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The Ottoman Tributaries Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia: Reflections on the Mobility of Objects and Networks of Actors[1]

Abstract

This paper explores the different channels of transfer of luxury commodities (rugs, silk fabrics) from Persia and the Ottoman Empire to the three principalities of Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania, located at the north-western fringes of the *Transottomanica*. In the introductory section, it examines the function of the luxury products and their integration into the representational culture of the fifteenth century at the Hungarian royal court, in the Transylvanian cities, as well as in the two Danubian Principalities. The successive integration of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia into the Ottoman sphere of power led to different forms of acceptance and transformation of the imported objects. Although there are parallels between the three principalities with regard to the bestowal of the honorary garments during the investiture rituals by the sultan and his officials, there are differences with regard to the further destiny of these valuable garments. While in Transylvania these were often treasured or reworked into representative costumes given their high material value, in Moldavia and in Wallachia a considerable number of kaftans were transferred into the sacral realm. Hereby older traditions were adapted to the new circumstances. The rulers of the two Danubian Principalities now acted as donors alongside high dignitaries within the framework of supra-regional networks. In addition to their native territories, their activities encompassed the major Orthodox sanctuaries in Greece and the Holy Land. Furthermore, the Danubian Principalities were an important hub for transfers to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Tsardom of Russia.

Keywords: Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, kaftan, oriental rugs, *hil'at*

1. Introduction

In contrast to the western and southern parts of the continent, East-Central Europe initially received only marginal consideration within the debates on the historical relationship between Europe and Turkey or the Ottoman Empire. The historical region of East-Central Europe,[2] whose core comprised the former Kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia, the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, along with the Polish-

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2 On East-Central Europe as an analytic framework of various disciplines, see Troebst 2012, Nr. 3–4.

Lithuanian Commonwealth, played a key role not only as the theatre of military conflict with the Ottoman Empire and its tributary, the Crimean Khanate, but also as an area of intense cultural contact. It was only in the last decade that these various entanglements and exchange processes between East-Central Europe and the Ottoman and Persian realms moved into the focus of a series of research projects and exhibitions.[3]

A comparable rise of interest can also be observed in relation to the Ottoman Empire itself, and to the group of tributary states of this political entity, which evolved in the sixteenth century. The newer research approaches focused on the composite state character of the Ottoman Empire and the negotiation between the imperial and the domestic, respectively foreign, powers.[4] In the context of reassessing the history of the empire itself, a comparative viewpoint has also been adopted in recent times concerning the tributary states, which were – and in part still are – treated mainly in the frame of national historiographies. The shift from the nationalistic narratives of 'the Ottoman yoke' or 'Ottoman despotism' to the '*Pax Ottomanica*' facilitated a more nuanced understanding of the history of Ottoman-dominated Europe.[5] As a consequence, research has increasingly focused on negotiation and exchange processes between the Sublime Porte and the tributary states located on the periphery of its sphere of power,[6] and the relations between the Ottoman tributaries and other European powers, such as Poland-Lithuania or Sweden.[7]

Ottoman advances in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries decisively changed conditions in East-Central Europe, especially the Kingdom of Hungary, and favoured the emergence of a complex ethnic and denominational constellation in the region that was frequently perceived by travellers from Western Europe as chaotic. Additionally, travel reports and illustrations in Early Modern publications depict the fringes of East-Central Europe as a strongly orientalised sphere. Another recurring topos in various media is the portrayal of the male population as warlike.[8] Their clothes, hairstyles, and weaponry evidently evoked the spatial proximity of the Ottoman Empire (see Fig. 1).

This paper focuses on the transfer of coveted luxury commodities, like rugs and kaftans, from the Ottoman Empire and Persia to this part of the *Transottomanica*. In parallel with the aspect of the materiality of these goods, it also considers their integration into the various social configurations in East-Central Europe.[9] In this way, the focus is set on the meanings assigned to the objects through interactions and their as-

3 See Atasoy and Uluç 2012; Jagodzinski 2013; Born and Puth 2014; Born and Jagodzinski 2014; Born, Dziewulski and Twardowska 2015; Bömelburg, Rohdewald and Uffelmann 2016; Istanbul 1999; Istanbul 2014; Brussels-Krakow 2015; Karlsruhe 2019.
4 Ágoston 2003; Barkey 2008; Firges and Graf 2019.
5 Panaite 2019; Kołodziejczyk 2006.
6 Papp 2003; Kármán and Kunčević 2013; Kołodziejczyk 2013; Păun 2015a; Kármán 2020.
7 Kołodziejczyk 2011.
8 Petneki 1981; Flórián 1993.
9 Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986; Wasiucionek 2020a, 304–305.

Fig. 1: Hungarian and Polish Nobles. Illustration from Bryn, Abraham. Omnium Pene Europae, Asiae, Aphricae atque Americae Gentium Habitus. *Coloniae 1577.*

sociated usage as symbolic capital.[10] These processes will be investigated on the basis of a broad compendium of sources, comprising diplomatic reports, customs registers and bequests. Furthermore, individual objects will be examined from an art-historical perspective, which will focus not only on stylistic aspects but also on iconographic details. Additionally, this paper brings together different strands of research which have not yet been sufficiently acknowledged due to linguistic barriers both within and outside of East-Central Europe.

2. Trade Routes and Merchants in Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia

The dissemination of eastern fabrics and garments, as well as other sought-after goods, began well over a century before the Ottoman advance into Central Europe, which reached its first dramatic climax in the Siege of Vienna, in 1529.

The major hubs for the various flows of commodities and the movement of tradesmen in this north-western part of the *Transottomanica* were the Black Sea and the mouth of the Danube, with the ports Caffa (Ukrainian: Feodosia) and Moncastro (Akkerman,

10 On this concept, see Bourdieu 1984.

Ukrainian: Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi, Romanian: Cetatea Albă), Kilija (Romanian: Chilia) and Brăila,[11] which were situated at the northern end of the Silk Road at the junction of the trade routes to Central Europe and the Russian territories (see Fig. 2).

The composition of the population in these places mirrored the far-flung trade routes that converged in these ports.[12] Along with Italians, Moldavians and Greeks resided 'Saracen' (Muslim) traders and ship-owners. According to the information in the extant documents, the latter played an important role in the shipment of goods (*per Saracenos asportantur*).[13] In the 1480s, when Kilija fell under Hungarian suzerainty, groups of Hungarians also settled in this area.[14]

From Caffa, the main Genoese emporium in the Crimea, silk garments imported from China or Central Asia were shipped to the Pera suburb of Constantinople (the base of the Italian colony) and farther afield to other ports of the Mediterranean.[15] In mediating between the individual groups, the Armenian communities assumed an increasingly important role. These communities evolved during the migration of this population from the northern part of the Black Sea region in the second half of the thirteenth century. The first places on the route were Tbilisi and Trebizont, later followed by settlements in the Crimea. As a result of the unstable conditions in the wake of the power struggles within the Khanate of the Golden Horde, a substantial number of Armenians migrated to the Duchy of Lithuania and to Moldavia.[16]

The lower reaches of the Danube constituted the starting points of two commercial routes of major importance for Central and Eastern Europe. One ran west through Wallachia via Brăila, Târgovişte, Dâmboviţa, Câmpulung towards Transylvania. There the main hubs were Kronstadt (Hungarian: Brassó, today Braşov in Romania) and Hermannstadt (Hungarian: Nagyszeben, today Sibiu in Romania).[17] The Transylvanian Saxon traders then took the goods farther to Nagyvárad (German: Großwardein, today Oradea in Romania) and from there through further mediation to Kaschau (Hungarian: Kassa, today Košice in Slovakia) and Krakow (Polish: Kraków).[18]

