New Europe College Yearbook 2023-2024

Volume 1

CĂTĂLIN CERNĂTESCU
OANA-MARIA COJOCARU
DARIA DROZDOVA
SIMONA GEORGESCU
MARIYA HORYACHA
SZABOLCS LÁSZLÓ
MARKENC LORENCI
RĂZVAN NICOLESCU
NICOLETA ROMAN

Editor: Andreea Eșanu

ISSN 1584-0298

New Europe College
Str. Plantelor 21
023971 Bucharest
Romania
www.nec.ro; e-mail: nec@nec.ro
Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10

NICOLETA ROMAN

Spiru Haret Fellow

Current affiliation: 'Nicolae Iorga' Institute of History-Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania
ORCID: 0000-0001-9626-6329

Biographical note

Nicoleta Roman is researching social and economic history, gender and history of women. She is also interested in childhood studies in (pre)modern Romania and Southeastern Europe, in terms of goods, mobility and the material culture associated with them. She is part of the editing team of the series on foreign travellers about the Romanian countries in the nineteenth century, edited by the Romanian Academy (2007-2020).

COMING FROM RUSSIA, BECOMING A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: POLITICS, EDUCATION AND STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL FOR GIRLS IN MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY WALLACHIA*

Nicoleta Roman

Abstract

Foreign teachers are transnational intercultural educators that participate in shaping educational systems in the receiving countries. This study explores the immersion of foreign female teachers into local structures and communities in Wallachia, a principality in the southern part of present-day Romania. It discusses the state school for girls established in Bucharest in mid-nineteenth century and its principals, two Russian ladies. The paper argues for entanglements between politics and education, its first principals being embedded in Russian imperial policies and practices, and their presence being both an act of power and a negotiation with the Romanian local elites. Ultimately it demonstrates the attempt through such educational institutions to transform the principality of Wallachia in a client state and to forge a similar bourgeois elite.

Keywords: education, politics, Russia, Wallachia, Romania, secondary schools for girls, client states

1. Introduction

The organisation of the [Romanian] Principalities is a necessary issue for the wellbeing of some neighbouring regions of our empire and also as a measure that will tighten the foundation of our political influence over the Orient. (General Pavel Kiseleff to Tsar Nicholas I in 1831)

The lines written by General Pavel Kiseleff to Tsar Nicholas I in 1831 as newly appointed governor of the Romanian Principalities of Moldavia

* The author gratefully thanks to James Christian Brown for the translation of the text.

and Wallachia represent a colonial perspective on these territories that had just entered under the protection of the Russian Empire. They also highlight a continuation in the Russian imperial geopolitical strategy of expansion to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire, here labeled as the Orient. The 'tightening' refers to what had already been done up to that moment through previous military confrontations and diplomatic treaties. This benevolent mask that the Russians take hides a superior and authoritarian perspective on the principalities that would at times be at odds with the tendencies in European politics, more liberal and democratic by the mid-nineteenth century.

The end of the premodern age brought important geopolitical changes which would be mirrored at the societal level. The reign of Peter the Great is perceived in historiography as the moment when Russia started to become more visible politically and to empower itself through the use of Western European knowledge and specialists. His aim was to transform Russia into an empire that would stand on an equal footing with those already in existence. However, in the eighteenth century the great number of Austro-Russian-Turkish wars shows the instability of the region, the inter-imperial rivalry, and the reluctance to accept Russia as a power on the imperial arena. Russia realized that it could not enter into such a dialogue, especially with the West, other than through military actions. Within this context, in strategic terms, the emergence of imperial Russia as a power could be seen in 'its expansion on a southerly axis from the Rivers Dniester and Bug in the quest to build a Black Sea littoral extension of the Russian Eurasian Europe' (Wess Mitchell 2018, 36). This meant a continuous conflict with both the Austrian and the Ottoman Empires, and with the national aims of the natives; in our case, the Romanians. In the nineteenth century, Western Europe (mainly France and Britain) gave diplomatic assistance to the emancipation of the nationalities in order to avoid a power imbalance in South-eastern Europe. Within this geopolitical clash of imperial agendas I analyse the aim of Russia to transform Wallachia into a client state and the resistance of the Western-educated native bourgeoisie in connection with the establishment of state education for girls.

