



The Danubian Principalities in the Politics of Russia and Prussia at the Time of the Turkish War and the First Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1768–1774). An Attempt at Reinterpretation

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Abstract. The article focuses on the issue of Danubian Principalities in the negotiations between Russia, Prussia, Austria and Poland-Lithuania during the Russo-Turkish War (1768–1774) as well as in the preparations for the first partition of the Commonwealth. The text answers the question why the partitioning powers did not hand over Moldavia and Wallachia to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as compensation for the partition. The study shows how the main actors in the negotiations used the issue of Moldavia and Wallachia. It shows that none of the parties treated this issue as a really important factor.

Keywords: *Moldavia, Wallachia, Russia, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, First partition, Russo-Turkish war.*

Anotacija. Straipsnyje nagrinėjama Dunojaus kunigaikštysčių problema derybose tarp Rusijos, Prūsijos, Austrijos ir Abiejų Tautų Respublikos per Rusijos ir Turkijos karą (1768–1774) bei rengiantis Pirmajam Respublikos padalijimui. Tekste atsakoma į klausimą, kodėl padalijimo galybės neperdavė Moldavijos ir Valakijos Abiejų Tautų Respublikai kaip kompensacijos už padalijimą. Tyrimas rodo, kaip pagrindiniai derybų dalyviai naudojo Moldavijos ir Valakijos klausimą. Parodoma, kad nė viena šalis nelaiškė šio klausimo iš tikrųjų svarbiu veiksniu.

Esminiai žodžiai: *Moldavija, Valakija, Rusija, Lenkijos ir Lietuvos sandrauga, Pirmasis padalijimas, Rusijos ir Turkijos karas.*

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Introduction

The affairs of the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia are widely present in the literature on the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774 and the first partition of Poland-Lithuania. They were woven by Albert Sorel into a narrative of the negotiations between the powers in the context of the Turkish War and the first partition of the Commonwealth. However, the treatment of the disputed Moldavian-Wallachian thread in his celebrated book *La Question d'Orient au XVIIIe: le partage de la Pologne, le traité de Kainardji* (Paris 1877, 1889) contains many inaccuracies.¹ A much more coherent picture was offered in the 19th and early 20th century by Romanian historians Mihail Kogălniceanu and Nicolae Iorga, whose findings are still used by researchers today.² One can meet, both in research and popular works, a view that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was to receive from the partitioners the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, lying between the Dniester and the Danube, as compensation for the lands lost in the first partition. According to some authors, this would be a Prussian idea, others attribute it to Russia. Those who write about this plan usually do not trouble about why it was not enforced. This is why the idea arose to look at how the matter of ceding the Danubian Principalities to the Commonwealth was actually presented. Therefore, I considered it necessary to verify the opinions of the historiography to date based on a detailed analysis of the sources, which have so far been used incompletely: this became the first

¹ While writing this article I have utilised the Polish translation of Sorel's book, SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardzyski* [= *La Question d'Orient au XVIIIe: le partage de la Pologne, le traité de Kainardji*, 1st. edition 1878]. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981.

² Cf. e.g.: DAVISON, Roderic H. Russian Skill and Turkish Imbecility: The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered. *Slavic Review* 35, 3 (Sep., 1976), p. 465; TOPAKTAŞ, Hacer. What Happened beyond the Border: Some Reports of the Moldavian and Wallachian Voivods related to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1764–1795). In *Turkey & Romania. A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans* (pp. 272, 275–76). Istanbul: TDBB, 2016; CIOBANU, Veniamin. Confederația de la Bar și implicațiile ei pentru Moldova (1768–1771). *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie* 7 (1970), p. 289. Ciobanu, still referred to by many later scholars, attributed, with some hesitation admittedly, to Frederick II the authorship of the idea of indemnifying the Commonwealth for the partition at the expense of Moldavia and Wallachia, cf. note 58.

aim of the article. The second, on the other hand, is to answer a number of questions. Some of them have not been posed by historians who have researched this issue before me. Who, when and why formulated an idea of compensating the Commonwealth with the Danubian territories for the partition? Did any of the partitioning powers (Russia, Prussia or the Habsburg Empire) take this proposal seriously? Under what circumstances did it arise? When did it disappear from the negotiations conducted in the St. Petersburg-Berlin-Vienna triangle? What purpose did it serve? What were other ideas about the Danubian Principalities during the Russo-Turkish War? I will try to answer this question starting from my recent research on the genesis of the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth³ and critically analysing the diplomatic correspondence circulating between Russia and Prussia in the era of the Turkish War 1768–1774.

Moldavia and Wallachia at the dawn of the Russo-Turkish War

Moldavia and Wallachia in the second half of the 18th century were tributarian states in close dependence on the Ottoman Porte. The *hospodars* (princes) were chosen in Constantinople from among the Ottomanised Phanariot families.⁴ The period of Phanariot rule is described in the literature as lasting until 1774⁵ (some would say it lasted well into 1830s).⁶ From the Turkish point of view, the Principalities served as a buffer separating the Ottoman Empire from Russia and as a supply area for the Ottoman army.⁷ On the whole Moldavia and Wallachia were becoming more vulner-

³ DUKWICZ, Dorota. *Na drodze do pierwszego rozbioru. Rosja i Prusy wobec Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1768–1771*. Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2022.

⁴ KOŁODZIEJCZYK, Dariusz. What is inside and what is outside? Tributary states in Ottoman politics. In Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (eds.), *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries* (pp. 421–32). Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2013; WASIUCIONEK, Michał. Placing the Danubian Principalities within the Composite Ottoman Empire. In *Turkey & Romania. A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans* (pp. 167–180). Istanbul: TDBB, 2016; PANAITE, Viorel. Wallachia and Moldavia from the Ottoman Juridical and Political Viewpoint, 1774–1829. In Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovo (eds.), *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760–1850: Conflict, Transformation, Adaptation* (pp. 21–44). Rethymno: University of Crete – Department of History and Archaeology, 2007.

⁵ TAKI, Victor. The Russian Protectorate in the Danubian Principalities: Legacies of the Eastern Question in Contemporary Russian-Romanian Relations. In Lucien J. Frary and Mara Kozelsky (eds.), *Russian-Ottoman borderlands: The Eastern question reconsidered* (p. 63). Madison: University of Wisconsin – Madison, 2014, note 20.

⁶ AKSAN, Victoria H. *Ottoman Wars, 1700–1870: An Empire Besieged*. Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007, p. 141.