The second long-distance trade channel ran north through the Principality of Moldavia to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Significant hubs were Lviv (Polish: Lwów, German: Lemberg) and Krakow.[19] In the course of the fifteenth century, the rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia granted privileges to different merchant groups travelling on these roads. The documents associated with these privileges regulated the staple right and also fixed the obligation for the travellers to follow certain routes.[20] Another im-

11 Brătianu 1944; Hrochová 1988; İnalcık 1994; Ghervas 2018; Cristea and Pilat 2020.
12 See Balard and Veinstein 1981, 81–93.
13 Pach 1987, 58.
14 Rădvan 2020, 78–79.
15 Jacoby 2017, 27–28; Khvalkov 2017, 351–353.
16 Osipian 2012–2013, 112–116.
17 Pakucs-Willcocks 2007.
18 Pach 1987, 58–59.
19 Charewiczowa 1924; İnalcık 1994, 286–291; Biedrońska-Słotowa 2015, 223, with references of imported carpets from the Krakow customs records.
20 Papacostea 1983.

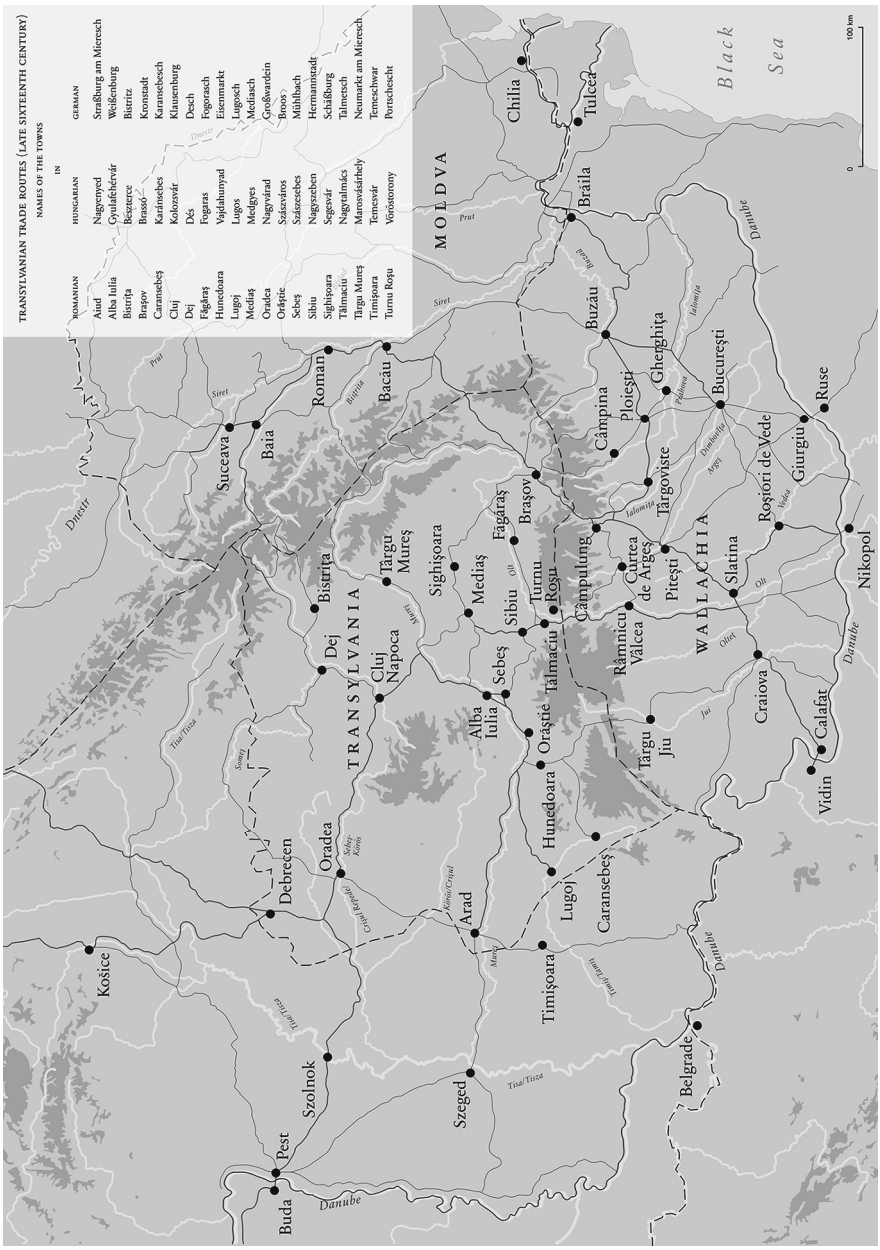


Fig. 2: Trade Routes in Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania. Graphics by Timo Stingl

portant route, the old *Via Militaris*, ran south of the Danube and passed through Belgrade, and functioned as the main deployment route for the Ottoman armies towards Central Europe.

The influx of commodities from different parts of the *Transottomanica* intensified as a result of several factors in the last two decades of the fifteenth century. Following the Ottoman occupation of Caffa in 1475, and Akkerman and Kilija in 1484, Sultan Meḥmed II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481) resettled the local merchants to Constantinople. This measure was aimed at turning the new capital into the centre of eastern trade.[21] The Ottoman rule over these cities also made it impossible for the Genoese to maintain control of the trade in silk in this area, thus favouring the rise of Bursa as the centre of the silk trade.[22] The assumption of a silk production in Ottoman Caffa, which has repeatedly been voiced in the literature, has not yet been clarified.[23]

Against the background of the outbreak of the Ottoman-Venetian military conflicts, the importance of the land routes via Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania increased even further.[24] This intensification can be traced in the preserved customs registers, where the term 'Tatar goods', which had frequently been used until then, was replaced with the formulation *res turcales*.[25] The discovery of the sea route to India (1498–1499) brought further changes for the entire *Transottomanica*. The previously lucrative spices and silks were now replaced by imports from Persia and Asia Minor, which included mainly carpets and textiles. Along the Moldavian route towards Lviv, Armenian merchants assumed a pivotal role in the transfer of these commodities.[26] At the same time, Moldavian traders, who were initially involved alongside the Genoese in transferring goods towards Poland and Lithuania, had a considerable role in commerce in Transylvania, where they competed with the Saxon traders.[27]

3. Oriental Luxury Goods as Symbolic Capital in the Hungarian Kingdom before 1526

Ottoman and Persian weapons and fine textiles were already particular components of the public appearance of the ruling dynasties in East-Central Europe in the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, this aspect of the culture of representation has never been investigated in detail. Owing to space constraints, the following information on the different channels of reception and the strategies of staging can only be presented in the form of a rough sketch. At the start of this series stands Sigismund of Luxembourg, King of Hungary (r. 1387–1437) and Holy Roman Emperor (r. 1410–1437), to

21 Khvalkov 2017, 405–406; Rădvan 2020, 78–79.
22 See İnalcık 1960.
23 See Öztürk 2000; Dode 2013.
24 İnalcık 1994, 302; Simon 2006, 858.
25 Nicolescu 1970, 53; Pach 1987, 62.
26 Nadel-Golobič 1979; İnalcık 1960, 138–139; Osipian 2012–2013, 116–118.
27 Dunca-Moisin 1999, 232; Kertesz 2003, 157–159.

