well as the gradual assimilation of foreign (written) practices in local institutions and by individual merchants.

The Fourth Crusade and the capture of Constantinople curtailed Byzantine dominance over the Black Sea and transformed it into one of the main exchange-nexus for Oriental and Occidental products.²⁸³ Poland and Hungary became significant links in the chain of European trade and a large segment of the population began to become involved in market exchanges. It is this particularly favorable trading context that accounts for the rapid economic development

²⁸¹Nicolae Iorga, *Drumurile de comerț creatoare ale statului românesc* (Commercial routes as founders of the Romanian state) (Bucharest: Ministeriul de Culte, 1924); Victor Papacostea, “Începuturile politicii comerciale a Țării Românești și Moldovei (secolele XIV- XVI) Drum și stat” (The beginning of Wallachian and Moldavian commercial politics (14th to 16th centuries) Road and state) In *Geneza statului în Evul Mediu românesc* (Bucharest: Corint, 1999), 220.

²⁸²Constantin C. Giurăscu, *Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea* (Towns or cities and Moldavian castles up to the middle of the sixteenth century) (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1997), 80; for Wallachia see Laurentiu Rădvan, *Orașele din Țara Românească până la sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea* (Wallachian towns up to the end of the sixteenth century) (Iassy: Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2004), 66.

²⁸³Rădvan, *Orașele din Țara Românească*, 66, Papacostea, “Începuturile politicii comerciale a Țării Românești și Moldovei,” 163.

of East-Central Europe during the fifteenth century.²⁸⁴

The terrestrial commercial routes that linked the Western and Oriental trade routes via the Black Sea started at the harbor of Licostomo, situated in the part of Wallachia at the Danube delta and Maurocastro on the Moldavian part of the Dnestr River, and headed toward the large market-towns of Lviv (Poland), Braşov (Hungary) and Leipzig (Germany). As this trade-route segment crossed the territories of the newly created Wallachian and Moldavian states,²⁸⁵ the commercial interests of the Hungarian and Polish kingdoms partly explain their struggle for suzerainty over the newly founded Danubian Principalities.²⁸⁶

The trade between Transylvanian and Polish commercial towns and Wallachian and Moldavian Principalities had both a regional and an international dimension, as the surviving privileges granted to foreign merchants suggest.²⁸⁷ The territories of Moldavia and Wallachia were exploited as segments of the commercial routes connecting West and East through Black Sea trade.

The main towns dominating the commercial exchange between the Hungarian kingdom and the medieval Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were the Transylvanian commercial burghs (Braşov/Braşov.t, Sibiu/Hermannstadt and, later on, Bistriţa/Bistritz), mostly populated by German-speaking Saxon settlers brought to Hungary by King Géza II (1141-1162).²⁸⁸ Perhaps due

²⁸⁴ Henryk Samsonowicz and Antoni Mączak, "Feudalism and Capitalism: an Alliance of Changes in East-Central Europe," in *East Central Europe in Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 12; see also Maria Bogucka, "The Towns of East-Central Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century" in *ibidem*, 101.

²⁸⁵ Rădvan, *Oraşele din Ţara Românească*, 160. After the Venetian state reconquered the Dalmatian coast in 1409, the Hungarian kingdom focused on Black Sea relations to continue its commercial politics and participation in international trade activities. The terrestrial link between Hungary and the Black Sea lay along the Brăila route that ran across Wallachia. The participation of the Polish kingdom in international commercial activities was also linked to the commercial route that ran across the second Danubian Principality, the newly founded Moldavia.

²⁸⁶ Petre Panaitescu, "Drumul comercial al Poloniei la Marea Neagră în Evul Mediu," (The Polish commercial road toward the Black Sea during the Middle Ages), în *Interpretări româneşti: Studii de istorie economică şi socială* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), 91.

²⁸⁷ See also Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society*. For the Romanian edition consulted see Chirot, *Schimbarea socială într-o societate periferică*, 56.

²⁸⁸ Erwin A. Gutkind, *Urban Development in Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Romania, and the U.S.S.R Vol.3* (New York: The Free Press, 1972), 115.

to its location, Braşov became one of the main centers of redistribution for oriental products.²⁸⁹ The numerous privileges issued on behalf of Braşov traders by the Hungarian kings – Louis of Anjou (1342-1384) and Sigismund I of Luxemburg (1387-1437) – as well as by the Wallachian and Moldavian princes, emphasize their crucial role as international trade agents.

During the fifteenth century, trade-related documents constitute a large part of the documents sent abroad by Wallachian and Moldavian princes. The role of trade-related documents is especially prominent in Wallachia where, during the early period, most of the surviving foreign documents are exclusively related to trade activities. Out of a total of twenty-one Wallachian documents dating up to the reign of Aldea (1431-33) in the Braşov urban archives, twenty are trade-related documents²⁹⁰. Thus, during a period when written evidence, especially in Wallachia, was extremely scarce and was issued mainly on behalf of clerical institutions, trade-related issues seem to have been among the few factors that stimulated the circulation of written documents among a very restricted community of laymen.

In the early period of state foundation, trade related documents usually comprised trade privileges and regulations. Soon afterwards, the type of trade documents broadened, and letters of free passage, those related to trade conflicts and – gradually - orders for various goods for consumption began to be recorded. This turning point in the surviving documents is related in Wallachia to the reign of Dan II (1420-1424, and II 1427-1431) and in Moldavia to the reign of the sons and successors of Alexandru the Good, Iliăş and Stephen (1432-1442).²⁹¹ Consequently, in the first part of the chapter, I shall address the trading privileges

²⁸⁹ For more information about this see Papacostea, “Inceputurile politicii comerciale a Țării Românești și Moldovei,” 164; See also Rădvan, *Orașele din Țara Românească*, 170.

²⁹⁰ On the type of documents, and the figures mentioned in this chapter see the distinctions I have made at the beginning of chapter 3.

²⁹¹ The political situation during the reign of the sons and successors of Alexander the Good (1400-1432) was very unstable as they continuously were overthrowing each other until 1442 when Stephen blinded his brother Ilie and ruled alone.

and regulations granted to foreign merchants and issued by the princes, turning subsequently to documents attesting trade conflicts and requests for various commodities.

4.1 Commercial privileges and regulations

The nature of the commercial relations of the Medieval Romanian Principalities with neighboring towns were stated in the commercial privileges. The documents are very specific, mentioning the trade routes, custom posts, and detailed custom fees to be charged for each product.²⁹² The texts of the privileges indicate that the organization of commercial activities in Moldavia and Wallachia followed the Western pattern with established routes, customs, as well as commercial barriers: only certain towns enjoyed staple rights. The format of the privileges was similar to the internal charters. Early documents, in addition to seals and witnesses, were occasionally backed up by oaths taken by noblemen and the prince and, in Wallachia, by specific maledictions.²⁹³

In Wallachia, trading privileges were especially common during the early period of the state's existence, witnessing the dynamics of commercial routes crossing the principality. They were granted to Transylvanian towns and to Braşov in particular.²⁹⁴ According to Papacostea, as a result of the initial political dependence of the Wallachian state on the Hungarian kingdom,²⁹⁵ Braşov merchants, as subjects of the Hungarian kingdom, received broad commercial advantages on Wallachian territory in transit and local trade: for the Braşov traders "the two countries shall be considered as one and merchants shall go about [in Wallachia, my note] as if in their own country." They were granted a single tax fee for transit

²⁹² See for instance, the first extant Wallachian privilege from the reign of Mircea the Old; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovul şi cu Țara Ungurescă*, vol. 1, no.1 (1413). See also "Privileges" in Jean Favier, *Gold and Spices: The Rise of Commerce in the Middle Ages* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1932), 77-94; Panaitescu, "Drumul comercial al Poloniei la Marea Neagră în Evul Mediu," 88

²⁹³ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovul şi cu Țara Ungurescă*, no. 4 (1421), no. 13 (c.1420-1424).

²⁹⁴ The privileges issued by Wallachian princes to Polish subjects did not survive. See Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria comerțului românesc: perioada veche* (The history of Romanian commerce, early period) (Bucharest: Tiparul românesc, 1925), 85.

²⁹⁵ Papacostea, "Inceputurile politicii comerciale a Țării Românești şi Moldovei," 170.

products, and tax exemption for internal trade.²⁹⁶

The first commercial privilege, granted by Vladislav I on behalf of Braşov traders on 1368, June 2, is the first surviving Wallachian document.²⁹⁷ The frequency with which commercial privileges were bestowed until the reign of Vlad Dracul (1436-1442, 1443-1447) is significant: almost every new prince had repeatedly to renew the privileges granted by his forerunners. During the fifteenth century, as a consequence of political instability, Wallachian princes such as Vlad Dracul often required the political support of the Braşov traders. Presumably, merchants in their turn were keen to record in return the commercial advantages bestowed on them by the Wallachian princes, thus increasing the number of documents issued by the Wallachian chancery.

During certain reigns, trade privileges and regulations issued on behalf of Braşov merchants constitute the large majority of the surviving documents. For instance, from the short reign of Radu Prasnaglava (1421, and 1424-7), there are a total of six documents, charters and trade related documents extant, out of which four were commercial privileges and trade regulations issued on behalf of Braşov traders.²⁹⁸ During the reign of Dan II (1420-1424, and 1427-1431) the same number of trade privileges and regulations were issued as internal charters: fourteen documents were issued on behalf of Braşov traders, while fifteen charters record land donations.²⁹⁹ Dan II seems to have been particularly involved in trade issues. He was the first prince to introduce written documents to confirm the commercial privileges of the local Wallachian traders from Târgovişte.³⁰⁰ He also often issued administrative letters insuring that the trade regulations would be well known to the Wallachian custom posts and local administration. Similarly, during his short reign, he

²⁹⁶ See, for instance, Bogdan, *Relaţiile Țării Româneşti cu Braşovul şi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 4 (1421), no. 17 (1431); See also Rădvan, *Oraşele din Țara Românească*, 172-3.

²⁹⁷ Iorga, *Acte şi scrisori*, no. 2 (1368, June 28).

²⁹⁸ Bogdan, *Relaţiile Țării Româneşti cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 4, no. 5 (1421), no. 6, no.7 (1424-1427).

²⁹⁹ See DRH B, vol. 1

³⁰⁰ Bogdan, *Relaţiile Țării Româneşti cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 13 (1420-1424).

confirmed at least five times the privileges of Braşov traders.³⁰¹

Were the surviving documents, especially the specific trade documents I am discussing here, a significant part of the written culture of the two principalities as a whole at that time, or do they account only for the tip of the iceberg? Certainly, foreign documents issued on behalf of a community more accustomed to the written records (and archiving them) have had a better chance of surviving to the present.

Nonetheless, the fact that the exchange of written communication after the withdrawal of foreign merchants almost discontinued in Moldavia and decreased significantly in Wallachia may support the assertion that, during the early period, foreign traders were more aware of the importance of written documents. Commercial documents from the first half of the fifteenth century issued on their behalf comprise a large part of the surviving documents,³⁰² reconfirming Goody's claim that "there is more evidence at least initially for external than for internal use of writing."³⁰³

At the direct request of a community more accustomed to written practices, Wallachian princes had to integrate written communication and issue documents as proof of granted commercial rights despite the fact that during this period in Wallachia oral communication seems to have been the norm. Moreover, the written practices of foreign merchants were soon embraced by the Wallachian local traders. Possibly, their plea for written confirmations of their commercial rights was more active than the surviving record indicates as a consequence of unsettled archival practices.

In Moldavia, similar trading practices by foreign merchants may be observed. During the early period of the Moldavian state, Hungarian and Polish tradesmen repeatedly requested renewal of their commercial privileges from the Moldavian princes. The Braşov traders once

³⁰¹Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 9, no. 10 (1422), no. 11, no.12, (1424), no. 18 (1431).

³⁰² Already after the reign of Vlad Dracul (1433-1446), the commercial privileges and trade regulations bestowed on Braşov merchants were beginning to decrease gradually.

³⁰³ Goody, *Logic of Writing*, 100.

more took the lead among the Transylvanian towns and were particularly active in confirming and reconfirming their commercial rights. Ten privileges are attested as having been issued by the Moldavian princes on behalf of Braşov traders in addition to seven letters of invitation to resume their trade. The first surviving documents date from 1435.³⁰⁴ Traders from Sibiu, on the contrary, seem to have yielded their position to the Braşov merchants, since after 1438 the record of their benefits in Moldavia is discontinued.³⁰⁵ The surviving Moldavian commercial privileges granted to the town of Lviv are less numerous. One of the first was written by Alexander the Good in 1408.³⁰⁶ By the end of his reign, the conflicts with the Polish kingdom seem to have curtailed the commercial relations between Moldavia and Poland.³⁰⁷ Resumed for a short period during the reign of Petru Aron,³⁰⁸ they discontinued after the reign of Stephen the Great. Thus, in Moldavia, as in Wallachia, several periods of political instability and recurrent princely removals led to repeated renewals of existing commercial rights. However, in general, considering the entire surviving material, trade-related documents are less important in Moldavia than in Wallachia. Documents related to political issues remain more important. Up to the reign of Stephen the Great, out of sixty letters produced for external needs, twenty-three letters were issued on behalf of foreign merchants, out of which twelve were commercial privileges.³⁰⁹ During Stephen's reign, out of sixty-one extant letters, fourteen are trade-related letters, of which seven concern commercial privileges. After the reign of Stephen the Great, princes discontinued issuing commercial privileges on behalf of foreign traders in Moldavia as in Wallachia, with the exception of Alexandru Lăpuşneanu I

³⁰⁴ Indirect references attest, however, that Braşov merchants received commercial privileges at least from the reign of Alexander the Good (1400-1425): Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ştefan cel Mare*, no. 189. The early trade relations of the Moldavian state with Braşov are confirmed as well by the documents attesting trade conflicts: *ibidem*, no. 179 (1433), no. 187 (1434).

³⁰⁵ They received their first privilege from the Moldavian prince in 1433. See *ibidem*, no. 180.

³⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, no. 176.

³⁰⁷ Iorga, *Istoria comerţului românesc*, 90.

³⁰⁸ In 1456, Prince Aron twice confirmed the commercial privileges of the Lemberg traders in Moldavia.

³⁰⁹ The entire collection is published in Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ştefan cel Mare*, no. 162, no. 176 (1408, Oct.8), no. 180 (1433, Apr.9), no. 186 (1434, March 18), no. 189 (1435, May 26), no. 204 (1437 Apr 23), no. 205 (1437, Apr. 29), no. 217 (1448, Sept. 11), no. 218 (1449, Aug.3), no. 223 (1452, Aug.12), no. 277 (1455, June 2), no. 229 (1456, Jan.15), no. 231 (1456, June 29).

(1552-1561, II 1564-1568), whose particular commercial activity is well known.

4.2 Trade conflicts

At the turn of the sixteenth century in Moldavia and half a century earlier in Wallachia, a transformation in the type of documents attesting trade relations can be seen. The number of documents granting trade privileges was gradually replaced by letters used in the resolution of trade conflicts.

The turning point in the transformation in the type of trade-related documents seems to have been grounded in political transformations that brought commercial changes with them. A gradual upsurge in the political dominance of the Ottoman Empire resulted in the full Ottoman control of the Black Sea by the early sixteenth century.³¹⁰ Consequently, according to Iorga, international trade relations between Western Europe and the Orient via the Black Sea came to an end. Thus, after the reign of Vlad Dracul (1433-1446) in Wallachia and that of Stephen the Great in Moldavia (1457-1504), the trade relations of the Danubian Principalities with neighboring commercial towns switched from international high scale commerce to a regional exchange of goods.³¹¹

According to Iorga, the turn toward regional trade had as one of its outcomes the involvement of more ethnic Wallachians in trade exchanges – since the international trade which it replaced was mainly carried out by foreign traders.³¹² Conversely, Chirot argued that it was only foreign traders who withdrew from commercial activities in the area, while international trade did survive and was taken over by Wallachian merchants. Later on, according to Papacostea, with the weakening of the political power of the Hungarian state the political power of the Ottomans grew and moved the Wallachian princes to question the old

³¹⁰ Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), 111; Iorga, *Istoria comerțului românesc*, 67-74.

³¹¹ Ibidem, 66, 67.

³¹² Ibidem, 68.

commercial rights granted to the Saxon traders on Wallachian territory.³¹³ As the Wallachian state grew in strength it became increasingly interested in controlling the benefits that resulted from such commercial exchanges.³¹⁴

Regardless of the significance of the economic or political factors that lay behind trade conflicts, a notable increase may be observed in the number of documents attesting trade divergences. As the early privileges granted to Braşov merchants were often challenged, this stimulated a protracted conflict between foreign and local merchants. The collective drive exhibited by Saxon traders to record and, through recording, maintain their traditional dominant position in the markets of the Principalities was matched by attempts of local merchants to earn trade privileges that would grant them similar rights. In addition, as a broader segment of the Wallachian population got involved in trade activities, collective requests as well as individual grievances stimulated an exchange of letters between the urban administration of Braşov and the Wallachian princes and marked the beginning of the use of written communication in the resolution of administrative or commercial issues.

Among the first Wallachian princes who used written documents to resolve the individual and collective grievances of their Wallachian subjects was Dan II (1420-1424, II 1427-1431). In his first surviving letter, issued to mediate an individual trade conflict, Dan II urged the Braşov traders to return taken merchandise to a certain Stoica, presumably a Wallachian subject “if they have to travel safely anywhere [Wallachia - my note] even up to the sea coast.”³¹⁵ An extra tax charged at Bran castle seems to have particularly distressed the Wallachian prince, who issued several letters to defend the collective rights of his subjects and urge the urban authorities of Braşov to settle the matter.³¹⁶

Trade conflicts seem to have multiplied continuously through the fifteenth century,

³¹³ Papacostea, “Inceputurile politicii comerciale a Țării Românești și Moldovei,” 185.

³¹⁴ Chirot, *Schimbarea socială*, 62.

³¹⁵ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 14 (1424-1427).

³¹⁶ Ibidem, , no. 15, 16 (c. 1427-1431).

consequently increasing the number of letters issued by the Wallachian chancery. Gradually, structural trade misunderstandings between the Wallachian and Transylvanian merchants developed. The fights to achieve reciprocity in business trade and surpass the staple rights of Braşov merchants, or institute the same practices, unfold in the data from the reign of Radu the Fair (1463-1474), who wrote “(...) everything was initiated by you. As my paupers (*săracii*) [he means his tradesmen, M.G.] were going there with their commodities, you took their goods and the profits from them; and they were left in distress, not free [to dispose] of their belongings. Therefore we paid you with the same token.”³¹⁷

Given the desire of the Wallachians to establish good conditions for trade, written documents seem to have been customarily used to settle trade disputes and to support new agreements. Radu the Fair apparently took up the foreign inspired use of documents in support of agreements, as in the same letter, he stated that as a confirmation of the fact that free circulation could be resumed: “(...) I send you this letter, under my seal, so that your men can move around everywhere in my country (...)” The trade conditions granted, endorsed by a written document, prompted a similar request: “Thus, you too, give me your letter under the town seal so that my people can move freely, if they trade at your place (...)”³¹⁸

Thus, important matters were communicated through written channels. Moreover, foreign written practices stimulated similar requests by the Wallachian princes to help their subjects. Radu the Fair explicitly indicated that the requested agreements should be confirmed in no less than 25 days in a written document issued by the Braşov town administration and endorsed with the “the town’s seal.”³¹⁹ Unfortunately there are no later data about what resulted from his request.

Individual trade conflicts continue to constitute a significant proportion of the surviving documents. Despite the fact that Vlad the Monk (1482-1495) repeatedly assured Saxon traders

³¹⁷ Ibidem, no. 83 (1470, March 6)).

³¹⁸ Ibidem.

³¹⁹ Ibidem.

about his commitment to respect their early rights of free circulation, fifteen out of thirty-one letters surviving from his reign comprise various individual complaints by the Wallachian traders of treatment encountered in Transylvania. These difficulties caused him to question the rights of free circulation granted to the Saxon traders.³²⁰

Trade conflicts between Braşov and Wallachia seem to step up even more in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Deterioration of trade relations are attested in sixteen surviving documents concerning trade conflicts issued in the Wallachian chancery in relation to trade abuses suffered by Wallachian subjects during the reign of Neagoe Basarab. Neagoe made open threats when enumerating trade injuries committed against his own house,³²¹ his noblemen,³²² or against Wallachian traders as a whole, killed or injured while trading in Braşov.³²³ The change in power positions indicated by these letters became clear in the political treaty signed by Neagoe Basarab with the Hungarian king, Lajos II (1516-1526), in 1517, where there was a clear statement of a major and explicit alteration of the early privileges granted to the Braşov merchants.³²⁴

Thus, during the fifteenth century, a significant part of the surviving Wallachian material was issued in response to mistreatment encountered by traders in Braşov. Until the end of the reign of Radu the Great (1495-1508), 71 out of 181 surviving letters preserved in the urban archives of the Transylvanian towns, are documents attesting to trade misunderstandings. Certain conflicts motivated the writing of several documents as, for instance, the one supported by a certain Mikhnea, Andre's brother, on whose behalf Radu the Great issued at least three letters complaining about his as well others' losses in Sibiu.³²⁵ However, gradually,

³²⁰ Ibidem, no. 159 (1491-1492).

³²¹ Ibidem, no.157 (1517-1521).

³²² Ibidem, no. 158, no.159, no.160 (1512-1521).

³²³ Ibidem, no. 156 (after 1517).

³²⁴ The Wallachian prince denied the Kronstadt traders their old rights of free and unrestricted commerce on Wallachian territory. Instead, traders had to sell their merchandise in three Wallachian market towns: Târgovişte, Târgşor and Câmpulung where only wholesale trade was allowed with clearly designated custom fees. See ibidem, no. 153 (1517, March 17).

³²⁵ Iorga, *Acte şi fragmente*, no. 279 (1500, Apr.12), No. 280 (1500, Apr.12, No. 282 (1500, May 31).

during the course of the sixteenth century, trade-related documents became less representative in Wallachia. Already during the reign of Neagoe Basarab, there are only seventeen letters attesting trade conflicts out of fifty-four letter documents sent abroad. Afterwards, especially after the reign of Michael the Shepherd, trade conflicts ceased to comprise a significant proportion of the Wallachian documents. From the reign of Radu the Great up to the reign of Mircea the Shepherd (1545-1552, II 1558-1559) there were thirty-one letters concerning trade conflicts out of 125 letters sent to foreign lands, while up to the end of the reign of Michael the Brave there are only six trade conflicts attested in written documents.

The decline in the number of documents, however, is not symptomatic of changes in the use of written documents but rather reflects the political and economic changes that took place in the area. With the establishment of Ottoman political power in the region accompanied by the stronger dependency of the Wallachian principality on the Ottoman Empire, trade relations with the Transylvanian towns discontinued.

Moldavian data suggest that trade misunderstandings were a less representative issue for the dissemination of written culture. Polish traders were most interested in participating in the international trade using the Moldavian route that had replaced the earlier *via tartarica* and not in local trade with the Moldavian principality.³²⁶ The presence of Lviv and even of Moldavian merchants at the coast of the Black Sea is well documented in the account books from the commercial towns of Caffa or Lviv.³²⁷ On the other hand, beyond trade privileges, little evidence survives from the Moldavian chancery attesting commercial relations. Moreover, Lviv traders seem to have been interested in Moldavian commercial privileges as long as the commercial Black Sea harbors of Chilia and Cetatea Alba were under the political

³²⁶ The new road – *via wallachica* – that connected the Baltic Sea and the Polish kingdom with the Black Sea and Oriental trade, served as an alternative for the *via tartarica* that was abolished after the disintegration of the Tartar Empire in the second half of the fourteenth century. For more information about this see Papacostea, “Inceputurile politicii comerciale a Țării Românești și Moldovei,” 167, 201-5. See also Iorga, *Istoria comerțului românesc*, 87.

³²⁷ Iorga, *Relațiile comerciale ale Țerilor noastre cu Lembergul. Regeste și documente din Arhivele orașului Lemberg*. (Commercial relations of our countries with Lemberg. Regestas and documents from the town archives of Lemberg), vol. I (Bucharest: Tipografia lucrătorilor asociați Marinescu și Șerban, 1900), 34.

control of the Moldavian princes (1485). Afterwards, toward the end of the reign of Stephen the Great as the Ottoman Empire took the towns of Chilia and Cetatea Alba,³²⁸ the Polish trade commerce in Levantine goods (on the shores of the Black Sea) declined.³²⁹ The trade privileges requested by the Polish merchants from Moldavian princes were discontinued accordingly. In contrast to the Wallachian principality, according to the extant evidence, trade privileges were seldom replaced in Moldavia by documents attesting trade conflicts. The few surviving letters documenting such conflict between Braşov and Moldavia are restricted to individual cases and private misunderstandings. Foreign merchants (as a collective body of commissioners) cease to be mentioned in the documents issued from the Moldavian chancery.

Although the first Moldavian trade conflict has the relatively early date of 1433,³³⁰ almost the same as in Wallachia, trade conflicts either with Braşov or with other Transylvanian commercial towns did not increase with time. From the reign of Stephen the Great, out of 67 foreign documents, only three letters were issued to resolve trade conflicts. During the reign of Stephen the Great's sons and successors, the evidence also shows that commercial misunderstandings were resolved in writing only in severe cases of trade grievances suffered by Moldavian subjects, such as death or unjust imprisonment.³³¹ For instance, in almost all cases when the Moldavian prince, Stefan the Young (1517-1527), mediated in favor of his subjects, they were described as having been imprisoned and detained in the town of Bistriţa.³³² *Subditus Matheus Desw*, for instance, in whose cause Stephen the Young wrote a letter in 1519, was, according to the Moldavian prince, unjustly imprisoned and ill-treated on

³²⁸ King, *The Black Sea: A History*, 112.

³²⁹ Iorga, *Istoria comerţului românesc*, 107.

³³⁰ Costăchescu, *Documentele moldoveneşti înainte de Ştefan cel Mare*, no. 179 (1433, March 15). The letter was issued as the consequence of a trade mistreatment encountered by a high Moldavian dignitary in Braşov. It was commissioned by the Moldavian prince Ilie (1433, 1435-1442) on behalf of Laurentius, *fusor monetarum nostrarum* to whom Iohannes, a citizen of Braşov and son of Judge Valentin, owned twenty-eight Hungarian florins. The letters alleges that Laurentius depleted almost the same sum in his struggle to recuperate his debt.

³³¹ Costăchescu, *Documente Bogdan*, no. 68 (1504, Dec.28), no. 73 (1508, Nov.5), no. 78 (1510, July 10).

³³² Costăchescu, *Documente Ştefăniţă*, no. 106 (1519, May 30), no. 108 (1521, May 17), no. 113 (1523, Nov.9), no. 117 (1526, Dec. 29).

a charge of murder.³³³

The number of Moldavian trade conflicts multiplied slightly during the reign of Petru Rareș and his son Ilie (1546-1551), as from Ilie Rareș' short reign eleven letters are surviving.³³⁴ Moreover, trade conflict letters seem shortly afterwards to become perceived as more ordinary as they record more minor issues. For instance Rareș wrote in 1527 to the administration of Bistrița on behalf of "*homines nostri zwchwawyenses*," (inhabitants of Suceava) who were mistreated at Bistrița, while selling their salted fish, or asking that the money owed to a Moldavian merchant Grigorie be returned.³³⁵

However, trade conflicts with the administration of the Transylvanian commercial towns were not among the major issues that lead to the increase in Moldavian documents during the fifteenth century and beyond. The lack of trade conflicts in Moldavia is related to lesser privileges granted by the Moldavian princes to foreign traders. Possibly, as a direct consequence of the change in the type of trade and withdrawal of foreign merchants, more Moldavian and Southern subjects became involved in local commerce as certain disputes related to such trade were recorded in the urban archives of Lviv.³³⁶ Nevertheless, Moldavian evidence for trade relations between Moldavian and Poland is rather scarce.

Chirot considered that two types of merchants were active in Wallachia, "high" merchants who were accomplished in international trade exchange and "small" traders coming from small towns or even villages, who were mainly involved in small local trade activity.³³⁷ The surviving records testify only rarely to the use of written evidence by the "smaller" traders. Especially during the fifteenth century, highest state dignitaries and even

³³³ Costăchescu, *Documente Ștefăniță*, no. 106 (1519, May 30).

³³⁴ The Latin letters from the reign of Petru and Ilie Rareș are published in Iorga, *Acte și Scrisori*, while the few instances of Slavonic letters are edited in Bogdan, *Documente moldovenești din sec. XV și XVI în Arhivul Brașovului*, no. 23 (c. 1530, Oct. 30), no. 24 (c. 1530, Jan. 24). With very few late exceptions, Slavonic letters record only the date of day and month, no year date being specified.

³³⁵ Iorga, *Acte și Scrisori*, no. 693 (1535, Feb. 14).

³³⁶ Iorga, *Relațiile comerciale ale Țerilor noastre cu Lembergul*, 34. See also Iorga, *Istoria comerțului românesc*, 141.

³³⁷ Chirot, *Schimbarea socială*, 61.

the princes themselves were often involved in the commercial activities. Unfortunately, in Wallachia or Moldavia commercial letters only seldom indicate the status of the subjects employing written evidence as a tool for the settlement of trade misunderstandings. Besides Christian names, they were usually referred to as *homines nostri*, *subditi nostri*, or *servitori nostri*. For instance, in 1434, Prince Ilias (1433, 1435-1442) intervened on the part of certain Moldavian citizens whom he labeled: “*Stephanus cum Martino, socio suo, homines nostri*” from whom a citizen of Braşov took without payment 33 oxen.³³⁸ Similarly in the Wallachian letters, the princes often mentioned just the Christian names of the subjects for whom they were arbitrating.³³⁹ Any specification about the status of the complainer usually refers to “our subject,” our man,”³⁴⁰ or “faithful subject” as, for instance, when Vlad Dracul (1433-1446) wrote about Martin: “Because of this, I let you know, that, wherever he would have any possessions, regardless of the amount, you shall return it to him and no hair shall be missing, since he is the *true subject* of my highness.”³⁴¹ Often, letters recording the physical and financial molestations of Wallachian subjects mentioned neither the names nor their status of the individuals involved.³⁴² They are presented as a community integrated under the general name of “our folks (*liudi*) or our humble ones (*siratzi*),”³⁴³ or in the best cases “our merchants and humbles (*tr’govtci i siromasi*).”³⁴⁴

Only seldom is the status of the persons involved indicated, as in the first surviving Moldavian letter attesting a trade conflict: *Conqueritur nobis Laurencius, fusor monetarum nostrarum*.³⁴⁵ Also in Wallachia, the princes sporadically mentioned the high status of their

³³⁸ Iorga, *Acte şi fragmente*, no. 28; Costăchescu, *Documentele moldoveneşti înainte de Ştefan cel Mare*, no. 187 (1434, Apr 21).

³³⁹ Bogdan, *Relaţiile Ţării Româneşti cu Braşovulşi cu Ţara Ungurească*, no. 14 (1424-1427), no. 72 (1456-1462).

³⁴⁰ Ibidem, no.72: “our man Dumitru.”

³⁴¹ Ibidem, no. 51.

³⁴² Bogdan, *Documente şi regeste* (1905), no. 15, no. 16 (1427-1431).

³⁴³ Ibidem, no. 16 (1427-1431);

³⁴⁴ Bogdan, *Relaţiile Ţării Româneşti cu Braşovulşi cu Ţara Ungurească*, no.188.

³⁴⁵ Iorga, *Acte şi fragmente*, no. 25 (1433, March 15).

subjects, indicating their *jupan* status next to the Christian names.³⁴⁶ Preia, sister of Dragomir governor, in whose aid Radu the Fair wrote to Braşov, was recorded with her status of noblewoman (*jupanitza*) and kinship relations.³⁴⁷ Certain identifications such as “our godfather,” may indicate that among the first individuals for whom the Wallachian princes intervened in writing may also have been noblemen of high social status who had a personal relationship with the princes.³⁴⁸ To assume, however, that persons whose social status went unrecorded belonged to lower social categories might be unwise given the low number of princely letters issued, especially during the fifteenth century. More often, other information recorded in the letters testify that the denomination of *siromakhu* (poor subjects) next to the Christian name by no means indicates low social status but rather was the rhetoric used in the Wallachian letters: “And after that I tell your highness about the problem of our *humble servant* Stanislav, who took a servant from Braşov to teach him the language, who, without his knowledge or will, ran away and embraced the faith of Islam.”³⁴⁹ Presumably, the fact that Stanislav wanted to learn a foreign language used in Transylvania and was capable of paying a servant for his instruction indicates that he was well-situated financially at least.

From the turn of the sixteenth century, however, the documents seem to diversify. On the one hand, a number of documents continued to record upper class actors who asked for princely written documents to help resolve their grievances. Sava, for instance, was named as *jupan* (nobleman) by Neagoe Basarab, when he asked Braşov traders to “give him fair justice and return his debts as they (Wallachian merchants; my note) were taking the cattle from the Turks and (these) at their turn require payment.”³⁵⁰ Moreover, in 1524, Prince Vladislav III (1523-1524) wrote on behalf of two previous high status dignitaries, a chamberlain and a

³⁴⁶ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 45, no. 46 (1433-1437), when the Wallachian Prince Vlad wrote twice on behalf of Jupan Sarandino.

³⁴⁷ Bogdan, *Documente şi regeste*, no. 86 (c. 1464-1472).

³⁴⁸ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, No. 171.

³⁴⁹ Ibidem, no. 190.

³⁵⁰ Bogdan, *Documente şi regeste*, no. 160 (1512-1521).

chancellor.³⁵¹ On the other hand, the lower nobility also seems to unfold in the data. Radu the Great, for instance, wrote on behalf of “(...) the man of my uncle, chamberlain Gherghina, to be freed (...).³⁵² The information may indicate that it was not only high status dignitaries, but at least noblemen of the second rank who seem to have been involved in trade activities. Later, even commoners seem to appear among the mistreated subjects mentioned in written documents. For instance, Neagoe Basarab wrote on behalf of certain Wallachian subjects, whom he labeled “our men, Oprea and Tatu, who were begging and herding cattle in Transylvania and collecting several sheep, half of which were taken by the custom guards.”³⁵³ Although there is no indication about their social status, the work being carried out by the subjects for whom the Wallachian prince arbitrated may suggest a rather humble social position. Moreover, it seems that it might have been customary for some Wallachian subjects to graze sheep in Transylvania as Dumitru from Mățau complained before Prince Vladislav that working for several masters at Braşov and being in charge of animal husbandry he collected 450 sheep which were taken away from him on his way back home.³⁵⁴ The fact that Dumitru is recorded as being a refugee in Transylvania from the reign of Radu Paisie³⁵⁵ as well as the fact that, while imprisoned, he also paid a debt of 44 florins may still suggest some doubt about his humble origins, despite his shepherding activities. Unfortunately, the lack of exact records hinders our understanding of when and whether lower social classes were involved in trading processes and more important here, in the process of using documents.³⁵⁶

4.3 Use of written evidence to request goods for consumption

The evidence of written requests for acquiring goods is rare in both Danubian

³⁵¹ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, No.165.

³⁵² Ibidem, no.194.

³⁵³ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no.260.

³⁵⁴ Bogdan, *Documente şi regeste*, no. 140 (1558-1559).

³⁵⁵ For the identity of Prince Radu mentioned in the letter see the note by the editor, Bogdan, *Documente şi regeste*, 195, no. 140 (1558-1559).

³⁵⁶ See, for instance, Costăchescu, *Documente Bogdan*, no. 68 (1504), no. 78 (1510, July 10).

Principalities. Presumably, the process of purchasing goods was carried out using oral agreements. From the implicit information appearing in the documents, the involvement of written evidence in acquiring goods was required as the result of particular administrative or legal misunderstandings, or certain custom requirements. For instance, in 1516, the Moldavian Prince Bogdan (1504-1517) wrote to the town of Bistrița that the servant of Governor Paul was sent to Brașov to purchase guns but ran away with the money he had been given for the purpose.³⁵⁷ Some Wallachian servants, as well, were no less tempted to remain in Brașov as shown by a request by Neagoe Basarab to the urban administration of Brașov to return a Gypsy slave, who being sent to Brașov for acquisitions of various goods had chosen not to come back.³⁵⁸

In Wallachia, explicit requests for military or personal goods began to be attested from the middle of the fifteenth century but up to the end of the sixteenth century there is no record that they were consistently disseminated. Usually, several princely letters survive from the most stabile reigns, so that, a total of 51 letters are extant from the Wallachian principality. Although mentions of military goods recur most often in these letters, private goods were sporadically requested in writing as well. Initially, the princes mainly requisitioned war merchandise such as guns, bows, or raw material to manufacture them. Moreover, the first attested requests for goods from abroad are not separate letters but were inserted as additional information recorded in a political letter or a letter of credence.³⁵⁹ In the first surviving separate letter, Vlad Dracul asked for Transylvanian military goods and carts.³⁶⁰ Likewise, quite early on, the Wallachian princes and even high-ranking noblemen began to use written documents to request special private goods. According to the surviving record, Basarab the Young (1477-1481) was among the first of the Wallachian princes who tried to record in

³⁵⁷ Ibidem, no. 86. See also Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, no. 1169.

³⁵⁸ Tocilescu, *534 documente*, no. 262.

³⁵⁹ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 22.

³⁶⁰ Ibidem, no.33, no. 55

writing his need for more elaborate furniture from Transylvania. He requested two big and comfortable cradles as well as ten nice, round, wooden tables for his house.³⁶¹ The details offered in the first letter suggest that the prince was a connoisseur of foreign products, and supposedly other oral or written demands preceded the first surviving request for ordinary goods. At the turn of the sixteenth century, Radu the Great (1495-1508) requested in writing a wider variety of products such as fur coats, fur, textiles, and even various categories of soap: “and we have sent to your grace our servant Oncea; and I ask your grace to labor for us and buy five pieces of soap with four florins and another five pieces of soap, of poorer quality, for three florins.”³⁶² The direct indications about the price and quality of the soap, for instance, also suggest that the acquisition of Transylvanian goods might have been a regular practice at least for Wallachian princes. However, the record remains sparse. Only eight letters survive from the reign of Radu the Great.

Along with raw materials and various goods, princely letters indicate that there was a need for skillful craftsmen to make various luxury items such as clocks, printer shops, or pieces of jewelry as indicated, for instance, in the letters of Neagoe Basarab.³⁶³

Although during the sixteenth century, the documents diversify and permit us a glimpse at the needs and requirements of the Wallachian princes, their number remain low. Moreover, the majority of the written requests, especially in Wallachia, seem to have been issued to inform the custom posts that the goods being carried were going to the Wallachian princes. As Wallachian and Moldavian princes did enjoy a special tax exemption in Transylvania, they were certainly keen to inform and convince the Transylvanian custom officials that such goods belonged to them.³⁶⁴ Presumably a written record endorsed by the princely seal gradually came to be perceived as more trustworthy and reliable and consequently could be

³⁶¹ Ibidem, no.137 (dated by the editor to 1478 or between 1480-81).

³⁶² Ibidem, no. 205 (undated).

³⁶³ Tocilescu, *534 documente*, no. 233, 249.

³⁶⁴ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 203. (1496-1507).

used to insure the necessary tax exemption. For instance, four out of eight letters issued by Prince Radu the Great³⁶⁵ seem to have been issued for tax exemptions.³⁶⁶ The attempts to avoid tax payments is so recurrent that it became almost formulaic: “Thus I pray your highness, to assist our goodness and not charge my merchandise, and I, in my goodness, shall assist you as you wish.”³⁶⁷

Sporadically, the most important Wallachian state dignitaries were also involved in active commercial exchanges with the towns of Sibiu and Braşov. Similarly to those of their princes, the Wallachian documents produced by the noblemen simply requested tax exemption in return for services.³⁶⁸ The first surviving written request for a piece of personal merchandise came from the governor of Vlad Dracul, the nobleman Voicu, who in 1431 asked for a textilecoat suitable for his imminent exile: “(...) so I plead, if God shall guide you, to help me with a textile coat, and if God shall assist my master, Vlad the prince (to gain the Wallachian throne -my note, M.G), for one we shall pay two or three (coats).”³⁶⁹ Presumably the request had been entrusted to writing given the unusual demand of the Wallachian nobleman to postpone the payment *sine die*.

Up to the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the letters attesting requests for various goods gradually decreased in Wallachia. The last request for a cradle, an item of merchandise that seems to have been particularly appreciated among Wallachian princes,³⁷⁰ dates from the reign of Mircea the Shepherd. Mircea the Shepherd is considered to be one of the princes with a particular interest in commercial activities. His commercial record, however, is very poor. Following his reign, such written evidence of commercial activity was entirely

³⁶⁵ Ibidem, no. 178, no. 183, no. 184, no. 186, no. 201, no. 203, no. 204, no. 205.

³⁶⁶ Ibidem, no. 184, no. 201, no. 203, no. 204.

³⁶⁷ Bogdan, *Documente si regeste*, no. 103, no. 104, no. 136.

³⁶⁸ Tocilescu, 534 *Documente*, no.413, issued by Gherghina, military administrator of Radu the Great (1495-1508). See also no. 435.

³⁶⁹ “(...) togo radi vi molim], ako vi qet Bog [naùchiti, pomozete me s] ednim šùbom ot postava, a ako bog[pomože gospodinù mi Vlad voivod, a mi kemo za edno dve platiti ili tri.” Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 207 (1431).

³⁷⁰ See also the request of the Wallachian Prince Vlad the Monk (1482-1496) in ibidem , no. 152 or that of Vlad VI (1532-1535) in Bogdan, *Documente si regeste*, no. 106.

discontinued.

In Moldavia, the record of written orders for foreign merchandise is scattered and uneven. A profusion of commercial requests of either military goods or personal items is only recorded from the reign of Alexander Lăpușneanu (1552-1562, 1564-1568). Up to his rule only 18 documents were preserved. The first two surviving letters date from the reign of Stephen the Great. In 1476, the latter asked the administration of Brașov to allow the prince's servant, the craftsman Michael, to return to Moldavia with the swords and arms he had purchased.³⁷¹ A letter from the same reign suggests that, at least sporadically, routine goods such as oil and textiles already began to be requested in writing from abroad by the fifteenth century.³⁷²

Lăpușneanu is the first and only Moldavian prince who conducted a regular commercial correspondence with a Transylvanian commercial town. During his reign, commercial and political relations with the town of Brașov discontinued. Political and commercial relations of his Moldavian subjects were reoriented towards the German Transylvanian commercial town of Bistrița, possibly because it was granted staple right by the Hungarian king in 1526.

The number of letters attested from Lăpușneanu's reign significantly increased as there are 119 surviving documents addressed to Transylvanian towns. Although administrative and political issues are also addressed in his letters, commercial and private concerns dominated them. Commercial activities, requests for various goods including private ones, as well as the constant need for skilled craftsmen and doctors are recorded in seventy-eight surviving letters.

The commercial evidence extant from the reign of Lăpușneanu is unique for both Moldavia and Wallachia. It seems that during his reign, the exchange of letters with Bistrița took place on a regular basis. Due to the rather constancy of the record it is possible to trace

³⁷¹ Bogdan, *Documente Ștefan cel Mare*, no. 148 (1476, Febr. 18), no. 188 (c.1500-1503, Sep.13).

³⁷² Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 165 (1482, June 17).

the procedure of letter exchange, the continuous presence at the princely court of foreign scribes capable of conducting regular correspondence in Latin or German and maintaining relatively good connections between the Moldavian capital of that time, Iassy and the town of Bistrița. The connections between Moldavian towns and the town of Bistrița seem to have been very good in this period, as letters sometime attests an almost weekly if not daily communication. For instance, in a letter from October 8, 1564, Alexander asked for the presence of the physician Andrei at the Moldavian court to treat his sick eyes. In one week's time, on October 15, 1564, the same physician Andrei had already been sent back from Suceava to Bistrița to procure the needed medicine that was unavailable in Moldavia.³⁷³ Moreover, in another letter from March 1567, Alexander asked once more for the same physician Andrei, whom he seems to have very much trusted, as his presence at the Moldavian court was often requested during his reign.³⁷⁴ Already on March 16, Andrei was sent back by the prince's son because his father was dead.³⁷⁵

Presumably the established conditions needed for the exchange of letters were facilitated by the commercial interests of Prince Lăpușneanu. He seems to have had regular bilateral commercial connections with the town of Bistrița. The possibility of regular written communication might have added some precision to trade processes and consequently eased the process. Regardless of the motivation, the data indicate that he regularly sent written documents to Bistrița confirming sent money or, more often, fattened pigs to provide the capital necessary to acquire various goods.³⁷⁶ His requirements seem to have encompassed a large variety of products, either common or luxury items, such as garments,³⁷⁷ clocks,³⁷⁸ or

³⁷³ Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, no. 1134.

³⁷⁴ See also *ibidem*, no. 1032 (1560, June 7), no. 1037 (1560, Aug.1); no. 1163 (1567, Aug.20); no. 1164 (1567, Aug. 29).

³⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, no. 1171.

³⁷⁶ The selling of pigs is especially often attested. See *ibidem*. no. 909 (1552, Nov. 24), no. 920 (1553, June 28), no. 997 (1559, March 31), no. 1001 (1559, May 6), no. 1003 (1559, June 5), no. 1135 (1564, Oct. 20).

³⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, no. 1138 (1564, Nov. 9).

³⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, no. 909 (Nov. 24).

parchment,³⁷⁹ and spices which were asked for repeatedly.³⁸⁰ However, his need for regular oil,³⁸¹ carts,³⁸² or iron,³⁸³ steel, marble³⁸⁴ and other raw materials are all commonly mentioned in his letters.

In addition to private goods, Lăpuşneanu needed a continuous supply of qualified people. At that time in Moldavia stone builders,³⁸⁵ similarly to bakers,³⁸⁶ clockmakers,³⁸⁷ tile makers³⁸⁸ or beer brewers³⁸⁹ seem to have been rare. Even unskilled workers were in great demand given the plague that (...) *mille hominum e vivis sublevavit*.³⁹⁰ Lăpuşneanu's letters constantly attest his efforts to bring in various types of craftsmen. For instance, in the spring of the year 1560 he sent three letters to Bistriţa asking for stone builders,³⁹¹ together with a brewer.³⁹² Thus, direct princely involvement in commercial or administrative activities contributed significantly to the growth of Moldavian written records during his time.

One of the first Moldavian letters, dating from the reign of Stephen the Great, mentioned the princely demand that Antonius, a silversmith from Braşov, was to come to Moldavia.³⁹³ From the same period, the Wallachian prince, Radu the Great, asked for a glass-blower to come and construct some windows in his newly constructed church promising that “when the time will come (to finish his work - my note M.G.), my highness shall gift him accordingly and guide him with honor back to your highness.”³⁹⁴ Up to the reign of Lăpuşneanu, most of the craftsmen were requested for the building of churches. Rareş,

³⁷⁹ Ibidem, no. 1024 (1560, March 24).