⁷ AKSAN, Victoria H. Ottoman military power in the eighteenth century. In Brian L. Davies (ed.), *Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1500–1800* (pp. 320–321, 330). Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012; BEALES, Derek. Joseph II. Vol. 1. *In the Shadow of Maria Theresa 1741–1780*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 285.

able to Russian imperial expansion in the 1740s–1770s because the Ottoman Empire had chosen to rely upon a Phanariot rule that was essentially fiscal and commercial and militarily underdeveloped – and this was a reflection of the structuring of power relations in other parts of the Ottoman Empire.⁸ Thus, Russia sought to infiltrate the Balkans almost from the beginning of the 18th century.⁹ In the second half of 1760s, with the threat of the coming Turkish war, both principalities attracted the attention of St. Petersburg as the scene of future hostilities. From the spring of 1768, with the prospect of war, they were infiltrated by Russian emissaries. Their task was to establish contact with local boyar and clerical elite. If this proved possible, they should trigger an armed anti-Turkish uprising.¹⁰ Mapping the Danubian Principalities area was also part of the terrain penetration. A mission of the Geographical Department of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences operated in the areas of Moldavia and Wallachia between 1768 and 1771. The task of the surveyors and cartographers was to establish coordinates and collect geographical information in the territories of the principalities, which – in view of the Russo-Turkish conflict – were being considered as an area of possible Russian expansion. The missions resulted in manuscript maps, which served not only scientific, but – above all – military and political purposes.¹¹

As part of the immediate war preparations, which began in March 1769, the Russian Empress Catherine II issued a manifesto to the Balkan peoples dated late January 1769 following the example of Peter I and his declaration of 1711.¹² The manifesto was printed in Kiev in various Slavic languages. The document was to be used at the

⁸ AKSAN, Victoria H. Ottoman military power in the eighteenth century, p. 337.

⁹ UEBERSBERGER, Hans. *Russlands Orientpolitik in den letzten zwei Jahrhunderten*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1913.

¹⁰ Particularly noteworthy in this context is the mission of Major Nazar Aleksandrovich Karazin. This officer was sent to the Balkans in the summer of 1768 to examine the condition of Turkish fortifications and establish contacts with the elite there. A few months after the start of the war he entered Bucharest at the head of his unit, IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*. Jassy: Édition du journal 'Neamul Românesc', 1917, p. 154–55, 158; CAMARIANO-CIORAN, Adriana. La Guerre Russo-Turque de 1768–1774 et les Grecs. *Revue des Études sud-est européennes*, 3, 3–4, 1965, p. 516–17; TCACI, Vladimir. Considerații privind poziția populației din Moldova față de războiul ruso-turc din 1768–1774. *Analele Asociației Naționale A Tinerilor Istorici Din Moldova. Revistă de Istorie*, 10, 2012, p. 112–13.

¹¹ Among others, in 1771 the geographers Ivan Islenev and Stefan Rumovski, on behalf of the Geographical Department, made measurements in Bender, and in 1772 in Bucharest and Iași; the result of their activities was a plan of the towns along the Dniester in the Bender area, drawn in 1773. In 1771, in agreement with the Geographical Department, the geographer Erik Laxmann, whose mission was of an economic and military nature, was also active in Moldavia and Wallachia, GNUČEVA, Vera F. *Materialy dlja istorii ekspedicij Akademii Nauk v XVIII i XIX vekah: Hronologicheskie obzory i opisanie arhivnyh materialov*. Moskva–Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1940, p. 111–112, 115–116.

¹² 1769 01 19/30 The text of the manifesto, SIRIO 87, p. 322–326. The manifesto has had various versions, cf. Moskva–Serbija, p. 428–431; CHECHULIN, Nikolai D. *Vneshnaia politika Rossii v nachale tsartsovaniiia Ekateriny II. 1762–1774*. St. Petersburg: Tipografia Glavnego Upravlenia Udelov, p. 324. Iorga claims that various Russian manifestos were secretly distributed in the Balkans as early as the spring of 1768, but the January manifesto of Catherine II appeared in Wallachia only after the outbreak of the war, IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 155–56.

discretion of the commanders of the Russian forces advancing towards the Dniester, General Alexander Mikhailovich Golitsyn and Peter Alexandrovich Rumiancev.¹³ In the version of the text published in SIRIO, the peoples of Moldavia and Wallachia are mentioned before all others and the persecution of the Orthodox population under Turkish rule is highlighted. The ongoing war is presented as semi-religious and aimed at liberating Christians from the Turkish yoke, which brings to mind the Crusades. In my view, it was intended to ensure a favourable takeover for Russian troops in Moldavia and Wallachia.

Another aim of the manifesto was to create a diversion in the Turkish inner provinces and make it easier for Russian troops to operate in the Balkans. Appealing to the idea of a Slavic and Orthodox/Christian community, Catherine II promised – on a conditional basis – Russian aid to the independence expectations of those who would act against Turkey.¹⁴ That is, the future position of the Balkan peoples was to depend *de facto* on their involvement on the side of Russia. In the manifesto, there was neither an explicit promise of independence nor any talk of incorporating these lands into the Russian empire. The propaganda image of the Empress as a defender of Christianity/Orthodoxy – present since the beginning of Catherine II's reign – was strongly exposed. Turkey's opposition to Russian commitment to defending the rights of Orthodox Christians in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was highlighted as the cause of the war. Thus, what in the eyes of Western Europe was supposed to create Catherine II as a champion of enlightened tolerance, here was used to portray her as an ardent adherent of the Orthodox Church.

Yet another important objective of the manifesto was to secure supplies for the encroaching Russian troops. Due to the lengthening of the supply lines as the Russian army advanced towards the Turkish borders, the availability of provisions on the spot was crucial. The army supplies were promised to be paid solemnly, which was supposed to win the Russians the support of the local population. And this promise is pretty much the only specific thing contained in the manifesto. However, if we note the significant increase in Turkish fiscal oppression on the eve of the war (it reached its apogee in 1769) and the famine in the area, such provision may indeed have been seen in St. Petersburg as necessary to organise supplies in an economically devastated area.¹⁵

¹³ 1769 01 23/02 03, letter of Catherine II to general P. A. Rumiancev, SIRIO 87, p. 326.

¹⁴ Some historians take the text of the manifesto literally and believe that Catherine II actually supported the independence aspirations of the Danubian Principalities, cf. TOPAKTAŞ, Hacer. *What Happened*, p. 275.

¹⁵ On the rise of fiscal oppression and its apogee at the dawn of the Russo-Turkish War, see: PANAITESCU, Damian. Ottoman policies and Wallachia's public finances (1714–1774). In *Turkey & Romania. A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans* (p. 212). Istanbul: TDBB, 2016. On the modernisation of the tax system in Moldavia following the introduction of Russian military administration during the Russo-Turkish War, see: COSTIN, Petru. Organizarea sistemului comercial vamal în Moldova în timpul războiului ruso-turc din 1768–1774: După materiale inedite din arhivele ruse. *Revista de istorie a Moldovei*, 65–66, 1–2, 2006, p. 71–75. One of the first measures taken by the military administration