As the title shows, the present paper brings into discussion the manner in which the school principals were chosen, their connection with Russia and local elite that was favourable to this neighbour from the Eastern border. The paper does not refer to curricula, pupils or the school building – separate topics that need an analysis for themselves – but stays focused on the profile of the school principals. As the state school

for girls was aimed at in 1832 it is relevant to say why it was established only twenty years later, in 1852. The main reason is that while there was a Russophile elite in Wallachia, there was also an opposition to it.

2. Navigating through neighbouring imperial agendas: Wallachia in the middle of the nineteenth century and the road towards decolonization

In the eighteenth century, Russia struggled to impose itself as a power in Southeastern Europe and temporarily succeeded in doing so by instrumentalizing the role of the Orthodox faith. Romanians, Serbs, Greeks, and others in the region shared the same Orthodox faith as the Russians and in this commonality lay the opportunity to interfere in other empires' internal policies. Through the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), the Russian Empire acquired access to the Black Sea and the right of protection over Christians in the Ottoman Empire, including those of Wallachia. This overlapped with its interest in regional influence (similar to that of the Austrian Empire), which can be traced in the establishment of consulates. Russia opened a consulate in Wallachia in 1781, and in Austria in 1783. France (1797) and Britain (1803) followed. Following the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), Wallachia and Moldavia came under the umbrella of a Russian protectorate. This meant that the principalities were under a dual political and administrative supervision (Ottoman and Russian).

The government of Russian general Pavel Kiseleff issued the first laws serving as constitutions in the Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, the *Regulamente Organice* (Organic Statutes) of 1831/2. These were publicly presented as reforming acts and issued after discussions between the Romanian elite, the representatives of the Church, and the Russians, and with the approval of the Ottomans. After these documents were adopted by the two Romanian Principalities came the surprise: additional acts through which Russia could intervene in the internal affairs of these Ottoman provinces. While in Moldavia the additional act was accepted, this idea was highly contested in Wallachia (Mihuț 2023).

Three major events need to be highlighted as they represent a public form of protest against the interference of Russia in the internal affairs of Wallachia – and by extension – of those of the Ottoman Empire. We mention them to (re)familiarize the reader with the local actors and their struggle, part of their leaders being cultural figures.

The first is the creation by Ion Câmpineanu (1798-1863) of the *National* party (Partida Națională), an ancestor of today National Liberal Party in Romania. In November 1838, two documents were issued publicly by Câmpineanu and his group: *Act de unire și independență* and *Osebitul act de numire a suveranului rumânilor*. Together these acts can be considered an alternative constitution to the *Organic Statute* issued under Russian pressure. Câmpineanu went to Constantinople, Paris, and London to seek diplomatic help but with no success. On his way back to Wallachia, he was arrested in Transylvania by the Austrian imperial authorities (as they collaborated with the Russians and the Ottomans) and imprisoned in Wallachian monasteries (Mărgineni, Plumbuita) to be re-educated. After two years of imprisonment, he was released in 1841, forced to retract and to stay away from politics. However, his actions inspired others. (For a monograph see Vladut 1973.)

The second, coming in response to Câmpineanu's action, was the so-called 'conspiracy' of Dimitrie (Mitiță) Filipescu (1808-1843) in 1840. A Wallachian prosecutor, with a doctorate in law, he established a secret society through which he campaigned for the creation of a democratic republic, for independence, and for the equality of people in front of the justice system. He was joined in this society by such cultural figures as Nicolae Bălcescu (1819-1852) and Cezar Bolliac (1813-1881). Filipescu was also arrested and imprisoned in a Wallachian monastery (Snagov), where he died at 35 years of age (in 1843).