whom the sultan's envoy presented silk fabrics, a Turkish silk tent and valuable carpets in 1424. During that year, the Serbian despot sent a Turkish saddle cloth and 10 *heidmische Decken* ('pagan blankets'). In another source, the eastern carpets are referred to as *Sirfish* ('Serbian'), which indicate that these luxury items were transferred via the southern route.[28]

The most prominent and controversial ruler was Matthias Corvinus. The circle of humanists gathered around the King of Hungary (r. 1458–1490) and Bohemia (r. 1469–1490) developed narratives that presented Corvinus as a champion of the Christian cause, regardless of the rather modest successes he achieved in this regard.[29] The staging of Matthias Corvinus in this light was not limited to literary and pictorial works, but extended to the presentation of Ottoman artefacts and living beings. For instance, in 1474, he appeared in a large Turkish tent at the royal meeting in Breslau (today Wrocław in Poland).[30] In the same year, he sent three tambourine-playing Turks as a gift to the Duke of Burgundy Charles the Bold (r. 1467–1477).[31] Two years later, he dispatched a group of richly dressed horsemen with golden turbans to Naples, as part of the delegation to fetch the royal bride Beatrix of Aragon (1457–1508). These were high-ranking Ottomans who had been captured near Szabács (today Šabac in Serbia).[32] With this public staging of Ottoman prisoners, Corvinus continued a practice already followed by Sigismund of Luxembourg, who had presented Ottoman prisoners in public at a series of meetings and negotiations.[33]

The eastern luxury items alongside the captive Ottoman musicians and fighters formed significant symbolic capital in the rivalry with other European courts, especially the political centres in Italy. There, in the second half of the fifteenth century, figures in rich oriental costumes became part of wedding celebrations and other public festivities.[34] Rulers like the Duke of Mantua Francesco II Gonzaga (r. 1484–1519) exerted considerable effort in importing horses and a turban from the Ottoman Empire.[35] The acquisition of horses was a complicated undertaking, as the animals were considered strategic goods that were not supposed to be sold to potential enemies.[36]

In the last decade of the reign of Matthias Corvinus, another level of meaning was added to these stagings. The ruler's highly visible triumphal entry into Vienna in 1485, when the royal treasure was carried by 24 camels, which he had previously received as a gift from Sultan Bāyezīd II (r. 1481–1512), was one of the most striking moments of his self-orientalisation. Contemporaneously, the circle of humanists

28 Balogh 1966, 401, 410–411.
29 See Klaniczay 1975; Born 2020, 119–126.
30 Balogh 1966, 401.
31 Ehm 2002, 274–275.
32 Csánki 1883, 623.
33 Whelan 2017, 51–54.
34 See Le Thiec 2009.
35 Ricci 2011, 90–93; Bourne 2011.
36 Reindl-Kiel 2009; Sogliani 2015, 68–70.

gathered at his court drafted an eastern genealogy, which opened up new political options for the Hungarian king.[37]

An unconventional use of Ottoman garments and weapons finally appears in a report sent in the summer of 1486 by the border commander Yūsuf Bey to Bāyezīd II. According to this note, Corvinus planned to simulate support by Ottoman troops, in order to gain a better negotiating position with his rival, the Emperor Frederick III (r. 1452–1493). To accomplish this, he ordered the purchase of turbans and other items of clothing in the southern border area of his kingdom, to make 500 of his riders appear as Turkish fighters.[38]

With regard to the oriental self-fashioning of Matthias Corvinus, previous research has repeatedly made reference to the correspondence of Cesare Valentini, the envoy of the Este family of Ferrara at the Hungarian royal court.[39] The emissary reported favourably on the bestowal of rich robes crafted from Persian textiles. Based on the term *turca*, used by Valentini and other Italian emissaries in the description of the cloak-like garment of the king, which extended to the floor, the robe was repeatedly identified as a kaftan. According to the source reports, Matthias Corvinus bestowed Pope Paul II (r. 1464–1471) as well as the French King Charles VIII (r. 1483–1498) and the city of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) with sumptuous garments.[40] The act of donation was considered as an equivalent to the *hil'at*-practice established in the Islamicate world well before the rise of the Ottoman Empire.[41] Ritual bestowals of gowns, headgear, jewellery, and weapons have been recorded for the ancient Persians and Sassanids. In the Byzantine Empire, comparable festive assignments of vestments were also made, mainly as the visual and ritual completion of an alliance.[42] A symbolic integration of the recipients into a new system also took place through the handing over of garments in the context of the medieval exchange processes between Hindus and Muslims.[43] According to Amanda Phillips, these robing ceremonials invoked 'a mixture of blessings, favour and legitimization'.[44]

The Hungarian king must have been broadly aware of this custom of donation through his diplomatic efforts to forge an anti-Ottoman alliance with Persia, and from reports of the envoys despatched to Egypt.[45] In contrast to the Islamicate realm, the ritual at the Hungarian royal court involved the handing over of the robes but not the public dressing of the guests.

In 1948, Jolán Balogh already suggested that the garment described in the aforementioned report of the Ferrara envoy was probably a Hungarian version of the *suba*

37 Balogh 1966, 410–411; Koch 1973; Born 2020, 119–128.
38 Hazai 1955, 290.
39 See Csánki 1883, 138; Szendrei 1905, 15.
40 Balogh 1948, 17–18; Flórián 1993, 73.
41 Gervers 1982, 12–14; Atasoy et al. 2001, 178–179; Jasienski 2014, 192.
42 Springberg-Hinsen 2000; Hambly 2001; Atasoy et al. 2001, 32–34; Phillips 2015, 116.
43 Flood 2009, 75.
44 Phillips 2015, 113.
45 See Tardy 1968.

(German: *Schaube*).[46] Since, from the early sixteenth century, sources mention both 'Turkish fabrics' and products made in the 'Turkish manner', and since the presence of Turkish tailors is documented from sources related to John Corvin (Hungarian: Corvin János, 1473–1504), the illegitimate son of Matthias Corvinus,[47] there is a possibility that the clothes mentioned by Valentini were also tailored by Turkish craftsmen. Eventually, they had fallen into captivity: by the end of the fifteenth century, several Turkish-Balkanic prisoners of war (including Muslim Bosnians and Albanians) were known to be employed in the artisan workshops of the Hungarian capital Buda.[48]

Following the death of Matthias Corvinus, luxury objects from the Ottoman Empire remained a major element of the representational culture, both in Hungary and abroad. For instance, in 1493 the humanist writer and Archbishop of Kalocsa Péter Váradi (d. 1501) sent a Turkish horse with corresponding accoutrements to Pope Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503).[49] In view of the export ban on horses from the Ottoman Empire, mentioned above, this animal might have come into the possession of the Archbishop as a spoil of war.

The examples presented so far reveal that secular and ecclesiastical elites in the Hungarian Kingdom used various types of luxury objects, which had arrived in East-Central Europe through different channels from the Ottoman sphere of power, for representational purposes. Diplomatic networks as well as ecclesiastical structures were involved in the transfer of these goods to the centres of Western and Southern Europe. The ruling elites in the Hungarian Kingdom were thus among the forerunners in the integration of Ottoman luxury products into courtly high culture, a development that has hardly been taken into account by previous research due to its strong focus on Italy and France.