The Russian army crossed the Prut line in June 1769 and occupied Iași at the end of September. According to some Romanian researchers, Russian propaganda caused the Russian army entering Moldavia to be greeted with enthusiasm.¹⁶ Nicolae Iorga wrote about the ceremonial welcome organised by the Orthodox Archbishop Gabriel. After the army entered Iași, representatives of the boyar elite took a solemn oath of allegiance to Catherine II. The next towns taken by Rumiancev's troops are known to swear similar oaths. In spite of the opinions of Romanian scholars, I am not inclined to consider the cheers in honour of the Russians or homages to Catherine II as spontaneous actions. Rather, I believe that these were performances directed by the Russians and their supporters.¹⁷ The attitude of the Moldavian *hospodar*, Gregory Kallimach, seems to have been somewhat less enthusiastic, but also sympathetic towards Russia. He paid for his lack of hostility to the Russian invaders with his head, and in his place Turkey chose the old and blind Constantine Mavrokordas, who became a *de facto* Russian prisoner in Iași after the city's take-over by Catherine II's army. During the first period of the occupation, control of Moldavia was exercised directly by the Russian military administration, and it was only in the second half of 1770 that a three-member council consisting of Metropolitane Gregory and two representatives of the boyar families was established. This council held power in Moldavia until the end of the war.¹⁸

As for the Wallachian principality, the *hospodar* Gregory III Ghika was himself one to invite Rumiancev's troops to his territory. Its capital, Bucharest, was manned by the Russians in November 1769.¹⁹ The takeover of the city was precipitated by a brief pro-Russian revolt.²⁰ Ghika, perceived as a pro-Russian politician, actually sided

in the occupied territories of Moldavia and Wallachia was the introduction of fixed prices for food. However, judging from the complaints of the Moldavian and Wallachian delegations made during their visit to St. Petersburg in 1770, the Russian military occupation (prior to the introduction of civil administration) was very burdensome for the civilian population of the principalities. It is worth mentioning that both countries were starved of grain even before the Russians occupied them, and for the purpose of supplying the Turkish troops, the Wallachian *hospodar* Gregory Ghika made grain purchases in Transylvania at the end of the summer of 1769, see: IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 159, 164; MIHORDEA, Vasile. *Les Pourparlers de Grigore Al. Ghica, Prince Régnant de Valachie, avec les Confédérés Polonais en 1769. Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 4, 1965, p. 684–685; AKSAN, Victoria H. *Ottoman Wars, 1700–1870: An Empire Besieged*, p. 141.

¹⁶ CAZAN, Ileana. The European Powers, the 'équilibre d'Orient' and the Romanian Principalities, 1740–1775, *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Modernă*, 16, 2003, p. 17.

¹⁷ The ambiguous attitude of Moldavian society towards the encroaching Russian troops has already been pointed out by TCACI, Vladimir. *Considerații privind poziția populației din Moldova față de războiul ruso-turc din 1768–1774*, p. 116–19.

¹⁸ IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 159–60.

¹⁹ CAZAN, Ileana. The European Powers, the 'équilibre d'Orient' and the Romanian Principalities, 1740–1775.

²⁰ IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 161. The mood in Wallachia had been pro-Russian for some time. The previous *hospodar*, Alexander Ghika, had been ousted from power by the Turks for allowing a conscription of recruits for the Russian army, MIHORDEA, Vasile. *Les Pourparlers de Grigore Al. Ghica, Prince Régnant de Valachie, avec les Confédérés Polonais en 1769*, p. 682.

strongly with Russia after the entry of troops.²¹ At the same time he had to contend with pro-Turkish opposition, especially as there was no pro-Russian party in either Iași or Bucharest before the war, and it was only built up under Russian occupation.²²

The Commonwealth and the Moldavian-Wallachian question

Before the Russian army had even taken control of the Danube principalities, a Polish theme emerged in the background. In January 1769, a decision was made in St. Petersburg – in view of the growing crisis of Russian domination in the Commonwealth – to send a new Russian ambassador to Warsaw. Prince Mikhail Volkonsky was appointed.²³ He arrived in Warsaw in the middle of the year. His main task was to check the possibility of further independent Russian policy in Poland-Lithuania. In order to combat the influence of the anti-Russian and anti-royal Bar Confederation, which had been active since the beginning of 1768, Volkonsky was tasked with organising a pro-Russian confederation with the help of Polish partisans. Its aim was to take control of the situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and to contribute to the rebuilding of the eroded Russian influence. Initially, it seemed possible. The basis for the organisation of the confederation was the plan crystallised in Warsaw in July-August 1769. The plan was prepared by Crown Master of the Kitchen (*kuchmistrz koronny*) Adam Poniński, and Crown Master of the Hunt (*łowczy koronny*) Franciszek Ksawery Branicki. Among other things, it stipulated that, after the formation of a new confederation and an alliance with Russia, the Commonwealth would declare war on Turkey. In turn, after defeating the latter, the Commonwealth would obtain from Catherine II Moldavia, Wallachia, Bessarabia and the right to free trade in the East as a reward. The plan envisaged the

²¹ Ghika, who ruled successively in Iași (1764–1767; 1774–1777) and Bucharest (1768 10 17–1769 09 17) was perceived by French and Prussian diplomacy as pro-Russian already in early 1760s when he acted as *dragoman*. At the same time, almost on the eve of the Russian entry into Bucharest, Ghika, masking his true intentions, made offers to the Turks to organise anti-Russian diversions, see: MIHORDEA, Vasile. *Les Pourparlers de Grigore Al. Ghica, Prince Régnant de Valachie, avec les Confédérés Polonais en 1769*, p. 683, 687. The lively reception of the encroaching Russians may also have been motivated by a desire to make amends for the period of collaboration with the anti-Russian Confederates of Bar of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth enforced by the Ottoman Porte, PETROV, Andrei N. *Voïna Rossii s Turciej i polskimi konfederatami s 1769–1774 goda*. Vol. 1 *God' 1769*. S. Peterburg: Tipografia Eduarda Veimara, 1866, p. 69.

²² IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 154. At the same time, the same researcher wrote that the pro-Russian Wallachian clergy were said to have asked for Russian intervention through the Russian ambassador in Warsaw as early as January 1769, *ibid.*, p. 157.

²³ For extensive coverage of the situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and Russian policy at the time and Volkonsky's mission, see: DUKWICZ, Dorota. *Na drodze do pierwszego rozbioru. Rosja i Prusy wobec Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1768–1771*.

possibility of introducing a new administrative structure in the occupied Danubian Principalities and granting these posts to both Poles-Lithuanians and Russians. The new rulers were to become vassals of both the Commonwealth and Russia at the same time.²⁴ It should be added that similar (albeit sometimes absurd) plans regarding Moldavia were also being made by other political centres in Poland-Lithuania.²⁵ The thing was therefore present in the Commonwealth's political debate.