³⁸⁰ Ibidem, no. 908 (1552), no. 1050 (1561, March 31).

³⁸¹ Ibidem, no. 1138 (1564, Nov.9), no. 1028 (1560, May 14).

³⁸² Ibidem, no. 1041 (1560, Oct.31).

³⁸³ Ibidem, no. 1003 (1559, June 5).

³⁸⁴ Ibidem, no. 1051 (1561, Apr. 7).

³⁸⁵ Ibidem, no. 1023 (1560, March 10); no. 1025 (1560, Apr.6), no. 1026 (1560, May 13).

³⁸⁶ Ibidem, no. 1127 (1564, Aug. 21).

³⁸⁷ Ibidem, no. 909 (1552, Nov. 24).

³⁸⁸ Ibidem, no. 1139 (1564, Dec.2).

³⁸⁹ Ibidem, no. 1026 (1560, May 13).

³⁹⁰ Ibidem, no. 913 (1553, March 25).

³⁹¹ Ibidem, no. 1023 (1560, March 10), no. 1025 (1560, April 6), no. 1026 (1560, May 13).

³⁹² Ibidem, no. 1026 (1560, May 13).

³⁹³ Bogdan, *Documente Ştefan*, no. 161 (1481, March 7).

³⁹⁴ Bogdan, *Relaţiile Ţării Româneşti cu Braşovulşi cu Ţara Ungurească*, no. 201.

especially in the last years of his reign when he suffered defeat at the hands of the Ottomans and was deserted by most of his noblemen, changed his political and territorial ambitions into building churches. Thus, he repeatedly writes letters asking for stonemasons and painters.³⁹⁵

As opposed to the previous princes, Lăpușneanu combined his interests in church building with the construction of social establishments. Written documents often record his requests for various craftsmen in his effort to improve the well-being of his subjects. Traders and their activity seem to have remained in the focus of his attention as he struggled to build a proper inn and not a poor *spelunca* for their comfort.³⁹⁶ The building of an apparently public bath in the Moldavian capital of that time, Iassy, is also recorded in another of his letters: (...) *unum balneum in hoc oppido nostro facere volumus*.³⁹⁷ Additionally, he was not only concerned about local churches, but seemed to have had a strong interest in the Orthodox community of Lviv and their urgent desire to build a church. From 1558 to 1566, he conducted a regular correspondence assisting them with needed administrative help and cash for the entire process of church erection and canonical organization.³⁹⁸

Unfortunately, the frequent exchange of commercial letters during Lăpușneanu reign does not seem to have established a pattern. After him, the commercial record is sparse. Even such princes as Ieremia Movilă, who seems to have been educated in Poland and was often involved in the exchange of political and administrative information in writing, seems to have been less focused on acquisitions of goods in written form. As there is no evidence to support the idea that Lăpușneanu's letters were kept in special archival conditions, it seems that in Moldavia just like Wallachia, commercial activities were based mostly on oral exchange of information. The records of Prince Lăpușneanu indicate however, that after the middle of the

³⁹⁵ Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, no. 807, no. 824, no. 833, no. 834, no. 835.

³⁹⁶ Ibidem, no. 964 (1557, July 29).

³⁹⁷ Ibidem, no. 1116 (1564, May 29).

³⁹⁸ There are eighteen extant letters: Bogdan, *Documente arhive biblioteci polone*, no. 100 (1558, Febr.22), no. 101 (1558 July 5), no. 102 (1558, July 6), no. 103 (1558, July 22), no. 104 (1558, Aug. 25), no. 105 (1558, Aug.26), no. 106 (1558, Dec.27), no. 107 (1559, Feb.23), no. 108 (1559, May 28), no. 109 (1559, Oct.23), no. 112 (1561, June 20), no. 126 (1564, Sept. 15), no. 129 (1565, Apr.22), no. 130 (1565, Apr.30), no. 131 (1565, July 22), no. 132 (1565, July 24), no. 133 (1526, Apr.23), no. 134 (1566, Aug.20).

sixteenth century, Moldavian princes were capable of conducting a diverse and regular correspondence in different languages.

Unfortunately, afterwards, especially after the second reign of Alexander Lăpușneanu, letter exchanges between the Danubian Principalities and Transylvanian commercial towns declined. The commercial relations after the middle of the sixteenth century switched from the Polish and Transylvanian towns to a rather local commerce with the Ottoman Empire, as the medieval Romanian Principalities moved increasingly into its sphere of influence.³⁹⁹ The role of trade in the development of urban institutions as well as the establishment of written practices was once more emphasized by the decline of northern Moldavian and Wallachian towns and, after the commercial exchanges were reoriented towards the Ottoman Empire, the development of south Wallachian and Moldavian towns.

4.4 From the office of the prince to the registers of the merchants

Trade activities stimulated the use of written evidence at the institutional and individual level at least for certain social categories such as high-ranking state dignitaries and/or urban communities of traders. Trade-related letters addressed to foreign institutions were soon followed by an internal correspondence between central and local administration. Attested already from the reign of Michael I (1415-1418), the administrative letters issued on behalf of traders from Brașov represent some of the first Wallachian instances of written communication between different layers of state administration.⁴⁰⁰ Documents were addressed to regional and county administrations,⁴⁰¹ local custom posts,⁴⁰² as well as high-ranking state officials.⁴⁰³ Early data indicate that collective as well as specific individual trade issues were

³⁹⁹ Panaitescu, "Drumul comercial al Poloniei la Marea Neagră în Evul Mediu," 144.

⁴⁰⁰ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no.2, no.12, no. 18.

⁴⁰¹ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 183.

⁴⁰² DRH B, vol.1, no. 40.

⁴⁰³ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 78.

put into writing. Certain documents were issued to inform local administrative bodies about the institutional framework in which trade activities were to be conducted, recording the detailed tax fees, established trade roots and general conditions to be met by foreign traders on Wallachian territory. Others were motivated by particular trade mistreatments encountered by Saxon traders in Wallachia.⁴⁰⁴

In Moldavia too, foreign traders seem to have stimulated the use of writing between central and local structures. Moldavian princes often addressed regional and urban administration urging them to respect the rights of Braşov merchants, “to observe the princely documents written on their behalf”⁴⁰⁵ and, similarly to Wallachia, to avoid any collective mistreatments or private justice on-the-spot.⁴⁰⁶

A specific clause (recorded in the documents) specifying that documents shall be carried along and presented upon demand indicates that private traders were expected to carry the received documents with themselves. Thus, trade activities involved use of documents, not only at the level of state institutions, but at the personal level as well. This fact reinforces the idea that written documents were indeed circulating on Wallachian territory and that individual traders as well as the Wallachian administrative officials were familiar with the written documents.

Moreover, foreign merchants not only stimulated the circulation of administrative documents in the Danubian Principalities but lead to the production of documents at a local level. The passive reception of documents by the local power structures gradually evolved to take on the active role of documents issuers as the princely letters were soon followed by those of regional and urban state dignitaries. One of the first Wallachian regional administrative letters was issued on behalf of Braşov traders by Cazan *mare vornic* (the high

⁴⁰⁴ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no.18 (1431).

⁴⁰⁵ Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, no.190 „(...) smotrite nasi listy shto esmi im’ dali.”

⁴⁰⁶ Ibidem, no. 190, no. 197, no. 199 (1435).

governor).⁴⁰⁷ Administrative letters, trade conflict letters or various requests for public or private merchandise were initially commissioned only by the princes. Similar letters issued by high state dignitaries, regional and urban administrators soon followed.

For instance, six out of eight Slavonic letters issued by the urban administrations of the Wallachian towns were trade-related letters.⁴⁰⁸ Furthermore, forty-five out of one hundred and thirteen surviving letters commissioned by Wallachian high state dignitaries were also trade-related letters, either on their own behalf or for their subjects.

Persons involved in commercial activities were supposed to carry individual documents attesting their identity. For the Wallachian merchants, similar to other Western traders, a letter of “safe-conduct,” commissioned by the Wallachian princes guaranteeing safe travel and trade seems to have been particularly appealing.⁴⁰⁹ According to indirect evidence, Wallachian princes provided such written devices from an early period. For instance, Vlad Dracul (1438-1446) wrote to the Braşov administration that he requested that “whoever would come from this country without my book (letter, my note M.G.) you shall stop him and announce my highness.”⁴¹⁰ Again, foreign practices of document use as an identity device seem to have been embraced by the Wallachian traders from the first half of the fifteenth century. Letters of free passage commissioned by princes and even by regional governors enforced by oral oaths are extant from an early period, when written evidence was extremely restricted on the Wallachian territory.⁴¹¹

Furthermore, “personnel” trade documents, such as registers, chirographs or receipts seem to have customarily used by the traders. Unfortunately, their existence is mostly revealed through indirect evidence. For instance, the first Moldavian urban letter produced in

⁴⁰⁷ DRH B, vol.1, no. 176.

⁴⁰⁸ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 457.

⁴⁰⁹ Favier, *Gold and Spices: The Rise of Commerce in the Middle Ages*, , 79.

⁴¹⁰ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 58.

⁴¹¹ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, No.107. Governor of the Wallachian Prince Aldea (1431-1433), Albul issued a letter of invitation to Braşov traders.

1421 already mentions a personnel commercial register kept by Niclos Hecht, a German inhabitant of the Moldavian town of Baia.⁴¹² However, only from the sixteenth century a few instances of surviving trade registers are preserved, the first one dated from 1508. Its content indicates that it might have been kept by a prince's trade agent as often acquisition of goods for the princely court or for the prince's private needs was recorded. It reinforces the idea that written activities were quite familiar to the traders as acquisition of paper and ink was recorded repeatedly.⁴¹³

Personal receipts or chirographs seldom survive. Among the few such documents that have been preserved there are two written agreements for the acquisition and selling of a great quantity of wool, signed for by Dumitru and Voicu from Râmnic with traders from Braşov. The Slavonic language of the documents may indicate that the papers were drawn-up at the request of the Wallachian merchants.⁴¹⁴ It is unclear though, if the text was drawn-up personally or by a hired scribe. The Romanian words used in the Slavonic text point only to the Wallachian or Moldavian origins of the producer of the document. Other receipts however point to Wallachian subjects involved in the commercial activities having active literary skills. For instance, the receipt commissioned or issued by Radu, son of Socol, Walah, confirming that the "cattle of his father given to a Bistriţa citizen, Zewch Lenart were returned to him intact and unharmed under the same seals they had been sealed" was endorsed by the Radu's seal and an alleged *manu propria* signature.⁴¹⁵ His Christian name and the affiliation strongly suggest that he belonged to the Wallachian sphere of influence. It seems that Radu had a high social status as he was recorded as being the son-in-law of the Wallachian prince, Mircea Ciobanul.⁴¹⁶ Other data testify that Wallachian traders issued receipts in various

⁴¹² *Akta Grodzkie i Ziemskie*, vol. IV, 108-9 (Lemberg, 1873); apud Petre Panaitescu "Cel mai vechiu act municipal din Moldova" (The earliest urban document from Moldavia) *Revista Istorică* 9.1-3(1923): 183-6, 184-5.

⁴¹³ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, No. 205.

⁴¹⁴ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 460, no. 461 (Feb. 14, no year date).

⁴¹⁵ Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, no. 984 (1558, May 2).

⁴¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

languages. For instance, a Latin receipt was commissioned by several Wallachian high-ranking dignitaries among whom a Ioan Ban, son of Socol was mentioned.⁴¹⁷ The close dates of the two receipts and the relation to Socol might indicate a kinship relation between the two commissioners of commercial documents.

The high social status of certain commissioners of written documents points to the strong relationship between the Wallachian political elite and persons involved in commercial activities. The evidence of conflict letters also support the notion that the political elite was often involved in commercial activities. Chancellor Tudor, for instance, wrote to Sibiu complaining about the fact that he had been asked to pay custom fees for a kaftan and other goods, despite the fact that his merchandise remained unsold: *Per quemdam nepotem nostrum ex sorore, videlicet Oppre vocatum, unum kaftan et unam peciam veluti exmiseramus, ut vendere debeat. Is autem nepos noster vendere nequivit, vigesimatores autem telonium nunc a predicta kaftan et veluto petunt.*⁴¹⁸

It seems, however, that it was not only the political elite employ personnel documents during their commercial activities. The large communities of Wallachian merchants seem to have been aware of the importance of the written word and capable of employing it. For instance, the community of merchants from Tragoviste was the first local community of Wallachian traders who received a written confirmation of their trade privileges from Dan II (1420-1424, II 1427-1431).⁴¹⁹ Furthermore, the same urban community of Târgoviște traders notified in writing the Braşov administration about their decision to change their trading place from Sibiu to Braşov. They sent a written document with their trading conditions to the administrative authorities in Braşov and asked in return a similar document that would endorse in writing what had been agreed upon.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁷ Ibidem, no. 938 (1554, August, 14).

⁴¹⁸ Ibidem, no. 353 (1509, June 14).

⁴¹⁹ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 13 (1420-1424).

⁴²⁰ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 450 (undated).

The number of surviving Wallachian and Moldavian receipts and registers reconfirms the general statement that personnel commercial documents have a low rate of survival. Various “misfortunes” may have hindered their preservation. Even the destruction of private land charters, the lasting value of which is well attested, occurred repeatedly during the course of various personnel or general calamities. The low survival rate of merchants’ letters and account is made even worse by their limited period of usefulness. Presumably, their accidental destruction might have been coupled with intentional discharge after documents lost their usefulness.⁴²¹

However, the indirect evidence supports the evidence found within the scattered primary documents and reconfirms the use of trade documents by Wallachian merchants. They employed individual receipts attesting their trade transactions or even left behind personnel archives. The written documents attesting commercial transactions seem to have enjoyed a high value as the evidence indicate that they are among the first things to be taken away during a conflict. For instance, Radu the Great urged the Braşov urban administration to return the taken documents: “(...) and that receipt you have taken from my man you shall put it back in his hand since there is no rule that your highness can take it from him.”⁴²² The governor of Vlad the Monk, Dragomir Udrishte, also complained to the Braşov administration that his books (presumably receipts) had been retained by force by their citizen, Cristea Roşul.⁴²³ The existence of traders’ personnel archives is brought up in a letter issued by the Wallachian prince, Moise Vodă (1518-20). He complained about an injustice of Braşov town officials (jupan Bergner) against “the small children” (“mali I nemojni”) of a Wallachian trader, Costea. The prince specified that on a debt account owned by the Wallachian merchant, the Transylvanian officials took from his “children” ten times the worth of the loan although “he could not show any receipt to prove that Costea was in debt;” Besides the taken

⁴²¹ Britnell, *Pragmatic Literacy*, 15.

⁴²² Bogdan, *Relaţiile Țării Româneşti cu Braşovulşi cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 185.

⁴²³ Ibidem, no. 236.

goods, Bergner “appropriated all of Costea’s receipts which attested Costea’ loans in Buda and other towns from Hungary and from my highness’ country (Wallachia, my note) and sent his men with those receipts everywhere and gathered all his (Costea’s my note M.G.) loans.”⁴²⁴

There is no indication about Costea’s social status. Unfortunately, it is not clear to what extent the existence of a single personnel archive indicates that the practice was widespread. Commercial receipts seem to have been used extensively nonetheless, as the request to show them (while claiming back loans) was expected by the Wallachian prince.

The fact that Bergner and his men were apparently able to gather all of Costea’s loans only by providing his receipts suggest that the written document seem to have functioned as symbolic device. It might be that, similarly to land charters, trade receipts during the early period of their employment functioned more as a symbol and proof of ownership than as a “real” source of information. This fact may also indicate that the circulation of written documents was in an incipient stage among Wallachian traders.⁴²⁵

According to direct evidence, trade documents had lesser impact in the development of written practices in Moldavia, with the exception of the early period. Even documents attesting the trade activities of foreign ethnic groups, presumably more accustomed to use of the written word such as Greeks or Armenian, are very sporadic. A single letter is preserved in the Polish State Archive belonging to a Greek merchant from Suceava asking for a postponement of a dispute process in Poland given his ongoing process in the Moldavian town of Suceava.⁴²⁶ Unfortunately, no direct record of trade related disputes are preserved from any Moldavian town. Mainly indirect records, such as foreign urban account books or

⁴²⁴ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 315.

⁴²⁵ Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, no. 984 (1556, May 2), The document was drawn up in Hungarian, *anno domini* 1558.

⁴²⁶ Bogdan, *Documente arhive biblioteci polone* no. 230 (1597, Dec 8).

trade conflicts testify about the use of written documents by Moldavian traders during their commercial transactions.⁴²⁷ Especially after the turn of the sixteenth century, the activities of Moldavian ethnic traders such as Nicolae Brânza from the town of Siret,⁴²⁸ Thodor Wallachus from Suceava,⁴²⁹ or Petrus Wallachus from Iassy⁴³⁰ have come to light in the Lviv account books. The indirect reference indicates that written practices were assimilated by the Moldavian traders; they seem to have frequently used documents during their commercial activities. For instance, a record from a Lviv account book indicates that during the period between 1564-6, a civil case arose over a dispute between Sebald Aichinger and Nicora Theklitz Vallachus from Schoczavia. Nicoara seems to have issued a chirograph in his town of residence for 1130 polish florins, apparently lent to the Polish subject. Afterwards, he threatened the debtor that unless he did not receive his payment back, he would appeal to princely justice. Receiving his money back, Nicoara was capable of issuing a receipt in Polish as evidence.⁴³¹ Unfortunately, no original document belonging to a Moldavian trader survives.

Despite the sparse primary record, indirect evidence indicates that letters and receipts were circulating as proof of ownership and engagement in both Moldavia and Wallachia. The reciprocal requests for formal documents in support of agreements are repeatedly mentioned especially in Wallachian commercial letters. The Wallachian Prince Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521), for instance, uncertain about the honesty of a Braşov craftsmen employed to produce a piece of jewelry, avoided letting him go free without written endorsement. Consequently, he demanded the town official to “send a book (receipt, my note M.G.) with the town seal so that my highness shall keep it until my merchandise shall arrive in my hand.”⁴³²

Writing was used as a device of public reprobation and control. Two Wallachian

⁴²⁷Iorga, *Relațiile comerciale ale Țerilor noastre cu Lembergul*, no. 24, no. 25, no. 27, no. 28.

⁴²⁸Ibidem, no. 30.

⁴²⁹Thodor Wallachus had a legal dispute with Gavril Byaler in Cracow. See *Relațiile comerciale ale Țerilor noastre cu Lembergul*, no. 34.

⁴³⁰In 1589, Petrus Wallachus was registered as having had a dispute with a citizen from Lemberg. See *Relațiile comerciale ale Țerilor noastre cu Lembergul*, no. 91.

⁴³¹Iorga, *Relațiile comerciale ale Țerilor noastre cu Lembergul*, no. 41-42.

⁴³²Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, no. 268.

traders were affected by such a situation in Transylvania. During the fifteenth century, the Sibiu urban administration displayed the names of the wrongdoers on the town gate. The Wallachian prince, Vlad the Monk (1482-1496), was informed that the names of his subjects, Coman and Bărbat were written on the gate. Vlad reacts by writing that they were “unfair and soulless (...) otherwise their names would not have been written on the town gate (...).”⁴³³

* * *

The impact of commercial activities and foreign practices on the spread and development of written culture is self-evident, especially in Wallachia. During an early period of the Wallachian state, when state institutions including the state chancery were not yet fully developed and written culture was very marginal, trade activities were one of the most important foreign factors that contributed to the circulation of written documents on Wallachian territory, even if among a very restricted community of laymen. The impact of different foreign influences on the Wallachian and Moldavian use of trade documents is witnessed by the different denominations of documents employed in commercial activities. As with other types of documents, trade-related documents show that the Moldavian principality was more influenced by Western structures and cultural traditions, while Wallachia enjoyed a stronger southern influence. The use of specific Western receipts in the form of chirographs seems to have been employed often in Moldavia.⁴³⁴ They were not mentioned in Wallachia and a Turkish word *hoget* was customarily employed for the common receipts employed in trade transactions. Thus, trade related documents demonstrate that various trade milieus had an impact on the introduction of written practices in Moldavia and Wallachia.

⁴³³ Bogdan, *Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 154 (c.1482).

⁴³⁴ Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, no. 1102.

Chapter 5. Diversification of documents' producers: urban, regional and local offices as issuers of documents. The involvement of the clerical milieu in the producing of (pragmatic) documents

In the Danubian principalities, up to the second half of the sixteenth century, the central state chancery was almost the only producer of written documents. Few exceptions are recorded in the Moldavian towns where the first urban letter intended for communication with a foreign institution was produced during the reign of the Moldavian Prince Alexander the Good (1400-1431). In Wallachia, according to the surviving evidence, urban correspondence with foreign institutions was sparse and only begins to emerge from the reign of Radu from Afumați (1522-29). In contrast, regional and urban land charters survive in Wallachia from the reign of Vlad the Monk (1482-1495), while in Moldavia the surviving evidence dates mainly from the last two decades of the sixteenth century.

The number of extant documents, internal charters and foreign letters produced by Wallachian or Moldavian institutions, noblemen and villagers remained low up to the end of the sixteenth century. There are ninety-five charters from Moldavia, produced outside the princes' chancery, while from Wallachia there are ninety-nine.⁴³⁵ The number of commercial, administrative and political letters produced by Moldavian and Wallachian urban and regional institutions is similarly low as only 121 such letters survive from Moldavia and 127 from the Wallachian Principality. Moreover, the surviving record indicates that only a couple of the Moldavian and Wallachian towns and the most important state officials issued documents up to the end of the sixteenth century.

The low number of the surviving documents might have been significantly influenced by the lack of any institutional form of archiving in the two Danubian Principalities. More

⁴³⁵ See mainly DRH B, vol. no. 7, no. 8, no. 11; for Moldavia DIR A, vol. 3 and 4.

than that, as the charters issued at urban, regional and local levels required the subsequent confirmation by the prince's chancery, they are more likely to have been lost in time, as being perceived as less important and valuable. Consequently, the low number of local documents attested today may not reflect the number of documents once produced.

In the following, I will trace the gradual involvement of written practices by state institutions and private individuals at the urban, regional and village level. I will try to show the main factors that stimulated the implementation of written communication outside the princely chancery.

5.1 Urban writing offices: Communication of the Moldavian and Wallachian urban offices with foreign institutions

The urban administration of Moldavian and Wallachian towns was very similar, embodying two parallel institutions.⁴³⁶ One represented the authority of the prince as the towns were the properties of the princes.⁴³⁷ The second urban administration was autonomous as early Moldavian and Wallachian towns were organized according to Magdeburg law, and was elected every year by the town inhabitants.⁴³⁸ In the ethnically mixed cities, old and large local ethnic groups were also entitled to have their own administrator and be judged according to their own law as for instance, the Armenian population in Suceava.⁴³⁹ The urban

⁴³⁶ See Petre P. Panaitescu, "Comunele medievale în Principatele Române" (Medieval villages in the Romanian Principalities) In *Interpretări Românești. Studii de istorie economică și socială*, ed: Stefan S. Gorovei et al (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1994), 128.

⁴³⁷ They are the oldest representatives of the central power locally, the supreme instances in this particular region until the creation later of the county administrations. They were called *vornic de oras* (city governors) and had juridical, fiscal, and during the early period, military authority. Before the middle of the sixteenth century in Moldavia, they were replaced or doubled by *ureadnici*, county governors with the same status as their functions switched gradually from military to civil duties. See Panaitescu, "Comunele medievale în Principatele Române," 131.

⁴³⁸ It was called *Șoltuz* from the German *Schultheiss* or *Voit* (Vogt); they reached the medieval Romanian Principalities through Poland and Galicia. See Constantin Giurăscu, *Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene din secolul al X-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea* (Burgs or towns and Moldavian fortresses from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries) (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1967), 125-6.

⁴³⁹ Giurăscu, *Târguri sau orașe*, 127. The custom was influenced by the practices from the Polish cities of Lemberg and Camenita. See Panaitescu, "Comunele medievale în Principatele Române" (Medieval villages in the Romanian Principalities), 141, 143; Other ethnically mixed towns such as Bacău or Huși where Hungarian and Romanian inhabitants are attested, preferred to appoint a single representatives successively. See Giurăscu, *Târguri sau orașe*, 128.

administration of certain towns are considered to be the oldest institutions attested on the territory of the Danubian principalities and, according to some historians, even preceded the state foundations.⁴⁴⁰ They possessed their own chancellery, seals, and town archives.

Moldavian urban institutions are attested as the first issuers of written documents outside the princely chancery.

5.1.1 The Moldavian evidence.

The surviving evidence from urban documents indicates that it was mainly two Moldavian towns, Baia and Suceava, that maintained a relatively continuous written correspondence with foreign institutions. Out of twenty-nine surviving Moldavian urban letters, twenty-three were issued by their urban administrations. The first surviving urban Moldavian letters confirm the religious, economical and political importance of these two Moldavian northern towns during the early period. The town of Baia was the first capital of the Moldavian principality. The Franciscan monastery from Baia is attested from 1345, prior to the first surviving document from the Moldavian principality.⁴⁴¹ Moreover, the first surviving document produced on the Moldavian territory was a princely endowment from 1384 on behalf of *fratres predicatorum* at the request of a Moldavian Catholic princess.⁴⁴² Later on, Baia is recorded as being the centre of the Catholic community in Moldavia. It had a bishopric from 1413.⁴⁴³

The town of Suceava succeeded Baia as Moldavian capital up to the reign of Alexandru Lapusneanu (1552- 1561, II 1564-1568) when; for commercial reasons, the Moldavian capital was moved to the southern town of Iassy. The northern towns in Moldavia were inhabited by a strong German community that engaged in commercial activities from an

⁴⁴⁰ Giurăscu, *Târguri sau orașe*, 132.

⁴⁴¹ For more information about this see ibidem, 186.

⁴⁴² DRH A, vol. 1, no. 1.

⁴⁴³ For more information about this see Giurăscu, *Târguri sau orașe*, 186.

early period.⁴⁴⁴

The surviving documents from Baia or from Suceava are not numerous. Up to the end of the sixteenth century there are fifteen preserved letters produced by the town administration of Baia and eight documents from Suceava. Most of them were written in German,⁴⁴⁵ and, based on the names within the documents, mainly on behalf of German ethnic groups.⁴⁴⁶

The first urban administrative letter was produced in Baia in 1421. Officials in the urban administration informed Lviv town officials that a German inhabitant of Baia, Niclos Hecht, who was involved in commercial activities, specified in his last will that he left to the Lviv town administration the debt owed to him by a merchant from Lviv. To support the merchant's testimony, the urban administration brought in the personnel commercial register kept by Niclos Hecht.⁴⁴⁷ The surviving evidence, therefore, indicates that the first instances of such written communication were produced by the German inhabitants in Moldavian towns who were engaged in broad commercial activities.

The earliest document surviving from Suceava was an administrative letter produced in 1472. The German urban official Rymer addressed Jerig Eyben, a judge from Bistrița, to plead for a pupil from Bistrița, who had studied the tanner's trade in Suceava and who needed a letter of confirmation about the status of his parents, without which his teachers refused to issue him a confirmation of his study.⁴⁴⁸

The German language of the documents made Romanian historians to consider that the towns of Baia and Suceava were populated mostly by Germans.⁴⁴⁹ Possibly, the choice of the German language for written communication was determined by the fact that it was

⁴⁴⁴ Ibidem, 189.

⁴⁴⁵ A single late letter produced by the joint Armenian and Moldavian administration was issued in vernacular Romanian. See Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 97.

⁴⁴⁶ See, for instance, Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 203 (1481, Apr. 10).

⁴⁴⁷ *Akta Grodzkie i Ziemskie*, IV, p. 108-9 (Lemberg, 1873); apud Petre Panaitescu "Cel mai vechiu act municipal din Moldova," 184-5.

⁴⁴⁸ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 134.

⁴⁴⁹ Giurăscu, *Târguri sau orașe*, 189.

credited as a record language in the area.⁴⁵⁰ The first surviving documents produced on Moldavian territory serve as a testimony that German ethnic groups inhabiting the Moldavian principality had close relations with their mother-tongue communities abroad. The commercial and administrative relations with the Saxon towns in Transylvania, apparently more accustomed to written practices, appear to have been translated into active use of written correspondence by the inhabitants of Moldavian towns. Possibly, in imitation of foreign practices, the urban administration of Baia and Suceava provided writing facilities for the inhabitants of the town as it seems that the first documents were issued on behalf of private citizens.

Among the earliest surviving Moldavian letters there are two letters preserved from the southern Moldavian towns of Byrlad and Vaslui. They are the only urban Moldavian letters issued in Slavonic and, according to Bogdan, testify that the majority of people inhabiting Southern Moldavian towns were actually Moldavian. The relatively early attestation of the documents, from around 1434 and 1437,⁴⁵¹ suggests that writing facilities were available at the town level in Moldavia to a greater extent than the surviving evidence indicates and that the Moldavian ethnic group as well as foreign groups were involved in issuing documents at the urban level.

The format and style of the Moldavian letters issued from Baia and Suceava show that, during the fifteenth century, professional scribes were active in Moldavian urban offices.⁴⁵² As during this period, German documents were issued only at the urban level, the writing personnel may have been of foreign origin, most probably Transylvanian, or at least might have been received their training there. The characteristics of the documents issued at Baia

⁴⁵⁰ Andrej Janeczek, "Urban Commune, Ethnic Communities, and Language Use in Late Medieval Red Ruthenian Towns," (unpublished paper delivered at the Leeds Medieval Congress, July 2008), 4. I am thankful to Dr. Anna Adamska for this material.

⁴⁵¹ See Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, 10. The letters are undated. Bogdan dated them to the first half of the fifteenth century, to 1434 and 1437 respectively. In contrast, Costăchescu changed the date of Vaslui's letter from 1437 to the second half of the fifteenth century and dated it between 1450 and 1500.

⁴⁵² Doc. 194, POB, Cluj State Archives. See also Doc. 243, POB, Cluj State Archives.

indicate that during the fifteenth century a uniform tradition was not yet established.⁴⁵³ There is no continuity in the presentation of documents, the script texts were written in, the text positioning on the page, the way the letters were enclosed and sealed. A number of different conventions were at play.⁴⁵⁴ Provided that the close dates of the documents are certain, it seems that already by the end of the fifteenth century an increased number of scribes were active in the urban chancery of Baia. However, it is unclear if their positions were stable since the record is sparse. Up to the end of the reign of the Voivod Stephen the Young (1517-1527),⁴⁵⁵ eight letters written by the urban administration of Baia⁴⁵⁶ and four letters from Suceava are attested. Despite the low number of surviving documents,⁴⁵⁷ their continuity suggests a regular existence of written facilities at the disposal of the town population.

After the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the record is very uneven. Letters from Baia disappear up to 1570, when the documents seem to have had a revival so that up to 1595 there are seven other letters extant.⁴⁵⁸ However, the type of the letters point to a continuity of tradition. Letters continued to be used in the resolution of rather narrow administrative issues for the local German community. Only by the end of the century do political issues start being addressed in urban letters. Nicolae Kirschner, a town official, sent two political letters to Bistrița to give an account for the unstable Moldavian political situation.⁴⁵⁹

Similarly, the urban evidence from Suceava records a hiatus in letters up to 1562, when a business letter was addressed by two burgers from Suceava to the town of Bistrița.⁴⁶⁰

During the last decade of the sixteenth century, three German documents were issued by the

⁴⁵³ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 135, no. 136 (around 1472).

⁴⁵⁴ Doc. 194, POB, Cluj State Archives. See also Doc. 243, POB, Cluj State Archives.

⁴⁵⁵ Document 492 (605), POB, CSA (1514, Feb 28); Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță Voievod*, no. 120 (1526, July 15); document no. 841 (958), POB, Cluj State Archives (1527, Febr.11).

⁴⁵⁶ Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Bogdan Voievod*, no. 77 (1510, May 30); no. 83 (1514, March 30). Iorga, *Acte și Scrisori*, no. 535 (1527, March 12); no. 239 (1502, June 20); document no. 843, POB, Cluj State Archives (1527, Feb 26).

⁴⁵⁷ There are 6 letters issued by the administration of Baia and 4 from Suceava in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

⁴⁵⁸ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1192 (1570, June 8), no. 1195 (1570, Nov.6), no. 1223 (1574, Aug.15), no. 1311 (1592, Aug.6), no. 1314 (1592, Dec.14), no. 1350 (1595, Sept.12), no. 1356 (1595, Oct.28).

⁴⁵⁹ Ibidem, no. 1350 (1595, Sept.12), no. 1356 (1595, Oct.28).

⁴⁶⁰ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1065 (1562, March 24).

German urban administration of Suceava which indicates that this German administration continued to produce documents up to the end of the sixteenth century.⁴⁶¹ The last letter from Suceava assured the citizens from Bistrița that the political situation was stable indicating that in Suceava as in Baia, political issues were beginning to be addressed at the urban level.

In the last years of the sixteenth century, other urban administrations of Moldavian towns such as Neamț⁴⁶² and Cotnari⁴⁶³ are attested as producers of documents. The fact that the first letters were produced in vernacular Romanian may indicate that the Reformation movement was felt initially at the urban level. Presumably, the accreditation of vernacular as language(s) of record stimulated the use of writing at the urban level. The early surviving vernacular letters such as a letter by Gheorghe of Campulung⁴⁶⁴ indicate unsettled written practices and untrained scribes which point to the novelty of the document production. The scribe of the letter was not mentioned, but the several priests recorded as having been among the witnesses indicate that with the acceptance of the vernacular as a recording language, the parish priest came to play a more significant role in the production of documents. The lack of precise dating, with only the date of month and day being recorded, may indicate that the producers of the vernacular letters were following the conventions set in the Slavonic letters, where the year was almost always omitted in the letters intended for regular communication.⁴⁶⁵

State officials from Moldavian towns representing the authority of the prince hardly ever commissioned documents on behalf of urban citizens based on the extant data. A single letter is preserved from the Moldavian town of Campulung.⁴⁶⁶ The letter was commissioned

⁴⁶¹Ibidem, no. 1335 (1594, June 22), no. 1453 (Apr 28). The last document does not record the year although we know it comes from the end of the sixteenth century; no. 1454 (no date, dated by Iorga at the end of the sixteenth century); See also Iorga, *Acte relative la Războaiele și Cuceririle lui Mihai Viteazul*, vol.12, no. 471 (1600).

⁴⁶²Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1457.

⁴⁶³Ibidem, no.1458.

⁴⁶⁴Ibidem, No. 1458.

⁴⁶⁵Iorga, *Acte relative la Războaiele și Cuceririle lui Mihai Viteazul*, vol. 12, no. 471 (1600).

⁴⁶⁶Tocilescu, *534 documente*, no. 527 (undated; second half of the sixteenth century). There are two towns in Moldavia and Wallachia with the same name of Câmpulung.

by Nichita Harbuz, apparently a refugee from Bistrița, and confirmed by Dan *ureadnic* (governor) and the whole country of Dolgopole (Câmpulung), Moldavia. The refugee supplicated the urban administration of the town of Bistrița to send him some of the wealth he had left behind: “And so I weep and beg your majesty, I weep to the greenness of the earth, I beg for God’s name to give me back some of my goods, how much God shall guide you so that I shall not be so deprived without having what and how to eat. I have two packs of cheese at Pinteia from Sângeorz and give them back to me for eating.”⁴⁶⁷ The letter was produced in Slavonic. However, the style and recorded details are atypical for institutional letters and may also testify to recent written practices at the level of central administration.

The study of the names on whose behalf the urban documents were issued indicate that up to the middle of the sixteenth century, it was mostly German ethnic groups who used Moldavian urban offices for their foreign correspondence. Only certain names such as Negrilă suggest that members of the Moldavian ethnic group used the urban offices to resolve mistreatment while conducting trade.⁴⁶⁸ Urban offices were used to a greater extent by the Moldavian ethnic group only when vernacular Romanian began to be accepted as a language of record.⁴⁶⁹

5.1.2 The urban evidence from Wallachia

The surviving Wallachian urban record is very poor and seems to have been greatly stimulated by commercial activities as the twelve Wallachian letters that survive addressed mainly commercial business.⁴⁷⁰ A letter issued by a German craftsman from Târgoviște and addressed to his brother at Brașov, indicates that the German speaking community was

⁴⁶⁷ Tocilescu, *534 documente*, no. 527 (undated; second half of the sixteenth century).

⁴⁶⁸ Document 332, POB, Cluj State Archives, Catalog number 439. Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 239. See also Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță Voievod*, no. 120 (1526, July 15).

⁴⁶⁹ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1457, no. 1458 (c. 1600)

⁴⁷⁰ See Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, no. 225 (1524).

capable of employing scribes for writing their personal letters. They may even have possessed active literary skills.⁴⁷¹

The few Wallachian urban letters that have come down to us are peculiar mainly for the variety of employed languages. The four surviving letters from the town of Câmpulung, for instance, were issued in four languages: German,⁴⁷² Latin,⁴⁷³ Slavonic,⁴⁷⁴ and vernacular Romanian;⁴⁷⁵ the latter one being the first surviving document produced in Romanian.⁴⁷⁶

The first attested document in German,⁴⁷⁷ next to German names of the urban administration and of the solicitors, indicates that in Wallachia as well as in Moldavia, Germans were among the first communities accustomed to the written culture. Later on, a trade letter issued in Slavonic on behalf of a Wallachian merchant, Neacșu of Dolgopolie in the same town of Câmpulung,⁴⁷⁸ appears next to the Wallachian name of the town administrator and testifies to the ethnic and religious diversity of certain Wallachian towns. It also indicates that Wallachian merchants could resolve their commercial affairs not only in the prince's chancery but also at their places of residence, as the name of the Wallachian merchant Neacșu indicates that he was born or resided in the town of Câmpulung. "Neacsu of Dolgopolie" is known to the Romanian historiography as the author of the first letter produced in vernacular Romanian. The letter was meant to inform Brașov officials about the political situation in the area.⁴⁷⁹ The fact that the first vernacular Romanian letter was

⁴⁷¹ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 690 (1534, May 24).

⁴⁷² *Ibidem*, no. 503 (1524, Feb.11).

⁴⁷³ *Ibidem*, no. 568, (1528, Dec.22).

⁴⁷⁴ Dragomir, "Documente nouă privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Sibiul în secolii XV și XVI," no.67 (c.1500).

⁴⁷⁵ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 456. The letter was dated by Ioan Bogdan to 1521.

⁴⁷⁶ The remaining eight Slavonic Wallachian urban letters were issued in the first half of the sixteenth century out of the commercial towns of Râmnic (Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 457. (1506)), Târgoviște (*Ibidem*, no.451 (1524) – this document is the only surviving letter with a political character), Târgșor (*ibidem*, no. 454 (1530)), Brăila (*ibidem*, no. 452 (1533)), no.453 (c. 15th-16th centuries)) and Argeș (See Panaitescu, "Documente slavo-române din Sibiu (1470-1653)," no.11 (c.1500)).

⁴⁷⁷ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 503, (1524, Febr. 11).

⁴⁷⁸ Tocilescu, *534 documente*, no.455; the letter is undated, Bogdan dated it between 1521-1545. See Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, no 186.

⁴⁷⁹ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 456. The commercial activities of Neacșu are attested also in a letter issued by the urban administration of Târgoviște. See Ioan Bogdan, ed. *Documente și regeste privitoare la relațiile*

produced in the same locality of Câmpulung points to a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual community, involved in commercial activities and capable of producing written documents in various languages. The fact that the first Wallachian letter issued in Romanian vernacular was produced by a person involved in commercial activities supports the idea that certain Wallachian merchants possessed actual literary skills and that vernacular Romanian was used for their commercial business before it reached institutional level.

The town of Câmpulung and its officials are attested prior to the foundation of the Wallachian state, similarly to the Wallachian capital of that time Târgoviște.⁴⁸⁰ According to Iorga, urban officials operated in the town prior to state foundation. An inscription from 1330 recorded on a tombstone mentioned a town official, *Laurentius de Longo Campo* (Câmpulung) and is dated to a time prior to 1330.⁴⁸¹

Târgoviște was inhabited by a German-speaking community, and similarly to Baia in Moldavia is attested as the residence of the Franciscan community in Wallachia. It was situated on the most lively of the commercial routes and during the researched period was known as an important place for collecting staple right taxes. Thus, I can conclude that in Wallachia as well as in Moldavia an early urban literate milieu was attested in multiethnic and multi religious communities, with dynamic commercial activities.

5.2 Wallachian and Moldavian urban institutions as producers of land charters

Despite a relatively early exchange of written communication specific for certain Moldavian towns, evidence concerning the production of charters at the urban level is very sparse and concentrated mainly in the last two decades of the sixteenth century.⁴⁸² Only thirteen charters issued by the Moldavian urban administrations of the towns of Suceava,

Țării Rumânești cu Brașovul și Ungaria, no. 187. The editor dated the letter to between 1530 and 1545.

⁴⁸⁰ Nicole Iorga, ed. *Studii și documente cu privire la Istoria Românilor*. (Studies and documents concerning the history of the Romanians), vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Instrucție, 1903), 273.

⁴⁸¹ Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol.2, 273.

⁴⁸² The first extant urban charter was issued in 1580 (DIR A, vol.3, no. 184).

Troțuș, Piatra, Birlad, Roman, Cotnari and Agiud survive. In addition, several charters issued by autonomous urban administrations indicate that princely representatives in the towns also provided writing facilities for the urban citizens needing to attest their property in writing. Sporadically, one finds documents indicating that county and urban administration collaborated to provide documents locally.⁴⁸³ However, the attested number of land charters produced at the urban level in Moldavia remained low with only nineteen surviving documents.

Moreover, there is hardly more than a single charter extant from one and the same place and office. Only from Baia, the most active commissioner of foreign letters, are there preserved three charters. Indirect evidence suggests the existence of at least three other documents issued by the administration of Baia⁴⁸⁴ as well as the existence of other urban offices such as Neamț from where no documents have been preserved.

In Wallachia, charters attesting landed property began to be produced much earlier, from the first decades of the sixteenth century. Yet, from this early period, only three documents are extant. The first Wallachian documents survive from the capital Târgoviște and from the town of Râmnic,⁴⁸⁵ localities actively involved in commercial activities. After the middle of the century, the surviving records slightly increase in number and the urban administrations of Buzău, Argeș, Pitești become attested as producers of land charters. It was only in the Bucharest urban office that a more regular activity is recorded by the attestation of several scribes' names. The activity of the urban chancery of Bucharest may be correlated with the re-orientation of trade activities from northern to southern towns. According to Panaitescu, with the reorientation of the main trade towards the Ottoman Empire, the southern Wallachian and Moldavian towns gained in importance and emerged as the new capitals of

⁴⁸³ Ibidem, no. 469.

⁴⁸⁴ DIR A, vol. 4, no. 243.

⁴⁸⁵ The first extant document was issued in Târgoviște between 1512-1521 (the document is not dated). DRH B, vol. 2, no. 94. One document is extant from Râmnic (DRH B, vol.2, no. 157 (1517, July 14)).

the Danubian Principalities.⁴⁸⁶ Presumably, the growing economical importance of the town of Bucharest led to its emergence as one of the most active producers of documents at the urban level. Commercial activities and the presence of both foreign and native elements among the merchant class who were more accustomed to use written documents stimulated the production of land charters at the urban level. Merchants often appear as commissioners of urban documents. Greeks, either merchants⁴⁸⁷ or craftsmen, became very active in recording their purchases in the form of houses, shops, and vineyards.⁴⁸⁸ In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, when the Greek presence was more dominant, land purchases of Greek merchants began to be attested as well.⁴⁸⁹

Moreover, the Wallachian urban record began to display more diverse social categories who were becoming involved in the commissioning of documents. Merchants and various craftsmen, such as soap boilers, sword-makers, bag-makers got all commissioned documents of one kind or another.⁴⁹⁰ However, they were seldom able to purchase landed property. The unwritten law prohibiting people to sell landed property outside their native group and noblemen's social class is still mirrored in the urban documents that have come down to us. Land transactions are almost absent, while purchases of shops, houses and mills are often recorded.⁴⁹¹ A bit later on, the social changes occurring in the second half of the sixteenth century are also reflected at the urban level as well in urban documents with concentration of estates in the hands of powerful members of urban society and monastic institutions.⁴⁹² Conversely, in Moldavia, the commissioners of documents at the urban level remained restricted to high-ranking social dignitaries and sporadically to monastic

⁴⁸⁶ Panaitescu, "Comunele medievale în Principatele Române," 150.

⁴⁸⁷ DRH B, vol.5, no. 226 (1563).

⁴⁸⁸ DIR B, vol.5, no. 307 (1587), no. 425 (1589), DIR B, vol.5, no. 448 (1590).

⁴⁸⁹ For more information see Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor în Principatele Române*, 33.

⁴⁹⁰ Petronel Zahariuc, "Noua documente din secolul al XVI-lea privitoare la istoria orașului București" (Nine documents from the sixteenth century regarding the history of the city of Bucharest), in *Civilizația urbană din spațiul românesc în secolele XVI-XVIII: Studii și documente*, ed. Laurențiu Rădvan, (Yassy: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2006), 205-21.

⁴⁹¹ DRH B, vol. 5, no. 266; DRH B, vol.8, no. 109, no. 136; DIR B, vol.5, no. 425, no. 448, no. 454.

⁴⁹² Zahariuc, *Documente din secolul al XVI*, no.5. For Moldavia see DIR A, vol.3, no. 449.

institutions.⁴⁹³

The existence of writing facilities at the urban level either in Wallachia or in Moldavia are witnessed not only in the few surviving land charters but by indirect evidence as well. The Wallachian data indicate not only that more charters must have existed previously but that other unrecorded urban administrations, such as that in the town of Târgșor, had also issued documents, all of which have since been lost. For instance, in a land dispute recorded in 1571, an uncle contested the legitimacy of his niece to inherit her father's land. During the dispute, the prince mentioned that he judged with his noblemen according to the true law and "according to a charter issued by the urban administration of Târgșor," and granted the daughter the land of her father.⁴⁹⁴ The documents also indicate that by 1571, a local document seems to have been a sufficient judicial proof as no further witnesses were apparently requested during the legal process.

Other indirect evidence such as existing urban registers recording the land transactions taking place at the urban level support the hypotheses that more written land transactions went on at the urban level than indicated in the surviving documents. The registers of the Moldavian urban administrations of Hârlău and Troțuș are mentioned in data from the second half of the sixteenth century.⁴⁹⁵ In Wallachia, according to Iorga, the urban registers of the town of Câmpulung, kept from a relatively early period, were preserved in the Franciscan monastery of the town.⁴⁹⁶

The presence of urban registers in the two Moldavian towns may well indicate that written activities were taking place in Hârlău and Troțuș on a greater scale than the evidence of the isolated documents surviving either from Hârlău or from Troțuș⁴⁹⁷ might suggest. Moreover, the evidence recorded in contemporary charters specified that given property was

⁴⁹³ DIR A, vol.4, no. 292 (1598); DIR A, vol.3, no. 449 (1587).