In the cities of Transylvania, which until 1541 was an important part of the Hungarian Kingdom, luxurious fabrics crafted in different regions of the *Transottomanica* had already played a significant role in the public sphere during the first half of the fifteenth century. The inventory of the city parish church in Hermannstadt from 1442 listed liturgical vestments made of high-quality *kemha*.[50] The brocaded silk fabric with patterns shaped from golden or silver threads, produced in Persia, and later in Damascus, Baghdad, and Alexandria, was such a sought-after commodity, that in 1481 agents of the Wallachian princely court journeyed to Kronstadt to purchase the coveted luxury textile.[51]

The extant customs registers from Kronstadt and Hermannstadt, the major Transylvanian hubs for the flow of eastern commodities, document for the first decade of the sixteenth century not only a considerable increase in the quantity of traded goods, but also the quality of the commodities. For instance, an entry from the summer of 1503

46 Balogh 1948.
47 Simon 2006, 833.
48 Fenyvesi 1989, 144.
49 Simon 2006, 832.
50 Wetter 2015, 165.
51 Nicolescu 1970, 55–56.

mentions the import of belts, coats and two simple tents by the merchant Petrus Schwarcz, who had also brought kaftans of varying quality from Wallachia. Three years earlier, the officials in Hermannstadt had already recorded 17 imported kaftans.[52] The entry from 1503 also lists three simple kaftans, whose value was set at 3 florins each, and a precious garment made of a gilt-patterned fabric valued at 40 florins. This luxurious piece was presumably a kaftan made of Italian silk, tailored in the Ottoman Empire. Silks from Venice, Florence and other Italian production sites were in use until the middle of the sixteenth century to produce sophisticated – mostly ceremonial – garments.[53]

We can also identify a comparable graduation in quality among the imported rugs. Over 500 rugs had been registered in Kronstadt in 1503.[54] Among the carpets imported during this period, remarkable pieces can already be found, including large specimens up to 23 cubits (13.8 m).[55] Besides the size, the quality of workmanship also influenced the value of the items. A high-quality exemplar worth 120 florins was presented by the city judges Hans Benker and Hans Fux in Prague in 1508, on the occasion of the coronation of Louis II (Hungarian: II. Lajos; Czech: Ludvík Jagellonský, r. 1508–1526). The gifting of carpets and valuable fabrics became well established as a practice in Transylvania. Among the recipients were included not only the Hungarian kings and later the princes of Transylvania and their court, but also diplomatic legations. Furthermore, members of the urban elites and especially representatives of the Protestant church were presented with carpets by the city magistrates on special occasions, especially at weddings, as is illustrated by the entries in the registers in Kronstadt, Hermannstadt or Bistritz (Hungarian: Beszterce, today Bistrița in Romania). Carpets were stored in the cities to serve as the basis for these donations, a significant part of which was collected as customs duties.[56]

A particular consequence of the increased demand for luxury items from the Ottoman Empire was the emergence of imitations of sought-after goods. These include bridles made by Saxon craftsmen in Hermannstadt and Kronstadt, which were wrongly labelled as 'Turkish'.[57] The records of the resulting litigations provide no information on the design of these imitations. However, considering the fame of the Saxon goldsmiths, it may be assumed that they were copies of the richly decorated horse accoutrements, which, as previously mentioned, were sought after as a status symbol.

52 Pakucs-Willcocks 2007, 90.
53 Mackie 2004, 218; Reindl-Kiel 2017, 148.
54 İnalcık 1994, 288, 298; Rogers 2002, 720.
55 Kertesz 2003, 159.
56 Eichhorn 1968, 78–79; Kertesz 2003, 160; Armer, Hanke and Kregeloh 2021.
57 Rusu 2012, 15.

4. Eastern Luxury Fabrics in the Representational Cultures of the Danubian Principalities in the Fifteenth Century

High-quality fabrics and garments of eastern provenance have also played a particularly important role in the representation of the ecclesiastical and secular elites in the neighbouring principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. The dissemination of luxurious products from Persia or the Seljuk Empire was facilitated by the connections to the riparian states of the Black Sea and the Caucasus region. When considering the ways in which these products were received and integrated into the local culture of representation, it is essential to recall the different connecting lines with the Byzantine Commonwealth. The various influences in the spheres of state and church institutions, political ideology, ecclesiastical and secular legislation and, last but not least, the arts and architecture were mediated through direct contact with imperial institutions and through Serbia and Bulgaria.[58]

A particular component of the manifold contacts with the Orthodox oecumene were the extensive endowments of the Wallachian and Moldavian rulers to the trans-regional Orthodox shrines. As part of the decentralisation of the endowment system, which began during the Latin rule in Constantinople at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the sovereigns from the Danubian Principalities initially competed with the Orthodox monarchs in the Balkans and the Caucasus. One of the first focal points of the activities of these *ktetores* was the monasteries on Mount Athos, to which institutional links had also been established. Thus Chariton, the *hegoumenos* (superior) of the Koutloumousiou Monastery on Mount Athos, became the second metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia in the fourteenth century. After the step-by-step occupation of the Orthodox states in Asia Minor and the Balkans, the Romanian princes broadened their foundation activities. The main forms of support were the monastic *metochia*, property grants for the purposes of income. Through this practice, which continued after the integration of Moldavia and Wallachia into the Ottoman realm, a considerable part of the landed property of the Danubian Principalities came into the possession of Orthodox institutions in Greece and the Holy Land.[59] The financial support, together with the donations of artworks to the Athonite monasteries, were understood by the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia, as well as by the Russian rulers, as valid proof of their imperial claims as leaders of the Orthodox realm.[60]

This alignment with imperial models can also be detected in the costumes worn at the Moldavian and Wallachian courts. The reconstruction of the princely sartorial regimes is based on a correlation of the small number of archaeological finds with the pictorial representations – primarily, the depictions of the donors in manuscripts and wall paintings.[61] In the first half of the fifteenth century, the rulers of the Danubian Principalities followed the line of the new ceremonial robes introduced at the Byzan-

58 See Pippidi 1983.
59 Chitwood and Grigore 2020, 93–96.
60 See Adashinskaya 2020, 147–148.
61 Nicolescu and Dumitrescu 1957, 100–101.