In accordance with the desires of Polish-Lithuanian politicians – at the behest of the head of Russian foreign policy, Minister Nikita Panin – Volkonsky was henceforth to delude the Poles and Lithuanians with hopes of gaining acquisitions at the expense of the Danubian Principalities in return for the Commonwealth's cooperation with Russia against the Ottomans. In the potential plan to bring Moldavia and Bessarabia (Wallachia was not mentioned at that moment) under Polish sovereignty, Panin saw the advantage of raising the size of the Orthodox population under Polish-Lithuanian rule, and thus increasing the possibility of Russian interference in the Commonwealth under the pretext of defending the Orthodox (dissenters). Moreover, once the Moldavian nobility gained full political rights in the Commonwealth, Russia could use them as its party and consequently strengthen its influence in Poland-Lithuania. Last but not least – the Russian minister saw the benefits of the gratitude that the Commonwealth would owe to Russia after so significantly enlarging its territory at the expense of the Danubian Principalities.²⁶ Since it was not possible to reshape the Polish-Lithuanian political scene and create a party willing to co-operate with Russia due to King Stanislaus August's inflexibility, the idea of rewarding the Commonwealth with acquisitions in the Balkans disappeared from Russian diplomatic correspondence at the end of 1769. The resignation from tempting the Commonwealth with territorial acquisitions also involved the abandonment of the thought of creating a Polish-Lithuanian auxiliary

²⁴ BEER, Adolf. *Die erste Theilung Polens*. Vol. 1. Wien: Druck und Verlag von Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1873, p. 245; KONOPCZYŃSKI, Władysław. *Konfederacja barska*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, 1991, p. 295–97; DUKWICZ, Dorota. *Na drodze do pierwszego rozbioru. Rosja i Prusy wobec Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1768–1771*, p. 278.

²⁵ 'Il [bishop Ignacy Massalski] propose une alliance offensive et défensive entre la Russie et la Pologne, outre cela le mariage du grand-duc avec la princesse fille du défunt dauphin, et un autre du roi de Pologne avec une des mesdames de France. Enfin la conquête de la Moldavie pour en faire une souveraineté en faveur du roi de Pologne d'aujourd'hui qui renoncerait moyennant cela au trône en faveur d'un prince saxon.' [He (bishop Ignacy Massalski) proposed an offensive and defensive alliance between Russia and Poland, as well as the marriage of the grand duke with the princess daughter of the late dolphin, and another of the king of Poland with one of the ladies of France. Finally, the conquest of Moldavia to make it a sovereignty in favour of the present King of Poland, who would in return renounce the throne in favour of a Saxon prince] 1769 05 12/23 Prussian envoy in St. Petersburg V. Solms to the King Frederick II of Prussia, GStA PK, 1. HA., Rep. 96, sign. 57B, No 530; about these and other unrealistic Polish concepts of occupying Moldavia and Wallachia, see: DUKWICZ, Dorota. *Na drodze do pierwszego rozbioru. Rosja i Prusy wobec Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1768–1771*, p. 286, 301.

²⁶ 1769 09 30/ 10 11, Russian minister N. Panin to M. Volkonsky, SIRIO 87, p. 498–504.

corps to take part in the war with Turkey.²⁷ This meant that St. Petersburg only wanted to calm the situation in the Commonwealth, and did not aim at real cooperation with it.

Most researchers who have highlighted the issue of Moldavia and Wallachia as a part of attempts to create a pro-Russian party treat the issue as Russia's own initiative completely, and ignore the Polish inspirations of the scheme.²⁸ Moreover, they perceive it as if it had some binding effect. However, since Panin in December 1769 withdrew from this idea and it did not return again in his instructions to the ambassadors in Warsaw, it is difficult to treat the ideas of 1769 as evidence of persistence of the concept of indemnifying the Commonwealth for the war effort, let alone for future partition. Despite this, in the negotiations between Russia, Prussia and Austria, the issue of annexation of the Danube principalities began exist on its own.

Before I turn to this issue, however, the question must be raised as to whether the indemnity plan was actually considered seriously in St. Petersburg in 1769. From the autumn of 1769, with the Russian conquest of Moldavia and Wallachia ongoing and proposals for the seizure of both principalities made by the opposition leaders within the Commonwealth, the St. Petersburg Council of State was dealing with the issue of the region's future.²⁹ Most scholars want to see St. Petersburg's actions as a genuine effort to secure the principalities' independence under Russian protectorate.³⁰ In fact, Catherine II's intentions may be demonstrated by a reference in one of the Empress's letters, dated December 1769, in which she refers to herself as the 'Duchess of Moldavia.' This should be interpreted as a reflection of her desire to seize these lands personally.³¹ I therefore think that the idea by the Polish-Lithuanian anti-royal opposition caught the attention of Panin and Catherine II for a while. Still, it was only treated as a possibility of taking control of the principalities indirectly through the Polish dominion. After all, from the outset Poniński and Branicki explicitly declared that being new masters of Moldavia they would serve Russian interests. The possible ceding of these territories to Warsaw as a fief, on the model of Courland, could not have impeded the Russian military presence in Iași and Bucharest in any way. However, the idea of bringing the

²⁷ DUKWICZ, Dorota. *Na drodze do pierwszego rozbioru. Rosja i Prusy wobec Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1768–1771*, p. 326–27, 330.

²⁸ CHECHULIN, Nikolai D. *Vneshnaia politika Rossii v nachale tsartsovaniia Ekateriny II. 1762–1774*, p. 311; STEGNII, Piotr V. *Razdely Polshi i diplomatia Ekateriny II: 1772, 1793, 1795*. Moskva: Mezhdunarodnye Odnosheniia, 2002, p. 122, note 173. The Austrian historian Adolf Beer was the only researcher who understood that this had been no serious political intention, BEER, Adolf. *Die erste Theilung Polens*. Vol. 1. Wien: Druck und Verlag von Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1873, p. 245.

²⁹ SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardżyjski*, p. 99.

³⁰ CAZAN, Ileana. *The European Powers, the 'équilibre d'Orient' and the Romanian Principalities, 1740–1775*, 2003, p. 17–18; CAMARIANO-CIORAN, Adriana. *La Guerre Russo-Turque de 1768–1774 et les Grecs*, p. 532; MADARIAGA de, Isabel. *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*. London: Phoenix, 2003, p. 223.

³¹ 'Jassy vziaty [...] Novaia moldavskaia kniagina vam klaniaetsia. Vsia Moldavia uchinila nam prosiagu', 1769 12 14/25 Empress Katherina II to general A. Bibikov, SIRIO 10, p. 389; 'the new Princess of Moldavia greets you', MADARIAGA de, Isabel. *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p. 207.

Danubian Principalities under Russian rule indirectly, through a Polish-Lithuanian intermediary, never took the shape of a serious political plan. It was but a bluff in the ambassador's dealings with Polish-Lithuanian politicians.

Prussia and Austria *vis-à-vis* Russian plans

There were at least two states, apart from Turkey, of course, that must have been bothered by the idea of Russia taking control (direct or not – it does not matter much) of the Danubian Principalities. Austria was reluctant to see Russian troops advance along the Danube. In August 1769 (i.e. even before Russia took control of the whole of Moldavia and Wallachia), during a meeting in Nysa, Emperor Joseph II explicitly declared to King Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine II's closest ally, that Vienna could not accept the Russian presence in Moldavia and Wallachia. However, Joseph II assured Frederick II of his desire to remain neutral in the ongoing war (and received Frederick's analogous declaration). Both monarchs expressed their readiness to mediate peace between Russia and Turkey.³²

The situation changed somewhat after Russia had taken military control of Moldavia and Wallachia in autumn 1769. At the turn of 1769, stricken by Russian military successes, Emperor Joseph II and Austrian Chancellor Wenzel von Kaunitz formulated the concept of turning the two principalities into a buffer territory separating the Habsburg Empire from Russia.³³ The fear of excessive growth of Russian power was undoubtedly one of the decisive factors that prompted Austria to offer Turkey to broker peace on the basis of the *status quo* already in February 1770.³⁴ Prussia, too, at the beginning of 1770, had to express firmly its resistance to the ideas of liberating Moldavia and Wallachia from Turkish rule and to subjecting of the principalities to Russian domination, as the concept of a protectorate was understood in Berlin (not unlike in Vienna).³⁵ Such a large expansion of the immediate Russian sphere of influence and the weakening of the Ottoman Porte threatened the balance of power between the powers stabilised after the Seven Years' War. This was something that neither Prussia nor Austria would accept.