⁴⁹⁴ See DRH B, vol. 7, no. 61.

⁴⁹⁵ DIR A, vol. 3 No. 5, p. 236, 239, 432, 433. See also Giurăscu, *Târguri sau orașe*, 136.

⁴⁹⁶ Iorga, *Studii și Documente*, vol. 2, 292-3.

⁴⁹⁷ DIR A, vol. 3, no. 454.

customarily recorded in urban registers. The reference to the tradition suggests that urban records and hence urban writing activities may actually have been practiced for a long time.

Thus, once again, the low number of surviving documents may not reflect the lack of written practices at local level but rather the low value attached to local documents and weak archival tradition.

5.3 Regional institutions and high-ranking state officials: The involvement of Moldavian and Wallachian noblemen in the commissioning and production of documents

The types of documents that Wallachian and Moldavian noblemen employed to maintain external connections mirror the princely documents. In Moldavia, noblemen were mostly involved in commissioning political letters. During the early fifteenth century, their presence in the documents was confined to witnessing and confirming the political agreements signed by the princes. Later on, the strong political position of the Moldavian nobility is confirmed by the collective political letters commissioned by the whole social body of the Moldavian nobility. In Wallachia, conversely, from the first half of the fifteenth century, noblemen are recorded mostly as commissioners of individual commercial and administrative letters.

The difference between the two principalities lay not only in the type but also in the number of the surviving documents. The seventy-one letters⁴⁹⁸ may suggest that Moldavian noblemen were less active producers of documents in contrast to Wallachian state officials, from whom 115 letters have been preserved. One of the reasons for this disparity in numbers between the two regions may lie in the stronger involvement of the Wallachian nobility in commercial activities.

⁴⁹⁸ There are 21 letters exchanged with Polish noblemen by a Moldavian chancellor, Luca Stroici, who had strong Polish affiliations. However, I have not included them in the general picture as the written activities of Chancellor Stroici are rather exceptional in the Moldavian context.

5.3.1 The Wallachian evidence

The first letters issued by Wallachian noblemen often addressed commercial issues. The testimony of forty-five commercial letters and receipts out of the 115 surviving Wallachian letters produced for external communication point to the fact that commercial activities contributed significantly to the number of documents produced at the regional and local level. Wallachian state officials often addressed trade misunderstandings on behalf of their subjects in written form. Furthermore, personal trade issues seem to have been addressed more often in writing by the Wallachian state dignitaries.⁴⁹⁹

Again, the employees of the state chancery seem to have been among the earliest commissioners of personal commercial letters. The first surviving Wallachian letter was produced in 1431 by a Wallachian nobleman named Coica.⁵⁰⁰ The Wallachian documents from the period attest that he was employed in the Wallachian chancery and although he signed his letter as Chancellor Coica, given his recent attestation in the Wallachian chancery, he might well have been still at the beginning of his career.⁵⁰¹ Nonetheless, he seems to have been already been dynamically involved in commercial activities and hence the production of personal written documents. His first surviving document specified that Chancellor Coica, in his fruitless attempts to have his wealth returned, produced other two documents. As he continued: “I4 mi est ž7l] na vas, zaradi i popr]vo v7rųvah Han2 i vasego kantilariš7 Linard2 ta im dadwh knig2; reko2 da mi dones[t] v]se, qo est moe, i x2st] da mi prinesų; a tie pridoh2 i ne prinesoh2 mi niqo.”⁵⁰²

It should be mentioned that around 1431, the Wallachian chancery was still at the beginning of its activity and laymen hardly commissioned documents to attest their landed property. According to both direct and indirect evidence, it seems that Wallachian noblemen

⁴⁹⁹ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 403. See also Bogan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 234, 236, no. 239. .

⁵⁰⁰ Ibidem, no. 206 (1431).

⁵⁰¹ During the early period in Wallachia, there was confusion between the function of scribes and chancellors. For more information see the chapter on scribes.

⁵⁰² Ibidem, no. 206 (1431).

during this early period used written letters more often to communicate information about their commercial relations than to record their landed properties. The five surviving trade related letters commissioned by Wallachian noblemen during the reign of Vlad Dracul (1436-1442) represent half of the surviving charters issued on behalf of Wallachian laymen by the same prince. Several high-ranking Wallachian state officials who acted for Vlad Dracul such as the treasurer,⁵⁰³ chamberlain,⁵⁰⁴ governor⁵⁰⁵ and chancellors⁵⁰⁶ issued documents mainly in relation to their personal trade affairs. Treasurer Stanciul, for instance, together with his brother Constantin, commissioned personal and princely letters in an effort to have family merchandise remaining in the house of a Braşov citizen returned.⁵⁰⁷

The fact that commercial letters were stored in the settled urban archives of the Transylvanian towns may have contributed to their better chances of survival, as compared with the Wallachian land charters, which were usually kept at home or in the monasteries. However, the type of documents, and the fact that commercial letters might have been perceived as more ephemeral than a written record of landed possession may reinforce my statement that, during the first half of the fifteenth century, writing was more used in Wallachia's external communication than for the record keeping.

Besides commercial questions, noblemen's letters often addressed political issues. The thirty-four surviving political letters issued by Wallachian noblemen indicate that in the frequent changes of Wallachian princes, noblemen took an active part in concurrent political rivalries. Thus, in the course of their activities they regularly commissioned both individual and/or collective documents. Two letters commissioned in the name of all the Wallachian noblemen as an answer to the information sent by the Moldavian Prince Stephen the Great about his intention of bringing them a new ruler are noteworthy. The rigorous and elaborated

⁵⁰³ Ibidem, no. 211 (1433-1437).

⁵⁰⁴ Ibidem, no. 213, no. 214 (c. 1437).

⁵⁰⁵ Ibidem, no. 207 (1431).

⁵⁰⁶ Ibidem, no. 216 (1442). The chancellor addressed political issues.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibidem, no. 211 (c.1433-1437).

Moldavian princely style is in direct contrast to the letters commissioned by the Wallachian nobility. The very colloquial language and short-tempered approach combined with their use of the second person singular strongly suggest that the letters were dictated directly by Wallachian noblemen, presumably very distressed by the involvement of the Moldavian prince in their internal affairs:

“Wt v]seh bol7ri Brailovski i wt v]she vlaseh pišemo tebe, Ștefane voevodo, gospodarȃ moldavski. Da est li ȃ tebe xlov7xestvo, imaș li ȃm, imaș li moz[k, qo si xtetiș xr]nilo i hartie izradi edno dete wt kurve, sina Kalcȃnina, ta govoriș ere ti est sin[? Ako ti est sin[I hokeș da mȃ dobro ȃxiniș, a ti ga wstavi da est po tvoe s]mr]ti gospodar] na tvoe mesto, i mater mȃ a tȃ ô ȃzmi ta ô dr]ži, da ti est gospoȃda, qo ô sȃ dr]žali ȃ nașe zemle svi ribari Brailovski. (...) I ȃxi si svoȃ zemlȃ, kako ga te sluȃžit, a wt nas se varȃi;”⁵⁰⁸

Certain Wallachian dignitaries were involved personally in political affairs, mainly on behalf of their princes. The remarkable letters commissioned by the noblemen of the Wallachian Prince Basarab the Young (1477-1481) show their desire to help him get back his wife as well as the state treasury, stolen and held by his rival in Brașov.⁵⁰⁹

Beginning with Radu the Fair (1462-1472), Wallachian governors took precedence among other state dignitaries and are consistently attested as producers of administrative, commercial, and political documents. The governor of Basarab the Young (1478-1482), Cazan, held quite regular correspondence on political, administrative, and private matters first as treasurer⁵¹⁰ and then as high governor.⁵¹¹ The first Wallachian internal administrative letter was also commissioned by Cazan on behalf of Brașov traders urging the local administration

⁵⁰⁸ “From the entire community of Brăila and Wallachian noblemen, we are writing to you, Prince Stephen, ruler of the Moldavian land. Do you have any humanity, do you have any brain for sparing your ink and paper for the progeny of the son of the whore Căltȃna, and tell to us that he is your son? And if it is so, and you want to be kind to him, let him rule your country after your death . (...) and give lessons to your own subjects and leave us alone.” Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 229 (1481).

⁵⁰⁹ Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 223 (1479-1480), no.224 (1480).

⁵¹⁰ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 393, no. 395.

⁵¹¹ Ibidem, no. 399.

“to stay away from Saxons so that no hair shall be missing from their head.”⁵¹² Seven letters issued by the governor of Vlad the Monk (1482-1492), Dragomir Udriște (c.1482-1492), show him to have been an active trader, commissioning documents on his own behalf and keeping written records of his transactions.⁵¹³ For instance, trading in Brașov and encountering certain trade misunderstandings, he was very troubled not to receive preferential treatment. He bitterly complained that despite the presence of acquaintances in Brașov, the administration there had refused to arbitrate personally in his trading conflicts and had sent him to the Sibiu administration, concluding that this was a completely different matter. As the distressed governor continued: “Cyrstea Roshul keeps those books of mine (receipts, my note M.G.) and refuses to give them back to me; and even with this you did not adjudicate for me.”⁵¹⁴

Certain recurrent letters indicate that Wallachian subjects advanced their complaints first before regional governors and only subsequently in front of princes. For instance, the governor of Radu the Great (1495-1508), Cyrstian, together with the Wallachian prince, issued administrative letters to reconcile differences between a citizen of Brașov, Marco, and a Wallachian nobleman, Stanislav.

Stanislav had hired the son of Marco from Brasov to teach him a certain language. Subsequently Marco's son left Wallachia crossing the Danube and embraced the Islamic faith. Governor Cyrstian, as well as the Wallachian prince, tried to convince the Brașov administration via written documents that Stanislav was not at all involved in the decision taken by the son of Marco.⁵¹⁵ Unfortunately the lack of dating on the document does not allow us to follow the procedure as it unfolded. Most probably, the case was initially brought to the

⁵¹² Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 231 (1481): “Ali wt Sasi da se varuete, da mū ga ne lipsat ni edin vlas.”

⁵¹³ Ibidem, no. 235, no. 236, no. 238, no. 239, no. 240, no. 241.

⁵¹⁴ Ibidem, no. 236: “Drugo, mi dr]žit Krst7 Rošiul wnei knige, ne qet da mi ih dast; i s] temzi eqe mi ne ūxiniste zakon.” See also no. 234, no. 239. For more information about trade documents issued by Wallachian noblemen see the chapter about trade.

⁵¹⁵ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 412. Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 247 (1496-1507).

attention of the regional governor, as his document recorded more details. Possibly, after an unsuccessful attempt to convince Marco's father, Stanislav requested the prince's intervention hoping to confer a higher proof to his testimonies.

Sporadically, Wallachian governors resolved commercial and administrative issues on behalf of foreign citizens. A Latin letter, commissioned in 1469 for a foreign merchant called Stephanus Literatus Braşoviensis, testifies that he, being accused by four Greeks who were inhabitants of Wallachia, traveled to Târgovişte to find the calumniators and then to Bucharest to be judged and acquitted by Neagu, governor of Radu the Fair.⁵¹⁶

Thus, the Wallachian state dignitaries seem to have been acquainted with written correspondence from an early period. The recurrent trade and administrative conflicts between the Transylvanian and Wallachian subjects seem to have been regularly resolved through written communications at the central or regional levels alike. The manifold kinds of business conducted in writing certainly contributed to familiarizing Wallachian nobility with written culture.

The pace of the Wallachian letters multiplied, especially in the last years of the sixteenth century, during the short period of Michael the Brave's rulership in Transylvania (November 1599-September 1600), from when 25, mainly commercial and administrative documents, commissioned by Wallachian state dignitaries survive.⁵¹⁷ Moreover, some of the evidence produced by the Wallachian officials such as signed letters, notes, and signatures testify that they had active writing skills. The fact, that the personal archive of Michael the Brave was preserved by German state officials raises once again the questions of possible losses in these documents, of how representative the surviving documents are and of the way writing practices spread in the Principalities. On the one hand, the signed documents of

⁵¹⁶ Iorga, *Acte şi scrisori*, no. 127 (1469, Nov.15).

⁵¹⁷ Densuşianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. 12, no. 1114, no. 1115, no. 1154, no. 1170, no. 1246, no. 1276, no. 1296, no. 1300, no. 1328, no. 1333, no. 1342, no. 1389, no. 1436, no. 1483 (1600); Chivu, *Documente şi însemnări româneşti din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 18 (1599), no.20 (1599), no. 22 (1599-1600), no. 23, no. 25, no. 35 (1600), no.37 (1600), no. 41 (1600), no. 49 (1600), no. 50 (1600).

princes and high-ranking noblemen multiply by the end of the sixteenth century both in Wallachia and Moldavia. However, the fact that most relevant documents were preserved in foreign archives may hinder any conclusions since other social strata may also have employed written documents for internal purposes although any sign of these has by now been entirely lost. While there is no possibility of avoiding uncertainty, the style and language of the Slavonic letters written by Wallachian noblemen indicate that the written practices of Wallachian state officials and scribes were still uneven. The language of the fifteenth century documents especially, is often colloquial and oral, similar to the early Wallachian princely letters. The use of the second person singular, direct quote⁵¹⁸ in addition to threats, recorded oaths,⁵¹⁹ and appeals of information as spoken⁵²⁰ testify to the use of oral and colloquial language in the issued documents. Only after the turn of the sixteenth century is there an improvement in the quality of the language used in Wallachian letters. However, the few letters issued by the lower-rank of state dignitaries preserve the earlier ‘oral’ characteristics.⁵²¹ Thus, the Wallachian written evidence produced at the regional and local level clearly testifies to a variable process and a gradual implementation of writing practices among Wallachian nobility.

5.3.2 The Moldavian Principality.

The Moldavian letters issued by local institutions and private individuals are lower in number than the Wallachian letters with only sixty-five Moldavian letters surviving. As noted, during the early period, the Moldavian nobility is attested mainly as issuers of collective

⁵¹⁸ See, for instance, Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 210, no. 213 (c.1437), no. 215 (1433-1440), no. 219 (1478-9).

⁵¹⁹ Ibidem, no. 208 (1431-1433), no. 217 (1474-1482), no. 233 (1482-1483).

⁵²⁰ Ibidem, no. 210.

⁵²¹ Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 430 (undated).

documents endorsing political matters involving high state decisions.⁵²² They also intervened as a body to support their princes as in the case of the matrimonial troubles of Prince Bogdan (1504-1517), when Moldavian officials addressed their collective appeal to the Polish king to allow the marriage of his sister with the Moldavian prince.⁵²³

Individual letters commissioned by Moldavian officials have a late attestation unfolding almost a century later than the Wallachian letters, mainly from the reign of Petru Rareș (1527-1538, II 1541-1546). Prior to his reign, only six documents survive⁵²⁴ of which five are political documents commissioned by Moldavian noblemen on behalf of their princes, while there is a single letter, commissioned by a Moldavian treasurer, which records a commercial issue.⁵²⁵

From the reign of Petru Rareș, thirty-four of sixty-five Moldavian letters issued at the level of state dignitaries have been preserved. During Rareș' military campaign in Transylvania (1528 to 1530), Moldavian noblemen, especially military administrators⁵²⁶ and treasurers⁵²⁷ engaged in a rather active correspondence as nine letters record written interventions related to the peace process which the Moldavian prince tried to achieve, or to war expenses. His active politics involved high state dignitaries in addition to scribes⁵²⁸ and painters⁵²⁹ to whom he issued/commissioned receipts and acknowledged the things he received.⁵³⁰ Military administrators of Moldavian possessions in Transylvania seem to have frequently corresponded with towns in Transylvania, resolving even minor issues in writing.

⁵²² Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, no. 163 (1387), no. 166 (1395), no. 182 (1433), no. 185 (1434), no. 195 (1435), no. 202 (1436), no. 216 (1448); Bogdan, *Documente Ștefan cel Mare*, no. 130 (1462).

⁵²³ Costăchescu, *Documente Bogdan*, no. 70 (1506).

⁵²⁴ Bogdan, *Documente Ștefan*, no. 134 (1468), no. 166 (c.1480-1484); Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 515, no. 517 (c.1447-1504); Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 320 (1506), no. 322 (1507), no. 368 (1510).

⁵²⁵ See Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 515 (c. 1447-1504) a trade conflict solved by a treasurer on behalf of his servant who had been charged an extra tax fee.

⁵²⁶ There are seven letters issued by the Moldavian military administrators. The military administrators of the Moldavian capital Suceava were most active. See Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 608 (1529), no. 623 (1529), no. 645 (1529), no. 652 (1530), no. 656 (1530), no. 663 (1530), no. 669 (1530).

⁵²⁷ Ibidem, no. 617 (1529), no. 669 (1530).

⁵²⁸ Ibidem, no. 810 (1543).

⁵²⁹ Ibidem, no. 755 (1541, May 6).

⁵³⁰ Ibidem, no. 755 (1541, May 6).

During the Rareș reign, the military administrators of Ciceu castle in Transylvania produced eight documents while afterwards only one document is extant.⁵³¹

After the reign of Prince Rareș (1527-1538, II 1541-1546) the record of noblemen's letters was almost discontinued. Up to the end of the sixteenth century only 11 letters have survived.⁵³²

The relatively rich record from Rareș' reign, preserved in Transylvanian town archives indicates that Moldavian noblemen had the means and capability of producing written documents. However, it is unclear whether Moldavian noblemen circulated written documents for their internal needs, as up to the end of the century no document survived. The letters issued during Rareș's reign on behalf of urban Transylvanian institutions may indicate that their survival was related to existing archival traditions there.

Thus, the relations of the Moldavian prince Rareș with the Transylvanian Principality were similar to those of Michael the Brave and resulted in a richer body of evidence. Correspondingly, it may also indicate that an absence of records does not always reflect an absence of writing activities.

The language of the Moldavian Latin letters shows that well-trained scribes and established writing practices existed. Conversely, certain vernacular documents produced at the end of the century reveal the direct forms of communication, filled with details and the special symbolism specific of oral language so often employed in Wallachian letters. For instance, a Moldavian treasurer, whose name failed to be recorded by the scribe, asked for support from a Rodna official. He addressed him directly reminding him about the food and drink they had shared, most probably as a symbol of the intimacy of their relations.⁵³³

⁵³¹ Ibidem, no. 1000 (1559).

⁵³² See, for instance, Tocilescu, *534 Documente*, no. 523 (second half of the 16th c.); Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no.1306 (issued by a cup bearer), no.1307 (1592), no. 1308 (1592), no. 1312 (1592) (the last two issued by a Moldavian chamberlain).

⁵³² Ibidem, no. 1307 (1592).

⁵³³ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1012 (1559).

Thus, Moldavian documents indicate the contribution of better trained scribes especially for documents produced in Latin. The producers of vernacular letters employed better written practices than in Wallachia although oral and colloquial language was still used in these early vernacular documents.

In summary, the most active producers of letters were high state dignitaries whose office presumably implied the presence of a professional scribe. Regional governors were the most dynamic in Wallachia. Exercising juridical and administrative prerogatives on their territories, governors early on wrote requesting justice for their citizens involved in administrative or trade disputes. They also exercised justice themselves and communicated the results in writing to Transylvanian officials. There were also state officials such as chancellors or treasurers who are well attested as being among the first to produce written letters since their careers required use of their literary capabilities. Women seem to be only incidentally present among the commissioners of letters and only in their quality as the widows of princes or dignitaries of state. The only administrative Wallachian letter commissioned by a woman, was sent by the widow of a former governor, who along with her son, tried to resolve an administrative issue on behalf of her servant.⁵³⁴

Unfortunately, when they commissioned documents dignitaries usually did not record their precise state functions. For instance, Dragomir, son of Manea, Wallachian governor under three princes, never recorded in the commissioned documents his state function and signed the five surviving letters under the name of nobleman Dragomir Manev (son of Manea)⁵³⁵ However, the recurrence of the same names in the surviving documents indicates that the commissioning of documents or at least the commissioning of foreign documents up to the end of the sixteenth century was restricted to the high-ranking state dignitaries. The

⁵³⁴ Tocilescu, 534 *Documente*, no. 446.

⁵³⁵ Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 217 (1474), no. 218(1476-7), no. 219 (1478-9), no. 220 (c.1482), no. 221 (1477). The documents were dated by the editor.

landed nobility does not seem to have been involved in the production of written documents dealing with commercial or administrative relations with foreign communities.

5.4 Land charters commissioned by the Wallachian and Moldavian regional institutions and state dignitaries.

Regional institutions and high-ranking state officials began to issue land charters in Wallachia from the end of the fifteenth century, earlier than urban Wallachian institutions. However, similarly to the urban charters, it is only from the middle of the century that the evidence becomes more consistent as 65 Wallachian charters produced by state dignitaries survive.

In Moldavia as well, regional and local documents retain the characteristics of the urban charters: they are attested mainly from the last two decades of the sixteenth century and their number is lower than that of the Wallachian documents as from Moldavia only thirty-eight charters have come down to us. The style, format, Slavonic language and seals used for the confirmation of documents indicate the presence of a more mature writing tradition in Moldavia compared to Wallachia.

As with written urban charters, Moldavian and Wallachian documents commissioned by regional administrators and other state officials had a provisory status and had to be subsequently confirmed in the princely chancery up to the end of the sixteenth century. For instance, the charter commissioned by Chancellor Balea and his wife outside the prince's chancery was confirmed in the following year by the Wallachian prince.⁵³⁶ Moreover, the Moldavian documents produced by state officials and regional administration explicitly mentioned that they would be valid only until a "proper" charter could be issued in the prince's office, "according to the custom of the country."⁵³⁷

Thus, the low number of surviving land charters produced outside the princely

⁵³⁶ DRH B, vol.11, no. 69 (1590).

⁵³⁷ See, for instance, DIR A, vol.3, no. 368, no. 571; DIR A, vol. 4, no. 173, no. 327.

chancery might be related to the judicial tradition attested in the two medieval Romanian Principalities, a tradition that conferred juridical validity only to charters issued in the prince's chanceries. A local document was considered to have only a temporary validity, until a record was to be produced in the state chancery. Thus, the land owners either did not have any incentive to request a local charter or to preserve it after a princely document was issued.

The secondary evidence from Wallachia and Moldavia supports the idea that more local documents previously existed. Only seldom do local charters survive compared to those produced in the princes' office. More often the charters produced in the central offices indicate that they were issued to confirm a local transaction and the document produced by the local official contains references to previously existing local documents which no longer exist today. For instance, in Moldavia in a land charter from 1589, Prince Petru Schiopul mentioned that he confirmed the acquisition of land by the Priest Dumitru and his father since he had seen and trusted a note from Vartic, the high governor.⁵³⁸ Another document from 1588 indicates that monastic institutions as well could resolve their land disputes locally and only ask for a princely charter on the basis of local documents.⁵³⁹ Only the second document produced at the prince's office is extant although the manner in which monks preserved documents attesting their landed property is well known.⁵⁴⁰

Thus, based on surviving data, similarly to the urban charters, there were more documents produced by Wallachian and Moldavian noblemen, compared to the actual number that still exist. Apparently, local charters were issued to replace the former oral testimonies of the witnesses that had served as a legal basis for confirming ownership of a landed property. During the early period, however, it seems that the practice of issuing documents at the regional level was not yet fully established. Some data, for instance, indicate that the ban of

⁵³⁸ DIR A, vol.3, no. 530 (1589, Aug 14).

⁵³⁹ Ibidem, no. 489.

⁵⁴⁰ See also ibidem, no. 530.

Craiova “went in front of the prince” to record his land donations.⁵⁴¹

The first producers of written land titles at the regional level are recorded in the Wallachian historical province of Oltenia whose governor, the great ban of Oltenia, was considered to hold the most important state dignity.⁵⁴² Prior to 1494,⁵⁴³ for example, Barbul, one of the influential Craiovești brothers, donated several villages to the family endowment of Bistrița monastery. As most probably the monastic institution was willing to avoid further disputes with the donor’s family, the local document was soon confirmed by the acting prince, Vladislav the Monk (1482-1495).⁵⁴⁴ Thus, with the creation of local offices where documents could be produced the written document took precedence over oral depositions and was then able to extend the gap between written communication and oral testimony. From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, the number of documents produced at the residence of the ban of Oltenia, Craiova town, increased. Moreover, the administrators of the province of Oltenia not only recorded their personal donations in the regional chancery but also those of their servants or fellow noblemen.⁵⁴⁵ The first charter of a village donation made by Badea clucer was also made on behalf of Bistrița monastery, patronized by the powerful family of Craiovești governors.⁵⁴⁶ Land confirmations on behalf of laymen were also recorded regionally. For instance, a subject of the Craiova ban, Arca, owed him money for 600 pieces of lard that he had been asked to sell. Having trouble justifying what had become of the goods he had taken or unable to return the money, he borrowed money from his brother, to whom in return the ban of Craiova confirmed the landed estate which had previously belonged to

⁵⁴¹ DRH B, vol. 2, no. 191.

⁵⁴² The position of the ban of Oltenia or ban of Craiova was among the highest ranks of Wallachian noblemen. He was given military, juridical and fiscal jurisdiction and often their actual power was greater than that of the princes they should have served; he was the only local dignity who had the right of *ius gladii*. See Valentin A. Georgescu and Ovidiu Sachelarie *Judecata domnească în Țara Românească și Moldova (1611-1831)* (The trial before the prince in Wallachia and Moldavia; 1611-1831). (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1979) I, p. 67).

⁵⁴³ The first charter is not dated, modern editors have dated it to a time prior to 1494, March 16. See DRH B, vol.1, no. 245.

⁵⁴⁴ DRH B, vol. 2, no. 246 (1494, March 16).

⁵⁴⁵ DRH B, vol. 4, no. 184, no. 292.

⁵⁴⁶ DRH, vol. 4, no. 184 (1545, July 25).

Arca.⁵⁴⁷ The brother, following the practice of monastic institutions, requested further confirmation of the local charters in the prince's office.⁵⁴⁸

From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, other present and former state dignitaries began to issue land charters, as indicated by the thirty-eight documents that survive. Nevertheless, they were less active than the regional administrators of Oltenia province where twenty-seven documents are extant from a single office. Moreover, the Wallachian state dignitaries, with the exception of regional governors (*vornic*) usually issued documents to attest their own, their families',⁵⁴⁹ or their servants' ⁵⁵⁰ land transactions. One of the first documents, for instance, was issued by the head of the Wallachian chancery, Radul, who confirmed the land donation of his father-in-law to Tismana Monastery.⁵⁵¹ The chamberlains Barbu and Vladislav also recorded in writing the land sold by their mother, the noblewoman Stanca. She sold the land in order to be able to have the liturgical services needed for her dead sons performed.⁵⁵² More often, however, Wallachian state dignitaries confirmed in writing their personal land acquisitions⁵⁵³ or their donations to monastic institutions.⁵⁵⁴ Moreover, next to state officials and former state officials,⁵⁵⁵ family members and especially wives and widows were active commissioners of charters. Stanca, the governess (as she calls herself) recorded a land donation to her servant Alexie in 1598.⁵⁵⁶

The Moldavian state officials provided written facilities for their personal needs (14 documents), as well as for their fellow noblemen, servants and lower social classes (24).⁵⁵⁷

The first and most active state dignitaries in Moldavia to provide writing facilities for their

⁵⁴⁷ DRH B, vol. 4, no. 205 (undated).

⁵⁴⁸ Ibidem, no. 206.

⁵⁴⁹ DRH B, vol. 8, no. 93.

⁵⁵⁰ DRH B, vol. 11, no. 273.

⁵⁵¹ DRH B, vol. 4, no. 225, (undated; dated by modern editors to 1547).

⁵⁵² DRH B, vol. 8, no. 93.

⁵⁵³ Ibidem, no. 95 (1577-9), DRH B, vol. 11, no. 66 (1590).

⁵⁵⁴ See, for instance, DRH B, vol.8, no. 104 (1577); DIR B, vol.5, no. 414 (1589).

⁵⁵⁵ DIR B, vol.5, no. 414 (1589).

⁵⁵⁶ DRH B, vol. 11, no. 273 (1598). It is unclear who wrote the document for Stana as no scribe is mentioned; the document is written in Slavonic which suggests a professional scribe.

⁵⁵⁷ See, for instance, DIR A, vol. 3, no. 108, no. 368, no. 411, no. 479.

subjects were regional governors.⁵⁵⁸ As mentioned, in both Moldavia and Wallachia, governors were in charge of tax collection or administration of justice and their duties are reflected in the documents they produced. For instance, in 1588, the high governor of the lower country in Moldavia confirmed the donation of a landed estate to certain “people from Murgești village” which he had expropriated from Ionașco Boboc for committing a murder.⁵⁵⁹ Court dignitaries or territorial nobility also sporadically issued charters.⁵⁶⁰

It is unclear whether all Wallachian and Moldavian state dignitaries appearing as commissioners of documents had their personal scribes. Only for the regional office of Craiova, where continuous activity is recorded, can I trace certain scribes who apparently received their training in the state chancery.⁵⁶¹ From time to time, documents produced by Moldavian or by Wallachian state dignitaries indicate that they were written by scribes employed in the chancery during the period. For instance, a Wallachian military administrator would employ professional scribes, who served at that time in the state chancery.⁵⁶²

However, the Wallachian documents issued outside the prince’s chancery usually did not respect the formulary of charters issued in the central office. On the contrary, Moldavian regional documents similarly to those produced at other levels of government were rigorously written.

By the end of the century, some instances indicate that Moldavian and Wallachian noblemen could personally produce documents for their servants.⁵⁶³ The differences between the two principalities and the writing abilities employed remains sizable since the Moldavian

⁵⁵⁸ See, for instance, documents issued by the governor of the lower country (DIR A, vol.4, no. 173), or upper country (ibidem, no. 293) by court servants (ibidem, no. 327), or by the territorial nobility (ibidem, no. 43).

⁵⁵⁹ The charter further specifies that he “had killed a man and run since he did not have any means to pay for his head.” As a result, the local governor confiscated his lands and notified the family that in order to redeem the confiscated land they need to pay twelve oxes and three gold coins for boots. It is unclear, though, why boots are mentioned. See DIR A, vol. 3, no. 479 (1588, Apr.15).

⁵⁶⁰ DIR A, vol.4, no. 327, no. 179.

⁵⁶¹ For more information see the chapter on scribes.

⁵⁶² For instance, the scribe Stănilă. See DIR B, no. 316 (writing for the Wallachian prince) and no. 414 (1589) for a former military town administrator (*portar*).

⁵⁶³ DIR A, vol. 4, no. 244 (the document is partially preserved. Modern editors dated it to between 1598-1599).

dignitaries were able to issue documents in Slavonic,⁵⁶⁴ while the Wallachians turned to the supposedly easier use of vernacular Romanian.⁵⁶⁵ In addition, after the reign of Despot Voda (1561-1563), Moldavian dignitaries close to the princes began to put their personal signatures on the documents.⁵⁶⁶

The social groups that used the regional offices for settling their land problems were diverse. The disputants were first limited to monastic institutions and high-ranking noblemen. Gradually, in the mid-sixteenth century, they included free peasants,⁵⁶⁷ parish priests,⁵⁶⁸ noblemen,⁵⁶⁹ clerics,⁵⁷⁰ as well as monastic institutions.⁵⁷¹ As the social inequality grew sharper and the wealthier social strata struggled to acquire more landed estates, land-selling or disputes between them and free peasants or lower nobility struggling to preserve their estates moved from the central to the regional offices, especially in Wallachia. During the year 1596, four out of ten surviving documents from the last decade of the sixteenth century were issued in the regional office of the Craiova ban on behalf of free peasants from Radovanu village.⁵⁷² In Moldavia, noblemen issued land charters mainly on behalf of lower-ranking state dignitaries and land holders. For instance, a regional administrator, (*pârcălab*) Gheorghe, commissioned a charter attesting a land transaction between a small land holder and a parish priest.⁵⁷³

5.5 Documents produced at village level: Charters attesting rights to landed property

The documents produced at the village level were only concerned with land property.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibidem, no. 43 (1591-1592); no. 244 (1598-1599).

⁵⁶⁵ DRH B, vol.11, no. 251 (1597).

⁵⁶⁶ DIR A, vol.4, no. 43 (1591-1592).

⁵⁶⁷ DRH B, vol. 6, no. 151 (1569, June 13).

⁵⁶⁸ Ibidem, no. 157.

⁵⁶⁹ DRH B, vol.8, no. 90.

⁵⁷⁰ DRH B, vol. 11, no. 132.

⁵⁷¹ DRH B, vol. 4, no. 184; DRH B, vol.11, no. 288, no. 343.

⁵⁷² See DRH B, vol.11, no. 152, no. 198, no. 199, no. 202.

⁵⁷³ DIR A, vol. 3, no. 494 (1588).

They are attested in the last quarter of the sixteenth century in Moldavia⁵⁷⁴ and about a decade earlier in Wallachia.⁵⁷⁵ They were produced by lower-ranking social groups, including free peasants, to record their personal land transactions.⁵⁷⁶ The main difference between their documents and those produced by the central office or by state officials lay in the format of the documents. These socially lower-ranking documents usually did not resemble either the one employed in the central chancery or the formulary often attested at the local level in Wallachia. The formulary used for small land holders rather consisted of a short note. It was even termed something like this: in Moldavia *zapis*⁵⁷⁷ or *răvaș* in Muntenia.⁵⁷⁸ In contrast to the documents produced by princes or high-ranking state officials, local documents did not record a higher authority as commissioner and warrantor of the transaction. However, in certain cases, in Moldavia especially, noblemen are recorded as witnesses.⁵⁷⁹ In Wallachia rather “good people” apparently from the same social strata stood as witnesses to the transaction.⁵⁸⁰ In certain cases it is hard to attribute the extant documents to a particular social category as various social groups were often involved in a single land transactions. Often high-ranking state dignitaries such as governors, chancellors or chamberlains, are recorded in local documents as purchasers or even as sellers of landed estates.⁵⁸¹ Their documents are similar to the ones used by commoners or lower nobility.

I assume that the choice for this specific type of document might have been related to cost since the price probably paid to prepare documents written at the village level must have been lower. In certain cases, the documents specify that state dignitaries and their family

⁵⁷⁴ The first extant document produced in Moldavia dates from 1572, January 3 (DIR A, vol. 3, no. 9).

⁵⁷⁵ The first extant Wallachian document dates from 1560, March 15 (DRH B, vol. 5, no. 167).

⁵⁷⁶ For Wallachia see, for instance, DRH B, vol.5, no. 167; vol.6, no. 23, no. 191; vol.7, no. 4, no. 9 et passim; for Moldavia DIR A, vol.3, no. 9, no. 49, no. 309; Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești*, no. 60, no. 61, no. 80, no. 81, no. 85.

⁵⁷⁷ See DIR A, vol.3, no. 309, no. 471; DIR A, vol. 4, no. 8.

⁵⁷⁸ DRH B, vol.7, no. 106.

⁵⁷⁹ DIR A, vol.3, no. 9, no. 13.

⁵⁸⁰ DRH B, vol.5, no. 167 (c. 1560); DRH B, vol. 6, no. 191 (1578); DRH B, vol.7, no. 106 (1572).

⁵⁸¹ DRH B, vol.7, no. 231, no. 297; for Moldavia see Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești*, no. 66, no. 68, no. 83.

members sold their estates as a consequence of distress and poverty caused by famine, high taxes, or depredations by the Tartars.⁵⁸²

The documents produced at village level often used the vernacular as their language of record. Among the 41 documents produced at the local level in Moldavia circa 20 are written in Slavonic,⁵⁸³ while out of the 29 locally produced Wallachian documents only 6 are written in Slavonic.⁵⁸⁴ Thus, half of the Moldavian documents and almost all the Wallachian documents produced at village level used vernacular Romanian as the language of record. Most of them were poorly written, apparently in the private houses of the involved parties or witnesses.

As the documents testify, special offices created especially for drafting documents did not exist during the period either in cities⁵⁸⁵ or villages.⁵⁸⁶ Priests as well as professional scribes recorded the transaction, usually in the beneficiary's house, in the house of the local priest or in other laymen's houses.⁵⁸⁷ Other documents issued by the county governors in Moldavia indicate the bishopric seat was also used as a notary office.⁵⁸⁸ Only later on, in the seventeenth century were offices for scribes established.⁵⁸⁹

The types of documents produced at village level were similar to those produced by higher-ranking social groups. Only occasionally did new types of documents occur, such as a written confirmation of a matrimonial endowment issued in 1596 by villagers from Dobrotei. However, even if new types of land transitions began to be recorded in writing, most documents still remained confined to issues of land ownership and its attestation. The

⁵⁸² Ibidem, no. 66.

⁵⁸³ See DIR A, vol. 3 and 4.

⁵⁸⁴ SEE mainly DRH B, vols. 5, 6, 7, 8, 11.

⁵⁸⁵ A document written in 1593 in Iassy indicates that the land transaction was accomplished and recorded in the house of "Titiana from Iasi" (see DIR A, vol.4, no. 117).

⁵⁸⁶ DIR A, vol.3, no. 306.

⁵⁸⁷ For Moldavia see also DIR A, vol.4, no. 38, no. 170; for Wallachia see Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești*, no. 5.

⁵⁸⁸ DIR A, vol.3, no. 411. It may have been caused by the fact that a bishop was the recipient of the charter attesting to his acquisition of land.

⁵⁸⁹ Nicolae Grămadă, "Cancelaria domnească în Moldova până la Constantin Mavrocordat" (The Moldavian chancery up to Constantin Mavrocordat), *Codrul Cosminului* 9 (1935): 129-231.

document produced by villagers from Dorotei certified that their neighbor (fellow) Cireșco donated a share of his owned land as a dowry for his daughter.⁵⁹⁰

Thus, the presentation of the data suggests that during the sixteenth century there was a continuous dissemination and infiltration of written records from the upper to the lower social groups. The models settled on by the higher-ranking nobility were soon embraced and followed by people in lower-ranking social groups. Initially, the latter were rather passive participators in document production as sellers of their land to higher-ranking individuals. Nonetheless, documents gradually started to be produced for small land transactions taking place at the village level most probably between commoners. The availability of local offices and cheaper literate personnel was of major importance for their needs as well as for the spread and implementation of written culture.

Sporadically documents testify that the use of written records for land transaction was becoming more common among smaller landed nobility or even commoners. For instance, Ignat Șușcala from the village of Nicoreni indicated that he “(...) sold a landed estate (...) as much as can be parted from the [land indicated in the] written note (*zapis*) I had brought from Bălaci.”⁵⁹¹ The status of Ignat Șușcala is not clear. However, the name of the written document he possessed, *zapis*, indicates that it might have been produced at the local level suggesting thus that Ignat might have been of lower rank. The fact that Ignat Șușcala by 1587 had commissioned two local charters, indicates that the landed nobility or even commoners might have been accustomed to employing documents as proof of ownership of their land property. Unfortunately, this situation cannot be generalized. In other cases, although four previous owners of the land are indicated, no written document is mentioned.⁵⁹² It may only be supposed that the inconsistent use of land charters by lower class people had become more regular by the end of the sixteenth century as out of twenty-seven surviving documents,

⁵⁹⁰ DRH, vol. 11, no. 163.

⁵⁹¹ DIR A, vol.3, no. 421 (1587, Mar 25).

⁵⁹² DIR A, vol.4, no. 115 (c. 1593-4)

twelve were issued during the last decade.⁵⁹³

5.6 *The role of clerical milieu as producer of pragmatic documents.*

According to the surviving written evidence, monastic institutions were established in Wallachia and Moldavia during the fourteenth century.⁵⁹⁴ Scribal activities began only from the early fifteenth century. The first Slavonic Gospel book copied in Wallachia dates from 1405, and later in Moldavia from 1424.⁵⁹⁵

During the fifteenth century, writing was actively employed in the clerical milieu for production of religious manuscripts. Nonetheless, the direct evidence indicates that monastic institutions are poorly represented as producers of pragmatic documents. The documents attesting land ownership and its transactions (the main type of documents that has survived from the Danubian principalities) indicate that written transactions of the landed estates in Moldavia and Wallachia took place almost exclusively at the level of the princely chancellery, especially up to the mid-sixteenth century. Monastic institutions had to go before the prince to have their donations legalized in writing.⁵⁹⁶

Only from the second half of the fifteenth century, a few surviving documents remain

⁵⁹³ See DRH B, vol.4, no. 184, no. 205, no. 292; DRH B, vol.6, no. 85, no. 151, no. 157, no. 227). For the documents issued in the last decade see DRH B, vol. 11, no. 109, no. 132, no. 152, no. 198, no. 199, no. 202, no. 288, no. 342, no. 343, no. 426.

⁵⁹⁴For the establishment of monastic institutions in Moldavia and Wallachia and for the surviving Wallachian and Moldavian manuscripts see Emil Turdeanu, *Études des littérature roumaine et d'écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines* (Brill: Leiden, 1985). See also Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria literaturii religioase a românilor până la 1688* (History of religious writings of the Romanians up to 1688) (Bucharest: Minerva, 1905).

⁵⁹⁵Fifteen religious manuscripts, copied by Gavriil, son of Uric, have survived from Moldavia. Gavriil, established the Moldavian calligraphic tradition with its strong Bulgarian influence in the first half of the fifteenth century. See Turdeanu, *Études des littérature roumaine et d'écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines*, 86.

⁵⁹⁶ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 3 (1449). See also DRH A, vol. 2, no. 73 (1458), no. 79 (1458). For Wallachia see, for instance, DRH B, vol.1, no. 34 (c. 1407-1418), no. 101 (1450), no. 102 (1451). Sporadically Moldavian noblemen commission as well private documents to record their donations to the monasteries. For the first surviving charter see DRH A, vol. 1 no. 289 (1448). It recorded a land donation to the monastery of Nemț by a laymen, Crâstea, written by a scribe Doncea, who seems to have been employed previously in the state chancellery. (DRH A, vol. 2, p. 455.) It is unclear whether it was written in the monastery, as he style and format of the charter do not follow the usual pattern of monastic charters.

to show that that charters were produced in the monasteries. The first documents produced in 1462 and 1476 in the monastic institutions of Moldovița and Putna record donations made by the Moldavian high treasurer Ignatie on their behalf.⁵⁹⁷ In Wallachia, the two monastic charters surviving from the fifteenth century were issued to record the donations of laymen and monastic servants.⁵⁹⁸

The form of the first documents produced in the monastic institutions already show a kind of pattern which was used regularly from then onwards. Their style, however, suggests an incipient tradition as the documents retain characteristics of oral speech. The monk Ilarion, for instance, in the first document produced in the Moldavian monastery of Moldovița, used the first person singular in the first part of the document enumerating in the name of the donator all the objects given in exchange for specific prayers. In the second part of the charter, he speaks in the name of the recipients and promises the donator to fulfill all his requests: “(...) and we, oh, son of the church and righteous friend of ours, seeing your gratitude, we have carried out what we had avowed in front of your highness, and in front of your wife, children and grand children to fulfill our promises (and pray) for your health and soul as long as this holy place shall endure.”⁵⁹⁹

Towards the middle of the sixteenth century, monastic institutions and high-ranking religious dignitaries more often began to produce monastic records about the land donations they had received.⁶⁰⁰ Apparently, laymen began to go directly to clerical and monastic institutions to make donations and have them recorded there: “And we, the noblemen Bogdan and Radu, sons of Danciul from Popești, came to the Holy Bishopric of Buzău, in front of Father Eremia and gave a vineyard on the hill of Vernești (...).”⁶⁰¹ However, only twenty Wallachian and eleven Moldavian charters produced in monastic institutions have survived.

⁵⁹⁷ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 102 (1462), no. 205 (1476, Jan. 25), no. 207 (June 1), no. 208 (1476, June 29).

⁵⁹⁸ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 57 (1425), no. 252 (1495).

⁵⁹⁹ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 102 (1462).

⁶⁰⁰ DRH B, vol. 7, no. 152 (1573).

⁶⁰¹ DRH B, vol. 5, no. 80 (1556).

This fact is the more surprising as written records were generally important for monasteries. What accounts for the low pace of production or the low survival rate of the documents produced at the level of monastic institutions? The clerical land titles, similar to other charters, seemed to have lacked higher juridical validity. For instance, one of the earliest donations made by Iuga to Putna Monastery was recorded three times at the monastery during the same year (1476).⁶⁰² But two years after the monastic charters were drawn up, the monks from the monastery of Putna also recorded the donation in the Moldavian state chancellery.⁶⁰³ Similarly, in Wallachia, even after the middle of the sixteenth century, monastic charters were reconfirmed in the princely office. The donation mentioned earlier by the noblemen Bogdan and Radu from Popești made to the Bishopric of Buzău was reconfirmed during the following year in the Wallachian princely office.⁶⁰⁴ Reconfirmation at the central level of the previous documents indicates that princely charters had a much greater validity than the monastic ones.

The role of monastic institutions is prominent as commissioners of written land titles especially in Wallachia. During the first half of the fifteenth century, when written documents were but sporadically used, monastic institutions were the first to employ written land titles to attest their landed property. As the donations of laymen made on behalf of monastic institutions remained outside the customary law of the Danubian Principalities, the monastic institutions were keen to employ writing to provide extra proof to safeguard their endowments. Furthermore, at the turn of the sixteenth century, monastic institutions were the first to involve written testimonies in Wallachian dispute settlement. Similarly, written documents were used and promoted as testimonies for testamentary donations by monastic institutions, both in Wallachia and Moldavia.

By middle of the sixteenth century, when the written documents began to be more valued and the number of their producers and recipients multiplied, clerics seem to have

⁶⁰² DRH A, vol. 2, no. 205 (Jan. 25, 1476), no. 207 (June 1, 1476), no. 208 (June 29, 1476).

⁶⁰³ Ibidem, no. 211 (1478).

⁶⁰⁴ DRH B, vol. 5, no. 109 (1557).

played a greater role as active producers of written land titles. They were involved more often in the princely chancelleries as professional scribes. They are also attested as active producers of local land titles written on their own or their fellows behalf. The first written monastic chronicles date from the same period in Moldavia.⁶⁰⁵ Necrologies were already kept in the Moldavian and Wallachian monasteries from the early fifteenth century.⁶⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries originals, written on wooden tablets or the walls of churches do not survive. The earliest surviving manuscript dating from the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504) is a copy of just such an earlier necrology from 1407.⁶⁰⁷

Moreover, indirect evidence suggest as well that certain types of “pragmatic writing” was employed by monastic institutions and that “filtering mechanisms” caused some categories of documents to be preserved and others destroyed. It seems that certain Moldavian monastic institutions such as Moldovița already kept registers concerning their incomes and supplies during the fifteenth century. By 1458, Stephen the Great told individuals running a tavern that they should have themselves recorded in the monks’ register.⁶⁰⁸ In Wallachia, the first indirect reference to the existence of monastic registers dates to the first quarter of the sixteenth century.⁶⁰⁹ In 1524, Vladislav III confirmed control of the custom post of Calafat to the Tismana Monastery and declared that “Monks are free to record in their register anybody who omits paying and bring him to my highness.”⁶¹⁰ From the middle of the sixteenth century, indirect references to various monastic registers multiplied. However, no document has survived before the end of the sixteenth century.