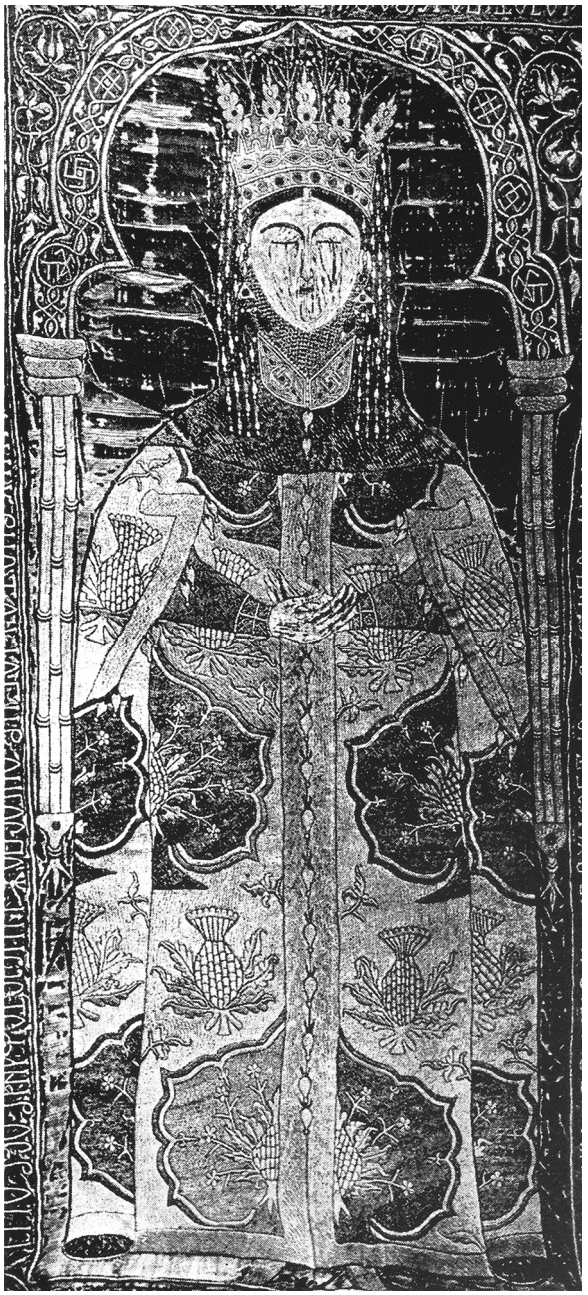
tine courts, in the wake of the Latin occupation of Constantinople. Their shape reveals significant similarities to the garments worn by rulers in the adjacent Turkish and Arab domains. This applies in particular to the *granatza*, to which Byzantine historians ascribed an Assyrian origin.[62] The robe, with its distinctive long sleeves, extending to the ankles, appears in depictions of the Moldavian rulers Alexander I Muşat the Good (r. 1400–1432) and Stephen III the Great (r. 1457–1504). For the production of these ceremonial robes, valuable silk fabrics were imported from Italy.[63]

An outstanding document for the reconstruction of the development of courtly dress in the fifteenth century, and the interplay of different traditions, is the funerary shroud of Maria Assanina Palaiologina (see Fig. 3). The second wife of Prince Stephen III the Great, buried in 1477 in the Putna Monastery, was the daughter of Isaac, the ruler of the small Principality of Theodoro-Mangup (Gothia) in the south-west of the Crimean Peninsula since 1458.[64] The shroud depicts the deceased sovereign with closed eyes in the manner of a *gisant*, under a trefoil arch, which is decorated with emblems highlighting the family links of the deceased to the noble Late Byzantine house of the Palaiologoi and the Bulgarian Assen dynasty. The princess is wearing a richly patterned robe with red lining and a sable collar, the tailoring of which strongly resembles a kaftan.[65] At the same time, the pattern of palmettes and pomegranate fruits reveals certain parallels with brocade fabrics manufactured in Italy.[66] With regard to both the cut of the princess's kaftan and the patterning of the fabric, parallels exist with the fragments of a luxurious silk vestment uncovered at the end of the nineteenth century, as part of a kurgan burial complex near Belorechenskaia, in the Kuban region on the northern coast of the Black Sea. The rich inventory of the burial of a woman from the second half of the fifteenth century also includes luxury objects of Syrian provenance.[67]

The Putna shroud is also an outstanding testimony to the Byzantine practice of displaying images over tombs, which is otherwise known mainly from written sources.[68] Another special feature is the realisation of the portrait through embroidery, a technique that was highly regarded in the Persian realm from the eighth century onwards.[69] It is likely that the portraits of Byzantine rulers, documented only in written sources, were also executed in this technique. In Moldavia, this form of commemoration of the deceased experienced a renaissance in the seventeenth century.[70]

62 Parani 2007, 119–124.
63 Nicolescu and Dumitrescu 1957, 100–109; Nicolescu 1970, 122–128.
64 Regarding the role of Maria Assanina Palaiologina within the framework of relations between the Principalities of Moldavia and Theodoro-Mangup, see Gorovei 2020, 151–154.
65 Nicolescu 1970, 228, cat. no. 83; Scarece 2003, 105; Paris 2019, cat. no. 30.
66 See Székely 2006, 9.
67 Dode 2013, 118–119; Kazan 2019, cat. no. 230.
68 Székely 2006, 145.
69 Diez 1928, 378.
70 Durand and Giovannoni 2019, 68–69; Paris 2019, cat no. 30–33.

Fig. 3: Funerary Shroud of Maria Assanina Palaiologina (1477). Putna Monastery Museum, Illustration in Diez 1928.



5. Kaftans as Emblems of Power

With the transfer of the Danubian Principalities under Ottoman suzerainty in the first half of the sixteenth century, kaftans became the primary representative garment of the princes and boyars.[71] Kaftans initially enjoyed particular popularity among the female members of the ruling families, as well as the leading boyar families.

The integration into the Ottoman sphere of power also paved the way for the principalities to access the distribution centres for luxury textiles. After the recognition of Ottoman suzerainty in 1456 through Voivode Peter Aron (Romanian: Petru Aron, r. 1451–1452, 1454–1457), Sultan Meḥmed II guaranteed the traders from Moldavia beneficial conditions for their activities in Adrianople (Edirne), Constantinople and Bursa.[72] Under these advantageous terms, imports of high-quality fabrics and garments intensified. In 1516, the customs register of Tulcea (Turkish: Tulça) recorded the import of 73 kaftans manufactured from different fabrics. The most expensive pieces were kaftans for men made of taffota, estimated at 400 *akçe*, while the counterparts for women were valued at 250 *akçe*.[73]

The high prestige of the kaftan as a vestment, whether in the Danubian Principalities or in Serbia or Bulgaria, stemmed to a large extent from the inaugural ceremonies for the rulers at the Sublime Porte.[74] In relation to ceremonial practices, there were obvious parallels with the investiture of the Patriarchs of Constantinople. According to legend, Sultan Meḥmed II presented Gennadios II Scholarios (r. 1454–1464) with a shepherd's crook, a sumptuous pallium, and a kaftan upon his installation as Ecumenical Patriarch in 1453. In this context, it seems plausible that some elements that had been part of the ritual prior to 1453 were perpetuated in the ceremony.[75] Furthermore, after the reception of the insignia, the head of the Greek Orthodox Church obtained the privilege of riding from the sultan's palace to the patriarch's residence in a procession, in the company of Janissaries and high dignitaries. By granting these privileges, Meḥmed II reaffirmed his claims to the succession of the Byzantine emperors, particularly with regard to the Christian population within and outside the Ottoman Empire.[76] Similar donations of kaftans made of brocade silk are also documented at the investitures of the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch, as well as of metropolitans. On these occasions, the precious garments were bestowed by high-ranking Ottoman officials.[77]

The particular appreciation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the second institutional pillar of the disintegrated Byzantine Empire, can equally be illustrated by comparing it with the treatment of other Christian groups. In 1463, after the con-

71 Nicolescu 1970, 128–141.
72 İnalcık 1960, 140.
73 Hóvári 1984, 123, 126.
74 Nicolescu and Dumitrescu 1957, 123.
75 Phillips 2015, 116; Vryzidis 2019, 62.
76 Thorau 2004, 321.
77 Papastavrou and Vryzidis 2018, 273–275.

quest of Bosnia, Meḥmed II granted security for the life and property of the Franciscan friars.[78] In contrast to oral tradition, the sultan apparently did not bequeath a kaftan to the friars when they received the charter. The robe presented today in the Monastery of Fojnica dates to a century later.[79]