A question arises, to which, unfortunately, I do not know the answer: to what extent did the opposition of Austria and Prussia (articulated at Nysa for the first time and then

³² SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kaimardżyjski*, p. 81, 84; BEER, Adolf. Die Zusammenkünfte Josefs II. und Friedrichs II. zu Neisse und Neustadt. *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* (Wien), 47, p. 1871; STRIBRNY, Wolfgang. *Die Russlandpolitik Friedrichs des Grossen 1764–1786*. Würzburg: Holzner-Verlag, 1966, p. 42–43.

³³ BEALES, Derek. Joseph II. Vol. 1. *In the Shadow of Maria Theresa 1741–1780*, p. 285.

³⁴ SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kaimardżyjski*, p. 90; KAPLAN, Hebert H. *The First Partition of Poland*. New York-London: Columbia University Press, 1962, p. 121.

³⁵ KAPLAN, Hebert H. *The First Partition of Poland*, p. 125–26; MADARIAGA de, Isabel. *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, p. 224.

repeated) to the Russian presence in the territories between the Dniester and the Danube, influence St. Petersburg to abandon, at the end of 1769, the idea of a 'soft' takeover of these territories through the Commonwealth. Instead of this, Russia orchestrated a grand performance intended to prove that Russian interference was merely a response to the requests of the Moldavians and Wallachians.

The question of independence of the Danubian Principalities

Acting by the method of accomplished facts, Russia organised a visit to St. Petersburg by representatives of the Moldavian and Wallachian elites in the spring of 1770. They paid homage to Catherine II as their new sovereign.³⁶ The delegates set off as early as December 1769, i.e. just after Russia's conquest of the principalities. This – given the relatively long time for information flow between Bucharest/Iași and St. Petersburg – may indicate that the idea for the delegation was conceived shortly after Panin had first agreed to tempt the Poles and Lithuanians with promises of acquisitions.

The Moldavian delegation included, among others, members of a new commission that had been set up to administer the country after the Russian army had entered. Also, representatives of the Wallachian elite headed by the *hospodar* Ghika rushed to St. Petersburg.³⁷ Both delegations arrived in the Russian capital in April 1770, where a solemn audience was organised during which the Moldavians and Wallachians bowed to the Empress. She accepted them as new subjects and took them under her protection.³⁸ At the same time, the Wallachian delegation explicitly formulated a request to incorporate their country into the Russian Empire.³⁹ According to Prussian perceptions of the event, Ghika's real intention was to obtain hereditary rule in Moldavia and Wallachia under a Russian protectorate.⁴⁰ This, in the opinion of the Prussian ambassador in St. Petersburg, harmonised with Catherine's aims: 'L'idée dont on a aimé à sa caresser

³⁶ IORGA, Nicolae. *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches nach den Quellen dargestellt*. Vol. 4. Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes Aktiengesellschaft, 1911, p. 502–503; IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 160; Source accounts, including, i. a., diary of delegates' trip to Russia: *Arhiva românească*, p. 146, 152–157, 249–262; a detailed description from a German-language newspaper published in St. Petersburg: *Anhang zu den St. Petrsburgischen Zeitung* 28 (Dienstag), 6 IV 1770. TCACI, Vladimir. *Considerații privind poziția populației din Moldova față de războiul ruso-turc din 1768–1774*, p. 119–21 – this researcher pointed out that similar deputations arrived from Georgia and Venice at the same time, indicating that Russia used analogous methods in different areas.

³⁷ IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 162–163.

³⁸ A description of the visit, based on sources produced by members of the delegation, was published by IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 164–65. For a version based on Russian sources, see: TCACI, Vladimir. *Considerații privind poziția populației din Moldova față de războiul ruso-turc din 1768–1774*, p. 121–24.

³⁹ IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 166.

⁴⁰ 'il [Ghika] se flatte lui-même [...] d'obtenir la Walachie et Moldavie comme un fief héréditaire pour lui et sa famille, sous la redevance de la Russie' [he [Ghika] flattered himself [...] that he would obtain Wallachia

ici le plus, c'est celle de les soustraire entièrement à la domination Turque, et d'en faire des États et des provinces indépendantes' [The idea that has been most cherished here is that of removing them entirely from Turkish domination and making them independent states and provinces].⁴¹

It is worth adding that almost simultaneously, i.e. at the beginning of 1770, Russia triggered an anti-Turkish uprising in the Peloponnese, prepared by secret emissaries for several years.⁴² The question therefore arises as to whether the tribute of the Moldavians and Wallachians staged in St. Petersburg should – together with triggering a Greek revolt – be counted as an activity in preparation for the great 'Greek project' of Catherine II and her favourite Grigory Potemkin? Or was it only about cutting Turkey off from the European shores of the Black Sea for strategic and economic reasons? And the Polish-Lithuanian option supported from Warsaw – was it included in the whole enterprise as one of the possible variants? Or perhaps – (which seems most likely to me) all these possibilities at once? Unfortunately, without additional research in the Russian archives, which are now unavailable, it is impossible to answer these questions. One can only cautiously formulate a hypothesis about Russia testing the possibilities for action in the Balkans and attempting to try simultaneously several scenarios, which all were ultimately intended to bring the Danubian Principalities under Russian influence.

Regardless of the whole *theatrum* orchestrated in St. Petersburg, as early as in June 1770, Prussia received an informal assurance that Russia would not insist on the annexation of the Danubian Principalities.⁴³ Panin told the Prussian ambassador that Russia had never thought of annexing these territories.⁴⁴ The Prussian diplomat, Victor Solms, was assured that Catherine II's aim was to turn them into a 'puissance intermédiaire' – i.e. a buffer state, ostensibly independent, though subservient to Russian interests. In August 1771, a Prussian envoy wrote that Russia did not regard the possibility of seizing Moldavia and Wallachia as compensation for the costs of the war, for which it could take an equivalent in the Commonwealth or elsewhere. Rather Russia considered it a push-back of the borders of its enemy (Turkey) and a reduction of the threat.⁴⁵ Frederick II thought that Austria should not oppose the slight weakening of its troublesome Ottoman neighbour, which would be a consequence of such peculiar independence of

and Moldavia as a hereditary fief for himself and his family, under Russian vassalage], 1770 05 7/18 Prussian ambassador V. Solms to the king Frederick II, GStA PK, 1. HA, Rep. 96, sig. 57D, no. 616.