The third was the Revolution of 1848, led by young Romanian intellectuals educated in Western Europe, who admired Câmpineanu's actions and ideas of liberty and equality among citizens and looked for a detachment from foreign intervention in internal political affairs. The connection between these anti-Russian movements (and others) can clearly be seen in the Islaz Proclamation (9 June, 1848), the political and social programme of the Wallachian forty-eighters. Its 22 points can be resumed to the following ideas:

- independence of the administration and legislature.
- separation of powers.
- a Romanian country representative at Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, the suzerain power.
- equal rights of the people.
- emancipation of Jews (Israelites) and political equality of all citizens irrespective of religion.

- emancipation of Gypsy (Roma) slaves of the State, the Church, and individuals
- equal instruction for all Romanians of both sexes.
- freedom of the press.
- election of a responsible Ruling Prince (Ro. *domnitor*) for a period of five years.
- creation of a system of prisons and a national guard.
- land reform.

These points from the Wallachian 1848 programme show the discrepancy between the reality and the proclaimed reforms introduced by the Russians through the *Organic Statute*. In fact, the suzerain and protective imperial powers were not interested in solving the social and political issues and in dismantling the entanglements that were in force between the legislative, administrative, and executive branches.

The burning of the *Organic Statutes* in the centre of Bucharest on 25 September 1848, during the Revolution of that year, a symbolic act by which the younger generation of intellectuals sought an end to Russian political influence and the privileges acquired by the elite that this influence promoted, reflects the constraints on Romanian society under the Russian protectorate. The gesture showed a distancing from the past and a resistance towards a *Russophile party* (to use a term from the period) in the presence of the people gathered in the square and a Church represented by the metropolitan looking down from a balcony.

While in the neighbouring principality of Moldavia, the Revolution of '48 lasted only a few days before being rapidly crushed on the orders of the Russophile ruling prince, Mihail Sturdza, in Wallachia the event went on for longer. This was due partly to the history of anti-Russian movements recalled here and to the collaboration of the Church and the army (members of which formed part of the provisional government),[1] partly due to good organization, and, not least, also due to connections with similar movements in the Austrian Empire. The Romanian forty-eighters of Wallachia conceived federalist projects, projects that would keep them in the empires, but would change the centres of power and eliminate the regional political influence of Russia, placing them under the protection either of Austria, of Prussia, or of Turkey. These proposals and negotiations led nowhere, as the imperial centres mentioned were not yet ready to solve the problem of nationalities and to stand up to a conflict with

Russia. Consequently, as a final response to the scale of the forty-eighter movements, the three neighbouring empires collaborated in suppressing them.

Nevertheless, the 1848 revolution brought to light the extent of Russian interference in the affairs of the neighbouring imperial provinces. In exchange for armed assistance offered to the Austrians and the Turks, Russia acquired even greater understanding on their part, and the ruling princes subsequently nominated in Wallachia belonged to the *Russophile Party*. When Russia exceeded the limits tacitly agreed in international politics regarding regional spheres of influence and occupied the territory of the Romanian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, one of the reasons for the outbreak of the Crimean War, the European powers no longer showed the same understanding as in the case of the 1848 revolutions. The defeat of Russia in this war was the beginning of the end of its political influence and, at the same time, marked the return of the exiled forty-eighters and a new working political concept: the *collective guarantee* of the European powers with regard to the Romanian principalities. A nuance is necessary. In spite of these political changes that were ultimately beneficial for the course of events in Wallachia, Russia remained a threat at its border. Conscious of all this, the Romanian elite sought a permanent equilibrium in foreign policy and also in relation to various internal groupings. It is significant that the founding of a girls' school under state patronage and in a time when the geopolitical context was dominated by Russia took place after the 1848 Revolution and was the manifestation of an act of power and of negotiation with the local elite. The alternation between moments of confrontation, persecutions, and violence with times of passive benevolence was a feature that distinguished Russian policy towards the 'nationality' problem in its sphere of influence (Weeks 2006, 27).