⁶⁰⁵ For more information about sixteenth-century Moldavian narrative sources see Ioan Bogdan, *Vechile cronici moldovenești până la Urechia* (The early Moldavian chronicles up to Urechia) (Bucharest: 1891).

⁶⁰⁶ For more information about the necrologies preserved from Moldavian and Wallachian Principalities see Damian P. Bogdan, ed. *Pomelnicul Mănăstirii Bistrița* (Necrology of Bistrița Monastery) (Bucharest: Fundația Regele Carol I, 1941), 20 and note 4, 21 and note 1, 2, 3, 4. See also Victor Brătulescu, “Pomelnicul cel mare al mănăstirii Sucevița” (The high necrology of Sucevița Monastery), *Mitropolia Moldovei și a Sucevei* 44. 3-4 (1968): 185-204..

⁶⁰⁷ Bogdan, *Pomelnicul Mănăstirii Bistrița*, 20.

⁶⁰⁸ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 75 (1458).

⁶⁰⁹ The registers of the custom post were attested from 1505. See DRH B, vol. 2, no. 30.

⁶¹⁰ Ibidem, No. 224 (1524).

Thus, monastic awareness of the importance of documents as valuable instruments for record-keeping becomes apparent. However, in their accumulation of land estates, and records safeguarding them, they depended on the new machinery of literacy which the state had put in place.⁶¹¹

* * *

Thus, as a conclusion, I can see that among the earliest actors who used writing for communication were towns with multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities, which were at the same time significant commercial outposts. Gradually, along the sixteenth century, documents for record keeping began to be produced in the same multi-lingual communities. High-ranking state officials, whose offices employed individuals with active literary skills, were also among the most prolific producers of the land-related charters. Thus, the use of written culture broadened from communications with foreign entities to the need to furnish proof of individual ownership.

The number of documents either used to exchange of information with foreign institutions or produced as records of land transactions is low. However, references to lost documents or registers suggest that written documentation must have been quite regularly carried out at both urban and regional levels although the majority of documents were subsequently lost. The factor most implicated in this loss seems to lie in a judicial tradition that treated only the charters issued in the state chancery as legally binding. Therefore, up to the end of the sixteenth century, the documents produced outside the princely chancery had a provisory status and required subsequent confirmation in princely charters.

The fact that most documents intended for administrative, political or commercial communications were preserved in foreign archives points to certain patterns of survival that indicate that other letters might have been issued at the regional, urban and local levels which

⁶¹¹ I am grateful to prof. Clanchy for this observation.

were lost because of the lack of well established archival practices. The relatively rich record from the reigns of Rareș and Michael the Brave preserved in the Transylvanian town archives, confirms the fact that high-ranking state officials either in Moldavia or in Wallachia had the means and ability to produce written documents. In contrast, the style and language of the Slavonic letters produced by Wallachian noblemen indicate that the written practices of Wallachian state officials and scribes were still unformed and varied throughout the researched period. Furthermore, the distributions of documents through time and the dynamics of the writing practices indicate a significant increase in the production of documents by the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The output of vernacular documents suggests that the dissemination of the documents was stimulated by the impact of the Reformation. Thus, even if many documents may have been subsequently lost, I conclude that the document types, and the social groups involved in their commission and production do not seem to differ significantly from those identifiable in the extant data.

Chapter 6 Who is writing? Literacy and scribes

In this chapter I shall focus mainly on the literate clerks who produced the written record. I shall investigate who were the first literate persons, their status, ages, family relations, and level of education. I will begin by drawing on the chancery's existence and function as it can shed additional light on the clerks employed in the offices.

6.1 Early Moldavian and Wallachian chanceries

The first charters produced in the medieval Romanian principalities were written in Latin on behalf of Catholic missionaries, the Catholic community, and a private nobleman.⁶¹² Along with other early Latin documents, the first charters suggest that the adoption of writing was influenced by the Catholic Church and Hungarian administration. Latin evidence is scarce. Possibly for political reasons, the first Wallachian and Moldavian rulers favored affiliation with the Eastern Church.⁶¹³ In less than a decade after the first charters, Latin was exchanged for Slavonic and new Orthodox monasteries began to be more richly endowed.

Political and religious oscillations are reflected in the organization of the early chanceries and in the formulary of the charters, especially in Wallachia. The Hungarian influence characteristic for the first extant charters⁶¹⁴ was added to by a South Slavonic influence. In 1374, Vladislav I (1364-1377) gained independence from the king of Hungary and was keen to call himself prince by the grace of God and not a vassal of the Hungarian king as in his first charters. South Slavonic influence became dominant in the Wallachian

⁶¹² In Wallachia the first charter was issued on behalf of the Catholic community (DRH B, vol. 1, no. 3 (1369, Nov. 25)) and the second for a private nobleman (DRH B, vol.1, no. 4 (1372, May 8)). In Moldavia the only Latin document was issued for *fratres predicatorum* (DRH A, vol.1, no. 1 (1384, May 1)).

⁶¹³ A possible association of the Western Church with the claims of Hungarian and Polish kings for the suzerainty over Moldavian and Wallachian princes might have served as an obstacle to the acceptance of the Catholic faith and consequently a further spread of Latin writing.

⁶¹⁴ The dating is according to the Catholic calendar. The charter is put under protection of the saints Stephen, Ladislav, and Emeric, the patron saints of the Hungarian kingdom, and the beneficiary of the charter is named *cavalerus* (DRH B, vol. 1, no. 3).

chancery.⁶¹⁵ The first Slavonic scribes in the Wallachian office are considered to have been of Bulgarian or Serbian origin.⁶¹⁶

Early Moldavian documents testify to a fusion of Western and Eastern elements in the Moldavian chancery. Western elements reached the Moldavian chancery through the Slavonic chancery offices of Poland and Lithuania, while Byzantine and South Slavonic characteristics came via the Wallachian chancery.⁶¹⁷ Certain elements of the Moldavian charters employed during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries such as boundary clauses, dating according to feast days, and *proclamatio* “to all those who shall see or read” bear significant differences from the Wallachian formulary and testify to a more significant Western influence. The first attested names of clerks employed in the Moldavian chancery: Goian,⁶¹⁸ Iatsco,⁶¹⁹ Tamash,⁶²⁰ and Bratei (1401),⁶²¹ suggest foreign scribes of Ruthenian or Polish origins.⁶²² Native scribes began to be employed in the Moldavian chancery during the reign of Alexander the Good (1400-1431).⁶²³

Standardization of the documents and practices in Moldavia was established before Wallachia despite the fact that the Wallachian chancery began producing documents from an earlier time period. It can be already noticed as early as the long reign of Alexander the Good

⁶¹⁵ The mastery of the language and the calligraphy of the first charters show a resemblance to the Bulgarian charters written in cursive; see Damian P. Bogdan, *Diplomatica Slavo-Romana din secolele XIV si XV. (Slavo-Romanian Diplomatics from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries)* (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1938), 53. Other historians are uncertain whether various elements specific to the Wallachian chancery show Serbian or Bulgarian influence since they had many elements in common; see Traian Ionescu-Niscov “Contacts entre la diplomatie Serbe et la chancellerie princière de la Valachie pendant les XIVe et XVe siècles,” *Bulletin de l'Association Internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Européen* 10, No. 2 (1972): 275.

⁶¹⁶ Bogdan, *Diplomatica slavo-romana*, 53.

⁶¹⁷ For more about this see Damian P. Bogdan, “Contribuții la studiul diplomatiei vechi moldovenești” (Contributions to the study of early Moldavian diplomatic), *Revista Istorică Română* 4 (1935), 92-140; Nicolae Grămadă, “Cancelaria domnească în Moldova pînă la Constantin Mavrocordat,” (The Moldavian chancery up to Constantin Mavrocordat), *Codrul Cosminului* 9 (1935): 133; Michel Lascaris, “Influences byzantines dans la diplomatie bulgare, serbe et slavo-roumaine,” *Byzantinoslavica* 3, No. 2 (1931): 4; Leon Șimanschi and Georgeta Ignat, “Constituirea cancelariei statului feudal moldovenesc” (The foundation of the Moldavian state chancery), *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie si Arheologie A.D. Xenopol* 9 (1972): 107-33.

⁶¹⁸ DRH A, vol. 1, no.7.

⁶¹⁹ Ibidem, no.11, 12, 13.

⁶²⁰ Ibidem, no.19.

⁶²¹ Ibidem, no. 19, 21 (1401).

⁶²² See Nicolae Iorga, “Cât de veche e școala la români?” (How early is the Romanian school attested?) *Lamura* 9 (1928): 36; Grămadă, “Cancelaria domnească în Moldova,” 149.

⁶²³ Ibidem.

(1400-1431).

In Wallachia the standardization of practices in the chancery seems to have been slower. There was no process of linear evolution, which makes it quite hard to decide when exactly the Wallachian chancery established a routine in the drafting of documents. Even though there are opinions⁶²⁴ that the formulary was settled by the beginning of the second part of the fifteenth century, various deviations are still attested after this period. Only after the turn of the sixteenth century, when an increase in the number of documents is recorded, does one note a standardization of the practices in the Wallachian chancery.

By the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504), the offices of the second and third chancellor were established in Moldavia.⁶²⁵ The Wallachian second chancellor is attested during the reign of Radu the Great (1495-1508),⁶²⁶ and the third chancellor only after the middle of the sixteenth century.⁶²⁷ This points once more to a slower development of the Wallachian chancery. In Moldavia at about the same time, further specialization of the chancery personnel had been created and a new class of scribes called *uricar* had emerged.⁶²⁸ They were ranked higher than the former scribes and were assigned to write documents in Slavonic.⁶²⁹ Moreover, at the same time, the position of the chancellors began to be ranked higher on the social scale. In Moldavia it was in the second place after the high governor.⁶³⁰ Further on, from the early sixteenth century, the office of the chancellor began to be highly credited in Moldavia and was ranked on the first place.⁶³¹ Conversely, up to the mid-fifteenth century, the position of chancellor in Wallachia was ranked in the last place among other state

⁶²⁴ Bogdan, *Diplomatica slavo-romana*, 35.

⁶²⁵ Grămadă, "Cancelaria domnească în Moldova,"

⁶²⁶ Nicolae Stoicescu, *Sfatul domnesc și marii dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova: Sec XIV XVII* (The prince's council and high dignitaries from Moldavia and Wallachia) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1968), 176.

⁶²⁷ Stoicescu, *Sfatul*, 184.

⁶²⁸ Grămadă considers that this division was influenced by Polish practices; Grămadă, "Cancelaria domnească în Moldova," 176.

⁶²⁹ Until the middle of the seventeenth century, when vernacular Romanian was used more widely as a language of record in the central chanceries, they seem to have had the same function as the former scribes.

⁶³⁰ Grămadă, "Cancelaria domnească în Moldova," 178.

⁶³¹ Stoicescu, *Sfatul*, 173.

dignitaries.⁶³² Afterwards, the position of chancellor raised to the third place of the Wallachian offices, behind the ranks of ban and governor.

By the middle of the sixteenth century paper began to be used in addition to parchment for writing charters in the two chanceries. The documents of the period began to be characterized by a specific brevity. In Moldavia, a new type of documents with a temporary juridical validity, called *ispisoc* began to be used. The new documents written on paper came closer to modern documents, as in most cases they are very specific in recording just the persons involved in the transaction and the land concerned.⁶³³ The developments in the chanceries as well as the use of paper might have accounted for and been influenced by the raise in the number of the documents.

6.2 Functionaries employed in the prince's chanceries during the early period: Their career, status, and family relations

During the early period of chancery existence, given the restricted character of literate culture, there is not much evidence of the practice of the written word beyond the prince's offices. Only single documents produced by various regional and urban chanceries or by monastic institutions are attested. Thus, I shall concentrate mostly on the personnel employed in the princes' chanceries.

The scribes during the first, early, period seem to have enjoyed a prestigious social status in both principalities. Judging from their names and family relations, scribes in the medieval Romanian Principalities were laymen.⁶³⁴ They seem to have been young and wealthy noblemen, offspring of highly positioned secular clergy or state dignitaries. Careers in the chancery were usually lengthy; skills seem to have been learnt in the office, as during

⁶³² Ibidem

⁶³³ The old charter's formulary survived in the records made for the religious institutions, but seldom in the documents issued for private noblemen. See DIR A, vol. 2, no. 218.

⁶³⁴ Sporadically certain names testify to monastic scribes, but they are used only singularly in both principalities.

the early period future chancellors were usually selected from former scribes. It might be that writing skills were learnt in the family context as the recurrence of certain families reflects a dynastic mentality.⁶³⁵ Certainly noblemen had a strong interest in their or their relatives' service in the state chanceries as documents often attest kin relations among various members employed in the chancery as well as among successive generations of scribes and chancellors from the same families. A survey of several careers indicates that service in the prince's office facilitated an augmentation of wealth and social standing.

From the early fifteenth century sources disclose the clerks employed in the Moldavian office as blood-related noblemen. The first signed Moldavian document, in 1401, mentions the names of Bratei *logofăt*, (chancellor)⁶³⁶ as its scribe and *Pan* Tamash,⁶³⁷ who sealed it.⁶³⁸ Nineteen years later, Ivashko, son of Bratei (Ivashko Brateevici), is recorded as a scribe in the same chancery.⁶³⁹ Moreover, the same father-son relation can be pinned between other two names signed to documents during the early fifteenth century. Chancellor Isaia, attested in the Moldavian chancery between 1409 and 1420, indicated in 1414 that he was a son of Gârdu.⁶⁴⁰ A scribe Gârdu is attested in the Moldavian chancery in 1407⁶⁴¹ and it is possible that Isaia meant him when he mentions that he is Gârdu's son. According to the extant document, the two scribes and their fathers were the only clerks employed in the Moldavian chancery until 1422, when the number of scribes and chancellors began to expand;

⁶³⁵Llinos Beverly Smith "The Impact of Literacy in Late Medieval Wales" In *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, ed. Huw Pryce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 196.

⁶³⁶In the Danubian principalities the title *logofăt* (from the Byzantine *logothetos*) was used for the head of the chancery.

⁶³⁷*Pan* is a title of Polish origin for a nobleman.

⁶³⁸Despite certain opinions that there was no confusion between the position of scribe and that of the chancellor in Moldavia (see Bogdan, "Contribuții la studiul diplomatiei vechi moldovenești"), I have noted that during the very early period certain scribes were called chancellors in the documents. Chancellor Bratei for instance indicated in a document from 1401 that he had written it with his own hand (DRH A, vol. 1, no. 21). Stoicescu also mentions in a footnote that the position of scribes was similar to that of the chancellor in Moldavia; see Stoicescu, *Sfatul*, 183, note 219. Only by mid-fifteenth century clear distinctions in the formulary of the charters were made between scribes, who wrote the charters, and the heads of the chancery, who sealed them.

⁶³⁹DRH A, vol. 1, no. 64 (1419).

⁶⁴⁰Ibidem, no. 52.

⁶⁴¹Ibidem, no. 29.

by the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504) thirty-five other names are mentioned.⁶⁴²

Mikhu/Mikhail, scribe and chancellor in the Moldavian office, is one of the early examples whose family relations, political career, physical property, and whereabouts are possible to trace on the basis of preserved records. His family archives were preserved in Poland and therefore the information about his career is rich. An analysis of his life course indicates the status that one individual needed to become an employee in the prince's office and also illustrates to what extent service in the prince's chancery might augment a man's initial political and economical standing.

Mikhail is attested for the first time in 1422, a relatively early period for the Moldavian chancery. Only after this year were a greater number of clerks recorded in the Moldavian charters.⁶⁴³ Mikhail was the oldest son of a wealthy and influential cleric.⁶⁴⁴ It seems that he began his service in the prince's office at an early age⁶⁴⁵ as there is information about him continuously from 1422 until 1470.⁶⁴⁶ In 1443 he became chancellor⁶⁴⁷ after twenty-one years of service, which confirms the general statement that administrative skills were learnt in the office and the higher personnel of the chancery were selected during the early periods from those inside the office. As head of the Moldavian chancery, he seems to have been active in the office as well as in foreign politics. His estates increased over time through frequent purchases and the prince's donations and he seems to become one of the richest and most influential persons of his own time.⁶⁴⁸ During his service of thirty-two

⁶⁴² See DRH A, vol 1.

⁶⁴³ DRH A, vol. 1, no. 76.

⁶⁴⁴ There are extant five charters received by Priest Iuga confirming his lands received from Alexander the Good, Ilie, and Stephen from 1424 until 1436. In some charters he owned ten villages and additional free land to found new villages (see DRH A, vol.1, no. 56, no. 102, no. 128, no. 129, no. 165). In 1439 he received a new confirmation of his land estates together with his son, Mikhail (DRH, vol.1, no.196). In the last charter (1439) he is attested as a priest of a higher rank, *protopop*. From 1424 until 1436 108 charters are preserved, 9 charters per year. In this context the number of charters received by priest Iuga might be significant. For Scribe Mikhail see also Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, 501-5.

⁶⁴⁵ DRH A, vol. 1, no. 76.

⁶⁴⁶ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 169.

⁶⁴⁷ DRH A, vol. 1, no. 242.

⁶⁴⁸ DRH A, vol. 1, no. 250, no. 254, no. 260, no. 279, no. 286. More than fifty villages are recorded in his possession. See also Costăchescu, *Documente înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, 505-6.

years⁶⁴⁹ in the Moldavian chancery, he received fourteen charters confirming his previously owned or newly bought or received land properties.⁶⁵⁰ Mikhail's land estates were more significant than his father's Iuga. He was continuously in the process of acquiring new properties during his service, which points to significant wealth.⁶⁵¹ He also had a prominent political career.⁶⁵² His position in the state chancery allowed a certain social standing that facilitated the endeavor for a political career, diplomatic relations, and, not least, commercial activities.

Mikhail is not the only such example. During the reign of Stephen the Great, another chancellor, Tăutu, made a similar brilliant career. Scribe in 1464⁶⁵³ and chancellor in 1475,⁶⁵⁴ his case is also illustrative of the fact that his family provided clerks and chancellors to the Moldavia office for three centuries.⁶⁵⁵ His career is one of the longest known; he was chancellor under Stephen the Great and his son, Bogdan; he served the Moldavian princes for

⁶⁴⁹ In the last year and a half of Mikhail's presence in Moldavia there is a document extant attesting him as head of the chancery. The last document sealed by him is in Jan. 1454. See DRH A, vol. 2, no. 39. In the last reign of Petru Aron, Petru is attested as head of the chancery.

⁶⁵⁰ DRH A, vol. 1, no. 165, no. 175, no. 196, no. 225, no. 228, no. 234, no. 250, no. 254, no. 269, no. 279, no. 286; DRH A, vol. 2, no. 21, no. 33, no. 48.

⁶⁵¹ Nicolae Grigoraș considered that his income came from commercial activities. See Nicolae Grigoraș, "Logofătul Mihul" (Chancellor Mihul), *Studii și cercetări istorice* 19, No. 2 (1946): 126. Sources attest his commercial activities only after his exile to Poland. Moreover, during this period state offices were considered more profitable than land exploitation. See Stoicescu, *Sfatul*, 133.

⁶⁵² DRH, vol. 2, no. 58 (1456). In Poland he seems to have enjoyed high social standing, as in 1456 Cazimir himself wrote a generous *salvus conductus* offering security throughout the Polish kingdom for him and his brothers, (Costachescu, *Documente*, D, No. 806) as well as liberty for his commercial activities, see Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. 2, no. 111. He received several estates, customs, and money donations from Polish noblemen in case he would be forced to quit Moldova. Mikhail indeed took refuge in Poland after Stephen the Great (1457-1504) became Moldavian prince. Nonetheless, Stephen invited him back in the first year of his reign and continued to invite him for thirteen years to come (DRH A, vol. 2, no. 66, no. 89, no. 138, no. 169). One of the letters written by Stephen was at the request of the Polish king, Cazimir, another fact which points to the significance of Mikhail's position (DRH A, vol. 2, no. 136).

⁶⁵³ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 119 (1464). Another Tăutu is attested in 1430 in a cartulary from the eighteenth century (see DRH A, vol. 1, no. 146). This is the only attestation until 1464 and given the time span it is possible that two persons with the same Christian name were involved.

⁶⁵⁴ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 201.

⁶⁵⁵ Tăutu remained in service until 1511. His son, Dragotă Tăutul, is attested as scribe in 1497. Ion Tautulovici is another scribe who signed documents in 1555. The son of Dragotă Tăutul is attested in the sixteenth century; see Nicolae Iorga, "Contribuții la istoria bisericii noastre II, Bălinești.", *Anuarul Academiei Romane* 2, No. 34 (1902): 483 cited in Grămadă "Cancelaria domnească în Moldova," 215. In the seventeenth century Drăgan Tăutul is attested. In 1621, Mihail Tăutu wrote a document for Vasile Lupu (220). In 1673 Mikhail Tăutu is attested as head of the Moldavian chancery. See Grămadă "Cancelaria domnească în Moldova," 176.

forty-seven years.⁶⁵⁶ During his long service in the chancery, he became one of the first state dignitaries, the prince's adviser, and messenger on various diplomatic missions.⁶⁵⁷

The status of Moldavian scribes, similar to that of the chancellors, seems to have been highly ranked. They are addressed reverently in the charters as "faithful noblemen," or "prince's noblemen."⁶⁵⁸ They often received written confirmation of their land estates, such as, for instance, Toader, brother of the Priest Luca, who was active at the end of the fifteenth century in the Moldavian chancery both as issuer⁶⁵⁹ and recipient of documents. During a period of service of eight years in the state chancery, he received four charters as a scribe⁶⁶⁰ and one as chancellor attesting his land domains.⁶⁶¹

By the end of the fifteenth century, a pattern emerges of kinfolk individuals employed in the Moldavian chancery. Despite an inconsistent manner of signing their names, it is possible that three brothers, Ion *daskal* (teacher), Coste, and Toader were writing in the Moldavian chancery during the same time span.⁶⁶² Fortunately, they received numerous land

⁶⁵⁶ Usually new princes changed the acting heads of the chancery since this was an important position in which to keep the dignity of a former prince and possible opponent. In this case Bogdan kept his father's dignity. Grămadă considered that the career of a scribe was short, undertaken as a step to a permanent position among the state dignitaries. I note in various examples that this is specific only after the turn of the sixteenth century, while previously scribes remained in the prince's chancery for a long period and advanced to the career of the head of the chancery when possible; see Grămadă "Cancelaria domnească în Moldova," 152.

⁶⁵⁷ For his diplomatic activities see S. Gorovei "Activitatea diplomatică a marelui logofăt Ioan Tăutu" (The diplomatic activity of chancellor Tautu), *Suceava Anuarul Muzeului Județean* 5 (1978): 237-53; see also Turdeanu, *Études des littératures roumaine et d'écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines*, 136.

⁶⁵⁸ During the fifteenth century Moldavian noblemen were called *pan*, under Polish influence; DRH A, vol. 2, no. 123.

⁶⁵⁹ DRH A, vol. 3, no.3, 10, 24, 25, 74-77, no. 130, no. 134, no. 204, no. 247, no. 293, no. 295 and passim.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibidem, no. 179 (1495), no. 192 (1495), no. 196 (undated charter, the modern editors dated it after 1495), no. 263 (1502).

⁶⁶¹ Ibidem, no.263 (1503).

⁶⁶² Ion *daskāl* (teacher) is attested first in DRH A, vol. 2, no. 199 (1475), no. 206; then his brother Coste, who indicated that he is a brother of Ion *daskāl* (ibidem no. 249(1483), no. 251, no. 252, 253) and then the most intriguing Toader, brother of Ion *daskāl* (Ibidem, no. 259 (1484)), who signs in various ways, as Toader, Ion's *daskal* brother (no.259, 1484), *Toader diac* (scribe) (no. 51, 1489), Toader *grămătic* (scribe) (no.32, 1488) and simply Toader in most of the cases (no. 1, 1487). Probably the same Toader is confirming his land estates as *Toader pisar* (scribe) (no. 179, 1495), *Toader boier, pisar* (nobleman, scribe) (no. 196, 1496), *Toader boier, credincios pan* (faithful nobleman) (no. 263, 1502), Toader chancellor and his brother, priest Luchii (no.286, 1503). In a single case, in a document from 1492 preserved in a copy (the date is uncertain), Toader, a scribe, signed as "Toader Popović" (son of priest) (DRH A, vol. 3, no.114). It is uncertain whether Toader, son of a priest, is the same person as Toader, "brother of Ion *daskāl*." The relatively close time span may suggest that he is the same person, although it is a question why from his first document in 1484 and until around 1492 he never mentions that he was son of a priest. In the prosopographical analyses by Maria Magdalena Szekely on the sixteenth century Moldavian nobility, it is also indicated that the three scribes employed in the Moldavian

endowments,⁶⁶³ where the extensive family was recorded. In a property charter received by Scribe Toader alone⁶⁶⁴ or in a charter of family land partition it is mentioned that Scribe Toader, together with his brother, Scribe Coste, Priest Luca, and other brothers were grandchildren of *Pan Negrea*,⁶⁶⁵ who is attested as governor during the reign of Alexander the Good.⁶⁶⁶ The recorded land possessions and the noble status of their grandfather (*pan*)⁶⁶⁷ testify to the high social standing and wealth of the Moldavian scribes of the period. Other examples similarly indicate that by the end of the fifteenth century a number of sons of priests were employed as scribes in the Moldavian chancery.⁶⁶⁸

In early Wallachia, data about various members of the state chancery as well as family relations among them is more difficult to record. This may result from the small number of documents extant from the fifteenth century and the abrupt standardization of the practices in the Wallachian chancery. Even by the middle of the sixteenth century scribes' names are often omitted. Only a few Wallachian clerks are attested until the end of the reign of Mircea the Old in 1418. During the reign of Vlad Dracul (1437-1444) did the names of the Wallachian scribes begin to be recorded in larger numbers, and by the reign of Vladislav II (1448-1456), eleven names come down to us. The total number of scribes' names is still fewer than in Moldavia. Many foreign names are attested among them, which indicates that natives and foreign scribes were employed together in the Wallachian office throughout the fifteenth

chancery of Prince Petru Rareș were brothers. However, she does not mentioned the scribe who signed as *Toader Popović*; probably she did not consider him the same person as Toader, brother of Priest Luchii. See Maria Magdalena Székely, *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rareș* (Counselors of Petru Rareș) (Iassy: Editura Unireștității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2002), 42-4.

⁶⁶³ See, for instance, the charters received by the above-mentioned Toader. DRH A, vol. 3, no.179, 196, 197, 263, 286.

⁶⁶⁴ DRH A, vol. 3, no.179.

⁶⁶⁵ See DRH A, vol. 3, no.127.

⁶⁶⁶ Székely, *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rares*, 48.

⁶⁶⁷ The status of *pan*, borrowed from Polish nobility, was given to the most important noblemen of the country as well as to prince's relatives. See Stoicescu, *Sfatul*, 28.

⁶⁶⁸ DRH A, vol. 3, no.108; no. 230 ("Ion Popović Ion [son] of priest); *Pisal Alexa Popovici ot Iași* (Written by Alexa, son of a priest from Iassy) DRH A, vol. 2, no. 108.

century.⁶⁶⁹

Additionally, there is confusion in the terms used to describe the functions of scribes and chancellors in the Wallachian office as both of them were called *logofăt* (chancellor) during the early period.⁶⁷⁰ A clause in the charter introducing the chancellor endorsing the newly written documents with the prince's seal is not characteristic for Wallachian charters. It was, however, specific for the Moldavian chancery and is of great help in distinguishing between the chancellor and scribes in the early charters.

In Wallachia, the names of the chancellors can be seen only from the witnesses' lists that are recorded in the *corroboratio*. Unfortunately, often witnesses were not recorded, especially in the charters of donations to monasteries.⁶⁷¹ As a great majority of early Wallachian charters were issued on behalf of monastic institutions, this constitutes a significant difficulty in tracing the careers of Wallachian employees of the state chancery. Moreover, in certain cases the witness lists seem to be incomplete, as the names of the chancellors were not recorded among the dignitaries who had witnessed the transaction.⁶⁷² These omissions in the record are difficult to understand since chancellor presence was mandatory for the juridical validity of the given document.⁶⁷³ Whenever a scribe's status or his kin relations are registered, however, sources reveal Wallachian scribes as laymen, kinsmen of high state dignitaries.⁶⁷⁴ Up to the end of the fifteenth century, the evidence is still scarce. It indicates nonetheless that Wallachian scribes began their service at an early age

⁶⁶⁹ Calcio (DRH B, vol. 1, no. 72 (1431), no. 94 (1441), no.110 (1453)), Coica (DRH B, vol. 1, no. 64 (1429-30), no. 86, 87, 88 (1439)); Latzco (DRH B, vol. 1, no. 127, no. 128 (1465)), no. 131 (1468)).

⁶⁷⁰ See also I.-R. Mircea, "Mari logofeți din Țara Românească (sec. XIV -XVI)" (High chancellors from Wallachia), *Hrisovul* 1 (1941): 117.

⁶⁷¹ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 2, no. 28, no. 49, no. 56; no. 97, no. 98.

⁶⁷² See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 2, no.122, 123, 124.

⁶⁷³ See *ibidem*.. See also Stoicescu, *Sfatul*, 179-180. The Moldavian chancery often stopped its activity during the periods when the chancellors were absent, usually sent on various diplomatic missions. Only after the second half of the sixteenth century a new type of document with a temporary juridical validity was instituted that could be drawn in the absence of the chancellor. See Gheorghe Punga, "De ce lipsesc uricele pentru unele perioade din cancelaria Tarii Moldovei?" (Why are charters not attested during certain periods by the chancery of Moldavia?), *Studii de istorie medievala si stiinte auxiliare* 1 (1999), 12.

⁶⁷⁴ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 248, no. 281. Clerk Ban indicates that he is a son of the governor, the second office at the prince's court. See also DRH B, vol. 4, no.22.

and remained in the office for a long time, consequently earning the high position of second or first chancellor. For instance, Coica, who is attested as an active Wallachian scribe from 1424 shows up in the witness list as one of the first heads of the chancery.⁶⁷⁵

In Wallachia, little evidence is recorded about the scribes' wealth, as they seldom received written land endowments during the fifteenth century.⁶⁷⁶ Yet, their status seems to have been high, as they are addressed by the princes as *jupan* (nobleman), the highest Wallachian status during the period.⁶⁷⁷ At times, data indicate that the scribes' positions were coupled with other state dignities.⁶⁷⁸

6.3 The employees of the state chanceries and their practices after the turn of the sixteenth century

The sixteenth-century Wallachian record, richer than the previous one, does not indicate any changes of the practices of the state chancery members. The documents confirm the earlier sparse attestations and testify to a continuity of practices in the Wallachian chancery throughout the sixteenth century. In contrast, in Moldavia after the reign of Stephen the Great, the election of chancellors from among former scribes ceased to be a common practice.⁶⁷⁹ Probably due to the wider spread of literacy skills, noblemen without former training in the chanceries proved to be capable of carrying out the functions of the chancellor's role.⁶⁸⁰ From the early sixteenth century onwards, the first dignity of the

⁶⁷⁵ DRH B, vol.1, no. 63 (undated).

⁶⁷⁶ Only two charters are extant written on behalf of scribes up to the sixteenth century; see DRH B, vol. 1, no. 208, no. 244.

⁶⁷⁷ Up to the end of the fifteenth century, the status of *jupan* was given only to the highest noblemen and high state dignitaries. See Stoicescu, *Sfatul*, 27. It is of Serbian origin, see George Mihailă, *Studii de lexicologie și istorie a lingvisticii românești* (Studies about lexicology and history of Romanian linguistics) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1973), 8.

⁶⁷⁸ See DRH B, vol. 1, no. 232, no. 242; DRH B, vol. 2, no. 49.

⁶⁷⁹ Up to the end of the reign of Stephen the Great all chancellors are attested as former scribes.

⁶⁸⁰ Especially in the early sixteenth century, I note a continuation between the function of treasurer and that of chancellor, as both functions required literacy skills. Isac, who became chancellor in 1513, replacing the famous chancellor Tăutu, was previously employed as treasurer, see DIR A/XVI, 1, no. 80. See also the case of Gavriil Totrușan, who replaced chancellor Isac in 1516 (DIR A/XVI, 1, no. 101) and is attested as chancellor until 1523, March 15 (DIR A/XVI, 1, no.192), and then from 1537 to 1540 (DIR A XVI, 1, no.356, no. 364. Similarly Mateiaș (chancellor from 1541 to 1548), was previously employed as high treasurer. For details of the career of Mateiaș see Székely, *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rareș*, 82. Later, the better documented figure of Luca/Lupu Stroici was

Moldavian chancellor seems to have been bestowed by the princes to other state dignitaries as recompense for special merits. Thus, from the sixteenth century it seems that the categories of scribes and chancellors began to be separated in the Moldavian chancery. Kinship relations continued to be recorded only between various scribes and priests, who began to produce documents in the Moldavian chancery.⁶⁸¹ Grămadă considered that the social pool out of which scribes were recruited began to include families of low noblemen and free peasants.⁶⁸² Certain highly positioned noblemen families, however, such as the Tăutu⁶⁸³ or the family of Dobrul, chancellor under Stephen the Great,⁶⁸⁴ continued to provide scribes and chancellors for the state chanceries up to the seventeenth century. Moreover, blood relation between high state dignitaries and chancery scribes is more often recorded in the sixteenth century than earlier.⁶⁸⁵ For instance, the scribe Ionashco is shown to be son of a chamberlain and brother of the wife of Vartic, the high governor, the second highest office in the Moldavian state.⁶⁸⁶

For one of the Moldavian scribes belonging to the new scribe category, *uricar*, documents disclose his predecessors for four generations:

also previously employed as treasurer and chancellor (1580-1591). See also Nicolae Stoicescu, “Lista marilor dregători ai Moldovei sec XIV-XVII” (The list of high dignitaries from Moldavia: XIV- XVII centuries), *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie “A.D. Xenopol”* 8 (1971): 402.

⁶⁸¹DIR A Vol. 2, no.184, no. 208, no.210; DIR A, vol. 3, no. 495. They do not even indicate their Christian names, mentioning just that the document “was written by a priest.”

⁶⁸²See also Grămadă, *Cancelaria Moldovei*, 180.

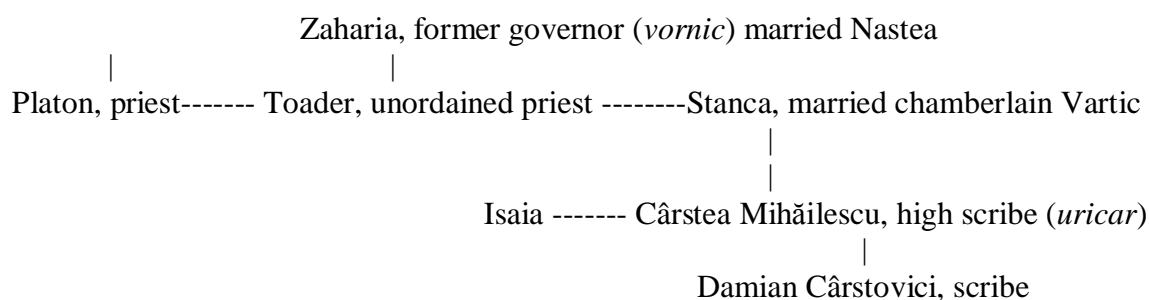
⁶⁸³For the Tăutu family see DIR A, vol. 3, no. 380 (1586), no. 468 (1588). Szekely considers that during the sixteenth century there was a general practice among Moldavian noblemen to preserve the dignities within the same families, see Szekely, *Sfeticii*, 39. See also Virgil Pâslariuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime și domnie în Țara Moldovei în secolul al XVI- lea* (The political relations between grand noblemen and principedom in Moldavia during the sixteenth century) (Chishinau: Pontos, 2005), 26.

⁶⁸⁴Chancellor Dobrul had a son; Ivanco [son] of Dobrul, is attested as a scribe during the reign of Bogdan (1504-1517). Later he was attested as chancellor: DIR A/XVI, vol.1, no. 25; The grandson of chancellor Dubrul, Toader Ivanco, is attested as a high ranking scribe (*uricar*) during the seventeenth century. See DIR A/XVII, vol. 3, no. 308; see also Szekely, *Sfeticii lui Petru Rareș*, 88.

⁶⁸⁵DIR A, vol. 3, no. 380 (1586), no. 398 (1586), no. 468 (1588), no. 545 (1590).

⁶⁸⁶DIR A, vol. 3, no. 389 (1586); possibly the same scribe, Ionașco was very active in the Moldavian chancery between 1579 and 1595.; this is uncertain, however, since he did not record any further details in the numerous charters he signed. See DIR A, vol. 3, no. 148 (1579), no. 188, no. 194, no. 224, no. 522 et passim. See also DIR A, vol. 4, no. 156 (1595).

Figure 1. *Example of a noble family tree illustrating kin relations among scribes in sixteenth-century Moldavia.*



After the turn of the sixteenth century, due to social, political, and economic instability, the situation of certain noble families as, for instance, that of scribe Mihăilescu began to decline. In contrast, the case of Scribe Cârstea Mihăilescu himself is a good illustration of the fortunate position of chancery members.

He was the grandson and son of state dignitaries, which indicates a high social status. The financial means of the family seem to have been fairly modest, as originally Cârstea Mihăilescu shared a single village, inherited from their grandfather, with his siblings and cousins. Compared to other family members, however, Cârstea Mihăilescu, employee of the prince's chancery, seems to have been in a better social and economic position than his kinsmen, as he kept purchasing parts of the commonly held village from his relatives.⁶⁸⁷

Additionally, other records of scribes' wealth and capability of purchasing land estates suggest that their services were well paid. They continued to purchase and receive land estates from the princes they served.⁶⁸⁸ Although sometimes Moldavian scribes are attested to have

⁶⁸⁷DIR A Vol. 3, no. 44 (1574), no. 76 (1575), no. 262 (1583). Additionally, he had numerous disputes with neighboring villages, and together with his father, Chamberlain Vartic, had struggled to secure his land estates (DIR A, vol. 3, no. 161 (1579-82), no. 178 (1580).

⁶⁸⁸ Ibidem, no. 410.

sold their land estates,⁶⁸⁹ usually they were rich landowners according to the extant records.⁶⁹⁰

The practices in the Wallachian chancery unfold only from the reign of Radu the Great (1495-1508). The evidence confirms that certain scribes served in the Wallachian chancery for quite a long time period, and often former scribes made a transition to the post of chancellor.⁶⁹¹ For instance, Oancea is attested as scribe from 1491⁶⁹² until 1510, when he became chancellor.⁶⁹³ However, as chancellor he remained in the Wallachian office only up to 8 January 1512, when the Wallachian Prince Vlad the Young (1510-1512) was removed by Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521).⁶⁹⁴ Other examples also illustrate that the careers of Wallachian chancellors may have been shorter than in Moldavia. Probably political instability and the fact that the office of the chancellor was ranked the third highest in Wallachia kept certain influential Wallachian noblemen from a life career in the chancery.⁶⁹⁵

Unfortunately for historians, even after the turn of the sixteenth-century Wallachian scribes were seldom attested as recipients of written charters. Possibly at the beginning of their careers, at an early age, they did not feel the need to secure their possible land in written form yet. It is also possible that the high price of written documents was an obstacle for them as for other Wallachian noblemen, as they had to pay the usual taxes to the prince. Yet, when confirmed, land property suggests that scribes possessed considerable land estates. For instance, the scribe Stanciu confirmed his inherited land property, which consisted of parts of

⁶⁸⁹ Ibidem, no. 398, no. 545.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibidem, no. 67, no. 380, no. 409, no. 468.

⁶⁹¹ Stoicescu also mentions that in Wallachia there was a transition from the function of scribe to that of chancellor. He considers that in this way lower noblemen could ascend the social scale and attain the function of chancellor. Iorga was of the opinion that scribes did not belong to the class of noblemen, Iorga, "Cat de veche e scoala la romani?" 36, 37.

⁶⁹² DRH B, vol. 1, no. 227.

⁶⁹³ DRH B, vol. 2, no. 78.

⁶⁹⁴ DRH B, vol. 2, no. 93.

⁶⁹⁵ After Staico, in 1505, March 26, Bogdan became chancellor of the Wallachian office (DRH B, vol. 1, no. 32) after holding the dignity of high *stolnic*. From 1508, Radu the Great was replaced by Mihnea the Bad and Theodor (a former scribe) is mentioned as chancellor (DRH B, vol. 2, no. 54). In 1510 he returned with the new prince, Vlad the Young (ibidem, no. 68 (1510, April 24)) to move from his office as chancellor to the higher one of governor (ibidem, , no. 78). Ivan logofat is attested only on March 15, 1512 (ibidem, no. 99) since first charters of Neagoe attesting donations to monasteries do not record any lists of witnesses.

five villages and slaves.⁶⁹⁶

Gradually, the Wallachian record unfolds to reveal several literate members of a single family and the passing of chancery positions between family members. One of the earliest examples is Priest Frâncu, his brother, Chancellor Stanciu, and his son, scribe and then chancellor, Tudor.⁶⁹⁷ Similar to Moldavia, data show them as wealthy landholders and active purchasers of land estates. Priest Frâncu, similar to the Moldavian priest, Iuga, was in the prince's service.⁶⁹⁸ Later, he is attested among the first Wallachian laymen who purchased land estates.⁶⁹⁹ Together with his brother, Chancellor Stanciu and his son, Tudor, Priest Frâncu seems to have been very record-minded. They secured their estates twice in the prince's office, after a possible preliminary record in the urban chancery.⁷⁰⁰ In the documents, Priest Frâncu is listed in the first place, a suggestion of age and probably high status. Yet he does not figure in the record as *jupan*; the highest status is bestowed only on his son, the scribe Tudor,⁷⁰¹ which indicates once more that the status of scribe was in particularly high esteem during this period.

The attestation of kinship relations among various members of the Wallachian chancery shows an increase by the middle of the sixteenth century and was broadly documented especially towards the end of the century. Chancellors' sons were employed as

⁶⁹⁶ Ibidem, no. 231.

⁶⁹⁷ Frâncu himself seems to have been in the prince's service in 1512 as agent of the princely authority or (*ispravnic*) (DRH B, vol. 2, no. 115), where he is attested as Priest Frâncu from Costești. The head of the chancery, Stanciu, secured his first charter in 1510. He mentions Priest Frâncu as his brother, which helps to show the family relations between various literate individuals (ibidem, no. 78). Stanciu received another four charters confirming his estates (ibidem, no. 146, no. 157, no. 161, no. 162). In the first charter, he secured his land estates for him and his brother while in the last two charters (Sept. 1, 1517 and Oct. 29, 1517) he donated all his estates to a monastery not mentioning his brother. Tudor, Priest Frâncu's son, Chancellor Stanciu's nephew, is first attested as scribe in 1504. As early as 1505 a Tudor who describes himself as writer and chancellor is attested (ibidem, no. 40). He is mentioned among witnesses in 1509 as head of the chancery (ibidem, no. 65) and continued to be mentioned until 1510, when was replaced by Oancea (ibidem, no. 81).

⁶⁹⁸ Ibidem, no. 115. In 1512 he witnessed a land exchange among the highest state dignitaries; and was appointed by the prince to guarantee its proper accomplishment.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibidem, no. 35 (1505).

⁷⁰⁰ Ibidem, no. 35, no. 42. The charter secured in the prince's office did not clearly specify that it was based on a record produced in the urban chancery. It only states that the money was paid in front of the urban administrators of Râmnic. Knowing the later practice, however, probably the transaction was made in Râmnic and a local charter was secured there, which afterwards was confirmed in the prince's office.

⁷⁰¹ See ibidem, no. 42.

clerks and later as chancellors. A strong relation is attested not only between fathers and sons,⁷⁰² but also between grandfathers or uncles and their grandchildren and nephews.⁷⁰³ Grandfathers or childless uncles would choose a grandson or nephew and grant him their name, estates, and, one assumes, learning. The honored favorites seem to have been eager to point to this relation as support for their privileged position in their records.⁷⁰⁴ It seems to have been more customary to record fathers or grandfathers' names only when the relation identified a known and respected kin relationship.

For the late period, an indicative Wallachian case is the Coresi family, who provided three generations of clerks to the prince's office during the sixteenth century. Scribe Coresi, son of Chancellor Coresi, seems to have had in his turn a son or a nephew employed as a scribe in the prince's office.⁷⁰⁵ Coresi began his career as a scribe in 1538⁷⁰⁶ and only in 1575 is attested as the second chancellor,⁷⁰⁷ which shows that, given the numerous employees of the prince's office in the later period, it took longer to attain the higher positions. His income seems to have been significant, as he actively purchased land during a period of social crisis when small land estates were concentrated into the large properties of high noblemen. In the numerous charters he secured, his family appears as wealthy landowners.⁷⁰⁸ His father was similarly employed as chancellor and both of them increased their wealth through official

⁷⁰² See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 11, no. 27 (1595).

⁷⁰³ DRH B, vol. 6, no. 10.

⁷⁰⁴ For one of the most detailed accounts see *ibidem*, no. 130.

⁷⁰⁵ A scribe who called himself "Little Coresi" signed a document in 1572, when Coresi was already the second chancellor, and it is impossible that he would have signed in this way. In the medieval Romanian Principalities it was customary to name the offspring with the Christian names of family members. See also Szekely, *Sfetnicii*, 84. As it was customary to name one of sons with the father's name, Chancellor Coresi might have named one of his sons or nephews Coresi. Thus, "Little Coresi" might have been a son or nephew of Chancellor Coresi. It is also to be noted that the children who were given their father's or grandfathers' names were later often given the same position in the chancery (see DRH B, vol. 7, Nn. 90 (1572)).

⁷⁰⁶ DRH B, vol. 4, no. 54; in 1568 he is mentioned as chancellor together with five other chancellors, next to the acting head of the chancery and the second chancellor (DRH B, vol. 6, no. 100 (1568)). It might be that he still acted as a scribe or the third chancellor.