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the installation ritual for the rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia had two parts. The first was staged in Constantinople, where the new rulers first delivered gifts (*pêşkêş*) in the form of horses, peregrine falcons or hawks. In the Audience Hall of the sultan's palace, they then received presents (*irsaliye*) in the form of kaftans and fabrics, a knitted cap *(üsküf)* resembling the headgear of the Janissaries, and a mace *(topuz)*.[80] In a continuation of the ceremony, the new ruler was consecrated in the Church of the Patriarchate. From the residence of the patriarch, the new prince travelled on a richly decorated horse, a further gift from the sultan, to the residence of the legation of his homeland. In the *Vlaḥ Sarayı,* respectively *Boğdan Sarayı*, the princes received and kissed the standard brought by a delegation of the sultan. The banners conferred on the Romanian princes corresponded to a *beylerbey* (provincial governor).[81] However, this also exemplified the Ottoman suzerainty over the subordinate territories. Upon returning home, the second part of the investiture ceremony was performed in the main church of the country.[82]

The situation in neighbouring Transylvania was different, especially regarding the confessional constellation. Following the defeat in the Battle of Mohács (1526) and the permanent occupation of Buda (1541), the Hungarian Kingdom was divided into three parts: the so-called Royal Hungary in the west, the territories under the direct control of the Ottomans, and Transylvania in the east.[83] However, the western and south-western parts of the former kingdom (including Croatia) gradually became a defence zone or buffer state of the Habsburg territories and the Holy Roman Empire. As a tributary state of the Ottoman Empire, with relative political autonomy, Transylvania was constituted in 1570 as a principality.[84] The backbone of this political entity comprised the three nations forming the three privileged Estates of the nobility (mostly ethnic Hungarians), the Székelys, also an ethnic Hungarian people primarily charged with military duties, and the ethnic German, Saxon burghers, belonging to the four *religiones receptae* (Lutherans, Calvinists, Unitarians and Catholics). The large Romanian population – excluded from political participation – belonged to the Eastern Orthodox Church, which enjoyed the status of a tolerated religion.[85]

78 See Papp 2014.
79 Šeparović 2016, 121, 123.
80 Szabó and Erdősi 2003, 143–144; Pedani 2007, 196–200; Murphey 2011, 223–225; Panaite 2019, 285.
81 Pedani 2007, 202.
82 Szabó and Erdősi 2003, 144.
83 Pálffy 2009.
84 Oborni 2013.
85 Murdock 2003, 219–221; Keul 2009, 15–47.

The incorporation of Transylvania into the Ottoman domain of authority was a relatively short process, and its reflexes can be traced in the most various media. Of particular interest are the miniatures in the *Süleymān-nāme* ('Book of Süleymān'), dated 1558.[86] This official history of the reign of Süleymān the Lawgiver (*ḳānūnī*, r. 1520–1566), written by the court annalist ʿĀrif Fetḥullāh Çelebi (d. 1561/62), also includes a depiction of the Sultan receiving the Crown of Hungary, accompanied by John Zápolya (Hungarian: Szapolyai János, r. 1526–1540), the voivode of Transylvania, who sits on a chair that is a miniature version of the throne of the sultan.[87] Another indicator of his acceptance at the Ottoman court is the robe of honour in which he is dressed. The display of crowns and the awarding of such robes of honour (*ḫil'at*) was an important way of underscoring the sultan's claim to autocratic rule as 'refuge of the world' (*pādişāh-ı ʿālem-penāh*).[88]

In 1541, Süleymān, in his war camp before Buda, bestowed upon the Hungarian delegation not only golden kaftans, but also silken belts adorned with precious stones, as evidenced by a letter from Antonio Veranzio (Croatian: Antun Vrančič, Hungarian: Verancsics Antal, 1504–1573) to Paulo Giovio (1483–1552).[89] The correspondence reveals a precise insight into Ottoman gifting practices, which together with his ability to communicate with high Ottoman dignitaries in Croatian,[90] were important factors for his appointment as envoy of the Emperors Ferdinand I (r. 1558–1564) and Maximilian II (r. 1564–1576) to the sultan's court.

Kaftans remained a key component of the ceremonies of confirmation of the elected princes of Transylvania. Similar to neighbouring Moldavia and Wallachia, the document of appointment (*ādlıname*) was handed over, with the insignia, by a delegation led by an usher of the sultan (*çavuş*).[91] The insignia comprised the banner, an ornamented mace, a gold-embellished, plume-adorned high cap and a caparisoned horse. In contrast with the case of the Danubian Principalities, the transfer of the insignia of authority took place in Transylvania. The respective ceremonies were conducted in different locations. In 1658, the handing over was staged in the Church of Schäßburg (Hungarian: Segesvár, today Sighişoara in Romania). On this occasion, the sultan's envoy forced the assembled leaders of the diet to accept the kaftans and thus acknowledge the election of Ákos Barcsay (r. 1658–1660).[92]

The ceremony of 1658 can certainly be seen as a visualisation of the power relations between the Ottoman overlords and their Transylvanian subjects. Nevertheless, the act of granting kaftans cannot be interpreted as a general visualisation of this type of hierarchy, as convincingly demonstrated by Gábor Kármán, in the case of the

86 See Fetvaci 2013, 18–20.
87 *Süleymān-nāme*, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Turkish Manuscripts, H. 1317, fol. 309a. See the reproduction and commentary in Fehér 1982, 106.
88 Szabó and Erdősi 2003, 126; Yelçe 2014, 141–142.
89 See Gyulai 2015, 96.
90 Belamarić 2010, 53.
91 Papp 2003, 57–60; Szabó and Erdősi 2003, 122.
92 Szabó and Erdősi 2003, 126–127.

Transylvanian legations at the court of the Beylerbey of Buda (Turkish: Budin). Throughout the seventeenth century, there were no permanent (but frequent) contacts between the Transylvanian princes and the Ottoman dignitaries in Buda. The beylerbeys not only bestowed kaftans on the Transylvanian envoys, but also dispatched respective garments to the princes themselves and occasionally to their sons.[93] Moreover, kaftans, admittedly made of highly valuable fabrics, were presented to the imperial envoys who passed through Buda, as well as being dispatched directly to the Imperial Court in Vienna.[94] In view of this, it is unthinkable that the Beylerbey of Buda intended to illustrate a vassal relationship by means of gifting these robes of honour, either towards the emperor in Vienna or towards the Transylvanian princes. The act of donating kaftans seems to be a unilateral gesture through which the donor's good intentions were communicated to the receiver, who was offered protection. Similar motives were also apparently associated with the dispatch of kaftans to two Protestant generals who were the allies of Prince Gábor Bethlen (r. 1613–1629).[95]

At the same time, these rituals were part of a highly differentiated system of gift-giving among the Ottoman elite. Hedda Reindl-Kiel has observed that the official Ottoman concept of gift-giving was an elaborate form of distribution and redistribution strongly interconnected with the perception of honour. This understanding formed the basis of several parallel circuits of the flow of luxury goods and commodities. First of all, the act of giving served as a political tool, intended to establish alliances and reinforce personal loyalties. In this sense, the exchange of gifts operated both between the sultan and his officials and between the grandees and their clients. On the other hand, this practice served as a mark of distinction, indicating the position of the recipient within the hierarchical system of the imperial elite.[96] Their counterparts in Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia were integrated on different levels in the complex circuit of gift-giving.