This geopolitical context is important because there are entanglements with the cultural and educational arenas in Wallachia. From the forty-eighters a significant number were schoolteachers and professors (for an analysis see Pârnuță 1976) and their leaders (Nicolae Bălcescu, Ioan Maiorescu, Ion Heliade Rădulescu etc.) were cultural figures.

3. Politics influences education: discussions, debates, postponements. Re-taking the project of the State School for Girls

The quotation with which I started this paper shows the intentions the Russian Empire had in the Romanian principalities. These intentions were known to the Romanian elite, both old and young, of boyar origin or from the emerging bourgeoisie; and each reacted according to their class interests. An element of continuity in Russian imperial policy towards their newly acquired provinces was the desire to maintain the native language in education and administration together with the privileges of the local elite and thus create loyalties that could be beneficial for the imperial agenda. This strategy can be traced back to Peter the Great and his conquest of the Baltic provinces and the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during Catherine the Great's reign (Weeks 2006, 29-30). An important link between Poles and Romanians (among others) existed that justified their collaboration against the Russian Empire. Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770-1861), after being a foreign minister and a chairman of the Council of the Russian Empire (1804-1806), became involved in the Polish national movement and his Polish exile organisation were in contact with the similar anti-Russian movements in Wallachia and Moldavia. In 1838 his envoy helped Câmpineanu draw up a national programme 'that included unification of Moldavia and Wallachia under a hereditary monarchy, independence from the Ottoman Empire, and an end to interference by the Russian protectorate' (Maier 2008, 191). The Polish emigres in Paris also collaborated with the Serbs on the same lines. This understanding between Poles, Serbs, and Romanians was due to the fact that besides being partitioned, Poland also knew the extent of Russian censorship and interference in its internal affairs. In 1832 'Polish autonomy was replaced by an "organic statute" emphasizing the territory's status as a part of the Russian Empire' (Weeks, 34). Thus, these laws (Organic Statutes) became legislative acts through which the Russians advanced the colonization process.

Although the existence of a school for girls under state patronage was provided for in the *Organic Statute* introduced in Wallachia by Russia in 1832, during its protectorate, its achievement was delayed by the political events mentioned above. They had consequences in the field of education, as the young generation of Romanian intellectuals, formed in Western capitals (Paris, Vienna, Berlin), saw in Russia's policy a form of cultural expansion aimed at holding back a national emancipation

that would be to its disadvantage. Among those who participated in the drafting of the 48-er programme (the Islaz Proclamation), which in principle favoured the abolition of class privileges, Ioan Maiorescu and Nicolae Bălcescu, both the products of European university centres, played a role in the denunciation of the Russian danger at the level of education: two leading Romanian 48-ers, one moderate and the other radical, the former coming from the Austrian Empire to Wallachia and the other a native of the principality, but both aware of imperial realities through their travels and studies. Both considered that in fact, Russia did not wish for a democratization of education in the true sense of the word. Ioan Maiorescu had raised the issue as early as 1838 through articles published in the gazette of Brașov, over the border in the Austrian Empire, but he was quickly dismissed from his post and blackmailed into retraction on the basis of his situation as an immigrant from Transylvania; if he wanted to be reintegrated in the teaching profession in Wallachia and to have an income with which to maintain his family, he had no choice. Having witnessed what had happened to Ion Câmpineanu and the masked censorship that existed in Wallachia, Maiorescu complied (Roman 2023).

The Romanians were learning, under pressure, to keep quiet and to learn to live, one way or another, with the Russians, who had the first say in the imposition of decisions in relation to the suzerain power, Turkey, which was in a process of 'reinvention' of its position on the international political scene: a reinvention that was only partial, and unsuccessful, given that the other powers would come to describe it as the 'sick man of Europe'.