⁷⁰⁷ DRH B, vol. 7, no. 232.

⁷⁰⁸ DRH B, vol. 6, no. 43 (1567). According to the extant record, Coresi received his first charter only after 29 years of service in the prince's chancery.

income as well as through the registration of private land transactions.⁷⁰⁹

The price to be paid for the redaction of written documents began to be mentioned sporadically only during the sixteenth century. The data from the records suggest that no fixed taxes for document drafting had existed earlier. Even in countries with a more mature tradition of writing, such as Poland, they were established only by the early sixteenth century.⁷¹⁰ In Moldavia narrative sources suggest that they were established only under the second reign of Constantin Mavrocordat (1741-1743)⁷¹¹

Tentative as the records are, the extant taxes indicate that during the sixteenth century the price paid for the redaction of documents was high. For instance, in 1585 a certain layman, Andreica, paid forty zloti (gold coins) for two charters and 14 for a title-deed,⁷¹² while during the same period part of a village could be purchased for a hundred zloti.⁷¹³ Another example from the same period indicates that a “strip or a belt of land” was purchased for 250 aspers, and fifty aspers were paid for the charter.⁷¹⁴

Another source of scribes’ income was writing private charters, the demand for which increased during this period.⁷¹⁵ For instance, chancellor Coresi received a Gipsy slave as a payment for writing a charter for the two laymen Radu and Moşul.⁷¹⁶ Not in the last instance

⁷⁰⁹DRH B, vol.7, no. 232 (1575-6). More literate members might have existed in the Coresi family because in the second half of the sixteenth century (1560-1581) a printer of this name was active in Sibiu (Hermannstadt) in Transylvania, who published one of the first known Romanian and Slavonic liturgical books. For more information about Coresi, the printer, see Dan Simonescu, “Un mare editor şi tipograf din secolul al XVI-lea: Coresi” (A great editor and printer from the sixteenth century: Coresi), *Studii şi cercetări de bibliologie* 11 (1969): 56.

⁷¹⁰ In Poland the exact amount of taxes to be paid for the redaction of various documents was established in 1511 (See Grămadă, *Cancelaria Moldovei*, 155 and note 3). See also Agnieszka Bartoszewicz, “The Litterati Burghers in Polish Late Medieval Towns,” *Acta Poloniae Historica* 83 (2001), 17, 19. In Hungary the amount of the tax was established earlier, in 1492, see *Corpus Iuris Hungarici*, I, 548-550.

⁷¹¹ In his second reign in Moldavia, he established the taxes. See Cogălniceanu, *Cronicle Romaniei* III, 183). In Serbia, however, already in the , Law Code written in 1349, the payment of chancellors and scribes for document writing is precisely specified.. See *Dushan’s Code*, 85, no. 129.

⁷¹² DIR A, vol. 3, no. 353. See also DIR A, vol. 2, no. 77.

⁷¹³ DIR A, vol. 3, no. 337, DIR A, vol. 2, no.77. Nonetheless, the price recorded might have been particularly high as it generated a new written document to ask for the payment back.

⁷¹⁴ It was part of a village that a certain member of the community inherited after the partition of the common land property; DRH B, vol. 8, no. 97 (1577).

⁷¹⁵See, for instance, DRH B, vol.7, no.128 (1573); DRH B, vol.8, no. 5 (1577).

⁷¹⁶ DIR B, vol.4, no.187. The price of a gipsy slave during the period could range between five hundreds and a thousand aspers. See DIR B, vol.4, no. 215 (1576).

did they sometimes falsify family charters to exclude the other family members from commonly inherited land. Consequently, it is not clear how much clerks might have received for their services. It is possible that because they had a special status at the princely court, written documents were more accessible. Nonetheless, the record points to permanent land acquisition made by various clerks, which is an indication that their position, besides honors and prestige, brought significant wealth.⁷¹⁷ Another source of income might have been the trade activities which were flourishing up to the first half of the sixteenth century and in which many Wallachian high noblemen were actively involved.

According to my reading of the sources, until the middle of the fifteenth century in Moldavia and up to the middle of the sixteenth century in Wallachia, no other group of Moldavian or Wallachian noblemen received so many written donations as chancellors. An interesting case is that of Harvat, head of the chancery under Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521), who received eight (extant) charters confirming his previous land estates and new purchases. All of them were received during his service in the prince's chancery, almost a charter per year, while no charter is attested from the former period of six years when he held other state dignities.⁷¹⁸ This is one of the highest numbers of charters received by a Wallachian individual for the period,⁷¹⁹ and a significant number in itself, as from the reign of Neagoe Basarab fifty-five charters commissioned on behalf of noblemen survive. This may suggest that prices of written documents were expensive even for the highest dignitaries. Possibly chancellors were exempt from the payment of at least some taxes, as two out of six original charters for Harvat mention that the prince "had forgiven the payment of the horse," which

⁷¹⁷ See also Stoicescu, *Sfatul*, 175. He considers that due to the required knowledge of written skills, chancellors in Wallachia were elected from among former scribes who did not belong to the high noble families of the land; however, the fact that their father or grandfather was among high state dignitaries indicates that scribes were descendants of families of high status.

⁷¹⁸ He is attested as high constable from 1508 to 1509 and as high treasurer between 1510 and 1514. See Nicolae Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova: sec. XIV XVII* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1971), 63.

⁷¹⁹ DRH B, vol. 2, no.121, 144, 167, 171, 172, 179, 204, 206.

constituted part of the tax.⁷²⁰ Consequently, the employees in the prince's office had not only the financial means to enlarge their land estates but also a preferential status in securing these estates in written form in a period when written documents began to be more credible.

Besides their economic wealth, chancellors and scribes of the state chanceries seem to have played an important role in internal politics during the endless noble rivalries for the Moldavian throne.⁷²¹ Later, Moldavian and Wallachian chancellors and scribes alike distinguished themselves abroad, as the first recorded proto-diplomats. The abundant attestation of the chancery's personnel as foreign emissaries suggests that this was one of their regular functions. Among the first attested was the Moldavian chancellor Mikhail/Mikhu, who in 1456, when the Moldavians agreed to pay the first tribute to the Ottoman Empire, was sent to Istanbul to try to decrease the amount to be paid or, if that was impossible, to agree upon the conditions.⁷²² In the frequent Wallachian and Moldavian missions exchanged with Transylvanian urban administrations, chancellors and scribes are recorded as messengers of the Moldavian and Wallachian princes, carriers of oral information or, later, of written letters.

723

The scribes sent to Braşov as envoys of Moldavian or Wallachian princes are recorded as producers of documents during the period of their diplomatic missions; there are many examples. For instance, the Wallachian Prince Radu the Handsome sent one of his scribes, Constantine, to Braşov.⁷²⁴ Scribe Oprea, in his turn, carried Basarab the Young's letters to the Braşov administration as well as to the Transylvanian prince.⁷²⁵ In certain cases the information is more elliptical. One of the envoys sent to Braşov by Vlad Dracul (1433-1446)

⁷²⁰ Henri Stahl, *Controverse de istorie socială românească* (Controversial issues about the Romanian social history) (Bucharest, 1969), 130; Giurescu, *Studii de istorie socială*, 251.

⁷²¹ DIR A, vol. 1, no. 259.

⁷²² DRH A, vol. 2, no. 58 (1456).

⁷²³ In one of the political missions by the Moldavian Prince Iliăş (1546-1551), the Moldavian Chancellor Theodorus Boloş fulfilled the function of legate. See Iorga, *Acte şi scrisori*, no. 869 (1548, July 2).

⁷²⁴ Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relaţiile Ţării Româneşti cu Braşovul şi cu Ţara Ungurească*, no. 82 (1463-1470): Radu the Handsome sent one of his scribes, Constantine, to Braşov.

⁷²⁵ Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relaţiile Ţării Româneşti cu Braşovul şi cu Ţara Ungurească*, no.115 (1478-9).

was referred to as “Michael, my truthful and honorable nobleman.” Possibly he was the same person as the scribe Michael, who was active during Vlad Dracu’s reign. He wrote the privilege for the Braşov merchants in 1437,⁷²⁶ and is also attested as a producer of internal documents.⁷²⁷ Later on, after the second half of the sixteenth century, Wallachian scribes and chancellors seem to have remained among the most active conveyors of diplomatic missions. Chancellor Tatul, for instance, is repeatedly attested as envoy to the Braşov administration and even to the Hungarian king.⁷²⁸ Like Scribe Nanul, he delivered the “truthful words of the Wallachian prince Radu Paisie.”⁷²⁹

In Moldavia as well, active chancery scribes are attested as the first diplomats. In the multiple foreign relations established by Stephen the Great at the end of the fifteenth century, scribes were often among the messengers of his diplomatic missions sent to Poland, Lithuania, and Moscow. Among them, Scribe Matiaş was sent, together with Governor Giurgea, to the Polish King Alexander.⁷³⁰ In 1498, the scribe Şandru was sent to the high knez of Moscow,⁷³¹ and one year later, in 1499, the scribe Costea was enumerated among Moldavian ambassadors to the Polish King Alexander.⁷³² Moldavian scribes and chancellors similarly conducted diplomatic relations with the administrations of the Transylvanian towns. For instance, the scribe and chancellor Vulpas, active in the Moldavian chancery during the reign of Stephen the Great, is attested as Stephen’s envoy to Braşov.⁷³³

Thus, service in the prince’s office was an opportunity that brought the employee to a higher social position, wealth, and status. Written culture was restricted and persons who could actively participate in its performance were perceived as unique innovators. This

⁷²⁶ Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 49.

⁷²⁷ DRH B, vol.1, no. 82 (1437), no. 90 (1440).

⁷²⁸ Tocilescu, *534 documente*, no. 332, 337 (undated).

⁷²⁹ Tocilescu, *534 documente*, no. 338.

⁷³⁰ See Costăchescu, *Documente Ștefan*, vol. 2, no. 173.

⁷³¹ Costăchescu, *Documente Ștefan*, vol.2, no. 141.

⁷³² Costăchescu, *Documente Ștefan*, vol. 2, no. 180.

⁷³³ Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Braşovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no.87 (1474).

capacity certainly led to appreciation among their fellows, a rise in social status and, not least, financial benefits.⁷³⁴ Consequently, certain influential families tended to monopolize the role and secure leading positions in the chancery for their young relatives. Moldavian and Wallachian state dignitaries alike remained equally interested in chancery service, even if this place was no longer so closed and elite-oriented in Moldavia, which testifies once more to the economic and political benefits it provided. As in the medieval Romanian Principalities, noblemen's positions were not inherited; every nobleman had to secure his position personally through his career and land ownership.⁷³⁵ A position in the princes' chancery helped preserve or augment an existing noble status. Further, during the times of political and social instability it provided the necessary financial means to preserve the status quo, as the case of *Uricar Cârstea Mihăilescu* suggests.

6.4 Education of the literate personnel

There are no attested schools during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in either Wallachia or Moldavia. Consequently, it is not clear whether literacy skills were learned at home, in the family, from mother, or rather, father to son, or whether they were taught in monasteries. Several attestations of *dascâl* (teacher) in the Moldavian chancery suggest that there were professional teachers for the offspring of noblemen.⁷³⁶ Their names suggest that they were laymen and I assume that, at least, some children were taught at home. Later data attest private teachers hired to instruct princely offspring. The Moldavian Prince Petru Șchiopu, himself possessing active writing skills, in his will indicates the amount to be paid to the teacher of his son Stephen.⁷³⁷ Moreover, several books are listed among the princely

⁷³⁴ John Oxenham, *Literacy. Writing, Reading and Social Organisation* (London: Routledge, 1980), 66.

⁷³⁵ Filitti, "Clasele sociale in trecutul romanesc," 3.

⁷³⁶ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 199, no. 201. In 1475 Ion *dascâl* (John the teacher) signed his first charters. Later data also suggest that noblemen hired private teachers for their offspring. See Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria literaturii religioase a românilor până la 1688*.

⁷³⁷ Iorga, ed. *Domnia și viața lui Petru Vodă Șchiopul* (The reign and life of the Prince Petru Șchiopul) In *Documente de istorie a României*. Clecția Hurmuzaki (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1900), no. 685 (1602, April 30)

belongings.⁷³⁸ Other princes as well as high state dignitaries had the same practices of instructing their offspring. It seems that not only boys but daughters were at least acquainted to use written communication, as for instance a daughter of the Moldavian prince, Lăpușneanu is attested as commissioner of written documents.⁷³⁹ Most probably, noblemen followed princely practices.

Up to the end of the sixteenth century, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements influenced the only attested Moldavian schools.⁷⁴⁰ Regular schooling continued to be done possibly in monasteries, at home, or in Poland or Transylvania.⁷⁴¹ For instance, the activities of Luca Stroici, his familiarity with the Latin alphabet and the Polish language indicate that he studied abroad, probably in Poland.⁷⁴²

Direct evidence about schooling abroad, however, is sparse during this period. Sources disclose rather a private exchange of princely's descendants sent abroad for a proper raising. For instance, an indirect record suggests that the Wallachian Prince Mircea the Old (1386-1418) had grown up at the court of the Hungarian king. Similarly his son, Vlad the Impaler, remained at the court of Janos Hunyadi.⁷⁴³

It seems that the custom of sending children abroad for the acquisition of various crafts was practiced in Wallachia and Moldavia at other social levels as well. Wallachian

⁷³⁸ Ibidem.

⁷³⁹ Bogdan, *Documente arhive bibliotecii polone*, No. 57.

⁷⁴⁰ The first attested school at Côtari was founded by Despot Voda (1561-1563), a Protestant prince of foreign origin. For more information about this see Maria, "Protestantism and Orthodoxy in sixteenth-century Moldavia," in *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1997), See also Maria Crăciun and Ovidiu Ghitta, eds, *Church and Society in Central and Eastern Europe*. (Cluj Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujană, 1998); Maria Crăciun, Ovidiu Ghitta and Graeme Murdock, ed., *Confessional Identity in East-Central Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Jesuits had founded a Latin school at Jassy (Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History*, ed. Matei Calinescu (Ohio: Ohio State University, 1984), 61.

⁷⁴¹ The practice to send children for education abroad is mentioned in the seventeenth century Moldavian narratives. See Tatiana Celac, ed., *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei* (The chronicle of the Moldavian Country) (Chishinău: Hiperion, 1990), 195.

⁷⁴² The location where Chancellor Stroici was schooled is still the subject of debate in the literature. Various places have been proposed ranging from Germany to Transylvania, and Poland. For a detailed bibliography see Gerd Franck, "Un mare ctitor-boier: Luca Stroici" In *Confesiune și cultură în Evul Mediu: În Onoarea Ion Toderășcu*, ed. Bogdan-Petru Maleon and Alexandru-Florin Platon. (Iassy: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iași, 2004), 295-6.

⁷⁴³ DRH D Vol. 1, No. 53.

letters exchanged with Transylvania disclose a practice of exchanging children between Wallachia or Moldavia and Transylvania or Poland. One of the earliest attestations is a letter issued in 1436 by the Moldavian Prince Iliăș on behalf of a tailor from the town of Roman who sent his son to Brașov “*ad docendum rasoriam artem.*”⁷⁴⁴

Unfortunately, neither direct, nor indirect evidence allows us to grasp any specific information about the training of chancery staff. The early information hardly attests more than the learning of various crafts. In Moldavia, one of the early examples about supposedly basic education abroad is recorded in 1582. It is a letter of grievance of a Moldavian layman, Petru Walachus from Jassy, whose son, sent to Lviv “for education,” died there. Unfortunately, the source does not tell anything about the type of education, age or social status of the sender. It seems, nonetheless, that Petru might have had high social standing as he sent his son to the Consul of Sniatin for study.⁷⁴⁵ The letter of gratitude addressed to the Polish Chancellor Zamoysky by the Moldavian Chancellor Luca Stroici for freeing his son from prison is also noteworthy.⁷⁴⁶ The information might be another indication that the children of the Moldavian princes or high noblemen might have grown up abroad, presumably in a more learned society. The knowledge of the Polish language by certain Moldavian noblemen, supports the assumption that schooling abroad might have been a practice for at least some of the high Moldavian. In certain situations it seems that a foreign person could have been hired for instruction in foreign languages.⁷⁴⁷

The direct evidence about schooling abroad⁷⁴⁸ or in the monasteries is attested only during the seventeenth century; for earlier periods only unsubstantiated information is available. However, it seems reasonable to assume that such practices might have grown out

⁷⁴⁴ Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, No. 200 (1436, June 9).

⁷⁴⁵ Iorga Nicolae, “Documente ale Mitropoliei din Iasi” (Documents of the Jassy Bissopric) In *Studii si documente*. vol 5, No. 25.

⁷⁴⁶ Bogan, *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească*, no. 290 (1599, Sept.30).

⁷⁴⁷ Ibidem, no. 190 (1496-1507).

⁷⁴⁸ In a narrative from the seventeenth century. See Celac, *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei*, 223.

of an older tradition. As most of the fostering of children seems to have been based on private and oral agreements, there is no record about children traveling or being placed for fostering children. Documents seem to have been resorted to only to indicate hostile situations or exceptional situations.

It seems, nonetheless, that the level of schooling during this period was low. At least the mastery of the Slavonic language by native scribes, a foreign language for them, seems to have been only superficial. Lack of any mentions of early libraries belonging to scribes and chancellors similarly fails to indicate that early literates might have been reckoned among first intellectuals. For them scribal activities were rather a craft. The usage of certain pre-existing formulas in the text, sometimes even arbitrary, testifies to their partial knowledge and improper training.

Cultural relations with the neighboring cultures with a better-established tradition of writing, however, led to the implementation of new Western practices in the Moldavian and Wallachian chanceries. For instance, after the middle of the sixteenth century, princes and chancellors sporadically began to use signatures *manu propria* in the charters they endorsed.⁷⁴⁹ Chancellors began to be mentioned as the first lay individuals with intellectual inclinations. They are attested as library owners and writers of chronicles. A chronicle written by a Wallachian chancellor, for instance, was used in 1597 by Baltazar Walter for his work about the deeds of Mikhail the Brave.⁷⁵⁰ The author declared in the dedication to the German noblemen that: *Walachico sermone a Dn. Cancellario conceptum, atque ab ipso Waiwoda*

⁷⁴⁹ In Moldavia, it was introduced for the first time by a prince of foreign origins, Despot Vodă (1562-1563). His signatures are in Greek. See DIR A, vol. 2, no. 159, no. 162. In Wallachia Greek was introduced by Mikhnea Turcitul, who was brought up in Constantinople. Nicolae Iorga considered that the usage of signatures began to be employed on documents as a new form of authenticity in consequence of the simplification of the formulary of the documents; however, it seems rather to have been influenced by Western notarial practices. See Iorga, *Istoria literaturii*, 102.

⁷⁵⁰ Dan Simonescu, "Cronica lui Baltazar Walter despre Mihai Viteazul în raport cu cronicile interne contemporane" (The Chronicle of Baltazar Walter about Michael the Brave compared to the internal Wallachian chronicals) *Studii și materiale de istorie medie* 3 (1959), 55

*approbatum contextum, in aula Targowistea obtinebam.*⁷⁵¹ Although the name of the Wallachian chancellor is uncertain, it testifies to the literary preoccupations of at least some chancery employee.⁷⁵²

Similarly in Moldavia, literacy activities of chancellors began to be attested by the end of the sixteenth century. Luca Stroici/Stroicz,⁷⁵³ who acted as chancellor under six princes, made the transition between the previous period with a restricted written culture and the seventeenth century, which may be considered a period of cultural renaissance in the medieval Romanian Principalities.⁷⁵⁴ Among other literate preoccupations, he was one of the first Moldavian laymen who owned a private library.⁷⁵⁵ Similarly, he is one of the first Moldavian noblemen who conducted an active political and private correspondence with Polish noblemen.⁷⁵⁶ In a rather political letter addressed to an unknown Moldavian chancellor in 1597 by the Polish chancellor, Jan Zamoyski, he asked for a *kronike woloska* which had been promised to him.⁷⁵⁷ Given the fact that Luca Stroici was the chancellor in Moldavia during the time and given his relations with the Polish nobility generally as well as his friendship and exchange of letters with Zamoyskie, it is possible that the letter was addressed to him. Regardless of this uncertainty, it indicates again that Moldavian and Wallachian chancellors alike began to be among the first laymen of their times with literacy activities.

⁷⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁷⁵² The chancellor was identified by Nicolae Iorga as Theodosie Rudeanu, who acted as chancellor under Mihail the Brave. See Iorga, *Istoria literaturii*, 8.

⁷⁵³ He acted as treasurer and then as chancellor from 1580 to 1591 and then from 1595 to 1610.

⁷⁵⁴ Concerning the treasurer and then chancellor Luca Stroici see Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, "Luca Stroici, Părintele filologiei latino-române," (Luca Stroici: the father of Latin-Romanian filology) in *Studii de lingvistică și filologie*, ed. Grigore Brâncuși (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1988).

⁷⁵⁵ In 1861, at the University of Lemberg, B. P. Hașdeu discovered the catalogue of the private library that had belonged to Chancellor Stroici. He described it as being written on four files of parchment, in Slavonic, by the hand of the chancellor himself. Among the authors Hașdeu mentioned the sympathisers of Reformation ideas such as Carion, Camerarius, Melanchton; see Hașdeu. "Luca Stroici," 70. However, his affirmation cannot be proved today. See Franck, "Luca Stroici," 306.

⁷⁵⁶ See Ilie Corfus, ed., *Documente privitoare la istoria României cuprinse în arhivele polone. Secolul al XVI-lea* (Documents concerning the history of Romania found in Polish archives: The sixteenth century) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1979).

⁷⁵⁷ See Irena Sulkowska, "Noi documente privind relațiile româno-polone în perioada 1589 - 1622 (New documents concerning Romanian and Polish relations from the period 1589-1622)," *Studii Revistă de Istorie* 12, No. 6 (1959): No. 2.

Later, from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, the number of chancellors and scribes attested as intellectuals of their times, authors of important works, and library owners multiplied.⁷⁵⁸

6.5 Scribes of the Latin documents who were active in the Moldavian and Wallachian state chanceries

With a very few early exceptions, Latin and German documents were used mainly for external correspondence. Unfortunately, little is known about the producers of Latin and German documents besides their names. Even the names are but seldom mentioned. Consequently, the rare available information is better known from the political missions, which the scribes of Latin documents had carried out than from the documents they wrote.

Even less information is available about their origins or ethnic background. One of the Wallachian letters indicates that it might have been a practice to request Latin scribes from Transylvania. Radu Paisie (1534-1545) asked from the administration of Sibiu for “a well trained and *learned* scribe since the previous one got sick and I do not have any other left.”⁷⁵⁹ The letter does not mention whether Prince Radu Paisie needed a scribe trained in Latin or Slavonic languages, but it is well known that at the time of Radu Paisie’s reign several scribes of Slavonic documents were active in the Wallachian chancery. Therefore, one might assume that the requested scribe was envisaged for the Latin documents.

The Wallachian prince’s request for a scribe from Transylvania might indicate that at least some of the scribes of the Latin and German documents were trained abroad. Grămadă, basing his study on the particularities of the written documents, considered that up to the middle of the fifteenth century, Moldavian scribes of the Latin documents were of Polish origins. Later, they were hired from Transylvania from the ranks of the Moldavian Catholic

⁷⁵⁸ See Ștefan Gorovei, “Nicolae (Milescu) spătarul. Contribuții biografice,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie “A.D. Xenopol”* 21 (1984): 179-182; idem, “Un cărturar uitat: Logofătul Grigoraș,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie “A.D. Xenopol”* 23, No. 2 (1986): 681-98.

⁷⁵⁹ Panaitescu, “Documente slavo-române din Sibiu (1470-1653),” no.47.

priests.⁷⁶⁰

The function of the scribes seems to have been coupled with diplomatic missions.⁷⁶¹ The Moldavian and Wallachian documents alike indicate foreign missions accomplished by notaries or literate servants of the Moldavian or Wallachian princes such as “Georgius *litteratus*,⁷⁶² *Gasparus litteratus*⁷⁶³ or, in Wallachia, *Iohannes Salanchy, secretaium nostrum*.”⁷⁶⁴ It is uncertain, however, whether the princes referred to Slavonic or Latin scribes. The Christian names seem to have changed according to the language of the documents issued. It is possible, however, that foreign scribes, given their language skills, might have combined service in the chancery with diplomatic missions along with native scribes.

Although scarce, the documents indicate that Latin scribes enjoyed an elevated position. The Wallachian Prince Radu Paisie promised in his letter of request to the Sibiu administration that he would treat the scribe with honor and remunerate him accordingly.⁷⁶⁵ In Moldavia, some scribes seem to have been able to issue documents in their own names on the prince’s behalf, which might support the idea that they had a privileged position and the confidence of the Moldavian princes. A German letter on commercial affairs, issued by Georgius de Revelles on behalf of Prince Lăpușneanu, is one example.⁷⁶⁶ In certain situations their fidelity seemed to have been questioned, however, as Petru Rareș urged the administration of the town of Bistrița to arrest his secretary and enemy Iohannes Literatus,⁷⁶⁷ whom he had sent on a political mission three years before.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶⁰Gramada, “Cancelaria Moldovei,” 26-27.

⁷⁶¹Based on numerous attestations, Szekely considered that diplomatic functions might have been their main task, see Szekely, *Sfetnicii*, 447.

⁷⁶²Iorga, *Acte si scrisori*, no. 796.

⁷⁶³Ibidem, no. 695.

⁷⁶⁴Ibidem, , no. 520. He held multiple letters of credence attesting his mission to Sibiu under Rareș in 1525, Dec. 20.

⁷⁶⁵Panaitescu, “Documente slavo-române din Sibiu (1470-1653),” no. 47.

⁷⁶⁶Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1002 (1559, May 6).

⁷⁶⁷Ibidem, no. 723 (1538, Dec 15).

⁷⁶⁸Ibidem,, no. 695 (1535, May 15).

From a later period, more consistent Moldavian Latin and German documents show several regular names of their producers. They indicate that foreign scribes, similar to the local ones, could have enjoyed a constant and long service in the princely chanceries and might have continued their services under new princes. It seems as well that only a single foreign scribe at a time was active in the princely chancery.

Stephanus Literatus, the secretary of the Moldavian Prince Rareș, is one of the first attested as fulfilling diverse political⁷⁶⁹ and economic⁷⁷⁰ missions for the Moldavian prince. He seems to have been in the prince's service for at least three years. Georgius of Revelles, mentioned above, stayed in Lapusneanu's service from 1559 to 1562 as the regular producer of German documents.⁷⁷¹ When Lapusneanu was overthrown, Georgius de Revelles remained in the service of Prince Despot (1561-1563), Lapusneanu's enemy and successor, for whom he wrote German⁷⁷² and Latin letters.⁷⁷³ After Lapusneanu succeeded in regaining the Moldavian throne, Revelles seems to have been replaced by Stephanus a Dees, who remained in the service of Moldavian princes from 1564 to 1570. He seems to have produced almost all the Latin letters issued during this period.⁷⁷⁴ He remained in the Moldavian chancery during Lăpușneanu's reign and after the prince's death served his son and successor, Bogdan.⁷⁷⁵ Unfortunately, after Bogdan's reign foreign scribes ceased to mention their names regularly. It might have been that Prince Lapușneanu enjoyed the services of better-trained scribes. The skills of Revelles to issue documents in Latin and German support this idea, although nothing is known about his or other scribes' education, ethnicity, or origins.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibidem, no. 677 (1531, April 8). The messenger of Rareș to Bistrița.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibidem, no. 552 (1528, Febr.14).

⁷⁷¹ Ibidem, no. 1003 (1559, June 5), 1040 (1560, Oct 31), 1046 (1561, Jan.1), 1047 (1561, Jan 13), 1048 (1561, Feb 18), 1049 (1561, Feb.19), 1050 (1561, March 31).

⁷⁷² Ibidem, no. 1064 (1562, March 17).

⁷⁷³ Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la historia Românilor*, vol. 2.1, no. 378 (1562, March 27).

⁷⁷⁴ Iorga, *Acte și scrisori*, no. 1102 (1564-8), 1103 (1564), 1159 (1567, June 1), 1158 (1567, Apr.29), 1159 (1567, June 1), 1161-1166 (1567), 1169 (1567, Nov.24), 1171 (1568, March 15).

⁷⁷⁵ Ibidem, No. 1172 (1568, March 16), 1173 (1568, May 23), 1177 (1568, Nov.19), 1180 (1569, Jan.12), 1184 (1569, Apr.25), 1193 (1570, Aug.19), 1194 (1570, Sept.26).

6.6 *The local sphere: The producers of the documents issued at the local level*

The social changes experienced in both principalities led to a continuous demand for written documents. In the second half of the sixteenth century offices able to issue written documents multiplied. Furthermore, documents began to be attested at regional, urban, and village levels. Unfortunately, most of the documents bear no information about the scribes. Even when recorded, most of the names of the local producers have only a single attestation, which suggests that their scribal activity was inconsistent and probably occasional. Only in rare cases do urban, regional or village records allow drawing some tentative conclusions.

Despite the fact that several names of Moldavian urban scribes are recorded, their scarcity provides little information about them or practices in the urban offices.⁷⁷⁶ Slavonic documents with sporadically employed vernacular words suggest that native professional scribes were active in the Moldavian offices.⁷⁷⁷

In Wallachia the picture is similar. The documents extant from the urban office of Bucharest, however, are more consistent and permit some conclusions about their producers. The number of documents as well as the presence of several scribes at a time indicates that there was busy and continuous activity going on in the urban office of the Wallachian capital in the last decades of the sixteenth century. The information about the scribes suggests that the regular practices employed in the central chancery were translated locally. The documents written in Slavonic indicate that in the urban offices laymen with professional training seem to have been employed. Similar to their fellows, central scribes, they seem to have stayed in the office for a long period.⁷⁷⁸ Kinship relations between scribes and priests, as well as between different scribes are attested locally as well.⁷⁷⁹ For instance, Eftimie, the most active

⁷⁷⁶ Scribe Ion is attested in 1587, Oct. 3, in the urban office of Baia (DIR A, vol. 3, no. 454; Scribe Sava is attested in Bârlad in 1591, Aug. 2 (DIR A, vol. 4, no. 35) and Scribe Ionașco wrote the only internal charter issued by the Cotnari urban office in 1598, Sept.10 (DIR A, vol. 4, no. 292).

⁷⁷⁷ DIR A, vol. 3, no. 376 (1586, March 23); DIR A, vol. 4, no.14 (1591, Apr.1).

⁷⁷⁸ Eftimie is attested between 1563 and 1571 (DRH B, vol. 5, no. 266, DRH B, vol. 7, no. 26).

⁷⁷⁹ Scribe Voico mentions that he is the son of Deico. See DRH B, vol. 2, no. 157 (1517, July 14).

scribe in the Bucharest urban office, is mentioned in a Greek contemporary note as being a son of the Priest Grozav.⁷⁸⁰ Eftimie's Christian name suggests that he might have belonged to a monastic order, but no further information is available about him except the fact that he was employed in the Wallachian urban chancery from 1563 to 1571 along with another scribe, Vlad.⁷⁸¹ Later, a scribe Dimitrie is attested from 1577 until 1580;⁷⁸² early in 1580 Dimitrie the Old began to be recorded.⁷⁸³ Dumitrie the Old continued his service in the Bucharest chancery at least until February 1590.⁷⁸⁴ Besides these two, eight other names of producers of documents were recorded in the Bucharest urban office in the last two decades of the century,⁷⁸⁵ among them a priest and three chancellors. The rather numerous staff indicates that writing activities were continuous at the urban level, at least in certain areas.

The documents issued in the Wallachian urban chanceries are written in Slavonic. Their format is slightly different from the documents produced in the state chancery. For instance, the verbal invocation is always employed at the beginning of the documents.⁷⁸⁶ The distinctions in the format of the documents suggest that urban scribes might not have been dependent on the tradition employed in the state chancery. Instead, they might have been trained in the monasteries, as the format of the urban documents is similar to land charters produced by monastic institutions. Conversely, the Wallachian regional scribes seem to have been directly dependent on the state chancery, as certain clerks who provided writing services for Craiovesti noblemen during the early sixteenth century are attested among the chancery's

⁷⁸⁰ DRH B, vol. 5, no. 266 (1563).

⁷⁸¹ For Scribe Dimitrie, see DRH B, vol. 5, no. 266 (1563, May 13) and DRH B, vol. 7, no. 26 (1571, May 20). For Scribe Vlad see Petronel Zahariuc, "Nouă documente din secolul al XVI-lea," no. 1 (1565, March 1) and no. 2 (1565, May 24).

⁷⁸² (DRH B, vol. 8, no. 73 (1577, May 26), no. 109 (1578, Jan. 9), no. 136 (1578, July 5), no. 329 (1580, Nov. 2).

⁷⁸³ Zahariuc, *Nouă documente din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 4 (1580, Jan. 13), no. 5 (1580, March 16).

⁷⁸⁴ DIR B, vol. 5, no. 448 (1590, Feb. 16).

⁷⁸⁵ Zahariuc, *Nouă documente din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 6 (1585, Oct. 29), Scribe Neag; DIR B, vol. 5, no. 307 (1587, Feb. 6) (The document is signed by Scribe Stan from Săvești); Zahariuc, *Nouă documente din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 7 (1587, May 29) Scribe Neanciu; DIR B, vol. 5, no. 425 (1589, May 30) Scribe Grama the Old; Ibidem, no. 454 (1590, Apr. 14) Scribe Gherghe, who in 1596 is attested as Gherghe the priest, DRH B, vol. 11, no. 150; Zahariuc, *Nouă documente din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 9 (1593, May 14) The scribe signed his name as Chancellor Stanciu; DRH B, vol. 11, no. 268 (1597, Dec. 3) The names of the two scribes were Chancellor Ivan and Chancellor Efrem.

⁷⁸⁶ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 5, no. 266 (1563, May 13).

scribes.⁷⁸⁷

The scribes who did the writing at the village level are obscure and their names and status are seldom mentioned. Only occasionally can I trace continuous activity of village priests as scribes at the local/village level. One of them was the Moldavian priest Andonie from Childești, who recorded land transactions for Governor Bantaș from 1586 until 1596.⁷⁸⁸ Priest Andonie seems to have carried out regular scribal activities, as he always is recorded as the producer of documents despite the fact that other literate persons and priests are attested among the witnesses.⁷⁸⁹ Moreover, he traveled from his village Childești to another village, Drăgușeni, to record a transaction, despite the fact that a local priest, Lupu, was attested among the witnesses.⁷⁹⁰ It seems that literate persons were not available everywhere and persons in need for the written record had to travel from one village to another, as a document from 7096 (1588) records.⁷⁹¹ The same situation is also recorded in Wallachia: Priest Pătru from Șura (“Pătru ot Șura”) traveled from his to another village, Balboși, to record a transaction at the house of another priest, Stoia from Balboși (“Stoia ot Balboși”).⁷⁹²

Thus, I conclude that literate priests were not available regularly at the village level in either Moldavia or Wallachia. This conclusion is endorsed by narratives from the eighteenth century, which allude to the great distress of old parish priests at the decision taken by the Reformist Prince Constantin Mavrocordat, to bestow a tax exemption only on literate priests in 1714.⁷⁹³

⁷⁸⁷ The first two written donations made by Craiovești noblemen were written by Scribe Stepan (DRH B, vol.2, no. 47); the same scribe Stepan is attested writing documents for the Wallachian princes (ibidem, no. 72, no. 81).

⁷⁸⁸ Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 66, no. 68, no. 83, no. 105. In the last document (no. 105), the scribe is not recorded, but the fact that all his previous transactions were recorded by Priest Andonie for Governor Bantaș and that the land is from the same village, Drăgușani, indicates that probably Priest Andonie also recorded the land transaction from 1596. Moreover, the style and peculiar formulas employed in the previous charters by Priest Andonie are very similar to this one, which suggests the same scribe. Unfortunately, the original documents are no longer preserved.

⁷⁸⁹ See ibidem, no. 83.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibidem, no. 105.

⁷⁹¹ DIR A, vol. 3, no. 459. An entire family of free land owners traveled from one village to another to sell their family land estates.

⁷⁹² Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 5.

⁷⁹³ Celac, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, 157.

Besides parish priests, among local producers of written documents there were monks,⁷⁹⁴ church servants,⁷⁹⁵ and possibly teachers.⁷⁹⁶ By the end of the sixteenth century, in Moldavia, some families of small land holders had literate members capable of recording their land transactions in the vernacular.⁷⁹⁷

Almost half of the forty-two Moldavian documents produced at the village level by the end of the sixteenth century, however, seem to have been written by professional scribes. Some of them were attested among the chancery's scribes from the period;⁷⁹⁸ for instance, a scribe Ionașco was active in the Moldavian chancery in the last decades of the sixteenth century. During the same period, a local document was signed by the scribe *Ionașco*, who mentions that he is from the village of Galbeni.⁷⁹⁹ The document is preserved in a copy which makes it impossible to apply any paleographic analyses; it is possible, however, that in a local document the professional scribe had allowed himself a less rigorous style and indicated his place of residence.⁸⁰⁰ He also mentions that he is writing the local document in the house of Priest Luciul from Galbeni village. In Wallachia likewise, local scribes, for instance, Ivașco from Loviște⁸⁰¹ or Stănilă,⁸⁰² were attested among the writers of the twenty-nine documents produced at the village level.: they were active scribes of the state chancery during the same period. It is known that Moldavian and Wallachian noblemen had their residences in the countryside; presumably, active or former professional scribes provided the necessary literate personnel at the village level. Alike, young relatives of court dignitaries sporadically acted as

⁷⁹⁴ DIR A, vol. 3, no. 471 (1588, March 5).

⁷⁹⁵ DRH B, vol. 11, no. 75 (1594, July 8).

⁷⁹⁶ The writer of the document signed in vernacular Romanian as *Ion dascăl*, which means teacher. See Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 85 (1592, July 21). For Wallachia see *ibidem*, no. 52 (1582, March 25).

⁷⁹⁷ Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 104.

⁷⁹⁸ DIR A, vol. 3, no. 306 (1584); DIR A, vol. 4, no. 8, no. 38).

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, no. 306 (1584, May 4).

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁰¹ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 8, no. 32, no. 94.

⁸⁰² DIR B, vol. 5, no. 316. He also wrote documents in the central chancery, see DRH B, vol. 8, no. 19, no. 20, no. 218, no. 221, no. 286.

scribes for documents produced for their fellows.⁸⁰³ They might have recorded their personal transactions, those of their servants⁸⁰⁴ or fellow noblemen.⁸⁰⁵

The language and formulary of the documents vary. Usually the documents commissioned by noblemen are well written. The first distinction between the professional scribes and parish priests is that professional scribes used the Slavonic language for local documents and not vernacular Romanian, used mainly by the parish priests. The professional scribes usually employed the formulary used in the prince's chancery and their documents point to a good knowledge of their craft.

Conversely, Romanian documents written by the parish priests usually suggest unsettled written practices. There are significant differences between private documents written in the assured hand of a professional scribe and those written by the local priest. Besides the vernacular language and finger print employed for the vernacular documents, both their appearance and content are crude, which testifies to the insufficient writing skills of the local priests. For instance, the governor's scribe wrote in a nice script, in accurate lines, well positioned on the page, while the document written by the Wallachian priest Pătru of Șura in fluctuating orthography presents an untrained mastery of writing, and style, suggesting a novice.⁸⁰⁶ Sporadically, parish priests, similar to the practice of the time, mentioned that they had written the documents *manu propria*.⁸⁰⁷

The language of the vernacular documents testifies to a transition period as many Slavonic formulas and linking words are employed in the Romanian documents. This suggests that village priests received only basic training in Slavonic and afterwards turned to the more

⁸⁰³ In Wallachia, a nephew of a chamberlain wrote a document in 1577 for a noblewoman Irina. See DRH B, vol. 8, no. 157 (1577, Dec. 15).

⁸⁰⁴ DIR A, vol. 4, no. 298, no. 244.

⁸⁰⁵ Two documents signed *manu propria* by treasurer (*cămăraș*) Ionașco Bașotă are extant. He wrote the documents for a nobleman whom he called "our father." Possibly he was in his service. See DIR A, vol. 4, no. 43 (1591-2), *ibidem*, no. 298 (1599).

⁸⁰⁶ For the characteristics of the Romanian language of the sixteenth-century documents see the Introduction to Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, 158; see also the facsimile no. 5, no. 6, no. 7 of the edited documents.

⁸⁰⁷ Caproșu, "Documente românești din secolele al XV-lea - al XVII-lea," no.3.

accessible vernacular language.

The parish priests' documents, similar to the early documents produced in the state chancery, are less stereotyped. Priest Andonie from Childești recorded, for instance, that he heard and saw personally the transaction of an impoverished chamberlain's family, who sold their estates out of distress and poverty⁸⁰⁸ to a family member, governor Bantas.⁸⁰⁹ As a rule, parish priests seldom wrote documents on behalf of noblemen. It might be that this was one of the cases when a low-priced service was needed. Consequently, it may have been the case that, despite professional scribes existing at the village level,⁸¹⁰ the services of parish priests were requested as more affordable.

* * *

To sum up, the professional clerks in the two medieval Romanian principalities were noblemen with significant wealth and status. Their knowledge seems to have been taught in the family, because kin relations among various members of the chancery are evident. Their careers in the chancery were usually lengthy, especially in the early period, as chancellors were elected from among former scribes. This led to an augmentation of political career as well as increased wealth. As in Danubian Principalities noble status was not inherited, a career in the chancery helped noblemen's offspring secure or elevate their rank and aided those of lower status in moving up on the social scale. The social standing related to practices of written culture is attested not only by the individual careers it made possible, but also by the diachronic development of family policies. Consequently, noblemen remained interested in their service in the chancery even after the literacy became more widespread and lower noblemen became involved in the process of drafting documents.

As written culture spread farther and documents certifying land possessions were

⁸⁰⁸Chivu, *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, no. 66.

⁸⁰⁹*Ibidem*, no. 8.

⁸¹⁰DIR AI, vol. 3, no. 306. Ionașco, the scribe from Galbeni, attested as scribe in the central chancery during the period recorded a transaction in the village of Galbeni, in the house of Priest Luciu from Galbeni.

required by princes during potential land disputes, small land holders were keen to record their new transactions in writing. The availability of literate priests and scribes at the village level and their ability to use the vernacular language met this need. Probably the prices charged by local priests were lower than those of the professional scribes. This facilitated the access to written documents for lower social categories and led to the farther dissemination of written culture.

Chapter 7. From the oral customs to the written word. Literacy versus illiteracy and quasi-literacy. Orality⁸¹¹

The surviving Moldavian and Wallachian documents consist mainly of land donations, selling, resolution of disputes, fixing boundary limits, and over time, testaments or wills. The fact that in the neighboring Hungarian kingdom the surviving documents of noblemen also mostly comprise land titles indicates that the restricted range of Wallachian and Moldavian documents was not related to lack of archival practices but rather by the fact that Wallachian and Moldavian noblemen, similarly to their neighbors, “lived in an oral culture, with a very weak writing practice, if any.”⁸¹²

Despite the fact that apparently the Wallachian society can be characterized as a preliterate, certain common oral customs (such as disputes related to land possessions, exchange of information, records of last wills) began to include written documents, although inconsistently and slowly. Conversely, in Moldavia, the data indicate a society adapted more thoroughly to written culture. In the following chapter, I shall trace the process by which the Moldavian and Wallachian lay society assimilated new written practices, why they did so, and how oral tradition was added to or replaced by the written document.

7.1 Land disputes procedures: oral customs as opposed to written documents

The administration of justice in both Medieval Romanian Principalities up to the end of the sixteenth century was based solely on customary law. Although the Byzantine religious-legal codes were among the first manuscripts to be copied or printed in Moldavia

⁸¹¹ For the definition of an oral or preliterate society contrasted to a fully literate or quasi-literate society see Franz H. Bäuml, “Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy,” *Speculum* 55.2 (1980): 243 and 246. Bäuml defined the preliterate society as a society in which “no one is literate, and where the members of at least the social elite, if not of all social levels, are dependent on oral traditions (...).” Conversely, a “quasi-literate” “is an individual who must rely on the literacy of another for access to written transmission. Finally, an illiterate is a person without need or means of such reliance.” Further distinction and nuances were added recently by Marco Mostert, “Forgery and Trust,” in *Strategies of Writing. Studies on Text and Trust in the Middle Ages*, ed. Petra Schulte, Marco Mostert and Irene van Renswoude (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 37-59.

⁸¹² Erik Fügedi, “Verba Volant... Oral Culture and Literacy Among The Medieval Hungarian Nobility,” 13.

and Wallachia, they seem to have had rather a symbolic function as the dispute procedures only seldom made any reference to the written codes.⁸¹³ Commissioned mostly by the Wallachian and Moldavian princes, the law codes that circulated in the Danubian Principalities were presumably envisaged as instruments to express the princes' ideological aspirations as guardians of the Byzantine tradition and not to provide a body of reference during future disputes.⁸¹⁴

Especially in Wallachia, the earliest land disputes (from the last decades of the fifteenth century) are grounded solely on the oral deposition of the witnesses. Charters were not mentioned even in the first disputes of the monastic institutions.⁸¹⁵ The prince judged “according to justice and law” (meaning customary law) together with all his “impartial servants”.⁸¹⁶

Nonetheless, three years after the first dispute is attested, in 1493, Tismana monastery brought a written charter into the dispute to support its claims.⁸¹⁷ Soon after, the monks would be able to prove their land ownership based only on a written title as witnesses ceased to be mentioned.⁸¹⁸ Conversely, not a single written document was mentioned during the increasingly numerous land litigations between Wallachian laymen (noblemen or free villagers⁸¹⁹) up to the first quarter of the sixteenth century.⁸²⁰ Judgment was based solely on witnesses' oral depositions; these were old and venerable noblemen, appointed by the prince

⁸¹³ Among the few examples see, for instance, DIR A, vol. 3, no. 480 (1588), no. 569 (1590) commissioned by the Moldavian prince Petru Șchiopu for the monastery of Pobrata. For Wallachia see DRH B, vol. 5, no. 232 (1562), DRH B, vol. 6, no. 97 (1568), DRH B, vol. 11, no. 160 (1596). Wallachian charters were commissioned by Petru Cercel and Michael the Brave.

⁸¹⁴ Simon Keynes, “Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 228. For the reception of the Byzantine Law Codes in the medieval Romanian Principalities see Vladimir Hanga, “Le droit Romano-Byzantine a-t-il été reçu dans les principautés Roumaines?” *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 2 (1971): 241.

⁸¹⁵ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 1, no. 221 (1490). Monks provided 24 witnesses while the laymen only 12.

⁸¹⁶ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 4, no. 198 (1547).

⁸¹⁷ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 238 (1493).