⁴¹ 1770 05 7/18 V. Solms to Frederick II, GStA PK, 1. HA, Rep. 96, sig. 57D, no. 616.

⁴² CAMARIANO-CIORAN, Adriana. La Guerre Russo-Turque de 1768–1774 et les Grecs.

⁴³ KAPLAN, Hebert H. *The First Partition of Poland*, p. 125–26; 1770 06 04, 09, 10 V. Solms to Frederick II, PC 29, p. 497–498, 502–505.

⁴⁴ IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 173–74. Fragments of the correspondence on which he based his conclusions, Iorga published in *Acte și fragmente*, p. 29–30. It should be noted, however, that the researcher has attributed the opinions contained in Solms's letters to Frederick II, and conjectures by Panin, among others, described in the Prussian envoy's letters are presented as the views of the Prussian king.

⁴⁵ 1771 08 16/27 V. Solms to Fryderyka II, GStA PK, 1. HA, Rep. 96, sig. 57G, No 728.

Moldavia and Wallachia. The Romanian historian Iorga was convinced that the idea of transforming the principalities into the buffer territory dividing Russia and Turkey was fostered by Ghika himself, who hoped to return to power in Moldavia in this way.

It is worth noting that exactly the same term and related political concept – ‘*puissance intermédiaire*’ – was used by Russian diplomacy with regard to the post-partition status of Poland-Lithuania. The Commonwealth was supposed to separate Russia from its closest ally that at the same time was a rival in competition for influence in the Reich – Prussia.⁴⁶ Thus, it seems that consideration was given in St Petersburg to creating a secure barrier of neighbouring countries which would have been formally independent but actually under Russian control – they would have separated Catherine II’s state from other European powers.

In addition to the main considerations, the economic issue must be addressed here, too. Having seized the Danubian Principalities in 1770, Catherine II considered the possibility of taking over the revenues from Moldavia and Wallachia that Turkey had drawn from these territories before the war.⁴⁷ In order to estimate accurately the scale of possible revenues, the delegations were questioned in St. Petersburg about the economic potential of the principalities.⁴⁸ For a Russia threatened by a financial crisis caused by the Turkish war, this could have been a significant budgetary boost, hence this issue should also be taken into account when one discusses Russia’s plans for the Danubian Principalities.

Coming back to the core of the discussion, it must be said that it is very likely that Austria’s opposition to Russian plans for the principalities prompted Frederick II to formulate, at the next meeting of the Prussian and Austrian rulers (this time in Nové Město in Moravia in September 1770), the idea that, after the war, Moldavia and Wallachia should nevertheless return to the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹ Frederick II – like in fact Catherine II – treated the question of the Danubian Principalities instrumentally, making a declaration to each of his political partners as they wished to hear it.

In December 1770 Russia presented to Prussia its terms of peace with Turkey. The Russians demanded the independence of Moldavia and Wallachia or their submission to temporary Russian rule as compensation for the war. In both cases it meant the same. It was not without reason that Russia built up a pro-Russian party among the boyar elite of the principalities using the community of religion. Clearly, in the event of their formal independence, the principalities should be informally subordinated to Russia’s own interests. In the case of international consent to the independence of the

⁴⁶ DUKWICZ, Dorota. *Rosja wobec sejmów rozbiorowych warszawskiego (1772–1775)*. Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2015, p. 207.

⁴⁷ 1770 02 24/03 07 Catherine II to general P. Rumiancev, SIRIO 97, p. 30–1.

⁴⁸ TCACI, Vladimir. Considerații privind poziția populației din Moldova față de războiul ruso-turc din 1768–1774, p. 127.

⁴⁹ SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardżyjski*, p. 109, 125.

principalities, the mechanisms previously practised in Poland-Lithuania were probably to be used to build and maintain influence in the Danubian region.⁵⁰

For Frederick II, these were unacceptable conditions and, in January 1771, the Prussian king demanded that Catherine II delete the point concerning Russia's acquisition of the principalities from the peace preliminaries. In response, on 20 January 1771, the Empress officially renounced her claims to Moldavia and Wallachia.⁵¹ This, in my opinion, put an end to the question of some form of independence for the two principalities. At the same time, Panin, in his talks with Solms, considered a rather absurd possibility of making the region a 'scorched earth' having first resettled the entire population in Russia to protect them from Turkish revenge.⁵²

The question of Danubian Principalities in the Russian-Prussian negotiations on the partition of Poland-Lithuania

Russia's concessions in the case of the principalities prompted Frederick II to formulate, in February and March 1771, a kind of exchange plan, which envisaged both the annexation of part of Polish-Lithuanian territory and the seizure of parts of Moldavia and Wallachia. In Frederick II's intentions, Austria was to retain the highland *starosties*⁵³ taken over from the Commonwealth in the summer of 1770; Russia was to compensate for the losses at the expense of the Commonwealth, too. Poland-Lithuania, on the other hand, was to get a piece of Moldavia and Wallachia as compensation (in the form of a fief).⁵⁴ Undoubtedly, this was a return to Panin's ideas of two years before, as Solms wrote explicitly about.⁵⁵ It is difficult, therefore, to see in this proposal – as most Romanian

⁵⁰ The analogy between the Polish and Moldavian-Wallachian 'dissident affair' was already pointed out by SOREL, Albert, *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardżyjski*, p. 234 and IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 153–154. On the general mechanisms of Russian domination in the Commonwealth, see: KOSIŃSKA, Urszula. *August II w poszukiwaniu sojusznika. Między aliansem wiedeńskim i hanowerskim (1725–1730)*. Warszawa: Neriton, 2012, p. 446–56.

⁵¹ 1771 01 04 Frederick II to Catherine II and 1771 01 19/30 Catherine II to Frederick II, PC 30, p. 370–74, 460–63. SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardżyjski*, p. 136 – according to Sorel, it did not end the question of Moldavia's and Wallachia's independence.

⁵² Iorga took this idea with all seriousness, see: IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 176–77; *Acte și fragmente*, p. 59–60.

⁵³ KAPLAN, Hebert H. *The First Partition of Poland*, p. 126–27.

⁵⁴ SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardżyjski*, p. 163. DUKWICZ, Dorota. *Na drodze do pierwszego rozbioru. Rosja i Prusy wobec Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1768–1771*, p. 416. The issue of transferring Moldavia and Wallachia to the fiefdom of the Commonwealth recurred in talks between Panin and Solms again and again, 1771 03 08/19 V. Solms to Frederick II, GStA PK, 1. HA, Rep. 96, sig. 57F, No 687.