Within these socio-political contexts that maintained a conflictual relationship between national and imperial agendas, an interesting development took place in Wallachia: private schools for girls emerged and developed both in the capital and in the provinces before the actual establishment of the Bucharest state school. The rejection of the additional act to the Organic Statute, the Romanian elite's awareness of the colonizing aim of Russia through education, and the existence of an embryonic culture of public political resistance made possible such an outcome. To these factors should be added the mobility of foreign women who saw in private schools a business or a commercial venture that could empower them on the educational labour market. To keep these schools running meant to remain competitive, to collaborate with the funding bodies, and to find strategies to remain relevant for the receiving community. For these women, as teachers and especially as principals, this could be achieved only through developing managerial skills and proving their

competence in terms of knowledge in different areas (foreign languages, mathematics, geography and history, etc.). French was the language of the elite that showed that a young lady was refined in manners and properly educated, ready to make her debut in society. But to teach it to the local people in an institution one also had to know basic Romanian, prove adaptability to local norms, and respond to parents' demands and needs. Those disciplines were part of the curricula.

While the establishment of the state school for girls in Bucharest was postponed until 1852, the locals used the model from the *Organic Statute* to empower themselves and create similar institutions even in the counties. In Craiova, one of the largest cities in Wallachia, we find the example of the Lazaro-Otetelesanu school for girls. Between 1837 and 1864, this private school had at least five principals, of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds: Mrs. Grulie; Wilhelmina Dahlen, a German lady; Italian-born Marietta Massenza; and finally French teachers Marie Villeneuve and Antonine Bergman (née Colet, and married in Craiova to a Romanian teacher) (Roman 2017, 375). Across the Romanian principality of Wallachia, such private schools for girls flourished although they had a more or less ephemeral existence. They experienced a fluctuation in the number of pupils. One could have – as the example of Caroline Kuhn's school shows – nine pupils in 1849 while in 1854 to reach twenty-six (Roman 2020, 47). These establishments depended on the geopolitical and economic stability of the region and on the skills of the headmistress.

The main aim of these schools was to provide girls with the necessary knowledge to become good mothers and good citizens (Alpern Engel 1983, 52) as the morality of women was linked to the 'foundation of social cohesion' in the community and in the society at large (Michaud 2000, 121). Morality is defined through religion and through a tacit code of ethics that would eventually transform a young lady into a virtuous and a respectable woman. Ellen Bayuk Rosenman argues that 'a pervasive 'anti-sensualism'' characterized the Victorian age and the Western bourgeois model of femininity. In this sense, 'virtue was a quality men should strive for, but many writers considered it the defining essence of femininity. Belief in a coherent female nature produced the familiar binary of angel and whore: either a woman was wholly pure or she was another being altogether' (Rosenman 2013, 49). Things were not so simple and the differentiation 'between the public and the private spheres was consistently contested throughout the [nineteenth] century' (Rosenman 2013, 50). Women had (limited) access to public roles and in

these situations they had to detach from personal and family matters and remark themselves in society through their own skills and capabilities. This is how a headmistress of a state school for girls was supposed to be. However, in a Romanian society marked by geopolitical and economic instability, by the constraints coming from the suzerain and the protective powers (the Ottoman and the Russian Empires) and with still an incipient native bourgeoisie, the above-mentioned model was a utopia. If for men the appointment to high public offices was a negotiation between various boyar groupings, the two above-mentioned powers and in connection with prestige, wealth, class and political loyalty, things should not be expected to be different for women.

Although egalitarian education programmes had existed since the seventeenth century and in Wallachia there was a reinforcement of the idea through the immigration of intellectuals of the 'Transylvanian School', the Wallachian 1848 revolution highlighted it. All the 1848 revolutions in Europe had in their programmes the demand for an egalitarian education as such an education 'was understood as an important instrument in national emancipation and the forming of a collective identity'. However, imperial agendas did not agree with such an aim without a sociopolitical control of it (Tenorth 2008, 738). Irrespective of the situation, the 1848 moment should be understood as a start in political activism for women in France (Schor 2022), a political model for young Romanian intellectuals and their families. Romanian forty-eighters considered that they had multiple identities and that one could have Romanian national consciousness while at the same time being both an Ottoman subject and a European (Morris 2021).