⁸¹⁸ Ibidem, no. 295.

⁸¹⁹ DRH B, vol. 2, no. 10 (1504). Two villages disputed a mountain.

⁸²⁰ There is only one exception until 1525. See DRH B, vol. 1, no. 208; the procedure is for the first time more carefully described in 1511 (see DRH B, vol. 2, no. 41 (1511), 85 (1511)).

or chosen by the parties involved.⁸²¹ Thus, it seems that during the early period only monastic institutions were accustomed to the use of charters they had earlier commissioned, while noblemen continued to be fully immersed in the oral tradition.

After the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the use of written documents as proofs of land ownership gradually penetrated the customs of the Wallachian lay society. Laymen began to base their claims for land or defend their property on written evidence. In the first half of the sixteenth century, these documents were rather often not trusted. Frequently, princes declared them to be fake and untrustworthy, hardly giving any further details about their decision, just setting the documents aside and requesting oral testimonies.⁸²² The party unable to provide witnesses was condemned to lose the process regardless of the fact that their land ownership was endorsed in written title.⁸²³ As Michael Clanchy wrote: “The tendency to base the rule on oral witness rather than on documents, shows how cautiously written evidence was accepted. Much important business continued to be done by the word of mouth.”⁸²⁴

Thus, up to mid-sixteenth century, even if the land litigation procedure mentioned written land titles, they were still perceived as inconclusive proof of ownership.⁸²⁵ Traditional oral testimonies were still more reliable and trustworthy.

The invocation of divine intervention into the oral testimonies might have further contributed to its perception as legally binding and solid evidence. The data indicate that witnesses’ confessions were accompanied by oath taking on the books of the Gospel or other rituals that involved divine power.⁸²⁶ Presumably, similar religious elements could be integrated into the first documents as an extra factor of reinforcement. A report from the

⁸²¹ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 4, no. 170, no. 171, no. 177, no. 178, no. 179, no. 181 (1545) where written documents were not even mentioned.

⁸²² DRH B, vol. 4, no. 209 (1547). See also DRH B, vol. 3, no. 23 (1526), no. 50 (1528).

⁸²³ DRH B, vol. 5, no. 36 (1554), DRH B, vol. 4, no. 97 (1539).

⁸²⁴ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 263; Mostert, “Forgery and Trust,” 49-50.

⁸²⁵ Wendy Davies, “Charter-writing and Its Uses in Early Medieval Celtic Societies,” in *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, ed Huw Pryce. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 102.

⁸²⁶ DRH B, vol. 5. no. 161; vol. 6, no. 131.

fourteenth century shows that the first land titles were recorded on icons.⁸²⁷ In addition, they finished with extensive curses. The potential spiritual punishments proved to be very relevant during the disputes that were to follow. The Wallachian princes, even in the second half of the sixteenth century, often invoked the binding force of earlier curses in the outcome of their decisions. For instance, in 1560, Mircea the Shepherd attributed a piece of disputed land to the Tismana monastery since “(...) in the early princes’ charters (provided by Tsimana Monastery, my note M.G.), it was testified by numerous noble and old men that those land estates had belonged to the Holy Monastery. And those early princes cursed in those charters with huge and great curses so that my highness was frightened before God to disregard them (the curses my note M.G.) and destroy the charters of the early princes.”⁸²⁸

Oral testimonies endorsed by oath taking continued to prevail even in the second half of the sixteenth century, regardless of the fact that oath takers were later on often declared perjurers and replaced by other sets of witnesses.⁸²⁹ As Marco Mostert put it: “Testimony gave the past an acceptable form and it was “true” because it created truth. Witnesses who swore a solemn oath on a gospel book could be accused of lying only when God’s authority was denied also.”⁸³⁰ Documents were not mentioned even during certain disputes that stretched over four or more generations.⁸³¹ Offspring as had their ancestors only demonstrated their righteousness on the basis of oral testimony backed by religious rituals. The sons of Lal and Dragomir, for instance, together with their comrades (*cetasi*) entered into a dispute with the villages of Soptani and Malureni with the sons of Bratei Lepsa and of Micsan. After two disputes during the reign of Petru the Young (1559-1568) in which 12 noblemen who took the pledge in favor of Lal were overridden by another team of 24 oath takers, Lal lost the

⁸²⁷ See DRH B, vol. 1, no. 1, note 1.

⁸²⁸ DRH B, vol. 5, no. 184 (1560).

⁸²⁹ See among many others DRH B, vol. 8, no. 113 (1578), no. 169 (1576), no. 188 (1579).

⁸³⁰ Mostert, “Forgery and Trust,” 50.

⁸³¹ See, for instance, DRH B, vol. 7, no. 166. The dispute is attested in 1574 and the record indicates that the family began to dispute its land from the reign of Vlad the Monk (1482-1495).

litigation and his landed estates. However, he did not give up and approached the successor of Petru the Young, Prince Alexandru Mircea (1568-1577), to reclaim his and his brothers' land. After holding other six successive litigations and being beaten three times and imprisoned together with the noblemen who took the oath, Lal's team managed to prove the righteousness of his claims and regain the villages. A complex ritual of reiterated oath-taking on the Holy Gospel by the two teams of oath-takers witnessed by the neighbors and ten priests finally proved sufficient to show the righteousness of Lal. Despite the complex process, a written title was neither provided nor requested.⁸³²

Although the number of charters owned by laymen brought into the disputes increased in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the predilection for written testimonies was not yet firmly established in Wallachia. The narration of the procedure itself indicates that oral testimony was the first to be taken into consideration and only later was its probity reinforced by written documents.⁸³³ Charters, when mentioned, came at the end of the procedures as additional information, apparently used to emphasize the righteousness of the princely justice. Thus, presumably judges and disputants alike grew acquiescent to written testimonies but in the procedure itself (as most probably in their way of thinking) old and traditional oral testimony still prevailed.

The acceptance of documents as a reliable proof of ownership was possibly hindered by the menace of potentially false documents. The increase in the number of charters labeled fake intensified as the probative evidence of the land charters strengthened. Apparently, chancery scribes took an active part in the process. Despite the death penalty or punishment by blinding, professional literates forged family charters either on their own behalf, eliminating other siblings and trying to get a greater share of family land, or in exchange for

⁸³² DRH B, vol. 7 No. 73 (1575).

⁸³³ See among many other DRH B, vol. 8, no.208 (1579), no. 222 (1579).

money on behalf of strangers.⁸³⁴ Some scribes seem to have misused their function to such an extent that princes summoned all those who recognized the specific script of these scribes to disregard their charters: “since they are fake and written without our knowledge.”⁸³⁵

As the documents were usually issued in a single copy without any drafted registers, there was ample room for fraud. Thus, according to Clanchy: “Objectors to written record had a case which was strong in substance as well as in sentiment, since numerous medieval charters were forged and the authenticity of genuine ones was difficult to prove.”⁸³⁶

* * *

Land disputes in Moldavia that had been unfolding since 1418 are grounded more on the written documents than on oral tradition. Similar to earlier land titles, first disputes occurred among noblemen and noblewomen; the first dispute that we know was brought to the princely court by Maicoalea, Stoian’s daughter, who entered into litigation of her estates with other laymen.⁸³⁷ Moreover, written charters belonging to laymen are mentioned during the dispute procedures from the middle of the fifteenth century, almost a century earlier than in Wallachia.⁸³⁸ Besides, by the second half of the fifteenth century, the procedure of certain disputes was solely based on written testimony: “(...)And they litigated and litigated and Ivaşco from Sireţel lost these villages completely for Ion introduced a grand charter showing how Ivaşco had given him these villages willingly; and Ivaşco here, in front of us and in front of our noblemen, could not defend himself in any way.”⁸³⁹ Thus, by 1459, in Moldavia a laymen’s charter could provide sufficient proof about the landed property in his possession.

⁸³⁴ For Moldavia see, for instance, DIR A, vol.1, no.37 (1505), no.259. See also Mostert, “Forgery and Trust,” 54.

⁸³⁵ DIR B, vol. 5, no. 260 (1586).

⁸³⁶ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 297.

⁸³⁷ She was mentioned only by her Christian name, Maicoalea and by the fact that she was Stoian’s daughter. See DRH A, vol. 1, no. 62 (1418).

⁸³⁸ DRH A, vol. 1, no. 210 (1440).

⁸³⁹ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 85 (1459) The procedure was still very schematically recorded. It hardly allows to grasp even who was the plaintiff of the case.

Moreover, over time, oral testimonies came to be replaced in Moldavia by written deposition of the witnesses.⁸⁴⁰

However, when the document was missing, oral testimony substituted the written evidence. One of the most interesting and detailed examples, an apparently verbatim record of a dialogue between the parties involved in a land dispute, indicated that the land title of the defenders had been burnt. The litigants, however, managed to bring the oral testimonies of the priest to whom they had trusted their charter for safekeeping into court. His oath accompanied by the oath of six other priests, testifying that indeed the document had burnt together with the church, was sufficient to prove their ownership and helped win the process.⁸⁴¹

Thus, the documents were not substitutes for the oral reaffirmation of land conveyances but rather intermingled with them. Even when land transactions were carried out by high-ranking Moldavian noblemen, such as Chancellor Mikhail, they made full payment for a purchased landed estate only after the whole ritual of land transition had been performed: “And Mikhail paid them a share out of the cost of the estate in advance and the rest shall be paid when they shall go and shall give him the entire border of this estate according to the agreement; (...) they shall go out in the company of noblemen, and neighbors, and with their old privilege (land title) to give and mark the entire border to Ban Mikhail.”⁸⁴² Thus, apparently even for a Moldavian chancellor at the end of the fifteenth century, a written document was not yet perceived as a legal proof of land succession unless supplemented by the customary ritual. And correspondingly, it did not replace the oral ceremonies but coexisted together with them. Consequently, charters were produced in the state chancery only after the estates had been orally transferred, as a record of the ceremony and of the participating witnesses. During potential disputes, the witnesses whose names had been written down would be able to confess orally in support of the litigants or as a substitute

⁸⁴⁰ DIR A, vol.4, no. 283 (1598).

⁸⁴¹ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 100 (1461).

⁸⁴² Ibidem, no. 21 (1452).

for the recorded document. Thus, a permanent interplay can be traced between traditional rituals and written documents. Documents were involved in oral ceremonies and supported by their performance. As Marco Mostert pointed out: “Probably the charter itself was less important than the performance of memorable rituals.”⁸⁴³

After the turn of the sixteenth century, the number of land disputes lowered in Moldavia. Those attested are almost exclusively resolved on the basis of written documents.⁸⁴⁴ Only exceptionally were litigations resolved on the basis of oral testimonies without any reference to the written documents.⁸⁴⁵ Moreover, along all the recorded land transitions and successions, written documents were regularly mentioned. The frequent use of the documents is testified by a special formula introduced after the turn of the sixteenth century in the Moldavian land charters. The documents specified that a person had sold or donated his true property out of his written land title: The long series of recorded documents indicate that, at least in certain cases, new documents were commissioned with each new generation.⁸⁴⁶

The new salience of written proof of ownership as opposed to the customary, oral ways is illustrated in the following case-study of a large patrimonial family that defined itself as grand nephews of a certain Fete. I followed the transfer of landed property over almost a century in order to highlight the inflection points when the relevance of written information became more important than the traditional manner in which family land succession had taken place before.

The process can be traced from a Moldavian dispute recorded in 1574. During the previous century the entire extended family had based their ownership of the family estate on a charter issued during the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504). Yet, by 1574, several

⁸⁴³ Mostert, “Forgery and Trust,” 52.

⁸⁴⁴ See, for instance, DIR A, vol. 2, no. 168 (1565).

⁸⁴⁵ DIR A, vol. 3, no. 33 (1573).

⁸⁴⁶ See, for instance, DIR A, vol. 2, no.129 (1560).

lineages of the extended family sued a certain branch on the basis that the name of their ancestor, a son of Fete, had been omitted from the original charter issued by Stephen the Great.

It is worth noting that at least the first generation⁸⁴⁷ had previously owned the estate without excluding anybody, presumably basing the non-exclusionary practice on oral tradition. Due to the increase in the probative evidence of the written document, one part of the family *read* and acted solely upon the written evidence against the custom that had guided their family practices previously.⁸⁴⁸

In Wallachia as well, large patrimonial families, becoming conscious of the relevance of written information and consequently of their errors and striving to prevent potential disputes, asked the princes to correct the omissions of, for instance, their grandfather: “So that they had taken their land title in front of my highness and put all sons of their grandfather in my highness’ charter.”⁸⁴⁹

When estates were sold, new charters were issued and the previous ones declared void. However, as apparently no registers were kept by the state administration about the issued documents, old charters could still be used as symbols of land ownership. Apparently, the possession of land titles continued to be associated with property rights. Documents could have been used (or at least were hoped to be used) for proving possession despite the fact that there was no relationship between the family for whom the title was issued and its current owner. Thus, stolen or obtained in other fraudulent ways, land titles were still presumably sufficient to prove ownership of the land.⁸⁵⁰ Consequently, both in Wallachia and in Moldavia, the rich evidence from the sixteenth century indicates that documents could be

⁸⁴⁷ In the charter recording the dispute from 1574, a previous dispute is mentioned, under a prince Petru, supposedly Rareș (1527-540).

⁸⁴⁸ DIR A, vol. 3, nNo. 37 (1574).

⁸⁴⁹ DRH B, vol. 8, no. 25 (1576).

⁸⁵⁰ Susan Kelly, “Anglo Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word,” in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 245.

stolen along with jewelry and other important valuables.⁸⁵¹ For instance, a Moldavian noblewoman, Miriica, wife of Gavril *vornic*, complained in front of Alexandru Lapusneanu (1552-1561, II 1564-1568) that the privilege of her grandfather, “ (...) was lost by her nobleman (husband-my note M. G.) Gavril, a former governor, when many other privileges of his were stolen in Șipote (...)”⁸⁵²

In Wallachia, the stealing of charters or using torture in order to seize documents or seals are as well attested.⁸⁵³ Documents seem to have been seen as a means which could potentially lead to the acquisition of disputed property and those defeated during litigations could kill the winner in their wrath and steal his land titles. For instance, in 1576, “Dolofanii (a large patriarchal family) was filled with resentment and slaughtered Vlad, portar from Șuici for the estates enumerated above (...) and seizing the people who held his titles over the land, he tormented them badly, burnt them and took the titles of the heirs and bought lands, eleven titles of their estates and villages and Gipsy slaves.”⁸⁵⁴ Most probably, the robbers of the documents were unable to read their contents but they were still aware of the value of the land titles as potential symbols of land ownership.⁸⁵⁵

Thus, noblemen in Wallachia as well as in Moldavia carefully safeguarded their written documents. As state archives were not established and as monastic institutions only seldom deposited laymen’s charters, documents were kept at home in the beneficiary’s house or with relatives.⁸⁵⁶ As most houses were wooden and natural calamities⁸⁵⁷ were as much to

⁸⁵¹ DIR A, vol. 1, no. 142.

⁸⁵² DIR A, vol. 2, no. 46 (1554).

⁸⁵³ DRH B, vol. 4, no. 229, DRH B, vol. 11, no. 21 (1594).

⁸⁵⁴ DRH B, vol. 8, no. 21 (1576).

⁸⁵⁵ See also Tóth, *Literacy and Written Culture*, 181.

⁸⁵⁶ The fact is attested from an early period. See, for instance, DRH A, vol.1, no. 199.

⁸⁵⁷ The causes are multiple, but most often is attested burning down houses or even of the entire village (DIR A, vol.1, no. 387, no. 447, no. 525). The information about burnt charters is recurrent in Wallachia and Moldavia. For Wallachia see DRH B, vol. 11, nr. 307 (1598); for Moldavia see DIR A, vol.1, no 147 (1520), no.155 (1520), no.387, no. 447, no. 525.

be feared as human violence,⁸⁵⁸ written land titles could also be buried in the ground or hidden in the hollow of trees,⁸⁵⁹ sometimes with only a single family member knowing the place the document had been hidden. For instance, in 1464, a Moldavian noblewoman named Muşa requested a new title for her estate declaring that the previous one was lost when “Crâstea, son of Pantelei and Muşa fell from a horse and died speechless, unable to tell where the family land title was hidden.”⁸⁶⁰ Litanies deploring lost or stolen titles are abundantly attested.⁸⁶¹ The repetition of the same formulas attesting lost or destroyed charters may indicate the high number of requests to renew lost land titles, especially in Moldavia.⁸⁶²

Thus, the evidence points to the increasing salience of written proofs of ownership both in Moldavia and in Wallachia in the second half of the sixteenth century. Although the role of written documents was still complemented by oral practices, and although its perception still fluctuating between symbolic to legal and back again, the possession of written documents was clearly seen as the most reliable evidence. For instance, a charter from 1596 records a land donation made by the former Governor Dragomir to Chamberlain Radu. The donation (as the charter goes) “was given by his tongue as Dragomir governor was unable to provide him with a written record since Prince Mihnea had been banished from the Wallachian throne and he had to follow him into exile.” Moreover, on his death bed, Governor Dragomir again reiterated the donation “with his tongue and supported it with curses and urged his son to give the village to Chamberlain Pârvu.”⁸⁶³ For Wallachian officials by the end of the sixteenth century, a land donated twice “with his tongue” was no longer a reliable donation even if it was supported by traditional curses. The son of the governor, thus, came before the prince and made an “adequate” donation, meaning with a

⁸⁵⁸Tartar or Turkish plunder is most often attested. See DIR A, vol.1, no. 356, no.396, no. 424, no. 482. Polish plunder is also recorded in Moldavia. See DIR A, vol.1, no. 174 (1522).

⁸⁵⁹ DIR A, vol.2, no. 46 (1554).

⁸⁶⁰ DRH A, vol. 2, no. 121 (1464).

⁸⁶¹They are attested from an early period. See, for instance, DRH A, vol. 1, no. 199. Yet, after the middle of the sixteenth century, their numbers multiplied.

⁸⁶² DIR A, vol. 4, no. 261, no. 265.

⁸⁶³ DRH B, vol. 11, no. 182 (1596).

written charter. This means that by the end of the sixteenth century, at least for high-ranking state officials, any land donation had obviously to be supported by a written record.

7.2 Administrative communication: Written versus oral?

During the fifteenth century, communication between the central and local administration in the Medieval Romanian principalities tended to be oral. However, oral traditions of conveying information seem to have been interspersed by sporadic employment of administrative letters produced by Wallachian and Moldavian princes from the reign of Mikhail (1418-1420) in Wallachia⁸⁶⁴ and of Stefan I (1434-1435) in Moldavia.⁸⁶⁵ The use of writing for administrative communications seems to have been introduced by foreign merchants since during the fifteenth century the few administrative letters that survive were issued mainly on their behalf. In Wallachia, several writs or “written commands from one person to another,” as Michael Clanchy defined them, are also attested.⁸⁶⁶ The fact that these writs were characterized by brevity, their oral style and the manner in which they addressed the addressee directly suggests that they may be among the earliest instances of written communication used in Wallachia.⁸⁶⁷

In the first Wallachian writ that we know of, produced on behalf of Tismana Monastery, Mircea the Old informed the inhabitants of several villages that they belonged to the monastic institution and ordered them to ignore the commands of any noblemen: “(...) and so my highness commands you (...) that you shall not belong to any noblemen or *cnez* (...), if somebody shall be lying to you, you shall not believe him. And all penalties or taxes, from the smallest to the biggest shall belong to the monastery and be collected by Tismana monks and by nobody else; noblemen shall not dare to try to collect them. And any of my

⁸⁶⁴ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 40 (c. 1418-1420).

⁸⁶⁵ Ibidem, no. 141 (1435).

⁸⁶⁶ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 90.

⁸⁶⁷ For the Anglo-Saxon evidence see also Simon Keynes, “Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” 247-8. DRH B, vol.1, no. 69, no. 70, no. 71 and *passim*.

noblemen who will come among you to take you or to put you to work, you shall knock on the head of anyone.”⁸⁶⁸

The recorded information was possibly communicated orally and the document was only used (if at all) in support of the oral speech. The very fact that monastic institutions preserved the document as proof of their village possessions indicates a transition from oral practices to written procedure. Later information suggests, however, that documents were displayed or, at least, perceived as a symbol of the prince's power that empowered the messenger to accomplish the tasks set by the prince. After the turn of the sixteenth century, references to the document became formulaic in the surviving writs. The beneficiary was entitled to display the prince's document as a device supporting his claims while the malefactor was warned to withdraw at the sight of it: “And in this way my highness speaks to you, at the very moment you shall see my highness' book (letter, my note M.G.), in that moment you shall stay away from the estate of the son of Dumitreasa.”⁸⁶⁹ As Anna Adamska and Marco Mostert specified: “Medieval letters not merely represented the sender, they were considered identical with the sender himself. Royal charters being royal letters, they too, could be thought to be the king.”⁸⁷⁰

In Moldavia, writs seem to have been employed only in the second half of the sixteenth century. Apparently, they as well seem to have been issued as a mandate to facilitate carrying out a specific mission. The reason that led to the request of a writ could encompass a variety of situations, from the search for some Gipsy slaves (who presumably had escaped from the monastery⁸⁷¹) to the right to possess a landed estate.⁸⁷² They seem to have been intended to be used as a proof of ownership and not for direct communication. However, at

⁸⁶⁸ DRH B, vol. 1, no.33 (c. 1407).

⁸⁶⁹ DRH B, vol. 2, no.79 (1510-1512).

⁸⁷⁰ Anna Adamska and Marco Mostert “The “Violent Death” of Medieval Charters: Some Observations on the Symbolic Uses of the Documents,” In *Ecclesia, cultura, potestas: Studia z dziejów kultury I społeczeństwa*, ed. Paweł Kras (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2006), 708.

⁸⁷¹ DIR A, vol. 2, no.181 (c. 1568-1572); DIR A, vol.3, no.119 (1583).

⁸⁷² DIR A, vol. 2, no. 150 (1560). See also ibidem, no.412 (1587) and DIR A, vol.4, no.177 (1596).

least in certain cases they were requested even when the estate was previously recorded in writing and owners possessed written privileges. For instance, the bee-keeper Onicica received a document that confirmed his ownership of some beehives. As the scribe stated: “We (Prince Alexandru Lapusneanu- my note M.G.) gave our book to this man, named Onicica the bee-master from the Jamenii bee-garden. For this he shall be strong and powerful enough with this book of ours to master his bee garden, his true purchased possession as it is written in his privilege.”⁸⁷³

The formulaic clause employed at the end of the documents: “And anybody facing this letter shall not dare to stop or hinder him.”⁸⁷⁴ indicates that in Moldavia, as in Wallachia, documents were used as symbols of princely power or at least perceived as such, thus legitimizing their bearer to carry out his mission.

The use of documents as elements of support, while conveying information, was more explicit in the early administrative letters. For instance, in a document from 1495, Vlad the Monk warns one of his county administrators (*vataș*), Tatu from Hîrtești, that he “shall guard that land, and those beehives and shall do your best [to protect them]. And with this book [i.e., charter] you shall shout in the market so that every man shall hear that my highness gave that land to the holy monastery (...).”⁸⁷⁵

It is not known, if the administrator Tatu was himself literate or had to involve the services of a hired scribe or of a monk from the monastery to whom the land belonged. Nevertheless, the local administrator Tatu, as well as the prince, were aware of the necessity to endorse the oral announcement with the written document. Even if the messages were still

⁸⁷³ DIR A, vol. 2, no. 127 (c. 1565). The early documents are usually undated.

⁸⁷⁴ DIR A, vol. 2, no. 182 (c. 1568-1571).

⁸⁷⁵ DRH B, vol. 1, no. 256 (1495). Some fifteenth-century oral practices, if not even earlier, persisted in rural communities up into the present day Romania. The public announcements (sometime with the help of a drum) of the tasks and duties to be performed by villagers were attested in some places even up to the eighties’ of the last century.

conveyed in oral form, the oral communication depended on the written word.⁸⁷⁶ The document and its seals seem to have been perceived as a higher authority than the traditional oral speech.

The use of letters for administrative communication during the fifteenth century, however, seems to have been rather exceptional since the extant data attest only nine letters from Wallachia and four from Moldavia.⁸⁷⁷ Even after the turn of the sixteenth century, the surviving record is low both in Moldavia and Wallachia. According to the extant evidence, in Moldavia, it seems that early administrative letters were mainly issued on behalf of foreign merchants, and only from the reign of Despot Voda (1561-1563) they point to local lay commissioners.⁸⁷⁸

Based on the surviving documents, up to the middle of the sixteenth century, the production of these documents was mainly restricted to princely administration. At other levels, such texts seem to have been mainly received and not produced, as only three administrative letters produced by Wallachian bans or governors are preserved. For Wallachia, indirect evidence nonetheless indicates that local documents were produced to a greater extent. For example, an administrative letter issued by a nobleman (*jupan*) named Radu from Borăști is attested already from 1511.⁸⁷⁹ However, the written procedures by no means replaced the previous oral ones, as almost from the same period, another Wallachian high-ranking dignitary, Deatco Ban witnessed an oath-taking practice concerning a land ownership dispute and testified orally in front of the prince about it.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷⁶ Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 28.

⁸⁷⁷ DRH A, vol.1, no. 122, no. 127, no. 141 (1435); Bogdan, *Documente moldovenești din sec. XV și XVI în Arhivul Brașovului*, no. 5.

⁸⁷⁸ Princely letters were usually addressed to local state officials such as county administrators (see for instance DIR B, vol. 5, no. 1, no. 435; DRH B, vVol. 7, no. 220), urban officials (DRH B, vol. 11, no. 306), or tax collectors (DIR B, vol. 5, no. 200, no. 493). They might have been criticized for their misdeeds (see, for instance, DIR B, vol. 5, no.) or were asked to solve locally various administrative problems on behalf of monastic institutions or laymen (DRH B, vol. 7, no. 220, DIR B, vol. 5, no. 435, no. 439).

⁸⁷⁹ DRH B, vol. 2, no.82 (1511).

⁸⁸⁰ DRH B, vol. 2, no. 110 (1512).

From the mid-sixteenth century, writing began to replace the previous oral procedures more regularly. For instance, between 1546 and 1551, the Wallachian Prince Mircea the Shepherd requested the regional administration to witness an oath-taking procedure. He, in contrast to previous princes, did not request that the speech be conveyed orally but rather specified: “So that, if they take the oath, your highness shall make for them a book (charter-my note) so that my highness shall trust them that they have taken the oath.”⁸⁸¹

Moreover, other indirect data shows that in the second half of the sixteenth century, writing was used by the princes’ officials while carrying out their administrative duties.⁸⁸² For instance, Prince Pătrașcu the Good (1554-1557) sent one of his administrators, Giura clucer (master of the royal house), “to check and write” down all the villages that belonged to the Craovești family along the Jiu river. Moreover, the Wallachian prince asked his official to gather all the existing charters that attested land transactions by the Craiovești family.⁸⁸³

Thus, contemporary information suggests that writing was regularly used by state officials. However, registers on issued documents do not yet seem to have been kept even at the level of the princely office.

Indirect Moldavian evidence supports the assertion that (at least sporadically) administrative letters *were* produced locally as well. Nonetheless, the evidence dates only from the last quarter of the sixteenth century. For instance, a local charter from 1586 issued by Albu, governor of Suceava, explains that the monks from Slatina monastery brought a complaint before the prince that the boundaries of their village had been trespassed. Hence, the commissioner of the charter explains that “(...) Gheorghie, military magistrate of Suceava, sent his letter to us, to gather good and old people from the town of Suceava and from the neighboring places [and settled the issue] (...).”⁸⁸⁴ How Gheorghie, governor of Suceava, was

⁸⁸¹ DRH B, vol. 4, no. 218 (c. 1546-1551).

⁸⁸² DRH B, vol. 5, no. 85 (1557).

⁸⁸³ Ibidem.

⁸⁸⁴ DIR A, vol. 3, no. 402 (1586).

informed about the complaint made by Slatina Monastery is unclear. I assume that the prince may have sent a letter to his official, a well-attested practice. Thus, from a single record I can infer that three branches of administration employed written documents for exchanging administrative information. However, no document survived except for the charter issued by Governor Albas, who confirmed the gathering of the witnesses and settling of the boundaries. I think that the monastic institution might have been more interested in the final charter issued by Governor Albas (*vornic*), in which the procedure, witnesses, and boundaries of the disputed land were stated, than in the previously written requests.”

Thus, in this respect one can also clearly trace the gradual replacement of oral traditions by written documents.⁸⁸⁵ Yet, the written exchange of information may be of quite recent date. Possibly, it was stimulated by the acceptance of vernacular Romanian as the language of record. An indication of this acceptance of vernacular may be the earliest urban administrative letter produced by the town administration of Piatra in 1596, written in vernacular Romanian.

The low number of surviving administrative letters may also be related to a contemporary perception of them as ephemeral and therefore easily disposed of. The scarce and late Moldavian record of administrative letters may be explained by the fact that monastic institutions (the main beneficiaries of the Wallachian administrative letters) may have had better means for perserving documents than Moldavian laymen.

However, although by the end of the sixteenth century the exchange of information between state officials seems to have involved oral and written forms of communication, among private land owners and even the offspring of former high-ranking dignitaries, communication continued to be restricted to oral speech. For instance, in a charter from 1582, the Wallachian scribe specified that the selling of a village by the sons of ban Hamza and others was “shouted in three markets, to find (purchasers-my note M.G.) to buy this estate

⁸⁸⁵ DRH B, vol. 2, no. 110; DIR A, vol. 4, no. 478.

written above (...).”⁸⁸⁶

Thus, the number of surviving documents, next to the contemporary information, indicates that communication via written letters was restricted to high-ranking state dignitaries whose work implied basic knowledge of literary skills or their use of hired scribes. Oral communication was still the norm at all levels of the society, both in Wallachia and in Moldavia. However, the value of written documents as a symbol of princely power seems to have been disseminated across various social categories.

7.3 Last wills

It seems to have been a regular practice in the Medieval Romanian Principalities to hand down property in oral ways. Based on the procedure recorded in a will confirmation from 1557, the procedure was to gather “good people” and donate landed estates “by the tongue”. Generally, an oral declaration in front of witnesses sufficed and, up to the last quarter of the sixteenth century, wills were only exceptionally recorded in writing.

The succession of landed property based on oral traditions has been confirmed by indirect evidence and by the formulae in written wills.⁸⁸⁷ The first written records concerning wills continued to employ the oral formulas according to which property was given “by the tongue of the owner.” The Moldavian prince Rareș, for instance, wrote in his signed will that he had left his testamentary disposition “by my own tongue.”⁸⁸⁸

Gradually oral testimonies began to be confirmed by written records, usually produced in the main state chancery. Evidence indicates that the first transition from oral to written forms of record storage of testamentary wills was issued for ecclesiastic institutions.⁸⁸⁹ Being

⁸⁸⁶ DIR B, vol. 5, no. 57 (1582).

⁸⁸⁷ DRH B, vol.5, no. 296 (1564); DIR B, vol.4, no. 312 (1578); DIR B, vol. 4, no. 353, no. 376, no. 423.

⁸⁸⁸ DIR A, vol. 4, no.129 (1594).

⁸⁸⁹For Anglo-Saxon evidence see Simon Keynes “Royal government and the written word in late Anglo-Saxon England,” 252.

the main beneficiaries of testamentary donations,⁸⁹⁰ monasteries were the leading institutions that encouraged backing-up oral dispositions with written evidence. As the testamentary donations of fathers and grandfathers were often questioned and even reversed by their offspring, monastic institutions used princely documents as an additional device to protect their acquisitions.⁸⁹¹ For instance, the will of the noblewoman Marga seems to have been recorded at her deathbed by monks of Glavacioc monastery in August. As the monks could not rely solely on their own documents, by September they had commissioned another document from the Wallachian prince.⁸⁹²

Gradually, laymen as well began to use written confirmations of former oral wills to secure landed property inherited through last wills.⁸⁹³ Written records as testimonies of princely support acted as shields against potential contesters.⁸⁹⁴

Only by the end of the sixteenth century were written records of testamentary wills commissioned by the actors themselves. Usually the record was produced in the state chanceries.⁸⁹⁵ Donations were sporadically recorded in monastic institutions as well since high ranking clerical officials were among the first issuers of written testaments.⁸⁹⁶ Similarly, parish priests began to play an important role as the first producers of written testaments at the deathbed of the donors.⁸⁹⁷ By the end of the sixteenth century, wills were recorded even at village level, presumably by the priest confessors.⁸⁹⁸ Most of these wills came to light only during the course of subsequent disputes. Moreover, their status as legal proofs was not yet settled as they were brought in only to reinforce and supplement oral testimony. For instance, in a land dispute among several siblings claiming the land inheritance of their deceased

⁸⁹⁰ See, among many others, DIR B, vol. 5, no. 338 (1587), no. 346 (1587); DRH B, vol. 7, no. 5 (1571).

⁸⁹¹ DRH B, vol. 7, no.5 (1571).

⁸⁹² DIR B, vol. 5, no 338 (1587).

⁸⁹³ Ibidem, no.81 (1557).

⁸⁹⁴ DIR B, vol. 4, no. 411 (1579), no. 218 (1576).

⁸⁹⁵ DRH B, vol. 5, no.13 (1551-2).

⁸⁹⁶ DRH B, vol. 7, no. 152 (1573).

⁸⁹⁷ DIR A, vol. 4, no. 35 (1591). For Wallachia see DRH B, vol. 7, no. 37 (1576).

⁸⁹⁸ DIR A, vol. 4, no. 50 (1592), no. 277 (1598).

brother Toader, a plea was initially made for an oral testimony. Thus, the sister of the deceased, Draga, “ (...) brought before us (the prince) good and old people as well as Toader’s confessor, who testified that Toader had left all his estates only to his sister Draga and to her children so that he would be remembered. Thus, she brought witnesses and a note made by his confessor priest Nicoara, and all of them took the oath that he left his estates only to his sister Draga.”⁸⁹⁹

Thus, provisions for testamentary succession were made usually in oral form up to the end of the sixteenth century. Only the last decade of the century marked the transition from oral to written transmissions of testamentary wills. Moreover, it was usually only landed properties that seem to have been perceived as valuable enough and consequently recorded in writing. The donation of other goods is only exceptionally attested in the recorded wills. Besides, even when by the end of the sixteenth century written testaments began to be produced, they were not yet perceived as being of sufficient legal weight during litigations. More reliable were the traditional oral testimonies made by witnesses. However, the fact that in the last years of the century records of wills were attested even at village level suggests that oral forms of settling inheritance had been complemented by written ones. Nevertheless, the process that would eventually lead to the perception of written testaments as solid legal proofs required a long period of familiarization.

Thus, after mid-sixteenth century, both in less literate Wallachia and in Moldavia, documents began to be more valued as proof of landed possessions or as conveyors of information. However, the written documents by no means replaced previous oral practices but rather coexisted with them.

⁸⁹⁹ DRH A, vol. 3, no.520 (1589).

Chapter 8. Conclusions

In this study I tried to trace the spread of practical literacy in Moldavia and Wallachia from the end of the fourteenth until the end of the sixteenth century. After the Roman Empire's withdrawal from Dacia there is no evidence for written culture on the territories of medieval Romanian Principalities up to the mid-fourteenth century. Indirect evidence suggests an extremely limited use of writing prior to the establishment of the states. The use of writing is manifest mainly after the foundation of a central political authority, both in Moldavia and in Wallachia. The surviving data that indicate the use of documents for practical purposes are mainly restricted to records concerning land ownership and communications of various kinds.

8.1 Land charters as promoters of pragmatic literacy

As land titles constitute by far the largest part of the surviving documents, I have concentrated first and foremost on the dynamics of growth as reflected in the increasing number of extant land charters. I could see that the dynamics of growth in the number of documents and their dissemination among various social strata were, especially in Wallachia, strongly correlated with the changes in land ownership and conflict situations deriving from traditional land inheritance patterns and the demands of new land owners. In Moldavia the number of documents seems characterized by a rather monotonous growth, without major inflection points.

Initially, the production of written documents was extremely limited: from state foundation (roughly the second half of the fourteenth century) to the end the fourteenth century, only 15 documents are extant from Moldavia with the same number coming from Wallachia, consisting of land titles and a few political treaties.

In Moldavia, after the first quarter of the fifteenth century, during the reign of Alexander the Good (1400-1431), the number of land charters seems to have gradually

increased: up to an average of three documents survive annually. By mid-fifteenth century, during the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504), the average number of land charters issued each year surviving in the archives increased to ten. After the reign of Stephen the Great to the end of my research period, the sixteenth century, the numbers of Moldavian charters tripled, reaching an average of 31 charters per year during certain reigns such as that of Petru Șchiopu or Ieremia Movilă (1595-1600).

Wallachia's initial increase in the number of surviving charters is slower. During the reign of Mircea the Great (1387-1418), there is less than one charter preserved per annum. It is only by the turn of the sixteenth century, in the reigns of Radu the Great (1495-1507), that this annual number reaches eight. However, by the turn, and especially after the middle of the sixteenth century, the number of Wallachian documents surpassed those issued in Moldavia attaining an average of almost forty-five preserved documents for each year during the reign of Michael the Brave (1593-1600).

While there is a sound expectancy that fewer documents survive from earlier ages, I claim that the increase in extant documents reflects an actual growth in writing practice that characterizes the research period. I stress that the formulary of the early documents reflects unsettled writing practices, while the low value attached to written land titles, up to the middle of the sixteenth century, points to a scarce use of written records.

The type of Moldavian charters being issued remained largely unchanged. Their contents are confined to ordinary land transactions: land ownership confirmations, land sales, donations of land, and, rarely, land disputes. The reasons for issuing documents, their commissioners and producers remain the same. Changes are recorded only with regard to the number of documents. In the subsequent growth I see an indicator of a gradual acquaintance with and acceptance of the use of written land titles. Thus, at least in the early stages, Moldavian society appears to have been more accustomed to the use of written documents

than Wallachian society. The only new type of document commissioned by Moldavian noblemen at the turn of the sixteenth century consists of charters recording the partition of previously owned collective estates.

In Wallachia written land titles are seldom employed up to the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The balance between oral customary practices and writing definitely favored oral practice rather than the latter. Therefore, while in Moldova written land titles were granted, received and re-confirmed as a matter of ordinary business, in Wallachia they seem to have been asked for in extraordinary cases only. These (specific) cases are recurrent in the documents and have permitted me to identify the factors that stimulated Wallachian nobility to use written records instead of the customary oral rituals carried out to perform the same task:

- The first increase in the number of Wallachian charters is related to the desire to avoid *defectus seminis* through the practices of *prefectio* (turning a daughter into a son for the purpose of the law) and fraternal adoption (turning a stranger into a brother). An additional element here is constituted by attempts to circumvent customary land succession.
- The sixteenth-century process of accumulating land to form great estates owned by high-ranking noblemen triggered the appeal of writing to small land owners as they strove to preserve their landed properties against encroachment.
- The great number of land disputes (possibly triggered by the same process of accumulation of land to form them into great estates) brought about a significant increase in the number of Wallachian documents. In this respect, the strengthening of the defensive role of the charters as probative evidence during disputes was essential.

Thus, the analysis of land titles reflects the differences between the written cultures in the two principalities. While Wallachia entered the scene roughly as a pre-literate society, with a strong emphasis on customary (oral) legal practices, in Moldavia writing seems to have had a more secure footing from the onset. The process of transition from collective to individual forms of land ownership in both cases is one of the reasons for the multiplication of land titles. The specificities of Wallachia's social structure brought about major social changes (which are less reflected in Moldavian documents), namely the formation (during the sixteenth century) of large landed estates at the expense of small land holders, a social conflict that stimulated a demand for written records. This situation caused the number of Wallachian documents to increase by almost nine times compared to the end of the fifteenth century, while in the more literate Moldavia, the written land titles only tripled compared to the previous century.

8.2 Foreign relations and trade: essential factors for the early written culture.

The two medieval Romanian principalities were located in an area where written culture was fairly extended in neighboring Hungary and Poland, as well as south of the Danube. In my view, trade and international relations represented the main media through which foreign writing practices trickled down into the lands that I have dealt with here.

Political treaties were among the first conduits of transmission of western cultural and literary traditions to the newly created states of Moldavia and Wallachia, as the first extant treaties were written abroad, in Latin, and using the host's customary format whether it was Poland or Hungary. Early political treaties indicate that both Moldavia and Wallachia were significantly influenced by the practices employed in the Polish and Hungarian chanceries. Later, as the fluctuations between Western and Eastern Christian tradition settled into a strong affiliation to the Eastern Church, the Western influence was gradually coupled with a South Slavonic one.

Correspondence on foreign affairs issued from the Moldavian principality constituted the most important factor that stimulated the production of Moldavian written communication. The constant on-going correspondence with Western kingdoms led, among other factors, to an early establishment of written tradition in Moldavia's chancery. From the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504), when the number of documents increased, Moldavian letters sent abroad indicate established practices, a mature tradition and the ability to produce documents in the official regional languages.

Conversely, in Wallachia, the political relations with neighboring powers seem to have played a less important role in the use of writing; active high level diplomatic interactions resolved in writing almost discontinued after the reign of Mircea the Old (1387-1418) only to be resumed during the reign of Michael the Brave (1593-1601). The style and format of Wallachian Slavonic political letters is often colloquial and oral, the information referred to was called "speech" and its transmission was referred to as "spoken." Especially during the fifteenth century, the style of these letters suggests that there was no differentiation between spoken and written language and that the prince formulated his letters as a direct verbalization to the recipient. These findings corroborate with the very low number of letters that survived, pointing to a 'literate mentality' still shaped by oral culture. Only the letters issued during the reign of Michael the Brave (1593-1600) suggest a gradual establishment of written practices in Wallachia.

Moreover, the first exchanges of diplomatic letters are attested simultaneously with a certain type of document, presumably letters of credence in which written instruments were used just to endorse and confirm oral speech. This indicates that the exchange of information with foreign institutions, both in Moldavia and especially in Wallachia, was based on an interplay of oral and written communications. The oral exchange of political information was gradually replaced by a written exchange in Moldavia, while in Wallachia the documents attest the

continuing and simultaneous use of writing and oral communication up to the end of the researched period.

In Wallachia, written communication was used mainly for trade-related and not diplomatic, documents. The role of trade is especially prominent during the early period, when most of the Wallachian foreign correspondence was related to commercial activities. Out of a total of 21 Wallachian documents preserved up to the reign of Aldea (1431-1433) in the Braşov urban archives, 20 were related to trade. Thus, during a period when written evidence, especially in Wallachia, was extremely rare and was issued mainly on behalf of clerical institutions, trade-related issues seem to have been among the few factors that stimulated the circulation of written documents among a very restricted community of laymen. Foreign merchants stimulated not only the circulation of administrative documents in the Danubian Principalities but led to the production of documents at a local level. The passive reception of documents by the local power structures gradually evolved to take on the active role of documents issuers as the princely letters were soon followed by those of regional and urban state dignitaries. Trade relations with foreign merchants not only stimulated familiarization with written practices at the level of state institutions, but at urban and personal levels as well. Wallachian merchants, similarly to their foreign colleagues, used both official documents (as identification devices) as well as commercial documents (receipts, chirographs, registers) needed in trade exchange. The data testify that they often turned to the princely administration to commission written documents as means to resolve misunderstandings in trade. Traders kept personal archives about ongoing transactions and some issued receipts signed *manu propria*, indicate that some of the traders had mastered active literary skills. Also, the fact that the first Wallachian letter issued in Romanian (1521) was produced by a person involved in commercial activities indicates that Romanian was used in their commercial business before it reached an institutional level.

Nevertheless, based on data from these documents, in most of the early cases the political elite was also a commercial elite. High-ranking state officials (also large landed-estate owners) were often involved in commercial activities. The surviving documents were produced mainly on their behalf. Only after the second half of the sixteenth century, with its switch from international trade to a local/regional one and a deeper involvement of the Wallachian subjects in the trade exchanges, the use of documents ceased to be restricted to high-level state officials.

In Moldavia, trade relations are less well-formed. The impact of writing was limited to the written practices of the state administration throughout the fifteenth century. Certain Moldavian princes and high state dignitaries were involved as well in the commercial activities as, for instance, prince Alexandru Lăpuşneanu (1552-1561, 1564-1568). However, after his reign the practice was discontinued and the use of trade documents was certainly less extensive than that of political and administrative letters.

The direct and indirect evidence for trade (along with other types of documents) indicates that the Moldavian principality was more influenced by Western structures and cultural traditions, while Wallachia enjoyed a stronger southern influence. Thus, trade related documents demonstrate that various trade milieus had an impact on the introduction of written practices in Moldavia and Wallachia.

8.3 The process of dissemination of written practices

Up to the turn of the sixteenth century, most of the documents, whether charters or foreign letters, were issued almost exclusively at the level of the princes chanceries. Only exceptionally documents were produced at the urban and regional level, mainly for foreign communication. After the turn of the sixteenth century in Wallachia, and even half a century later in Moldavia, documents began to be produced for record keeping by other state structures and even private individuals.

In Moldavia, the earliest exchange of letters was employed by towns inhabited by German-speaking communities involved in commercial activities. A century later, by the last quarter of the sixteenth century, land titles began to be produced in Moldavia outside the princely chancery. The first surviving urban land titles indicate that they were produced by the same town administrations that had previously used writing for communication with foreign institutions. Thus, I advance the hypothesis that the correspondence with foreign institutions led to a familiarization with written culture which, later on, facilitated the production of other types of documents (such as charters). I conclude that the richest corpus of written records was produced in urban institutions involved in commercial activities with broad ethnic and religious diversities.

In Wallachia, surviving urban correspondence is scarce and late in date. However, the same pattern is preserved: the urban settlements inhabited by the German-speaking communities were heavily involved in commercial activities and were attested as the earliest producer of foreign correspondence. In towns with multi-ethnic and multi-religious inhabitants (like Câmpulung) the variety of used languages indicates a variety of professional scribes or priests trained in various written traditions.

In contrast to the extant foreign letters, in Wallachia, land charters began to be produced outside the princely chancery, earlier than in Moldavia. Already after the first quarter of the sixteenth century, regional, urban administration and village structures began, sporadically, to issue land titles. During the last two decades of the sixteenth century, it was not only new local producers who are attested but the number of local surviving documents increased in comparison with the previous period. Moreover, the languages of the produced documents diversified further as letters to foreign areas began to employ Hungarian, while the internal charters used Romanian. I assign the multiplication of producers to the impact of the Reformation which reached initially the towns.