6. Ottoman luxury textiles in the local networks of power in Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania

Ottoman luxury textiles appear to have played a more prominent role in the social and political life of the Danubian Principalities than in neighbouring Transylvania. This is illustrated in the wall paintings of the churches, especially in Wallachia, in which, from the sixteenth century, kaftans became an integral element of the representation of founders, as well as biblical and historical figures.[97] Similar arrangements have survived in other South-East European regions.[98] Religious paintings thus reflect similar dress conventions to those of the Orthodox elites in the Ottoman Empire, as

93 Takáts 1915, 249; Kármán 2017, 46–49.
94 Gervers 1982, 13.
95 Kármán 2017, 52–56.
96 Reindl-Kiel 2013.
97 Negrău 2011, 86–88.
98 See Atasoy and Uluç 2012, 34–36; Šeparović 2016, 122–123; Merantzas 2017.

well as in the adjacent tributary states.[99] Moldavia and Wallachia were included in the Ottoman system, both institutionally and factionally. Accordingly, the Porte-centred system of *hil'at* circulation comprised only the highest ranks of the principalities' elites. Nevertheless, there have been considerable oscillations with regard to the number of beneficiaries. The official chronicle of Radu Greceanu (ca. 1655/1660–1725) mentioned that, towards the end of the seventeenth century, between 12 and 24 boyars had received their kaftans at the Porte.[100] The rest participated in a complimentary local circuit, in which the voivodes distributed kaftans to the wider circle of boyars.[101]

These gifts were bestowed on festive occasions, especially at Easter and Christmas. From the records in the commandments register (*anafter*) of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (r. 1688–1714), it is apparent that the quality of the kaftans given was dependent on the rank of the dignitary. As a compensation for simpler gowns, silk fabrics were sometimes additionally gifted.[102]

The princes of Wallachia and Moldavia also bestowed high-quality kaftans on high-ranking church dignitaries, such as the members of the delegation of the Patriarch of Antioch Macarios III (r. 1647–1672) who travelled through the Orthodox regions of Eastern and Northern Europe looking for support for his church. His son, Paul Zaim (Archdeacon of Aleppo, 1627–1669), reports on the various stages of the journey in his account, an important source on the history and everyday life in Wallachia and Moldavia in the second half of the seventeenth century. During his sojourn in Iaşi, the Moldavian ruler Vasile Lupu (r. 1634–1653) presented the patriarch with valuable vestments, including a kaftan, and pledged financial support for the needy church.[103]

Given the high regard in which kaftans were generally held, and their relatively limited availability, it comes as little surprise that these garments were sometimes used as a currency. In 1517, for example, the chancellor Stanciu paid for a vineyard and orchards with a kaftan worth 100 aspers.[104] This, of course, also had the effect that kaftans and other luxury textiles imported from the East were treasured along with jewels and cash. The inventories of objects moved by the Movilă family (Polish: Mohyła) to Poland, as part of the dowry for their daughters, contain references to kaftans, as well as more than 100 Persian and Ottoman carpets.[105]

In Transylvania, the majority of the high-quality fabrics and garments entered the country either as imports or as diplomatic gifts and remained in private hands. The bequests and testaments of the Transylvanian princes certify 12 kaftans for Mihály

99 Vryzidis 2018, 92–94.
100 See Wasiucionek 2016, 71.
101 Wasiucionek 2018, 47–51.
102 Giurescu 1962, 441, no. 194.
103 Paul de Alep 1976, 46.
104 Moisuc 2017, 28.
105 See Corfus 1972; Dunca-Moisin 1999, 233.

Apafi II (r. 1690–1699) and even 20 for Gábor Bethlen.[106] The latter also possessed an impressive collection of rugs. In addition to the western tapestries and 150 carpets in his residence in Gyulafehérvár (German: Karlsburg, today Alba Iulia in Romania), a further 75 Persian and 112 Turkish rugs were stored in a so-called carpet house.[107]

These collections of luxury objects also formed a pool from which the prince could draw, when required. Such a situation arose after the confirmation of Catherine of Brandenburg (1602–1644, r. 1629–1630) as the successor to her husband, Prince Gábor Bethlen, through the Porte.[108] This was an unusual act in two respects. On the one hand, the succession was confirmed by the sultan, while the reigning prince was still alive. Concurrently, a woman was given the princely insignia for the first time. However, the number of gifts sent for this occasion was smaller than usual. Instead of the 20–40 kaftans, the envoy brought only seven, which forced the prince to fill the gap from his own holdings. The episode documents that it was important for the ruling prince to fulfil the representational standards established at the Gates of Felicity at the court in Gyulafehérvár.[109]

The above-mentioned inventories and bequests also include valuable details of subsequent alterations of kaftans and imported garments. The majority of these fabrics were converted into *dolman*s or *mente*s. These cloak-like garments were tailored using even the smallest fragments of fabrics in the form of patchwork. The denomination of these objects (*kaftányos* or *kaftánból szabott*, *kaftánnal bélelt* or *kaftánybol* = 'kaftanic', 'kaftan-tailored', 'kaftan-lined' and 'made of kaftan') did not designate a specific type of tissue, but instead referred to the outstanding quality material of the kaftans.[110] The association with diplomatic ceremonies lived on in other terms, such as *csausz menté* and *díván menté*. Unfortunately, none of the garments mentioned in the inventories of Transylvanian princes such as János Kemény (r. 1661–1662) have survived.[111]

The model set up by the princely court was soon emulated by the upper echelons of Saxon society. Inventories of the estates of Lutheran ministers from the end of the seventeenth century list clothes in conspicuous colours and sophisticated accessories such as the garnet-coloured *Felsche* (ceremonial coats) and *kozakische Hüte* (fur hats with agraffes made of precious stones).[112]

This development was accompanied, from the mid-seventeenth century, by a series of sumptuary laws that were not only aimed at the visualisation of the hierarchical order of the urban population, but also formed part of the process of strengthening the designation of national identity. It is telling that in some of these regulations, the eastern origin of the luxury articles or garments has been replaced by the denomina-

106 Gervers 1982, 70–78; Gerelyes 1993, 77.
107 Baranyai 1959–1960, 253–256.
108 Deák 2010, 155.
109 Szabó and Erdősi 2003, 124. See also Atasoy et al. 2001, 178–179.
110 Pásztor 2012, 124.
111 Takáts 1915, 226; Pásztor 2012, 129.
112 Sedler 1993/1994, 5.

tion 'Hungarian'. A prescription issued in Bistritz in 1664 mentioned the cutting of hair 'in the Turkish or Hungarian way', as well as 'Hungarian clothes'.[113]

7. Luxury Textiles in the Sacred Sphere

Rulers and high dignitaries from both Danubian Principalities were integrated into trans-regional networks as religious patronage, as briefly mentioned above. Using the example of Neagoe Basarab (r. 1512–1521), who, according to common tradition, was regarded as a benefactor of the Slavic and Arabic speaking Orthodox communities from the Balkans to the Sinai, certain mechanisms within such a network are described below.[114] The personality in focus came from the wealthy Craiovescu family and ascended to the throne of Wallachia with the support of Sultan Bāyezīd II. In order to symbolically legitimise this power, which he attained under questionable circumstances, Neagoe Basarab oriented himself in the Byzantine autocrats' catalogue of virtues as rulers. As an important point in the presentation of a generous and just sovereign was the translation and staging of relics,[115] he ordered the reworking of a kaftan into a cover for the shrine containing the relics of Saint Gregory of the Decapolis, in the Bistriţa Monastery.[116] The dark blue, high-quality silk, manufactured in Italy, suggests that the reworked garment was a robe that had been awarded to him during a ceremony at the Sublime Porte (see Fig. 4).[117] The prince also commissioned an inscription – the Slavonic text written with gold thread on red velvet reports on the donation, which had also comprised a ring, and at the same time also contains warnings of consequences in the event of damage.[118] The latter aspect in particular documents the transfer of the object from its original cultural environment to an ecclesiastical sphere, and with it the imposition of a new symbolic layer.[119]