⁵⁵ Panin embraced Frederick II's idea favourably: 'Le dédommagement de la Pologne par la Walachie est une chose que j'ai pu porter au comte Panin, parce que je savais qu'il y avoie songe, aussi là t-il regarde comme parfaitement bonne, et m'a avoué, qu'il avoie eu cette idée, et qu'il lui paraissait tout comme à Votre Majesté propre à accommoder tout le monde, et à convaincre surtout la cour de Vienne, de

historiography would have it⁵⁶ – Frederick II's own initiative in seeking to transfer the Danubian principalities to the Commonwealth. What is striking about this proposal is the lack of explanation of what Prussia would gain from the whole operation. At the same time, there is an unmistakable association with the so-called 'Lynar Plan' of February–March 1769. Those days, in the course of negotiations for the renewal of the Russo-Prussian alliance, Frederick II, at the Russian request, presented Prussia's desired range of territorial acquisitions at the expense of Poland-Lithuania.⁵⁷ Frederick II's plan for Moldavia and Wallachia in the spring of 1771 has an even closer connection to the negotiations on the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

In fact, at the end of February/beginning of March 1771, Russia and Prussia, having established the principles on which the pacification of the Commonwealth was to take place, moved to the second stage of the partition negotiations – defining the scope of the annexations.⁵⁸ Frederick's plans regarding Moldavia and Wallachia were included in the guidelines for the Prussian ambassador in St. Petersburg prior to detailed negotiations on the scope of the partition. In March 1771, Solms and Panin sat down with maps and began to draw the borders of the partitions, with the extent of territorial acquisitions for Prussia coming to the fore. Hence, Frederick's replacement proposal should be seen as part of these discussions. On the one hand, as with the 'Lynar plan', it was a form of pressure to speed up negotiations, and on the other hand, probing the partner as to what it was willing to allow. Furthermore, the return to the idea of indemnity for Poland-Lithuania for partition suggested to Panin how to deal with the guarantee of territorial inviolability that St. Petersburg given to the Commonwealth in 1768. This was indeed an extremely troublesome issue for Russia. It belonged to those matters over which Panin had long pondered how to get around past promises without damaging Catherine II's prestige. Early in the second phase of the partition

la sincérité de la déclaration de l'impératrice de Russie, de ne pas vouloir garder ces provinces pour elle' [The compensation of Poland by Walachia is something that I was able to bring to Count Panin's attention, because I knew that he had been thinking about it, and so he considers it to be perfectly good, and has admitted to me that he had this idea, and that it seemed to him, as it did to Your Majesty, to be suitable for accommodating everyone, and especially for convincing the Court of Vienna of the sincerity of the declaration of the Empress of Russia that she did not want to keep these provinces for herself.], 1771 03 29/04 09 V. Solms to Frederick II, GStA PK, 1. HA, Rep. 96, sig. 57F, No. 692.

⁵⁶ STROE, Laurențiu. Implicațiile românești ale evoluției *Problemei Orientale* în deceniile 7–9 ale secolului al XVIII-lea, part 1. *Carpica*, 37, 2008, p. 327–28. Following Cioban's findings mainly, Stroe attributed the authorship of the project to Frederick II and pointed out that such a solution would have made Russia more inclined to agree to partition. Indemnification for the Commonwealth was, in the researcher's opinion, all the more important because Russia, when considering partition, had to take into account the guarantee of territorial inviolability given to Poland. According to this explanation Frederick II's plan was to find fertile ground in St. Petersburg. There are also researchers who see Frederick II as the author of a pacification plan for the whole of Europe, Brie and Horga, *Relațiile internaționale*, p. 200.

⁵⁷ DUKWICZ, Dorota. *Na drodze do pierwszego rozbioru. Rosja i Prusy wobec Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1768–1771*, p. 162–70.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 412–22.

negotiations, the Russian side had not yet clearly formulated its territorial claims (Panin mentioned an interest in the Polish Inflatns) and Frederick's plan clearly signalled that he would agree to all Russian proposals. With regard to Prussia, it was obvious that in the areas under Prussian military occupation, i.e. a large stretch of Greater Poland and part of Warmia, Frederick II would receive his 'dédommagement' [compensation] for his involvement in Polish-Lithuanian affairs. In response to Frederick II's proposals, Panin clearly accepted that Prussia would enlarge its territory at the expense of the Commonwealth.⁵⁹ Thus, Frederick II's plan again (as in 1769) served its purpose – it prompted Russia to take a clear position.

A difficult point in the Russian-Prussian negotiations was one concerning Danzig (Gdańsk). Frederick II wanted to grab the Baltic port at all costs. Prussia in 1770 even considered the possibility of taking the city and port par force. Russia, on the other hand, did not want to agree to such a strengthening of Prussia within the Baltic Sea. As both negotiating sides were well aware of what the controversy was about, there was no need to include it explicitly in Frederick II's letters. I think that the Prussian King's replication of Russian ideas for remunerating the Commonwealth at the expense of the Danubian Principalities should be seen primarily in terms of jacking up the price for Danzig. Frederick II treated Moldavia and Wallachia instrumentally, as a bargaining ware. Given that Frederick II must have been aware that the eventual transfer of the Danubian Principalities to formal Polish-Lithuanian sovereignty would still open them up to Russian influence and thus strengthen the Russian presence in the Danube delta and consequently on the Black Sea. I do not rule out here that there he might have had another concept behind this, which can be summarised as: Black Sea trade for Russia – Baltic Sea trade for Prussia.⁶⁰

In May 1771, the matter of approving partition, together with the Moldavian-Walachian question, came before the Russian Council of State. Panin, among other things, briefed Prussian ideas. The Council approved the idea of compensation for the Commonwealth on the Danube, but did not agree on Danzig for Frederick II.⁶¹ Since St. Petersburg firmly resisted Prussian bids for Danzig, and kept on declaring willingness to settle the matter of Moldavia and Wallachia in consultation with Austria, the matter of handing over the 'dédommagement' on the Danube to the Commonwealth slowly quieted down.⁶² After 1771, neither Russia nor Prussia returned to the idea of 'paying' the Commonwealth for partition with territories belonging to the Danubian Principalities.

⁵⁹ 1771 03 1/12 V. Solms to Friedrich II, SIRIO 37, p. 402–406.

⁶⁰ The suggestion that Frederick II was redirecting Russia's attention to the Black Sea was made by STROE, Laurențiu. Implicațiile românești ale evoluției *Problemei Orientale* în deceniile 7–9 ale secolului al XVIII-lea.

⁶¹ KONOPCZYŃSKI, Władysław. *Pierwszy rozbiór Polski*. Kraków: Arcana, 2010, p. 97.

⁶² 1771 05 20/31 V. Solms to Frederick II, PC 31, s. 189. Despite these assurances, Austria was still prepared to protest against the partition of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1772, SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardzyski*, p. 161.