Indirect evidence indicates that a large number of local charters attesting land ownership did not survive because of their limited juridical value. Similarly, the fact that most documents intended for administrative, political or commercial communications were preserved in foreign archives, in addition to the better survival rate of the personal archives of those princes and noblemen with strong connections to the Catholic world, confirms the hypothesis that documents' chances of survival were filtered through the existence (or the lack) of established archival practices. However, the significant increase in the production of surviving documents by the last quarter of the sixteenth century, and the dynamics of writing practices reflect an on-going transition that seems to have begun in the second half of the sixteenth century. Thus, even if more documents may have previously existed, the type of documents and the social groups involved in their commissioning and producing might not differ significantly from the image offered by the extant data.

8.4 Who was writing?

Up to the turn of the sixteenth century, the production of documents was restricted to an elite of professionals within the state apparatus. The acquisition of active literacy skills constituted a resource that tended to bring its practitioner to high-ranking social status and wealth. Unlike the norm in the Catholic world, the early scribes in the medieval Romanian principalities were laymen. They seem to have been young and wealthy noblemen, offspring of high positioned clergy or state dignitaries. Careers in the chancery were usually lengthy; skills seem to have been learnt in the office, as during the early period future chancellors were usually selected from former scribes. It may be that writing skills were learned within the family context, as the recurrence of the names of certain families reflects an almost dynastic transmission of trade across generations. Moldavian and Wallachian chancellors and scribes distinguished themselves abroad as the first recorded proto-diplomats. The abundant attestation of the chancery's personnel as foreign emissaries suggests that this was one of their

regular functions.

After the mid-sixteenth century, especially in Moldavia, the social pool out of which scribes were recruited began to include families of the lower nobility. However, the high-ranking social standing and wealth of scribes continued to be well attested. In addition, toward the end of the sixteenth century writing skills became diversified to a small extent beyond the professional scribes to a limited number of high state and church dignitaries. The use of vernacular brought a limited number of village priests into the writing arena. Consequently, priests began to form an active social group out of which chancery scribes began to be recruited. Kinship relations between various scribes and priests are often attested. Moreover, especially in Wallachia, priests became active producers of documents at the local level. The local documents issued in vernacular Romanian strongly suggest that these were incipient and unsettled writing practices.. However, the active literary skills possessed by parish priests were very important in order to supply the demand for the written word at the local level, thus facilitating the transition from oral practices to use of the written record among the lower social strata.

8.5 Oral culture/Literate culture

I revealed the processes of appearance and dissemination of written culture in two “preliterate” societies. This process can be understood only by stressing that at the onset of my study the two principalities relied almost exclusively on oral practices that included, but were not limited to, customary law, practices of administration, proof of ownership and dealing out justice. Gradually, certain common oral customs such as record keeping and communication began to include written documents. Nonetheless, the involvement of documents in the practices of the two societies did not bring about an immediate change in non-literate mentality. Documents neither replaced oral testimonies nor functioned as “real” sources of information. Instead they were perceived as symbols of princely power or as a

symbol of ownership: they were preserved, hidden and stolen as very valuable objects in themselves, with little concern expended on the actual contents of the texts.

Only gradually and inconsistently did written documents begin to replace former oral practices. Despite the fact that at the highest level of these societies writing was used for communication from the first half of the fifteenth century, at all the other levels, even at the end of the sixteenth century, most communication of information took oral forms.

It is only after a number of generations that an inflection point can be identified in the way written records were perceived and valued. In Wallachia, by the end of the sixteenth century, I noticed that written documents were being disseminated among various social strata and, more importantly, there was a change in the way such documents were perceived. Written charters, which earlier had little or no legal weight in the face of oral testimonies, gradually increased their legal value and took precedence over witnesses. By the end of the sixteenth century, transactions of land began regularly to involve written records at least among high-ranking social strata. Moreover, the perception of the documents as powerful instruments during potential social struggles extended down to the village level. Consequently, free peasants began to confirm their rights to land in writing and carefully preserved all pieces of writing, either their own or belonging to others.

However, the written record did not replace the performance of oral ceremonies but rather co-existed with them. As Marco Mostert pointed out: “Probably the charter itself was less important than the performance of memorable rituals.”⁹⁰⁰

By the end of the sixteenth century, there were very few new types of documents indicating that written culture went beyond official communications and the ownership records. Moreover, evidence of active writing skills is still restricted to certain princes or high-ranking state officials. In Michael Clanchy’s words: “What is most evident is that literate habits and assumptions, comprising a literate mentality, had to take root in diverse social

⁹⁰⁰ Marco Mostert, “Forgery and Trust,” 52.

groups and areas of activity before literacy could grow or spread beyond a small class of (...) writers.”⁹⁰¹

By the end of the sixteenth century, in the Medieval Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, I unveil a set of processes that impacted the ways in which written documents were perceived, valued, and acted upon, rather than one in which assimilation of active writing skills spread throughout the two societies.

⁹⁰¹ Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 185.

Bibliography

Archival primary sources:

Documents No. 194, No. 243, No. 332. Fond POB. Cluj State Archive.

Printed primary sources:

Andea, Susana and Avram Andea. "Mănăstirea Râmeț în secolele XIV-XVII. Izvoare documentare" (The Monastery of Râmeț from the 14th to the 17th century). *Ars Transilvaniae. Institutul de Arheologie si Istoria Artei* 2 (1992): 195-203.

Aricescu, C.I, ed. *Condica de venituri și cheltuieli a vistieriei de la leatul 7202-7212 (1694-1704)* (The register of income and expenditures for the years of 1694-1704). Bucharest, 1873.

Axinte, Uricariul. *Cronica paralelă a Țării Românești și a Moldovei*. (The chronicles of Wallachia and Moldavia). Bucharest: Editura Minerva, 1993.

Bălan, Constantin, ed. *Inscripții medievale și din epoca modernă a României. Județul istoric Argeș (sec. XIV-1848)* (Medieval and early modern Romanian inscriptions). Bucarest: Editura Acdemiei, 1994.

Bălan, Constantin and P. Cernovodeanu, eds. "Documente inedite slavo-române din Țara Românească din veacurile XVI-lea și al XVII-lea (1542-1635)" (Unedited Slavonic documents from Wallachia and Moldavia). *Romanoslavica* 11 (1965): 333-355.

_____, eds. *Câteva documente bistrițene (1578-1751)* (Several documents from the town of Bistrița). Cluj: Cartea Românească, 1947.

_____. "Reeditarea unui document din 1411" (The new edition of a document from 1411) *Hrisovul* 7 (1947): 199-201.

Bălan, Teodor, ed. *Documente bucovinene*. Vols. 1-2. Cernăuți: n. p., 1934.

Bălaș, Dumitru. "Hrisoave și scrisori vechi (1549)" (Charters and old letters) *Mitropolia Olteniei* 12.1-2 (1960): 97-100.

Berger, Albert, ed. *Urkunden-Regesten: aus dem Archiv der Stadt Bistritz in Siebenbürgen. Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von Ernst Wagner. Band I-II (1203-1570), Band III (1571-1585)*. Cologne:: Böhlau Verlag, 1995.

Berza, Mihai. *Repertoriul monumenteleor și obiectelor de artă din timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare*. (Repertory of monuments and art objects from the reign of Stephen the Great) Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.P.S., 1958.

Bianu, Ioan and Nerva Hodoș. *Bibliografia Românească Veche 1508-1830* (Early Romanian Bibliography). Bucharest: Stabilimentul Grafic J.V. Socec, 1903.

_____, ed. *Dosofteiu, Mitropolitul Moldovei (1671-1686), Psaltirea în versuri, publicată după manuscrisul original și după ediția de la 1673*. (Dosoftei, the bishop of Moldavia (1671-1686), the versified Psalter according to the original manuscript and the edition from 1673). Bucharest:n. p., 1887.

Bogdan, Damian P, ed. *Acte Moldovenești dinainte de Ștefan cel Mare* (Moldavian

- Documents before the reign of Stephen the Great). Bucharest: Fundația Regele Carol I, 1938.
- _____. ed. *Acte Moldovenești din anii 1426-1502* (Moldavian documents during the 1426-1502 period). Bucharest: n. p., 1947.
- _____. *Diplomatica Slavo-Romana din secolele XIV si XV*. (Slavo-Romanian Diplomatics from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1938.
- _____. ed. *Pomelnicul Mănăstirii Bistrița* (Necrology of Bistrița Monastery). Bucharest: Fundații Regale, 1941.
- _____. *Pomelnicul dela Bistrita si Rudeniile de la Moscova și Kiev a lui Ștefan cel Mare*. (Necrology of Bistrița and the relatives from Moscow and Kiev of Stephen the Great). Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1940.
- _____. *Glosarul cuvintelor Românești din Documentele Slavo-Române* (Glossary of the Romanian words from Slavo Romanian documents) Bucharest: Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1946.
- _____. “Inscripții rusești si ucrainiene din anii 1494-1805 aflate pe teritoriul Republicii Populare Române (Russian and Ukrainian inscriptions on the teriitory of the Romanian Popular Respublic from the years 1494-1805). *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 77. 11-12 (1959): 1018-25.
- _____. “Despre manuscrisele slave din Biblioteca Academiei Române” (About the Slavonic manuscripts from the library of the Romanian Academy). *Arhiva Românească* 4 (1940): 119-26.
- _____. “O ediție de documente slavo-muntene din arhivele Sibiului și Brașovului a lui Sârcu necunoscută la noi” (An unknown edition of Slavonic Wallachian documents from the town archives of Sibiu and Brașov edited by Sârcu). *Hrisovul* 2 (1942): 41-59.
- Bogdan, Ioan, ed. *Album paleografic cuprinzând douazeci și șase de facsimile de documente românești din sec XV* (Paleographic album covering twenty six facsimils of the Romanian documents from the fifteenth century) Bucharest: Socec, 1905.
- _____. *Documente moldovenești din sec. XV si XVI în Arhivul Brașovului* (Moldavian documents from the City Archives of Brașov). Vol.1. Bucharest: Socecu &Comp., 1905.
- _____. *Documente privitoare la Relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească în sec. XV și XVI*, Vol.1 (1413-1508) (Documents concerning Wallachian relations with Brașov and Hungary during the fifteenth and sixteenth enturies). Bucharest: Socecu &Comp., 1905.
- _____. ed. *Documente și regeste privitoare la relațiile Țării Rumânești cu Brașovul și Ungaria în sec. XV si XVI* (Documents and regestas concerning the Wallachian relations with Brașov and Hungary during the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries). Bucharest: Atelierul graphic I.V. Socecu, 1902.
- _____. *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Documents of Stephen the Great) Vols 1-2. Bucharest: Socec & Co, 1913.
- _____. “Inscripțiile de la Cetatea Albă și stăpînirea Moldovei asupra ei” (Inscriptions from Cetatea Albă and the Moldavian suzeranity) *Analele Academiei Romane* 30.2 (1908): 23-47.

- _____. *Vechile cronicе moldovenești pînă la Urechia: Texte slave cu studiu, traducere și note* (Early Moldavian chronicles preceding Urechia: Slavonic texts with translations, comments and notes). Bucharest: Göbl, 1891.
- _____. *Vlad Țepeș și narațiunile germane și săsești asupra lui* (Vlad Tepeș: German and Russian chronicles about him). Bucharest: Librăria Socecu, 1896.
- Brătulescu Victor. "Documente și inscripții vechi din biserici argeșene" (Early documents and inscriptions from the churches of Argeș) *Glasul Bisericii* 20.3-4 (1961): 257-66.
- _____. "Grafitele de la Moldovița" (The graffiti from Moldovița) *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 41.7-8 (1965): 419-26.
- _____. "Inscripții și icoane privind breslele de altadata." (Inscriptions and icons about previous guilds) *Glasul Bisericii* 24. 5-6(1965): 505-10.
- _____. "Inscripții și însemnări din biserici și mănăstiri." (Inscriptions and notes from churches and monasteries) *Mitropolia Olteniei* 17. 11-12 (1965): 971-8.
- _____. "Inscripții și însemnări din biserici și mănăstiri". (Inscriptions and notes from churches and monasteries) *Episcopia Râmnic-Argeș. Mitropolia Olteniei* 18. 5-6 (1966): 463-76.
- _____. "Inscripții și însemnări din bisericile Olteniei: secolele XVI-XVIII" (Inscriptions and notes from the churches of Oltenia: sixteenth to eighteenth centuries). *Mitropolia Olteniei* 14.10-12 (1962): 690-701.
- _____. "Miniaturi și manuscrise din Mănăstirea Putna" (Miniatures and manuscripts from the Putna Monastery) *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 42.7-8 (1966): 460-510.
- _____. "Nume de calugări și de dieci în grafitele de la mănăstirile Voroneț și Humor" (Names of monks and scribes in the graffiti from the monasteries of Voroneț and Humor) *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 41.9-10 (1965): 541-554.
- _____. "Piatra de mormânt a lui Bogdan al II-lea, tatăl lui Ștefan cel Mare" (The tomb stone of Bogdan II, father of Stephen the Great) *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 37.3-4 (1961): 166-80.
- _____. "Pisanii, pomelnice și însemnări din mănăstirea Sărcinești-Vâlcea" (Inscriptions, necrologies and notes from the monastery of Sărcinești-Vâlcea). *Mitropolia Olteniei* 7.1-2 (1955): 84-95.
- _____. "Pomelnicul cel mare al mănăstirii Sucevița" (The grand necrology of the Monastery of Sucevița) *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 44.3-4 (1968): 185-204.
- _____. "Pietrele de mormânt de la muzeul din Fălticeni" (The tomb stones from the Fălticeni Museum) *Buletinul comisiilor istorice* 32 (1938): 38-9.
- _____. "Pomelnicul triptic al lui Alexandru Lăpușneanu din mănăstirea Slatina" (The necrology of Alexandra Lapușneanu from Slatina Monastery) *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 35.3-4 (1959): 179-187.
- Bucur, Tudor, Ioana Burlacu, et al., eds. *Romania: Foreign sources on the Romanians*. Bucharest: General directorate of the state archives of Romania, 1992.
- Bujoreanu, M, ed. *Pravila tipărită la 1640 în Mănăstirea Govora și Pravila lui Matei Basarab (1652)* (The Law code printed at 1640 and the Law of Matei Basarab 1652). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1984.
- Călinescu, Gheorghe. "Altre notizie sui missionari cattolici nei paesi romeni" *Diplomatarium*

- Italicum* 2 (1930): 362-431.
- Camariano, Nestor and Ariadna Camariano-Cioran, eds. *Cronica Ghiculeștilor. Istoria Moldovei între anii 1695-1754*. (The chronicle of the Ghiculești family. History of Moldavia between 1695-1754). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1965.
- Cantacuzino, Constantin Stolnicul. *Istoria Țării Românești*. (The history of Wallachia). Ed. Damaschin Mioc. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1991.
- Caproșu, Ioan “Documente moldovenești din secolele al XV-lea - al XVII-lea” (Romanian documents from the foreign archives) *Analele Stiintifice ale Universitatii “Al. I. Cuza” Istorie* 37 (1991): 171-204.
- Cazacu Matei. “Documente inedite din secolele XVI- XVII” (Unpublished documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) *Studii* 20.2 (1967): 307-12.
- Celac, Tatiana, ed., *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei* (The chronicle of the Moldavian Country) (Chishinău: Hiperion, 1990).
- Chiaro Florentino Del, Anton Maria. *Storia delle moderne rivoluzioni della Valachia*. Ed. Nicolae. Iorga. Bucharest: n. p., 1914.
- Chihodaru, Constantin, Ioan Caproșu et al., eds. *Documenta Romaniae Historica A: Moldova*. Vols. 1-3. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1980.
- Chivu, Gheorghe, Magdalena Georgescu et al., eds. *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea* (Romanian documents and notes from the XVIth century). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1979.
- Codrescu, Theodor, ed. *Uricariul cuprindzietoriu de hrisoave, anaforale și alte acte ale Moldovei* (Register containing chrysobulla, anaphoras and other documents) Vol. 1-3. Iassy: Tipografia Buciumului Român, 1889.
- Constantinescu, N. “Contribuții arheologice asupra curții domnești din Târgoviște (sec. XIV-XVI)” (Archeological contributions to the princely court from Suceava: fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) *Studii și cercetări de Istorie Veche* 15.2 (1964): 225-40.
- _____. “Date noi în legătură cu Cetatea Neamțului” (New data related to the Neamț town) *Studii și cercetări de Istorie Veche* 11.1 (1960): 81-105.
- Constantinescu, Radu. *Vechiul drept românesc scris. Repertoriul izvoarelor. 1340-1640*. (The early Romanian written Law). Bucharest: DGAS, 1984.
- _____. *Manuscrise de origine românească din colecții straine. Repertoriu* (Manuscripts of Romanian origin from the foreign collections. Repertory). Bucharest: DGAS, 1986.
- Corfus, Ilie, ed. *Documente privitoare la istoria României cuprinse în arhivele polone. Secolul al XVI-lea* (Documents concerning the history of Romania found in the Polish archive: the sixteenth century). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1979.
- _____. *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone: Secolele al XVI-lea și al XVII-lea* (Documents concerning the history of Romania found in the Polish archive: the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2001.
- Costăchescu, Mihai, ed. *Documente moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare* (Moldavian documents preceeding the reign of Stephen the Great) Vols. 1-2. Iassy: Viata Romaneasca, 1932.
- _____, ed. *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefan cel Mare* (Moldavian documents from

- the reign of Stephen the Great) Iassy: Institutul de Arte Grafice "Bravo," 1933.
- _____, ed. *Documente moldovenesti dela Bogdan Voievod (1504-1517)* (Moldavian documents from the reign of Bogdan Voievod (1504-1517). Bucharest: Fundația Regele Carol I, 1940.
- _____, ed. *Documente moldovenesti de la Ștefăniță Voievod (1517-1527)* (Moldavian documents from the reign of Ștefăniță Voievod 1517-1527). Jassy: Institutul de Arte Grafice "Brawo," 1943.
- Costin, Nicolae. *Letopisețul țării Moldovei de la zidirea lumii până la 1601* (Moldavian chronicle from the genesis of the world up to 1601), ed. Ion St. Petre. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1942.
- Crăciun, Ilie and A. Ilies, eds. *Repertoriul manuscriselor de cronici interne: secolele XV-XVIII privind istoria României* (Repertory of the manuscripts of the internal chronicles concerning Romanian history, the fifteenth-eighteenth centuries). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1963.
- Crețulescu, Narcis. "Documentele mănăstirii Neamțu" (Documents of Neamtu monastery) *Arhiva. Organul societății științifice și literare din Iași* 21(1910): 341-50.
- _____. "Documentele mănăstirii Neamțu" (Documents of Neamțu monastery). *Arhiva. Organul societății științifice și literare din Iași* 22 (1911): 407-10.
- Cuciu, Ștefan, ed. *Relațiile Țării Românești și Moldovei cu Brașovul 1369-1803. Inventar arhivistic*. (The relations of Wallachia and Moldavia with the town of Brașov). Bucharest: DGAS, 1986.
- Dan, Dimitrie. *Cronica episcopiei de Rădăuți, cu apendice de documente slavone și ilustrațiuni* (The chronicle of Rădăuți monastery with an appendix of Slavonic documents). Vienna, 1912.
- _____. *Mănăstirea și comuna Putna* (The monastery and village of Putna). Bucharest: Socecu, 1905
- _____. *Mănăstirea Sucevița* (Sucevița Monastery). Bucharest: Socecu, 1923.
- Decei, Aurel. "Redescoperirea unor documente moldovenești din secolele XV-XVI" (The discovery of certain Moldavian documents from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) *Revista Arhivelor. Direcția generală a Arhivelor Statului* 69.1 (1992): 13-25.
- Densușianu, Nicolae, ed. *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Colecția Hurmuzaki* (Documents concerning the history of the Romanians. Hurmuzaki Collection). Vol 1-3. With a *Supplement I* containing documents for the years 1518 to 1819 edited by Grigore Tocilescu and Alexandru I. Odobescu, Vols1-4; *Supplement II* containing documents for the years 1510 to 1703 edited by Ioan Bogdan, Vol 1. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1900.
- Djamo, Lucia "Documente slavo-moldovenești inedite din secolul al XVI-lea - al XVII -lea" (Unedited Slavonic documents from Moldavia from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) *Romanoslavica* 10 (1964): 447-56.
- Dobjanschi, Ana, Anca Lazarescu et all, eds. *Arta din Moldova de la Ștefan cel Mare la Movilești*. (Moldavian art from Stephen the Great to Movila dynasty). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1999.
- Dobrescu, Ion. C. "Documente de moșneni (Brădet-Mehedinți) (sec XVII-XIX)" (Documents belonging to free peasants) *Revista Arhivelor* 6.1 (1944): 30-46.

- Dragomir, Silviu, ed. "Documente nouă privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Sibiul în secolii XV și XVI" (New documents concerning Wallachian relations with the town of Sibiu during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) *Anuarul Institutului de istorie Națională al Universității Regele Ferdinand I din Cluj*, 4 (1926-27).
- Elian, Alexandru, Constantin Bălan, et al., eds. *Inscripțiile medievale ale României. Orasul București* (Romanian medieval inscriptions. Bucharest City) Vol.1, 1395-1800. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1965.
- Fecioru, D, ed. "Catalogul manuscriselor din Biblioteca Patriarhiei Române" (The catalogue of the manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Patriarchy) *Studii Teologice* 11.5-6 (1959): 345-87.
- _____. "Catalogul manuscriselor din Biblioteca Patriarhiei Române" (Catalogue of the manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Patriarchy) *Studii Teologice* 11. 7-8 (1959): 474-489.
- _____. "Catalogul manuscriselor din Biblioteca Patriarhiei Române" (Catalogue of the manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Patriarchy) *Studii Teologice* 11. 9-10 (1959): 590-606.
- _____. "Catalogul manuscriselor din Biblioteca Patriarhiei Române" (Catalogue of the manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Patriarchy) *Studii Teologice* 12.1-2 (1960): 93-122.
- _____. "Catalogul manuscriselor din Biblioteca Patriarhiei Române" (Catalogue of the manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Patriarchy) *Studii Teologice* 12.3-4 (1960): 32-256.
- _____. "Catalogul manuscriselor din Biblioteca Patriarhiei Române" (Catalogue of the manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Patriarchy) *Studii Teologice* 12.5.6 (1960): 436-455.
- _____. "Catalogul manuscriselor din Biblioteca Patriarhiei Române" ("Catalogue of the manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Patriarchy) *Studii Teologice* 12. 7-8 (1960): 562-579.
- Florescu, George and Dan Pleșia. "Condica vătăreștilor. Copii de documente, regeste și mențiuni publicate (1535-1712)" (The register of the family of Vătărești) *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 19.5 (1966): 967-86.
- Gemil, Tansin. "Două documente tătarești referitoare la campania din 1476 al sultanului Mehmed II-lea în Moldova" (Two documents concerning the campaign from 1476 of the Sultan Mehmed II in Moldavia) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași* 5 (1968): 185-94.
- Georgescu Florian et al., eds. *Documente privind istoria orașului București*. (Documents concerning the history of the city of Bucharest) Bucharest: Muzeul de Istorie a Orașului București, 1960.
- Ghibănescu, Gheorghe, ed. *Ispisoace și zapise (Documente slavo-romane)* (Acts and charters: Slavonic Romanian documents) Vol 1. part 1, 1460-1600. Iassy: Epitropia Casei Spitalelor Sfântului Spiridon din Iași, 1906.
- _____. *Surete și Izvoade (Documente slavo-romane)* (Charters and translations: Slavonic-Romanian documents) Vol. 1-3. Iassy: Tipografia "Dacia", 1906.
- _____. *Surete și Izvoade: Documente slavo-romane între 1428-1757* (Charters and

- Translations. Romanian-Slavonic documents between 1428-1757) Vols. 24. Iassy: Viața Românească, 1930.
- Giorgescu, Constantin and Dan Simonescu, eds. *Istoria Țării Românești 1290-1690. Letopisetul cantacuzinesc*. (The history of Wallachia 1290-1690. The chronicle of the Cantacuzino family). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1960
- Giurescu, Dinu C. "Anatefterul. Condica de porunci a vistieriei lui Constantin Brâncoveanu" (The registers of tasks of the treasury of Constantin Brâncoveanu) *Studii. Materiale de Istorie Medie* 5 (1962): 353-504
- Grecescu, Constantin, ed. *Istoriile domnilor Țării Românești de Radu Popescu Vornicul* (The history of Wallachian princes by Radu Popescu). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1963.
- _____. "Hrisovul albinarilor (1579-1580)" (The charter of bee keepers) *Hrisovul* 7 (1947): 195-99.
- Grecu, Vasile, ed. *Viața sfântului Nifon*. O redacție grecească inedită (The life of saint Nifon. A Greek original work). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1944.
- Gregorian, Mihai and E. Stănescu, eds. *Cronicari munteni* (Wallachian chroniclers). Bucharest: Editura literară, 1961.
- Grigoraș, Nicolae and Ion Caproșu, eds. "Documente moldovenești inedite din secolele al XVI-lea și al XVII-lea" (Unedited Moldavian documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 21.2 (1968): 243-257.
- Guboglu, M. "Inscripții de pe raclele din catedrala Mitropoliei Olteniei din Craiova." (Tomb inscriptions from the bishoprics of Oltenia from Craiova) *Mitropolia Olteniei* 12.1-2 (1960): 93-6.
- Holban, Maria. *Călători străini despre Țările Române* (Foreign travellers on the Romanian Principalities). Vols. 1-6. Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1976.
- Holban, Theodor. Documente de la răzeșii din Moldova" (Documents belonging to the Moldavian free peasants) *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 56.6-8 (1980): 628-33.
- _____. "Noi documente românești din arhivele polone și franceze" (New Romanian documents from the Polish and French archives) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași* 19 (1982): 591-6.
- Ionescu-Nișcov, Traian. "Două documente inedite din prima jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea" (Two unedited documents from the first half of the sixteenth century) *Romanoslavica* 5 (1962): 151-5.
- Iorga, Nicolae, ed. *Acte și fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor* (Documents and fragments concerning Romanian history) Vol. 3. Bucharest: n. p., 1897.
- Iorga, ed. *Domnia și viața lui Petru Vodă Șchiopul* (The reign and life of the Prince Petru Schiopul) In *Documente de istorie a României. Colecția Hurmuzaki*. Vol.11. Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1900.
- _____. *Acte relative la Războaiele și cuceririle lui Mihai Voda Viteazul* (Documents related to the wars and conquests of Michael the Brave) in *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. Colecția Hurmuzaki*, vol. 12 (1594-1602). Bucharest: n. p., 1903.
- _____. *Acte și scrisori din arhivele orașelor ardeleni (Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu)* (Documents and letters from the Transylvanian urban archives (Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu). *Documente de istorie a României. Colecția Hurmuzaki*. Vol.15.1 (1358-1600).

- (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1911).
- _____. *Documente românești din arhivele Bistriței* (Romanian documents from Bistrita Archives). Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1900.
- _____. *Documente noue în mare parte românesci relative la Petru Șchiopul și Mihai Vitezul* (A collection of new, partly Romanian, documents concerning Petru Șchiopul and Mihai Vitezul). Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1898.
- _____. *Inscripții din bisericile României* (Inscriptions from the Romanian Churches) Vol. 1-2. Bucharest: Institutul de arte grafice, 1905.
- _____. *Relațiile comerciale ale Țerilor Noastre cu Lembergul: Regeste și documente din Arhivele Orașului Lemberg* (The trade relationship of our countries with the city of Lemberg. Regestas and documents from the City Archives of Lemberg). Bucharest: Tipografia Lucrătorilor Asociați: Marinescu și Serban, 1900.
- _____. *Socotelile Brașovului* (The Brașov account book). Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1899.
- _____. *Socotelile Sibiului* (The Sibiu account book). Bucarest: Carol Göbl, 1899.
- _____. *Studii și documente cu privire la Istoria Românilor. Cărți domnești, zapise și Răvașe* (Studies and documents concerning the history of the Romanians. Notes and letters) Vol. 5. Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Instrucție, 1903.
- _____. *Studii și documente cu privire la Istoria Românilor. Documente felurite.* (Studies and documents concerning the history of the Romanians. Various documents) Vol 19. Bucharest: Atelierele grafice Socec, 1910.
- _____. *Scrisori domnești* (Letter of princes) Vălenii de Munte: Neamul Românesc, 1912.
- Iorgu, Iordan, ed. *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei și "o seamă de cuvinte"* (Moldavian chronicle and "Collected Stories"). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1960.
- Isac, Virginia. *Catalog de documente din arhivele statului Iași. Moldova* (catalog of the documents from the state archives of the town of Jassy. Moldavia), Vol. 1 1398-1595. Bucharest, DGAS, 1989.
- Iufu, I. "Manuscrise slave în bibliotecile din Transilvania și Banat" (Slavonic manuscripts from the Transylvanian and Banat libraries) *Romanoslavica* 8 (1963): 451-79.
- Jacimirskij, Alexandr. "Slavianskie i Russkie rukopisi Rumynskikhz bibliotek" (Slavonic and Russian manuscripts from Romanian libraries) *Sbornik otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti* 79 (1905): 25-43.
- Kałużniacki, Emil, ed. "Documenta mołdawskie i multańskie z archiwum miasta Lwowa" (Moldavian and Wallachian documents in the Lwow archives). In *Akta Grodzkie i Ziemske z czasów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z Archiwum tak zwanego Bernardyóskiego we Lwowie* Vol. 7. Lwów: n. p., 1878.
- Kozak, E. *Die Inschriften aus der Bukowina*. Vienna, 1903.
- Limona, Dumitru, ed. *Catalogul documentelor referitoare la viața economică a Țărilor Române (sec XVII- XIX). Documente din arhivele statului Sibiu.* (Catalogue of the documents concerning the economic life of the Romanian Principalities. Documents from the state archives, Sibiu). Bucharest: Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului, 1967.
- Lința, Elena, ed. *Catalogul manuscriselor slavo-române din Republica Socialistă România.* Vols 1-3 (Catalogue of the Slavonic Romanian manuscripts from Romania).

- Bucharest: Universitatea București, 1981.
- _____. *Catalogul manuscriselor slavo-române din Cluj-Napoca* (Catalogue of the Slavonic Romanian Manuscripts from Cluj-Napoca). Bucharest: Universitatea București, 1980.
- _____. *Catalogul manuscriselor slavo-române din Brașov* (Catalogue of the Slavonic Romanian manuscripts from Brașov). Bucharest: Universitatea București, 1985.
- _____. “Doua scrisori inedite ale lui Miron Costin (1684-1685)” *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 11.5 (1958): 79-90.
- Litzica, Constantin. *Catalogul manuscriselor grecești* (Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts). Bucharest : Carol Göbl, 1909.
- Măzăreanu, Vartolomei. *Condica mănăstirei Voroneț*, (The registry of the Monastery of Voroneț). Ed. Simion F. Marian. Suceava: n.p., 1900.
- _____. *Condica Mănăstirii Solca* (*The registry of the Monastery of Solca*), edited by Simion F. Marian. Suceava: n.p., 1902.
- Mehmed, Mustafa. “Doua documente turcesti despre Neagoe Basarb” (Two Turkish documents about Neagoe Basarab) *Studii revista de Istorie* 21.5 (1968): 921-30.
- Melhisedec, Episcop, ed. “Catalog de cărți sîrbești și rusești vechi ce se află în biblioteca sfintei mănăstiri a Neamțului” (Catalogue of the old Slavonic and Russian books of the library of Neamț Monastery) *Revista pentru istorie, filologie și arheologie* 3 (1884): 129-143.
- _____. *Cronica Hușilor și a episcopiei cu asemenea numire* (The chronicle of Huși and its bishopric). Bucharest: n.p., 1869.
- _____. *Cronica Romanului și a episcopiei de Roman* (The chronicle of Roman and its bishopric). Bucharest: n.p., 1875.
- Mihail, Paul. *Documente și zapise moldovenești de la Constantinopol (1607-1806)*. Iasi: Intreprinderea “Lupta Moldovei,” 1948.
- Mihailia, George. “Manuscrisele slavo-române din colecția lui M. P. Pogodin.” (Slavo Romanian manuscripts from the collection of M. P. Pogodin) *Romanoslavica* 29 (1991): 343-392.
- _____. *Studii de lexicologie și istorie a lingvisticii românești* (Studies about lexicology and history of Romanian linguistics). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1973).
- Miletić, L. “Novi vlaho-b’lgarski gramoti ot’ Brashov” (New Slavonic Romanian documents from Brașov) *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenii, nauka I knijnina* 13 (1896): 3-152.
- Mircea, Ion-Radu, ed. *Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești: 1369-1600* (Catalogue of the Romanian documents: 1369-1600). Bucharest; Editura Academiei, 1946.
- Miron, Vasile Gheorghe. *Din tezaurul documentar sucevean, Catalog de documente 1393-1849* (From the archival treasury of Suceava. Catalogue of documents). Bucharest: DGAS, 1983.
- Moisescu, Titus. “Un ancient manuscrit de Putna. Ms 816/S” *Revue romaine d’histoire de l’art. Série théâtre, musique, cinema* 26 (1989): 3-40.
- Muczkowski, Josephus. *Album studiosorum Universitatis Cracoviensis*. Krakow: Typ.Univ., 1892.

- Mustafa, Mehmed A, ed. *Documente turcești privind istoria României, vol 1. (1455-1774)* (Turkish documents related to the Romanian history). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1974.
- Năsturel, Petre Ș. "Date noi asupra unor odoare de la Mănăstirea Putna" (New data about the treasury of the Putna Monastery) *Romanoslavica* 4 (1960): 260-88.
- Nicolaescu, Ștefan, ed. *Documnte slavo-române cu privire la Relațiile Țării Românești și Moldovei cu Ardealul în sec. XV și XVI* (New Slavonic Romanian documents related to the relations of Wallachia and Moldavia with Transylvania during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries). Bucharest: n.p., 1905.
- Nițescu, Constantin. "Vechi ctitorii târgoviștene (Pisanii și inscripții)" (Early churches from Târgoviște) *Glasul Bisericii* 24.1-2 (1965): 128-49.
- Odobescu, Alexandru. "Despre unele manuscrise și cărți tipărite aflate la mănăstirea Bistrița (Vâlcea)" (About some manuscripts and edited books of Bistrița monastery (Vâlcea) *Revista Română* 1 (1861): 703-41.
- _____. "Episcopia de Argeș" (The bishopric of Argeș) *Convorbiri literare* 49 (1915): 1119-25.
- Panaiteanu, Petre P, Damaschin Mioc et al., eds. *Documenta Romaniae Historica B: Țara Românească*. Vols. 1-8, 11. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1983.
- Panaiteanu, Petre P, ed. *Cronicile slavo-române din secolele XV-XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan* (Slavonic-Romanian chronicles from the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries published by Ioan Bogdan). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1959.
- _____. "Documente slavo-române din Sibiu (1470-1653)" (Slavo-Romanian documents from Sibiu) *Studii și Cercetări* 32 (1938): 1-44.
- _____. *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei de la Aron Vodă încoace* (Chronicle of the Moldavian state since Aron Voda). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1958.
- _____. *Manuscrisele Slave din Biblioteca Academiei RPR* (Slavonic manuscripts from the Academy Library). Bucharest, Editura Academiei, 1959.
- _____. *Catalogul manuscriselor slavo-române și slave din Biblioteca Academiei Române*. (Catalog of the Slavonic-Romanian and Slavonic manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Accademy of Science) Second edition ed. Dalila-Lucia Aramă and revised by George Mihăilă. Bucharest: Editura Aademiei, 2003.
- _____. "Cel mai vechi act municipal din Moldova" (The earliest urban document from Moldavia) *Revista istorică* 9 (1923): 183-6.
- Pascu, Ștefan, Constantin Cihodaru et al., eds. *Documenta Romaniae Historica D Relații între țările române* (Relations among the Romanian countries) D, Vol.1 (1222-1456). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1977.
- Pascu, Ștefan. *Contribuțiuni documentare la istoria românilor în secolele XIII și XIV* (Documentary contributions to the history of Romanians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries). Sibiu: 1944
- Petriceicu-Hașdeu, Bogdan. *Arhiva istorică a României* (Romanian history archive). Vols.1-2. Bucharest: n. p., 1866.
- Popescu, Paulin, ed. "Manuscrise Slavone din Mănăstirea Putna (sec. XV-XVIII)" (Slavo Romanian manuscripts from Putna Monastery) *Biserica Orthodoxă Română* 40.1-2

- (1960): 105-45.
- _____. "Manuscrise Slavone din Mănăstirea Putna (sec. XV-XVIII)" (Slavo-Romanian manuscripts from Putna Monastery) *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 40. 7-8 (1960): 688-711.
- Potra, Gheorghe, ed. *Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului Bucureşti (1594-1821)* (Documents concerning the history of the town of Bucharest). Bucharest, Editura Academiei, 1961.
- Rosetti, Alexei, ed. *Scrisori Româneşti din Arhivele Bistriţei (1592-1638)* (Romanian Letters from the city Archives of Bistriţa). Bucharest: Casa Scoalelor, 1944.
- Sacerdoteanu, A. "Din arhiva mănăstirii Cozia 1393-1778" (From the archives of Cozia Monastery) *Hrisovul* 6 (1946): 65-104.
- _____. "Documente de cultură românească veche. Cărţi (sec XVII-XVIII)" (Documents concerning early Romanian history. Books) *Mitropolia Olteniei* 16.5-6 (1964): 449-463.
- _____. "Pomelnicul Mănăstirii Argeşului (sec. XVII- XVIII)" (The necrology of Argeş Monastery, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 83 93-4 (1965): 297-330.
- Sarcu, Polihrom, ed. "Iz' perepiski Rumynskikh voevod' s sibinskim' i brasovsim' magistratami" *Sbornik otdelenia russkago iazika i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk* 77. 2 (1906).
- Smochină, Nicolae, ed. "O pravilă românească din veacul al XVI-lea "Pravila sfinţilor părinţi după învăţătura lui Vasile cel Mare întocmită de ritorul si scolasticul Lucaci în 1581" (A Romanian Law Code from the sixteenth century: "The canon of Holy Fathers according to the teachings of Basil the Great compiled by rethor Lucaci) *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 83.11-12 (1965): 1043-1062.
- Sulkowska, Irena. "Noi documente privind relaţiile româno- polone în perioada 1589 – 1622" (New documents concerning Romanian-Polish relations between 1589-1622) *Studii Revistă de Istorie* 12.6 (1959): 91-100.
- Sulkowska-Kurasiowa, Irena. *Documenty Krolewskie I ich funkcja w panszwie polskim zu Andegawenow I pierswszych Jagiellonow 1370-1444* (Royal Documents and their functions in the Polish kingdom: 1370-1444). (Warsaw: 1977).
- Şimanschi, Leon and Nistor Ciocan "Acte slavone inedite, din anii 1443-1447 privind istoria Moldovei" (Unedited Slavonic documents from 1443 to 1447 related to Moldavian history) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie si Arheologie "A.d. Xenopol"* 11 (1974): 173-187.
- Tocilescu, Grigore G., ed. *534 documente istorice slavo-române din Ţara Românească şi Moldova privitoare la legăturile cu Ardealul 1346-1603* (534 Slavo Romanian historical documents related to the relations of Wallachia and Moldavia with Transylvania 1346-1603). Vienna, n. p., 1931.
- _____. and A. I. Odobescu, ed. *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor (1518-1780)* (Documents concerning Romanian history (1518-1780). Bucharest: Suplimentul Grafic Socecu & Teclu, 1886.
- Veress, Endre, ed. *Akták és levelek Erdély- és Magyarország Moldovával és avasalföldével való viszonyához. Acta et epistolae realtionum Transylvaniae Hungariaeque cum*

- Moldavia et Valachia* Vol. 1 (1468-1540). Budapest: Stephaneum, 1914.
- _____. *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești* (Documents concerning the History of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia) Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1933), vols. 1-6.
- Werböczy, Stephen. *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary. A Work in Three Parts*. Ed. János M. Bak, Péter Banyó, and Martin Rady. Idylwild, CA: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 2005
- Wickenhauser Fr. A. *Die Urkunden des Klosters Moldoviza*. Czernowitz: n.p., 1884.
- _____. *Geschichte der Kloster Woronetz und Putna*. Czernowitz: n.p., 1886.
- Zaharia, Dumitru. *Colecția de documente de la Filiala arhivelor Statului Bacău. (1400-1864)* (The document collection from the Bacău branch of the state archives). Bucharest: DGAS, 1986.
- Zahariuc, Petronel. “Nouă documente din secolul al XVI-lea privitoare la istoria orașului București” (Nine documents from the sixteenth century related to the history of the city of Bucarest) In *Civilizația urbană din spațiul românesc în secolele XVI-XVIII: Studii si documente*, edited by Laurențiu Rădvan, 205-21. Yassy: Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2006).

Secondary Sources:

- Adamska, Anna. “The Introduction of Writing in Central Europe (Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia)” In *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*. Edited by Marco Mostert, 165-192. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999.
- _____. “Orality and Literacy in Medieval East central Europe: Final Prolegomena.” In *Oral Art Forms and their Passage into Writing*. Edited by E. Mundal and Jonas Wellendorf, 69-83. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2008.
- _____. “Waging War and Making Peace with Written Documents: The Kingdom of Poland against the Teutonic Knights (1411-1422)” In *Strategies of Writing. Studies on Text and Trust in the Middle Ages*, 253-263. Ed. Petra Schulte, Marco Mostert and Irene van Renswoude. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008.
- _____. and Marco Mostert. “The “Violent Death” of Medieval Charters: Some Observations on the Symbolic Uses of the Documents,” In *Ecclesia, cultura, potestas: Studia z dziejów kultury I społeczeństwa*, ed. Paweł Kras, 699-709. Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2006.
- Andronic, Alexandru. “Noi contribuții arheologice la istoria orașului Iași” (New archeological contributions to the history of the city of Jassy) *Mitropolia Moldovei si Sucevei* 41.7-8 (1965): 403-8.
- _____, Eugenia Neamțu and M. Dinu. “Săpăturile arheologice de la Curtea Domnească din Iași.” (The archeological excavation executed at the princely court from Jassy) *Arheologia Moldovei* 5 (1967): 169-285.

- _____. "Cercetări arheologice de pe teritoriul oraşului Iaşi" (Arheological research on the territory of the town of Jassy) *Arheologia Moldovei* 9 (1980): 103-19.
- Artimon, Alexandru. "Cercetări arheologice de la at Târgul. Trotuş din anii 1987-89" (Archeological research at Târgul. Trotuş from 1987 to 1989) *Carpica* (1989): 221-68.
- Artz, Frederick B. "Learning." In *The Mind of the Middle Age: AD 200-1500. A Historical Survey*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Badea, Ioan. "În legătură cu epitaful de la mănăstirea Cozia [1316]" *Mitropolia Olteniei* 7.3-4 (1955): 202-4.
- Bălan, Ioanichie. *Mănăstirea Bistriţa* (The Bistriţa Monastery) Jassy: Editura Mitropoliei Moldovei şi Sucevei, 1986
- Balş, G. "Bisericile moldoveneşti din secolul al XVI-lea" (Moldavian churches from the sixteenth century) *Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice* 21 (1928).
- _____. "Bisericile lui Ştefan cel Mare" (The churches of Stephen the Great) *Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice* 18 (1925).
- _____ and Corina Nicolaescu. *Mănăstirea Moldoviţa*. (Moldoviţa Monastery). Bucharest: n. p., 1928.
- Bartoszewicz, Agnieszka "The Litterati Burghers in Polish Late Medieval Towns." *Acta Poloniae Historica* 83 (2001): 5-15
- Bătrâna, Lia, Bătrâna Adrian. "Cercetările arheologice de la Curtea de Argeş" (Archeological research at Curtea de Argeş) *Cercetări Arheologice* 5 (1982): 201-5.
- _____. "Cercetările arheologice efectuate în cursul anului 1979 în Curtea de Argeş" (Archeological research in Curtea de Argeş in 1979) *Cercetări Arheologice* 4 (1981): 144-171.
- Bäumel, Franz H. "Varieties and consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy" *Speculum* 55 (1980): 237-65.
- .Behrmann, Thomas. "The Development of Pragmatic Literacy in Lombard City Communes" In *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West, 1200-1330*, 25-43, ed. Richard Britnell. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997.
- Berza, Mihai. "Haraciul Moldovei şi Țării Româneşti în sec. XV-XIX" (The tribute of Wallachia and Moldavia during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 2 (1957): 7-47.
- _____. "Ultimul manuscris miniat din epoca lui Ştefan cel Mare" (The last painted manuscript from Stephen the Great times) *Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei* 5.3-4 (1955): 109-31.
- _____. "Unde a fost lucrat manuscrisul călugărului Filip din 1502" (Where was produced the manuscript from 1502 belonging to monk Filip) In *Omagiu lui P. Constantinescu-Iaşi cu prilejul împlinirii a 70 de ani*, 275-82. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1965.
- Bethencourt, Francisco and Florike Egmond, eds. *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe 1400-1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Birnbaum, Henrick "Orality, Literacy and Literature in Old Rus" In *Aspects of the Slavic Middle Ages and Slavic Renaissance Culture*. New York: Peter Lang, 1991.
- Bîrsănescu, Ştefan. "Academia domnească a lui Alexandru cel Bun-legendă sau realitate?"

- (The princely academy of Prince Alexandru the Good: legend or reality?) *Revista Învățămintului Superior*. 10.9 (1968): 89-98.
- _____. "Scoala de grămătică din țările române de la finele veacului al XIV-lea și din veacul al XV-lea" (Scribes' school in the Romanian Principalities at the end of the fourteenth and during the fifteenth centuries) *Anal. Univ. Al. I. Cuza. Filoz. Econ. Juridica* 13 (1967): 61-7.
- _____. "Școala greco-slavo-românească de la mănăstirea Putna" (The Greek Slavonic Romanian School of the monastery of Putna) *Revista Pedagogica* 15.6 (1966): 20-31.
- Bloch, Marc. *French Rural History: An Essay on Its Basic Characteristics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.
- Bloch, Maurice. *Ritual, History and Power: Selected Papers in Anthropology*. London: Athlone Press, 1989.
- Bogucka, Maria "The towns of East-Central Europe from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century" In *East Central Europe in Transition*, 97-108. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Boyarín, Jonathan, ed. *The Ethnography of Reading*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Bogdan, Damian P. "Despre unele texte românești vechi (secolele XIV-XVII)" (About early Romanian texts, fourteenth to seventeenth centuries) *Mitropolia Olteniei* 34.10-12 (1982): 663-73.
- _____. "Contribuții la studiul diplomatiei vechi moldovenești" (Contributions to the study of early Moldavian diplomatic) *Revista Istorică Română* 4 (1934): 92-140.
- _____. "Cancelaria lui Mirea cel Bătrân." (The chancery of Mircea the Old) *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 7, 8.39 (1986): 659-668, 729-745.
- Boldur, Alexandru V. *Ștefan cel Mare Voievod al Moldovei (1457-1504): Studiu de istorie socială și politică* (Stephen the Great, the prince of Moldavia (1457-1504): The study of social and political history). Iassy: Junimea, 2004.
- Brătianu, Gheorghe I. *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor în Principatele Române* (The prince' counsel and the assembly of the estates in the Romanian Principalities). Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1995.
- Briggs, Charles F. "Literacy, Reading and Writing in the Medieval West" *Journal of Medieval History* 26 (2000): 397-420.
- Britnell, Richard, ed. *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West, 1200-1330*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997.
- Brown, Warren C., ed. *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.
- Burke, Peter, "The Social History of Language" In *The Art of Conversation*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993.
- _____. *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Camille, Michael. "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy" *Art History* 8 (1985): 27-49.