In his efforts to symbolically consolidate power, Neagoe Basarab also acted as a promoter of the devotion of Saint Nephon, in whose biography several threads of the relations examined in this article have been brought together. The Athonite monk had been elected Ecumenical Patriarch (Nephon II) three times (1486–1488, 1497–1498, 1502) and in between was deposed by the sultan. The reappointments were always made after the intervention of the Wallachian princes. Against this background, it is hardly surprising that Nephon II also served as head of the church in Wallachia for a brief period.[120] Shortly before his death in 1508, he returned to the Monastery

113 Pakucs 2018.
114 On these construed narratives and the related agendas, see Păun 2015b, 121–123.
115 Negrău 2011, 131.
116 Iorga 1928–30, vol. 1 (1928), 124–125.
117 Nicolescu 1970, 132.
118 Nicolescu 1970, 210–211, no. 47; Bucureşti 2019, 166, cat. no. 49 (the original donatorial inscription), 167–168, cat. no 50 (the reconstructed kaftan).
119 See general remarks on this phenomenon in Papastavrou and Vryzidis 2018, 273–275.
120 See Falangas 2009, 165–189.

Fig. 4: Kaftan Reconstructed from the Former Cover of the Shrine with the Relics of Saint Gregory of the Decapolis, in the Monastery Bistriţa in Wallachia. Bucureşti, National Museum of Art, inv. no. 15.618/Ţ 421, © Muzeul Naţional al României.

of Dionysiou. Among the collections of the monastery is a coat, which is considered to have been one of the possessions of Nephon II.[121] The liturgical garment, tailored

121 Thessaloniki 1997, 386–387, cat. no. 11.12 (Anna Ballian); Atasoy et al. 2001, 178.

in accordance with Byzantine traditions, is crafted from a luxury double damask woven in gold and silver thread in a pattern of repeated roundels alternating with crosses.[122] In the centre of the medallions, Christ appears as High Priest, blessing with both hands. As convincingly demonstrated by Waren Woodfin, this motif had been conceptualised during the Middle Ages by the Byzantine clergy as a counterpart to the costumes of the court officials, which bore the image of the Emperor, and was supposed to visualise the unity between the earthly and the heavenly church.[123] The special loom was probably made in one of the workshops in Bursa or Constantinople, which initially specialised in producing goods for the elite of society. A court case handed down from Lviv, in 1548, in which a Turkish merchant was accused of having sold textiles 'with crosses' to someone who had not originally ordered them,[124] allows us to assume that silk fabrics with Christian motifs had entered general trade around the middle of the sixteenth century. Dating to the start of the following century is a small cluster of liturgical vestments, with two *phlenoria* tailored from fabrics, which show strong parallels to the Nephon-sakkos. In 1614, the voivode Stefan Tomşa II (r. 1611–1615 and 1621–1623) donated these pieces to the Solka Monastery, together with two more vestments made of fabric with vegetal motifs, which were probably originally components of kaftans, along with an altar curtain and an icon cover. The monastery founded by the prince was intended to become his burial place. However, the entire complex was dissolved at the end of the eighteenth century, in the wake of the reforms initiated by Emperor Joseph II. The garments are now preserved in collections in Lviv and in the Putna Monastery.[125]

The donation of Stefan Tomşa II, as evidenced through the inscriptions on the vestments, is of particular interest, since the prince maintained the closest connections with the innermost circles of power in Constantinople, and also ostentatiously staged this affiliation to an empire-wide elite, as has recently been convincingly elaborated by Michał Wasiucionek. At the same time, the prince presented himself as a devout Christian through the foundation.[126]

The largest documented group of liturgical garments featuring silk fabrics with Christian motifs, and produced in the Ottoman Empire, is preserved in the Moscow Kremlin.[127] In considering this tradition, and the important role of the *metochia* of the Athos monasteries in Moldavia as a mediator with Russia, as demonstrated by Vera Tchentsova and Lidia Cotovanu,[128] the transfer of high-quality silk fabrics with Christian motifs to Russia via an intermediate station in Moldavia appears plausible.

122 An image of the vestment can be consulted online at https://www.elpenor.org/athos/en/e218ck1.asp (accessed 15 May 2020).
123 Woodfin 2012, 179–207.
124 Abrahamowicz 1959, 101, document no. 96.
125 Székely 2015.
126 Wasiucionek 2020b.
127 Atasoy and Uluç 2012, 80–96.
128 Cotovanu 2016; Tchentsova 2016.

In addition to the rich endowments presented to the Orthodox oecumene, different strategies for the transfer of eastern luxury textiles into the public sphere of the churches can be discerned in the case of the Ottoman tributaries of Transylvania and Ragusa. High-quality fabrics from the Ottoman Empire and Persia were reworked into liturgical fittings in Transylvania by all denominations alike, but on a far lower scale than in the neighbouring Danubian Principalities. So far, only two examples of remodeled kaftans are documented. A cope (*pluviale*), made of red and gold decorated velvet with a pattern of undulating tendrils, is preserved in the treasure of the Lutheran Black Church in Kronstadt.[129] The second garment is a chasuble crafted from a late sixteenth-century silk lampas (*kemha*) kaftan with a *çintamani*-pattern. The vestment, which is part of the collection of the *Budapest Iparművészeti Múzeum* (Museum of Applied Arts), comes from the Armenian Catholic church in Gyergyószentmiklós (today Gheorgheni in Romania).[130]

In the Republic of Ragusa, the kaftans were systematically stored and redesigned. The documents kept in the city archives prove that the Ragusan diplomats, on their return, were obliged to present the kaftans received at the handover of the annual tribute in Constantinople to the chamberlain of the government. The treasurer then estimated the value of the luxurious *vestae turcicae*. Afterwards, the kaftans, tailored from looms from Bursa, Üsküdar and Italy, were stored in a state depository. Subsequently, the objects, some of which had a value of up to 50 ducats, were transformed into liturgical fittings for churches in the territory of the Republic. The highest quality kaftans were chosen for the most prominent churches. Thus, over the centuries, the city's cathedral received more than 20 kaftans, from which splendid vestments and covers for altars and reliquaries were made.[131]

8. Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the forms of reception and functionalisation of the luxury products imported from the eastern parts of the *Transottomanica* in the principalities of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia could show that this was not a strictly East-West movement. The three political entities in focus functioned as mediators between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, to Western and Southern Europe, to the Tsardom of Russia, and sometimes even to Greece and the Holy Land. Among the most important protagonists of these transfer processes were the ethnically and denominationally mixed groups of merchants and craftsmen, as well as the ruling families and high dignitaries. The latter groups increasingly used the imported luxury items as a vehicle for self-promotion. In the case of the occupants of the Hungarian throne, this occurred as part of an initiative directed at the general public in the western part of the continent. While this practice was abruptly brought to an end by the

129 See Wetter 2015.
130 Pásztor 2015, 199.
131 Han 1984; Belamarić 2010, 56–59; Šeparović 2016, 118–121.

dismemberment of the Hungarian state in 1526 and 1541 respectively, with regard to the Danubian Principalities, it was possible to show a clear continuity between the period before and after their conversion into an Ottoman tributary. In particular, the institutions of the Orthodox churches, which continued to exist under the Ottoman suzerainty, formed an important platform for the use of imported luxury goods in the service of self-promotion.

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