In my opinion, neither in Berlin nor, still less, in St. Petersburg, was the idea of ceding Moldavia and Wallachia to the Commonwealth ever considered seriously, and the issue of both principalities was repeatedly used in various negotiations, if needed. In April 1771, an offer of the Danubian principalities for Prince Albert of Habsburg was made on behalf of Russia by Kacper Saldern (a close adviser to Panin) to Joseph Lobkowitz, the Austrian deputy going to St. Petersburg.⁶³ Catherine II herself, too, did the same in August 1771. Thus, Austria was tempted to agree officially to the partition of the Commonwealth. Additionally, Russia gauged Austrian intentions and, at the same time, prevented Austria from becoming involved in the Turkish War.⁶⁴ Whereas the lack of a clear position from Vienna caused the partition negotiations to stall, Russia – in June 1771 and at the beginning of 1772 – again pulled in the threat of independence for the Danubian Principalities.⁶⁵ Austria therefore felt compelled to protest. Frederick II joined in.⁶⁶ Finally, in July 1772, Russia communicated to Austria – as it had done to Prussia a year and a half earlier – that it was renouncing its claims to Moldavia and Wallachia.⁶⁷ This made the Turks more willing than before to negotiate peace.⁶⁸ Moldavia and Wallachia were also the focus of other bargains. At the end of January 1771, Turkey, seeking an alliance with Austria against Russia, was prepared to pay the Habsburgs with part of Wallachia.⁶⁹

The final chapter of the Polish-Lithuanian thread in the Moldavian and Wallachian affair was opened by the local boyars. During the peace negotiations with Turkey from 1772 to 1774, the Moldavian and Wallachian boyars unsuccessfully tried to act as a party. Drawing up various scenarios for the future fate of the Danubian Principalities, they tried to return to the idea of incorporating Moldavia and Wallachia into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on principles analogous to those of Courland – formally a fief of Poland-Lithuania, but actually a Russian province.⁷⁰ However, these proposals

⁶³ SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardżyjski*, p. 151; KONOPCZYŃSKI, Władysław. *Pierwszy rozbiór Polski*, p. 101; KONOPCZYŃSKI, Władysław. *Konfederacja barska*, p. 501. 1771 04 12 Habsburg ambassador to St. Petersburg J. Lobkowitz to Austrian chancellor W. Kaunitz, SIRIO 109, p. 519–22.

⁶⁴ KONOPCZYŃSKI, Władysław. *Pierwszy rozbiór Polski*, p. 103.

⁶⁵ SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardżyjski*, p. 152, 161–62.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 215. Already in September 1771, Solms wrote that Russia would officially give up Moldavia and Wallachia, but not under pressure from Vienna, which is considered humiliating, but through direct negotiations with Turkey, 1771 08 26/09 06 V. Solms to Frederick II, GStA PK, 1. HA, Rep. 96, sig. 57G, No 731.

⁶⁸ SOREL, Albert. *Kwestia wschodnia w XVIII wieku. Pierwszy podział Polski i traktat kainardżyjski*, p. 213.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144; KONOPCZYŃSKI, Władysław. *Pierwszy rozbiór Polski*, p. 102–3.

⁷⁰ IORGA, Nicolae. *Histoire des relations russo-roumaines*, p. 178–180; For more recent opinions on the Moldavian and Wallachian proposals submitted to the peace negotiating parties, with references to earlier literature, see: TAKI, Victor. *The Russian Protectorate in the Danubian Principalities: Legacies of the Eastern Question in Contemporary Russian-Romanian Relations*, p. 41, 64–65.

had no impact on the course of the negotiations, and only show that for those who had opted for Russia during the war, any scenario was good, as long as it was not a return to Turkish rule.

Conclusions

Finally, owing to the Russo-Turkish treaty concluded at Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, Russia gained influence over the casting of the principalities' thrones. Religious freedom for Christians in the Danubian principalities, exemption from taxes owed to Turkey for Moldavia and Wallachia for two years and freedom of migration were also secured. These provisions were later interpreted in St. Petersburg as granting Russia the role of protector of the Orthodox Church in these territories, which again brings to mind the assumption of the same role in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁷¹ In fact, the peace arrangements were utilised by Russia to gradually expand its influence in the Danubian principalities.

It is clear that in the negotiations between Russia and Prussia (and Austria) around the Turkish War and the partition of the Commonwealth, Moldavia and Wallachia were treated as trifles designed to pretend to be serious bargaining chips. Interestingly, they were also used by the party that did not have them 'in hand', i.e. Prussia. The problem of handing over Moldavia and Wallachia to the Commonwealth was only genuinely considered by St. Petersburg in a short period between September and December 1769. Thus, it was at a time when – in view of the seizure of the principalities by the Russian army – some decisions had to be taken on their further fate. At the same time, the final decision on the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had just been taken. And the mere fact that the question of ceding the principalities to the Commonwealth was considered does not mean that a positive decision on the matter was ever taken or seriously considered in St. Petersburg except for a very short while. Moreover, I have not found any source evidence that – as much of the Romanian historiography wants it to be – St. Petersburg was serious about the independence of the principalities or about making them 'compensation' for the partition to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The only real plan Russia had was to create of principalities a buffer territory cutting off Turkey from the European shores of the Black Sea, under more or less formalised Russian control. In fact, this was accomplished by the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, which

⁷¹ YALÇINKAYA, Mehmet A. The Meetings of Foreign Envoys by the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in the Second Half of the 18th Century: The Case of The Embassy of Repnin to Istanbul (1775–1776). In *Turkey & Romania. A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans*. Istanbul: TDBB, 2016; MAYUZUMI, Akitsu. The Establishment of the Russian Consulates in the Danubian Principalities in the 1780s and the Ottoman Empire. In *Turkey & Romania. A History of Partnership and Collaboration in the Balkans*. Istanbul: TDBB, 2016.

provided Russia with a kind of protectorate over Moldavia and Wallachia, although they formally returned to Turkish sovereignty.⁷²

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Dunojaus kunigaikštystės Rusijos ir Prūsijos politikoje Turkijos karo ir pirmojo Abiejų Tautų Respublikos padalijimo metu (1768–1774). Bandymas iš naujo interpretuoti

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Santrauka

Per Rusijos ir Turkijos karą (1769–1774 m.) 1769 m. Rusija okupavo Moldaviją ir Valachiją. Ūkių kontrolės perėmimas privertė Sankt Peterburgą susimąstyti, koks turėtų būti tolesnis šių teritorijų likimas. Tais pačiais 1769 m. Lenkijos–Lietuvos sandrauga svarstė idėją paimti Moldaviją ir Valachiją vasalais kaip atlygį už tai, kad Lenkija ir Lietuva prisijungė prie karo su Turkija Rusijos pusėje. 1769 m. pabaigoje Rusija trumpam sutiko, siekdama suklaidinti Lenkijos ir Lietuvos politikus, kad šie sutiktų su šia idėja. Iš tikrųjų jokie šaltiniai nerodo,

kad Rusija būtų rimtai svarsčiusi galimybę atiduoti Moldaviją ir Valachiją Abiejų Tautų Respublikai. Rusijai rūpėjo tik bet koku būdu tiesiogiai ar netiesiogiai (per Lenkiją ir Lietuvą) kontroliuoti Dunojaus kunigaikštystes. Tuo tarpu Prūsija ir Austrija siekė užtikrinti, kad užgrobusi Moldaviją ir Valachiją Rusija per daug nesustiprėtų. Todėl Berlynas ir Viena ne kartą reiškė prieštaravimus dėl Rusijos dominavimo Balkanuose. Tačiau, nepaisant to, visos derybų šalys Moldavijos ir Valachijos klausimą derybose naudojo kaip derybinį kozirį, kuris vis dėlto neturėjo didelės reikšmės.

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