- Cândeia, Ionel. *Ce povestesc icoanele* (The narration of the icons) Sibiu: Editura Transilvania. 1991.
- Carruthers, M.J. *The book of Memory: A study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Cazacu, Matei “La famille et le statut de le femme en Moldavie (XIV- XIX siecles)” *Revista de istorie* 2-3 (1997-1998): 1-17.
- Cernea, Emil. “Jus valachicum.” *Recherches sur l’histoire des institutions et du droit* 2 (1978): 21-8.
- _____. “Le rôle de la communauté villageoise dans la formation des Etats féodaux roumains” *Analele universității București, seria juridică* 1 (1972): 19-29.
- _____. “Le rôle de la communauté villageoise dans la formation du droit coutumier en Roumanie” *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire* 5 (1971): 119-28.
- _____. “Quelques considérations sur le *Jus valachicum* dans la Pologne féodale” *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire* 5(1971): 845-52.
- _____. “Traditions autochtones et influences étrangères dans l’ancien droit roumain” *Recherches sur l’histoire des institutions et du droit* 1 (1977): 7-18.
- Cernovodeanu, Pavel. *Societatea feudală românească văzută de călători străini (secolele XV-XVIII)* (Romanian feudal society as seen by foreign travelers: fifteenth to eighteenth centuries). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1973.
- Chelcu, Marius “Mențiuni documentare la acte emise de cancelaria lui Alexandru cel Bun” (Documentary mentions about the charters issued by the chancery of Alexander the Good) *In honorem Ioan Caproșu*, ed. Lucian Leuștean, Maria Magdalena Szekely et all. Iassy: Polirom, 2002.
- Chihodaru, Constantin. *Alexandru cel Bun (23 aprilie 1399-1 ianuarie 1432)* (Alexander the Good (23 April 1399- 1 January 1432). Jassy: Junimea, 1984.
- _____. “Învățămintul în Moldova în sec. XV-XVIII. Școala domnească din Iași” (The teaching in Moldavia from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries) *In Contribuții la istoria dezvoltării Universității din Iași*, 9-32. Bucharest: 1960.
- Chiroț, Daniel. *Social Change in a Peripheral Society* (New York: Academic Press, 1976).
- Ciobanu, Veniamin. *Țările române și Polonia. Secolele XIV-XVI* (The Romanian states and Poland. Fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1985.
- Ciobotea, Dinica, Croitoru, Ana. “Cartile de lectură a moșnenilor din Secu-Dolj (sec. al XVII-lea-XIX-lea)” (reading books of the free peasants from Secu Dolj: the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) *In Mehedinți. Cultură și civilizație* 4(1982): 342-6.
- Ciurea, Dimitrie. “Organizarea adiministrativă a statului feudal Moldova (sec. XIV-XVIII)” (The administrative organization of the Moldavian feudal state (fourteenth to eighteenth centuries) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași* 2 (1965): 143-235.
- _____. “Diplomatica latină în Țările Române” (Latin diplomatics in the Romanian Principalities) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iași* 8 (1971): 1-24.
- _____. “Observații pe marginea documentelor latine românești. Studiu de dimplomatică” (Obervation about Romanian Latin documents) *Apulum* (1943-5): 215-50.

- _____. "Relațiile externe ale Moldovei în secolul al XVI-lea" (The foreign relations of the Moldavian state during the sixteenth century) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "Alexandru Ioan Cuza"* 10 (1973).
- Clanchy, Michael T. *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1979.
- _____. "Remembering the past and the good old law" *History* 55 (1970): 166-72.
- _____. "Literacy, Law, and the Power of the State" In *Culture et idéologie dans la genèse de l'état moderne Collection de l'école française de Rome* 82 (1985): 25-34.
- _____. "Medieval Mentalities and primitive legal practice" in *Law, Laity and Solidarities*, ed. Pauline Stafford, Janet T. Nelson and Jane Martindale. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001.
- _____. "England in the Thirteenth Century: Power and Knowledge" in *England in the Thirteenth Century*. Proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium., ed W.M. Ormrod, 1-13. British Campus of the University of Evansville, 1985.
- Codarcea, Cristina. *Societe et pouvoir en Vallachie (1601-1654) entre la coutume et la loi* Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002.
- Collins, James "Literacy and Literacies" *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24 (1995): 75-93.
- Connerton, P. *How societies remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Constantinescu, Nicolae. "Contribuții arheologice asupra curții domnești din Târgoviște, secolul al XIV -al XVI" (Archeological contributions on the princely court of Târgoviște during the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries). *Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (și Arheologie)* 2 (1964): 225-40.
- Costăchel, Viorica. "Dreptul feudal și prădalica" (Feudal law and *defectus seminis*) *Revista Istorică* 31.1-2. (1945): 113-24.
- Craciun, Ion. *Catehismul românesc din 1544*. (Romanian Catechism from 1544). Sibiu: Cartea Românească, 1946.
- Crăciun, Maria "Protestantism and Orthodoxy in sixteenth-century Moldavia" In *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*. Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1997.
- _____. "Apud Ecclesia: Înmormântarea la biserică în Moldova secolelor XV- XVI" (Church burials in Moldavia during fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) In *Confesiune și cultură în Evul Mediu: In Honorem Ion Toderășcu*, ed. Bogdan-Petru Maleon and Alexandru-Florin Platon. Jassy: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iași, 2004.
- _____. and Ovidiu Ghitta, eds. *Church and Society*. Cluj-Napoca: European Studies Foundation Publishing House, 1998.
- _____. eds. *Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe*. Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 1995.
- Cselényi, Béla. *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Moldavian culture during the time of Stephen the Great) Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1964.
- Dâmboiu, Aurel. *De la piatră la hârtie* (From stone to paper). Bucharest: Editura științifică, 1964.
- Damian P. Bogdan. "Diplomatica Slavo-Româna" (Slavonic-Romanian Diplomatic) In

- Documente de Istorie a României*, Vol.2, 3-244. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1956.
- _____. "Cancelaria lui Mircea cel Mare" (The chancery of Mircea the Great) *Revista de Istorie* 7 (1986): 659-668.
- _____. "Cancelaria lui Mircea cel Mare" (The chancery of Mircea the Great) *Revista de Istorie* 8 (1986): 729-745.
- Demeny, Lajos, and Lidia Demeny. *Carte, tipar și societate la români în secolul al XVI-lea*. (Book, printing press and the Romanian society during the sixteenth century). Bucharest: Editura Kriterion, 1986.
- Denise, Eugen. "Carte veche românească în fondurile bibliotecii Institutului de Istorie "Nicolae Iorga" (sec XVI)" (Romanian early books in the collection of the library of the History Institute "Nicolae Iorga") *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Seria Muzeu* 24.4 (1987): 60-6.
- Diaconescu, Emil. *Alexandru cel Bun (1400-31)* (Alexander the Good 1400-1431). Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1968.
- Djamo-Diaconița, Lucia. Un pomelnic necunoscut al mănăstirii Cozia. (An unknown necrology of the Cozia Monastery) *Mitropolia Olteniei* 31.10-12 (1979): 731-46.
- Dogaru, Maria. "Les sceaux des chancelleries de Valachie et de Moldavie" *Typologie der Konigsurkunden* 30. 8-9 (1992): 271-6.
- Donat, Ion. *Domeniul domnesc în Țara Românească* (The estate of the prince in Wallachia). Ed. Gheorghe Lazăr. Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1996.
- Dundes, Alison and Alan Dundes, eds. *Folk Law. Essays in the Theory and Practice of the Lex Non Scripta*. New York: Garland Publisher, 1994.
- Elian, Alexandru. "Legăturile Mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei cu Patriarhia din Constantinopol și cu celelalte biserici ortodoxe" (The relations of Moldavian bishoprics with the Patriarchy from Constantinople) *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 77. 10 (1959): 75-93.
- Eubel, Conrad. "Zur Geschichte der römisch-catholischen Kirche in der Moldau" *Römische Quartalschrift* 12 (1898): 107-29.
- Favier Jean. *Gold and Spices: The Raise of Commerce in the Middle Ages*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1932.
- Filitti, Ion C. *Clasele sociale în trecutul românesc* (Social classes in the Romanian history). Bucharest: n. p., 1925.
- Finnegan, Ruth. *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.
- Fox, Adam. "Oral and literate culture in early modern England: case studies from legal records," In *Fact, Fictions and Forensic evidence. The potential of judicial sources for historical research in the early modern period*, 35-52. Ed. Solvi Sogner. Oslo: Universitet I Oslo, 1977.
- Franck, Gerd, "Un mare ctitor-boier: Luca Stroici" (A high nobleman church founder: Luca Stroici) In *Confesiune și cultură în Evul Mediu: In Honorem Ion Toderășcu*, ed. Bogdan-Petru Maleon and Alexandru-Florin Platon. Iassy: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iași, 2004.
- Franklin, Simon. *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c. 950-1300*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

- _____. "Booklearning and Bookmen in Kievan Rus': A survey of an Idea." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12(1988): 830-48.
- _____. "Literacy and documentation in early medieval Russia." *Speculum* 1.60 (1985): 1-38.
- _____. "Byzantium and the Origins of written Culture in Rus" In *Literacy, Education and Manuscript Transmission in Byzantium and Beyond*, 186-97. Ed. Catherine Holmes and Judith Waring. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Fügedi, Erik. *The Elephantny: The Hungarian Nobleman and His Kindred*. Budapest: CEU Press, 1992.
- _____. "Verba Volant...Oral Culture and Literacy among Medieval Hungarian Nobility" In *Kings, Bishops, Nobles and Burghers in Medieval Hungary*, 1-25. Edited by J. M. Bak. London: Variorum Reprints, 1986.
- Ganshof, F.L. "Charlemagne et l'usage de l'écrit en matière administrative." *Le Moyen Age* 57 (1951): 1-25.
- Gellrich, Jesse M. *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages: Language Theory, Mithology, and Fiction*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Georgescu, Valentin A. *Bizanțul și instituțiile românești până la mijlocul sec. al XVIII-lea*. (The Byzantine Empire and Romanian institutions up to the middle of the eighteenth century). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1980.
- _____ and Ovidiu Sachelarie. *Judecata domnească în Țara Românească și Moldova (1611-1831)*. (The trial before the prince in Wallachia and Moldavia; 1611-1831). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1979.
- _____. « La place de la coutume dans le droit des états féodaux roumains de la Valachie et de la Moldavie jusqu'au milieu du XVIIe siècle." *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 6.1 (1967): 553-586.
- _____. "O biruință a limbii și culturii românești. Primul cod de legi laic" (A victory of the Romanian language and culture. The first laic Law code (Jassy-1646 » *Magazin Istoric* 20.6 (1986): 13-15.
- _____. "Presentation de quelques manuscrits juridiques de Valachie et de Moldavie (XVe-XIXe siècles)." *Revue des Etudes Sud Est Européennes* 6.4 (1968): 625-38.
- _____. "Presentation de quelques manuscrits juridiques de Valachie et de Moldavie (XVe-XIXe siècles)" *Revue des Etudes Sud est Européennes* 7.2 (1969): 335-365.
- _____. "La réception du droit romano byzantine dans les principautés Roumaines (Moldavie et Valachie)" In *Mélanges Henry Lévi-Bruhl*, 373-94. Paris: 1959.
- Geremek, Bronislaw. "Poziomy kultury: przekaz ustny i tradycja literacka" In *Kultura Polski sredniowiecznej XIV-XV*, 366-80. Ed. B. Geremek. Warsaw: Institut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1997.
- Gervers, Michael. *Dating Undated Medieval Charters*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000.
- Ghetie, Ion. "Factori interni și factori externi în problema dezvoltării scrisului în limba română" (Foreign and local factors in the problem of development of Romanian writing) *Limba Romana* 29.2 91980): 123-7.
- _____. "Contribuții la localizarea psaltirilor românești din sec. 16" (Contributions to the localization of the Romanian Psalm books from the sixteenth century) In *Cele mai*

- vechi texte romanesti*. Bucharest: Universitatea din Bucuresti, 1982.
- Giurăscu, Constantin. "Les relations économiques austro-roumaines du XVe au XVIII e siècle." *Revue Romanine Historique* 7.5 (1968): 743-59.
- _____. *Tîrguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene din secolul al X-lea pînă la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea* (Towns or cities, and Moldavian fortresses from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries). Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1967.
- _____. "Organizarea financiară a Țării Românești în epoca lui Mircea cel Bătrîn" (The Wallachian financial organization Under the reign of Mircea the Old) *Academia Română. Memorii Secția istorică* Seria 3.7. 1(1927).
- _____. *Studii de istorie socială* (Studies of social history). Bucharest. Editura Academiei, 1943.
- Giurăscu, Dinu. *Țara Românească în secolele XIV și XV* (Wallachia during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1973.
- _____. "Moldova în relațiile economice europene la începutul secolului al XV-lea" (Moldavia in the European economical relations during the early fifteenth century) *Revista Roma Studii Int.* 1-2 (1967): 171-182.
- _____. "Relațiile economice ale Țării Românești cu țările peninsulei balcanice din sec. Al XIV-lea până în mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea" (The Wallachian economic relations with the Balcan peninsula during the fifteenth and sixteenth century) *Romanoslavica* 11 (1965): 167-201.
- Gionea, Vasile. "La coutume en Valachie, en Moldavie et en Transylvanie durant le Moyen Âge." *Recherches sur l'histoire des institutions et du droit* 10 (1985): 33-54.
- Goilav, Grigorie. "Bisericile armene de prin Țările Române" (Armenian churches from Wallachia and Moldova). *Revista pentru istorie, arheologie și filologie* 12.1 (1911): 99-112.
- Golner, Carol. "Despre aparatul diplomatic a lui Mihai Viteazul" (About the diplomatic apparatus of Michael the Brave) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj* 1966): 85-107.
- Gonța, Alexandru. *Satul în Moldova medievală. Instituțiile* (The village in medieval Moldavia: the institutions). Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1987.
- _____. *Studii de istorie Medievala* (Studies of Medieval History). Iassy: Editura "Dosoftei" Iași, 1998.
- Goody, Jack. *The interface Between the Written and the Oral*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- _____. *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- _____, ed. *Literacy in Traditional Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.
- _____, ed. *Family and Inheritance. Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Gorovei, Ș. Ștefan. "O inscripție de la Iuga Vodă 1399" (An inscription of Prince Iuga 1399) *Anuarul Institutului de istorie și Arhologie Iași* 19 (1982): 657-682.
- _____. "Activitatea diplomatică a marelui logofăt Ioan Tăutu" (The diplomatic activity of

- the great chancellor Ioan Tăutu) *Suceava Anuarul Muzeului Județean* 5 (1978): 237-53.
- _____. "Clanuri, familii, autorități, puteri (Moldova, sec. XV XVIII)" (Kinship, families, authorities and power: Moldavia from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries) *Arhiva genealogică* I (VI) 1.2 (1992): 87-93.
- Gorovei, Ștefan. "Nicolae (Milescu) spătarul. Contribuții biografice," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A.D. Xenopol"* 21 (1984): 179-182.
- _____. "Un cărturar uitat: Logofătul Grigoraș," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A.D. Xenopol"* 23, No. 2 (1986): 681-98.
- _____ and Maria Magdalena Székely. *Princeps omni laude maior: O istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Princeps omni laude maior: A history of Stephen the Great) Putna: Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2005.
- Grămadă, Nicolae. "Cancelaria domnească în Moldova pînă la Constantin Mavrocordat" (The Moldavian chancery up to Constantin Mavrocordat) *Codrul Cosminului* 9 (1935): 129-231.
- Grigoras, Nicolae. "Logofătul Mihul" (Chancellor Mikhul) *Studii și Cercetări Istorice* 19.2 (1946): 123-73.
- Grodziski St. "Le devoirs et les droits politique de la noblesse polonaise." *Acta Poloniae Historica* 36 (1977).
- Gront, Gheorghe. "Nomocanonul lui Manuil Malaxos în Țările Române" (The law code of Manuil Malaxos in the Romanian Principalities) In *Omagiu lui P. Constantinescu-Iasi cu prilejul împlinirii a 70 de ani*, 303-8. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1965.
- _____. "Le droit Byzantine en Roumanie" *Balkan Studies* 7 (1966): 186-193.
- _____. "Dreptul bizantin în Țările Române. Îndreptarea legii din 1652" (The Byzantine law in the Romanian Principalities) *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 13.1 (1960): 57-82.
- _____. "Dreptul bizantin în Țările Române. Pravila Moldovei din 1646" (The byzantine law in the Romanian principalities. The Moldavian Law code from 1646) *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 11. 5 (1958): 33-59.
- _____. "L'Eclogue des Iasuriens dans les pays roumains" *Balkan Studies* 9.2 (1968): 359-374.
- _____. "Le livre de jugement de l'empereur Justinien. Compilation des sources byzantines en versions slave et roumaine" *Revue des études Sud-est Européennes* 6.4 (1968): 639-47.
- _____. "Les nouvelles de Leon le sage dans les pays roumains" *Revue Roumaine Histoire* 6.5 (1967): 717-29.
- _____. "Pravila de la Govora din 1640" (The Govora Law code from 1646) *Studii Revista de Istorie* 14.5 (1961): 1211-26.
- Gurevich, Aaron. "Oral and Written Culture of the Middle Ages: Two 'peasant visions' of the Late Twelfth to the Early Thirteenth Century" In *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, ed. Jana Howlett. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.
- Gutkind, Erwin A. *Urban Development in Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Romania, and the U.S.S.R* Vol.3 New York: The Free Press, 1972.
- Guțu, Olimpia. "Note privitoare la scrisul în limba română înainte de 1550. (Notes concerning

- writings in Romanian prior to 1550) *Revista arhivelor* 60.4 (1983): 390-401.
- Hanga, Vladimir. "Le droit romano-byzantine a-t-il été reçu dans les Principautés Romaines?" *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 2 (1971): 237-55.
- Hasdeu, Bogdan P. "Luca Stroici, Părintele filologiei latino-române," (Luca Stroici: the father of Latin-Romanian filology) in *Studii de lingvistică și filologie*. Edited by Grigore Brâncuși. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1988.
- Heidecker, Karl, ed. *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.
- Henry, Paul. *Les églises de la Moldavie du Nord*. Paris: 1930.
- Hodson, J.H. "Medieval Charters: the last witness" *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 5 (1974): 79-81.
- Holmes, Catherine and Judith Waring, eds. *Literacy, Education and Manuscript Transmission in Byzantium and Beyond*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Hyams, P. "The charter as a source for the early common law" *The Journal of Legal History* 12 (1991): 173-89.
- Innes, Matthew. "Memory, Orality and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society" *Past and Present* 158 (1998): 3-36.
- Ionescu, Dimitrie. "Contribution a la recherche des influences byzantines dans la diplomatie roumaine" *Revue historique Sud-est européenne* 11 (1934).
- Ionescu, Gheorghe. "Un caz de nerespectare de către domnie a 'Mărturisirii martorilor adeveritori'" (A case of dismissal by the prince of the testimony of the testifying witnesses). *Analele Universității București, Istorie* 18.2 (1969): 129-47.
- Iorga, Nicolae. *Istoria religioasă a românilor pînă la 1688* (Romanian religious history up to 1688). Bucharest: Minerva, 1905.
- _____. *Istoria comerțului românesc: perioada veche* (The history of Romanian commerce, early period). Bucharest: Tiparul românesc, 1925.
- _____. "Notes de diplomatie roumaine" *Bulletin de la Section Historique* al Academiei Romane, 17 (1930): 114-141.
- _____. *Polonais et Roumains. Relations politique et culturelles*. Bucharest: Ministeriul de Culte, 1921.
- _____. *Studii asupra evului mediu românesc* (Studies on the Romanian Middle Age) Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1984.
- _____. *Viața femeilor în trecutul românesc* (Women's life in the Romanian past). Vălenii de Munte: Neamul Românesc, 1910.
- _____. "Ce carte învățau odată femeile la noi" (What books our women were previously studying?) *Floarea darurilor* 1.3 (1907): 129-45.
- _____. *Drumurile de comerț creatoare ale statului românesc* (Commercial routes as founders of the Romanian state). Bucharest: Ministeriul de Culte, 1924.
- Isac, V. "Despre originea alcătuirii unor condici de documente privind proprietățile bisericesti din Moldova" (About the origins of registers regarding the monastic possessions from Moldavia) *Revista Arhivelor* 3.1 (1960): 278-81.
- Iuffu, Zlatca. "Manuscrise slave din biblioteca și muzeul mănăstirii Dragomirna" (Slavonic

- manuscripts from the library of Dragomirna Monastery) *Romanoslavica* 13 (1966): 189-202.
- Jacimirskij, Alexandr. "Iz istorii slavianskoi pismennosti v Moldavii i Valakhii XV-XVII vek" (About the history of Slavonic writing in Moldova and Wallachia from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries) *Pamiatniki drevnei pismennosti i iskusstva* 112. Sankt Petersburg: 1906.
- Jakó, Sigismund and Radu Manolescu. *Scrierea Latină în Evul Mediu* (Latin writing during the Middle Ages). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1971.
- _____. "Începuturile scrisului în păturile laice din Transilvania medievală" (The beginning of writing among laymen in Medieval Transylvania) *Studii și cercetări de Istorie*. Cluj 7.1-4 (1956): 81-102.
- _____. "Editarea cărților românești la Sibiu în secolul al XVI-lea" (Romanian books edited at Sibiu during the sixteenth century) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj* 8 (1965): 115-126.
- Kelly, Susan. "Anglo Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Kern, Fritz. *Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1939.
- Keynes, Simon. "Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- King, Charles. *The Black Sea: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Kleinschmidt, Harald. *Understanding the Middle Ages: The Transformation of Ideas and Attitudes in the Medieval World*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000.
- Lacaris, Mihail. "Influences byzantines dans la diplomatie bulgaire, serbe et slavo-roumaine" *Byzantinoslavica*, 3.2 (1931).
- Layton, Robert. "Functional and Historical Explanations for Village Social Organization in Northern Europe" *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1.4 (1995): 703-723.
- Lăzărescu, Emil. "Nicodim de Tismana și rolul său în cultura veche românească" (Nicodim of Tismana and his place in the early Romanian cultures). *Romanoslavica* 11 (1965): 259-77.
- _____. "Despre piatra de mormânt a comitelui Laurențiu și câteva probleme arheologice și istorice în legătură cu ea" (About the tomb stone of comis Laurentius and several historical and archeological problems it raises). *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei* 1-2 (1957): 109-27.
- Legenda, Denisa. "Copiști de manuscrise românești în secolul al XVII-lea-profilul intelectual." (The scribes of the Romanian manuscripts from the seventeenth century) *Studii de istorie a Transilvaniei*. (1994): 135-8.
- Lehr, I. "Comerțul Țării Românești și Moldovei în a doua jumătate a secolului XVI-lea și prima jumătate a secolului XVII." (The Moldavian and Wallachian commercial activities during the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries) *Studii. Materiale de istorie medie*. 4 (1960): 29-51.

- Lehr, Lia. "Organizarea administrativă a orașelor din Țara Românească în anii 1501-1650" (The administrative organization of the Wallachian towns from 1501 to 1650). *Studii. Revista de istorie* 9 2-3.(1956): 57-75.
- Lerner, Robert E. "Literacy and Learning." In *One Thousand Years : Western Europe in the Middle Ages*. Ed. Richard L DeMolen, 165-235. Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974.
- Smith, Llinos Beverly. "The Impact of Literacy in Late Medieval Wales" In *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, ed. Huw Pryce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- Lunt, Horace. "The Beginnings of Written Slavic." *Slavic Review* 23 (1963) : 212-19.
- _____. "The Language of Rus' in the 11th century." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12/13 (1988/9): 276-313.
- Maag, Karin, ed. *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*. Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1997.
- Macurek, Josef. "A influențat actul ceh de cancelarie documentele moldovenești în a doua jumătate a sec. al XV-lea" (To what extent the Moldavian documents from the fifteenth century were influenced by the Czechoslovakian diplomatic) *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 21.1(1968): 3-21
- Maleon, Bogdan-Petru "Statutul fiscal al clerului de mir ortodox în Moldova medievală" (The status of priests in Medieval Moldavia) In *Confesiune și cultură în Evul Mediu: In Honorem Ion Toderășcu*, ed. by Bogdan-Petru Maleon and Alexandru-Florin Platon. Iassy: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iași, 2004.
- Malowist, M "The Problem of the Inequality of Economic Development in Europe in the Later Middle Ages" *Economic History Review* 19 (1966): 15-29.
- Manolescu, Radu. *Comerțul Țării Românești și Moldovei cu Brașovul (secolele XIV –XVI)*. (The Wallachian and Moldavian commercial activities with the town of Brașov). Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1965.
- _____. "Scrierea latină în Moldova și Țara Românească în Evul Mediu" (Latin writing in Moldavia and Wallachia during the Middle Ages) *Revista Arhivelor* 9.2 (1966): 67-82.
- Mareș Alexandru. *Filigranele hârtiei întebușate în Țările Române în sec. XVI*. (The water marks of the paper used during the sixteenth century in the Romanian Principalities). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1987.
- _____. "Cea mai veche culegere de extrase religioase traduse în limba română. din secolul XVI" (The earliest florilegia of the religious fragments translated into the Romanian language during the sixteenth century) *Limba Română* 29.1/29.3 (1980): 239-45.
- _____. "O știre din 1543 despre scrierea românească cu alfabet latin?" (A testimony from 1543 about a Romanian writing with Latin script) *Limba Română* 28.5 (1979): 545-9.
- Marinescu, Florin. "Valorificarea documentelor românești de la Muntele Athos" (The study of the Romanian documents from Mount Athos) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie si Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol"* 26 (1989) 499-509.
- Matei Mircea D. *Contribuții arheologice la istoria orașului Suceava* (Archeological contributions to the history of the city of Suceava). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1963.

- _____. "Probleme de cultură orășenească în Moldova medievală (sec. XIV-XVI)" (Considerations about urban culture in medieval Moldavia) *Studii și Cercetări de istorie Veche*. 16.3 (1965): 533-544.
- Mazilu, Dan Horia. *O istorie a blestemului* (A history of the curse). Bucharest: Polirom, 2001.
- McKitterick, Rosamond. *The Carolingians and the Written Word*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- _____, ed. *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Medyntseva, A.A. Gramotnost' v Drevnei Rusi. Po pamiatnikam epigrafiki pervoi poloviny XIII veka (Literacy in early Moscow. Epigraphic sources from the first half of the thirteenth century). Moscow: 2000.
- _____. "Nachalo pis'mennosti na Rusi po archeologicheskim dannym" (The beginning of writing in Russia on the base of archeological sources). In *Istoriya, kul'tura, etnografiya I fl'klor slavyanskikh narodov: IX mezhdunarodnyy s'ezd slavistov*, 86-97. Moscow: Nauka, 1983.
- Mews, C.J. "Orality, Literacy and Authority in the Twelfth-Century Schools" *Exemplaria* 2 (1990): 475-500.
- Mihăilă, George, ed. *Ioan Bogdan. Scrieri alese*. (Ioan Bogdan Selected works). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1968.
- Mioc, Damaschin. "Les assemblées d'Etats et la fiscalite en Valachie et en Moldavie" In *Anciens Pays et et assemblées d'Etats*, 93-140. Bruxelles: 1969.
- Mostert, Marco, ed. *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999.
- _____. "Forgery and Trust" In *Strategies of Writing. Studies on Text and Trust in the Middle Ages*, Ed. Petra Schulte, Marco Mostert and Irene van Renswoude, 37-59. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008.
- _____. and Anna Adamska, ed. *The Development of Literate Mentalities in East Central Europe*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.
- Monnet, Pierre "Pouvoir communal et communication politique dans les villes de L'Empire à la fin du Moyen Âge" *Francia* 31.1 (2004): 121-139.
- Mullet, Margaret. "Writing in Early Medieval Byzantium." In *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, 156-85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Mundal, Else and Jonas Welendorf, eds. *Oral Art Forms and their Passage into Writing*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2008.
- Munteanu V.Vasile "Organizarea mănăstirilor românești în comparație cu cele bizantine (până la 1600)" (Organization of the Romanian monastic institutions compared to the Monastic Institutions from the Byzantine Empire) *Studii Teologice* 1-2 (1984): 14-92.
- _____. "Organizarea mănăstirilor românești în comparație cu cele bizantine (până la 1600) (Organization of the Romanian monastic institutions compared to the Monastic Institutions from the Byzantine Empire) *Studii Teologice* 3-4 (1984): 169-232.
- Murgescu, Bogdan. *Istorie românească-istorie universală*. (Romanian history-universal history). Bucharest: Teora, 1999.

- _____. „Phanariots” and „Pământenii.” Religion and Ethnicity in Shaping Identities in the Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire,” 196-205. In *Etnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe*. Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 1995.
- Nasturel, Petre. “Legăturile Țărilor Române cu Athosul până la mijlocul veacului al XV-lea” (The relations of the Romanian Principalities with Mount Athos up to the middle of the fifteenth century). *Mitropolia Olteniei* 10 (1958): 735-758.
- Neamțu, Vasile, Elena Neamțu, and Simion Cheptea. *Orașul medieval Baia în secolele XIV-XVII* (The medieval town Baia between fourteenth and seventeenth centuries). Iassy: Junimea, 1980.
- Nedkvitne, Arnved. *The Social Consequences of Literacy in Medieval Scandinavia*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.
- Niculescu, Corina. *Miniatura și Ornamentul cărții manuscrise din Țările Române, secolele al XIV-lea al XVIII-lea. Catalog* (The miniatures of the Wallachian manuscripts from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries) Bucharest: Muzeul de Artă. 1964.
- Nussbacher, Gernot. “Tipărituri românești menționate într-un act de partaj din 1585” (Romanian printed books mentioned in a land partition charter). *Limba Română* 40.1-2 (1991): 73-7.
- Oikonomides, Nicolas “Mount Athos: Levels of Literacy” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988): 167-178.
- Olson David R. and Nansy Torrance, eds. *Literacy and Orality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Olteanu, Ștefan. “Inscripția de pe piatra de mormânt de la mănăstirea lui Iațco din Suceava” (The funerary inscriptions of Iațco Monastery of Suceava). *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 1 (1956): 367-70.
- Olteanu, P. “Pravila de la Govora (1620-21) in lumina izvoarelor bizantino-slave” (The Govora Law Code (1620-1621) and the Byzantine and Slavonic influence) *Romanoslavica* 29 (1991): 105-21.
- Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy. The technologizing of the Word*. London: Routledge, 1982.
- _____, and Bryan Stock “Oral and Written Tradition in the Middle Ages” *New Literary History* 16.1 (1984): 1-206.
- Ostrogorsky, G. “Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1971): 1-32.
- Oxenham, John. *Literacy. Writing, reading and social organisation*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Panaiteanu, Petre P. *Călători poloni în țările române* (Polish travellers in the Romanian lands). Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1930.
- _____. “Comunele medievale în Principatele Române” (Medieval villages in the Romanian Principalities) In *Interpretări Românești. Studii de istorie economică și socială*, ed. Stefan S. Gorovei et al. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1994.
- _____. “Din nou despre diploma bărlădeană din 1134” (Again about the Birlad charter from 1134) *Romanoslavica* 13 (1966): 85-91.
- _____. "Drumul comercial al Poloniei la Marea Neagră în evul mediu" (The Polish trade-

- road to the Black Sea during the Middle Ages). In *Interpretări românești. Studii de istorie economică și socială*, ed. Stefan S. Gorovei et al. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1994.
- _____. “Începuturile dreptului scris în limba română” (The beginning of written law in the Romanian language) *Studii*, 7.4 (1954): 215-228.
- _____. “Les origines de l’imprimerie en langue roumaine” *Revue des Etudes Sud-est Européennes* 6.1 (1968): 23-37.
- _____. *Mircea cel Bătrîn* (Mircea the Old). Ed. Gheorghe Lazăr. Bucharest : Corint, 2000.
- _____. *Octoiul lui Macarie și originile tipografiei în Țara Românească*. (Macarie Octoih and the origin of printing shops in Wallachia). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1939.
- _____. *Obștea țărănească în Țara Românească și Moldova. Orînduirea feudală* (The peasant community in Wallachia and Moldavia: the feudalism). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1964.
- _____. “Cel mai vechi act municipal din Moldova” (The earliest urban document from Moldavia) *Revista de Istorie* 10-12. 9(1923).
- Papacostea, Șerban. *Evul Mediu românesc: Realități politice și curente spirituale* (Romanian Middle Ages: Political realities and spiritual issues). Bucharest: Corint, 2001.
- _____. *Geneza statului în Evul Mediu românesc* (Bucharest: Corint, 1999), 220.
- _____. “Începuturile politicii comerciale a Țării Românești și Moldovei (secolele XIV-XVI) Drum și stat” (The birth of commercial activities of the Wallachian and Moldavian states (fourteenth to sixteenth centuries) Road and State).” In *Geneza statului în Evul Mediu românesc: Studii critice* (The birth of the state in the Romanian Middle Ages: critical approaches). Bucharest: Corint, 1988.
- _____. *Constituirea statelor feudale românești* (The foundation of the Romanian feudal states). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1980.
- _____. “Relațiile internaționale ale Moldovei în vremea lui Ștefan cel Mare” (The foreign relations of Moldavia during the reign of Stephen the Great) *Revista de Istorie* 35. 5-6 (1982): 607-38.
- Papacostea, Victor. “Originile învățămîntului superior în Țara Românească” (The origins of high education in Wallachia) *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 14.5 (1961): 1139-69.
- _____. “O școală de limbă și cultură slavonească la Târgoviște în timpul lui Matei Basarab” (A Slavonic school at Târgoviște during the time of Matei Basarab). *Romanoslavica* 5 (1962): 183-94.
- _____. *Civilizație românească și civilizație balcanică* (Romanian and Balcanic civilization). Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1983.
- Parkes Malcolm B. “The Literacy of the Laity” In *Scribes, Scripts and Readers. Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts*. London: The Hambleton Press, 1991.
- Pârvan, Vasile. *Politica lui Ștefan cel Mare cu Ungaria* (Stephen's the Great policy toward Hungary). Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1905.
- Pâslariuc, Virgil. *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime și domnie în Țara Moldovei în secolul al XVI-lea* (The political relations between grand noblemen and principedom in Moldavia during the sixteenth century). Chishinău: Pontos, 2005

- Patterson, R.B. Earldom of Gloucester. *The charters and Scribes of the Earls and Countesses of Gloucester to A.D. 1217*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973. .
- Peretz, Ion. *Istoria dreptului român* (The history of the Romanian Legal System). Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1972.
- Poncea, Traian Valentin. *Geneza oraşului medieval românesc în spţiul extracarpatic (Secolele X-XIV)* (The birth of the medieval Romanian city outside Carpathian-region from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century). Bucharest: Editura Biblioteca Bucureştilor, 1999.
- Pop-Atanasov, G.I. Vele, and M. Jakimovska-Tošić. *Skriptorski centri vo srednovekovna Makedonija* (Scriptorial centres in medieval Macedonia). Skopje: Filosofski fakultet, 1997.
- Popescu Vâlcea, G. *Un manuscris al voievodului Ieremia Movilă. (Tetraevangheliarul dintre anii 1595-1606)* (A manuscript of the Moldavian prince Ieremia Movila: The Gospel book from 1595-1606). Bucharest: Meridiane, 1984.
- Popovich, Val. "Importante documente privind începuturile industriei de hârtie din Moldova" (Documents related to the beginning of paper production in Moldavia) *Revista Arhivelor* 1.1 (1958): 227-33.
- _____. "Începuturile industriei de hârtie în Moldova" (The beginning of paper production in Moldavia) *Analele Universităţii Al.I.Cuza Şt. Sociale* 1-2 (1955): 87-110.
- Porcescu, Scarlat. "Activităţi culturale la mănăstirea Neamţ în secolul al XV-lea" (Cultural activities at Neamţ Monastery during the fifteenth century) *Mitropolia Moldovei şi Sucevei*, 5.6 (1962): 477-506.
- Potkovski, E. "Écriture et société en Pologne du bas Moyen-Age (XIVe-Xve siècles)" *Acta Poloniae Historica* 39 (1979): 47-100.
- Potra, George. "Contribuţii la istoricul arhivelor româneşti" (Contributions to the study of the Romanian archives). *Revista Arhivelor* 1 (1944): 1-29.
- Pryce, Huw, ed. *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Pungă, Gheorghe, "De ce lipsesc uricele pentru unele perioade din cancelaria Ţării Moldovei?" (Why are charters not issued during certain periods by the chancery of Moldavia?), *Studii de istorie medievală şi ştiinţe auxiliare* 1 (1999), 12-20.
- Racoviţă, Constantin. "Începuturile suzeranităţii polone asupra Moldovei" (The beginnings of the Polish suzerainty over Moldavia). *Revista istorică română* 10 (1940): 237-332.
- Rady, Martin. *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*. London: Palgrave, 2000.
- Rosseti, Alexandru. "Les plus anciennes traductions roumaines de livres religieux" *Dacoromania* 7 (1988): 7-12.
- Rădulescu, Andrei. *Cartea Românească de învăţătura. 1646*. Bucharest : Editura Academiei, 1961.
- _____. "Publicarea izvoarelor dreptului românesc scris din Ţara Românească şi Moldova pana la 1825" (The sources of the Wallachian and Moldavian written law up to 1825) *Buletinul Ştiinţific al Academiei Române Ştiinţă Istorie Filosofie* 1. 3-4 (1948-9): 211-24.
- Rădulescu, Maria. "Un manuscris slavonesc al lui Radu din Măniceşti (1572)" (A Slavonic manuscript belonging to Radu from Măniceşti) *Romanoslavica* 13 (1966): 357-365.

- Rădvan, Laurențiu. *Orașele din Țara Românească până la sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea* (The Wallachian towns up to the end of the sixteenth century). Iassy: Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2004.
- Reynolds, Susan. *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900-1300*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.
- Rezus, Petru. “Școlile de la Mănăstirea Putna” (The schools from Putna Monastery) *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 42. 7-8 (1966): 511-22.
- Ruzescu, I. “Un text puțin cunoscut de drept vechi românesc “Pravila întocmită de Lucaci la Mănăstirea Putna.” *In Omagiu lui Alexandru Rosetti la 70 de ani*. Bucurest: Editura Academiei, 1965.
- Sachelarie, Ovidiu and Nicolae Stoicescu. *Instituții feudale din Țările Române. Dicționar* (Feudal institutions from the Romanian Principalities. A dictionary). Bucharest: Editura Acedemiei, 1988.
- Samsonovicz, Henryk and Antoni Mączak, “Feudalism and Capitalism: an alliance of changes in East-Central Europe” *In East Central Europe in Transition*, 6-23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Schulte, Petra, Marco Mostert and Irene van Renswoude, *Strategies of Writing. Studies of Text and Trust in the Middle Ages*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008.
- Scribner, Sylvia and Michael Cole. *The Psychology of Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Sheehan, M.M. “English wills” *Journal of Medieval History* 14 (1988): 3-12.
- Șimanschi, Leon and Georgeta Ignat “Constituirea cancelariei statului feudal moldovenesc”(The foundation of the Moldavian state chancery) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie si Arheologie A. D. Xenopol* 9 (1972): 107-33.
- _____. “Constituirea cancelariei statului feudal moldovenesc” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie si Arheologie A.D. Xenopol* 10 (1973): 123-51.
- Șimanschi, Leon. “Cele mai vechi sigilii domnești și boierești” (The earliest princely and noblemen seals) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie si Arheologie A.D. Xenopol* 17 (1980): 141-158.
- Simedrea, Tit. “Tetraevanghelul vistiernicului Mateiaș. Manuscript din 1535” (The Gospel book belonging to treasurer Mateiaș) *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 7.3-4 (1978): 179-203.
- Simonescu, Dan. “Un mare editor și tipograf din secolul al XVI-lea: Coresi” (A grand editor and printer from the sixteenth century: Coresi) *Studii și cercetări de bibliologie* 11 (1969): 53-61.
- Skupienski, Krzysztof. “Les chancelleries urbaines et l’Église en Pologne médiévale *In La diplomatique urbaine en Europe au Moyen Age*, ed.W. Prevenier. Leuven-Apeldoorn: 2000.
- Šmahel, F. “L’alphabétisation des couches populaires en Bohême aux XIVe-XVe siècles.” *In Cultura elitarna kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*. Edited by Geremek, 189-204. Warsaw : Zakład Narodowy, 1978.
- Smochină, N. “Le Procheiros Nomos” de l’empereur Basile (867-89) et son applications chez les roumains au XIVe siècle.” *Balkan Studies* 9.1 (1968): 167-208.

- Socolan, Aurel. *Circulația cărții vechi românești până la 1850 în județul Maramureș* (Circulation of the old Romanian books in Maramureș county until 1850). Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1983.
- Spinei, Victor. *Moldavia in the 11th-14th Centuries*. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1986.
- _____. “Comerțul și geneza orașelor în Sud-Estul Moldovei (sec XIII-XIV)” (Trade and the birth of the towns in South Eastern Moldavia) *Analele Brailei* 1.1 (1993): 171-236.
- _____. “Coexistența populației locale din Moldova cu grupurile etnice alogene în sec. XIII-XIV” (Coexistence of the Moldavian ethnic group with other ethnic communities during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) *Acta moldaviae Meridionalis* 2 (1980): 157-176.
- Spufford, M. “First Steps in Literacy.” *Social History* 4 (1979): 407-35.
- Stafford, Pauline, Janet T. Nelson and Jane Martindale, eds. *Law, Laity and Solidarities*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001.
- Stahl, Henri H. *Traditional Romanian Village Communities: The transition from the Communal to the Capitalist Mode of Production in the Danube Region*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- _____. *Controverse de istorie socială românească* (Controversial issues about Romanian Social History). Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1969.
- _____. *Contribuții la studiul satelor devălmașe românești* (Contributions to the study of the Romanian Village Communities). Vols 1-3. Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1998.
- Stock, Brian. *Listening for the Text. On the Uses of the Past*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.
- _____. *The implications of Literacy . Written Language and the Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Stoicescu, Nicolae. *Sfatul domnesc și marii dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova (sec XIV-XVII)* (Princely counsel and high state officials from Wallachia and Moldavia). Bucharest: 1968.
- _____. *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova: sec. XIV- XVII* (A dictionary about high state officials from Wallachia and Moldavia). Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1971.
- _____. “Lista marilor dregători moldoveni (1384-1711)” (High Moldavian state officials: 1384-1711) *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie si Arheologie “A.D. Xenopol”* 8 (1971): 401-25.
- _____. “Organizarea statala in vremea domniei lui Mircea cel Mare” (The organisation of the state during the reign of Mircea the Old). *Studii. Revista de Istorie* 39.7 (1986): 625-42.
- Ștrempel, Gabriel. “Biblioteci de manuscrise medievale românești (s. XVI-XVIII)” (Romanian medieval manuscripts (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries). *Magazin Istoric* 20.5 (1986): 30-32.
- _____. *Copiști de manuscrise românești până la 1800* (Scribes of the medieval Romanian manuscripts up to 1800) Vol. 1. Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1959.
- Székely, Maria Magdalena. *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rareș*. (The high state dignitaries of prince Petru Rareș) Iassy: Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2002.

- _____. "Testamentele: o abordare preliminară" (Wills: A preliminary approach) *Revista de Istorie Sociala* 2-3 (1997-1998): 25-31.
- Tamaș, Corneliu. "Cancelaria în timpul lui Mircea cel Batran" (State chancery under the reign of Mircea the Old) *Historica* 3 (1974): 111-20.
- Thompson, Francis J. *The reception of Byzantine Culture in Mediaeval Russia*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1999.
- _____. "The nature of the Reception of Christian Byzantine Culture in Russia in the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries and Its Implications for Russian Culture" *Slavica Gandensia* 5 (1978): 107-39.
- Țighiliu, Iolanda. *Societate și mentalitate în Țara Românească și Moldova, Secolele XV-XVII* (Societies and mentalities in Wallachia and Moldavia). Bucharest: Paideia, 1998.
- Tikhomirov, Mikhail. "Gorodskaya pis'mennosti' v drevnei Rusi XI-XIII vv. (Urban literacy in Old Russia from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries) *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* 9 (1953): 52-66.
- Tóth, István György. *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe*. Budapest: Central European University, 2000.
- Turdeanu, Emil. *Études des littérature roumaine et d'écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines*. Brill: Leiden, 1985.
- _____. *La littérature bulgare au XIV-siècle et sa diffusion dans les pays romanins*. Paris: 1947
- _____. "Les lettres slaves en Moldavie: le moine Gabriel du monastere du Neamt (1427-1447)." *Revue des études slaves* 27 (1951): 267-278.
- _____. "The Oldest Illuminated Moldavian Manuscript." *Slavonic and East European Review* 29 (1951): 456-69.
- Turner, Ralph V. "The Miles Literatus in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century England: How Rare a Phenomenon?" *The American Historical Review* 83.4 (1978): 928-945.
- Voiculescu, Mircea. "O invitație la nuntă de acum cinci veacuri" (A wedding invitation of five centuries ago). *Magazin istoric* 25 (1991) 84-85.
- Ward, Jennifer C. "Noblewomen, Family, and Identity in Later Medieval Europe" In *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations*. Ed. Anne J. Duggan. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000.
- Wormald, C.P. "The uses of literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and its neighbours" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 27 (1977): 95-114.
- Wunsch, Thomas and Andrzej Janeczek, eds. *On the Frontier of Latin Europe: Integration and Segregation in Red Ruthenia, 1350-1600*. Warsaw: n.p., 2004.
- Zugrav, I. "'Când am fost la Rădăuți de învățam carte..." Însemnări pe două cărți din secolele XVII și XVIII" (From the times I was studying at Rădăuți: Notes on two books from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 43. 3-4 (1967): 306-8.
- Queller, Donald E. "Thirteenth-Century Diplomatic Envoys: *Nuncii et Procuratores*" *Speculum* 35 (1960): 196-213.