With the 1848 Revolution defeated, its leaders and influential participants either exiled or under internal surveillance, Russia acquired an even greater influence in the region thanks to the military aid it had given to the Ottoman Empire. The first ruling prince after 1849 appointed from Constantinople with the Tsar's approval, was Barbu D. Știrbei, a Russophile who had been General Pavel Kiseleff's secretary at the time of the drafting of the *Organic Statute*, a skilled player on the political stage. Until 1851, he stood up to dual Turkish-Russian supervision, with the presence of Ottoman and Russian armies on Wallachian territory, and tried to revive a local economy that had been badly hit by armed conflict. It was only in 1851 that he re-opened the discussion, abandoned for almost twenty years, of a school for girls, and requested a report on the subject from the education ministry of the time (*Eforia Școlilor*, the

Ephorate of Schools). In its report to the ruler, the institution recognized that such a school, though projected in 1832, had neither been established then nor on the occasion of the reorganization of public instruction in 1847. It is true that in 1847, a step forward had been taken, and it had been decided that the Church, using the income of the monastery of St. Spyridon New in Bucharest, would provide almost half the funding and a place (or a room) in the yard of the monastery's church (ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor si Instructiunii Publice, 154/1851, f. 33). Without specifying the reasons for the stopping of the project for a state girls' school, the Ephorate suggested that the idea should be taken up again, as 'the founding of a girls' school is a need of the highest importance.' As the economy was still in a poor state, the budget was reduced, and such a school could not be 'maintained at the expense of the state'; nor would it be possible to fund 100 scholarships, as had initially been intended, but only twenty. The solution was partial funding by the Church (also from the income of the monastery of St. Spyridon New) and the finding of a person 'who will have given evidence of their capability and morality by maintaining such an establishment in the capital for a long time.' Here we have the three selection criteria of the Ephorate of Schools: administrative and pedagogical abilities, morality, and experience in running a private school (or after the French term, a *pensionnat*).

4. Choosing the school principals for the state girls' school in Bucharest

4.1. The first school principal, by invitation on the part of the state

The choice had to be made from among the staff of the *pensionnats* known in Bucharest at the time. The Ephorate recommended a name that fulfilled the three criteria and was already known in elite circles and even to Prince Știrbei: the countess of Grand-Pré (ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor si Instructiunii Publice, 154/1851, f. 4). An impoverished but well-educated aristocrat, of French origin, with very good results in Bucharest—a *pensionnat* with ten stipendiaries—, she was the ideal that was sought (no one with better qualities was known) and her appointment would have constituted a real step towards Europeanization in education. However, the recommendation was rejected and the person chosen was Anna Iacobson, who was invited by the state to become the headmistress

of the state *pensionnat* in the summer of 1852. Why her? A glance at the above-mentioned context and at Mrs Iacobson's family history provides the answer. In 1852, Russia was at the height of its geopolitical influence and regional expansion, and Prince Barbu Știrbei sought to create at state level an elite who would correspond to the expectations of the more powerful of his 'supervisors'. He had to be prudent if he was to keep his position. Anna Iacobson, née Karpov (1798-1878) was the widow of Arnold Iacobson, the colonel (Russian rank of *polcovnic*, cf. Cernovodeanu & Gavrila 2002, 106) attached to the occupation force and a former close associate of Kiseleff's: it was under his command that the outlaw Tunsul had been caught and he had also played a part in the suppression of the Brăila revolt (Potra 1990, 77). Unknown sources mention that she had an involvement in the 1848 revolution (Iorga, p. 77). Interestingly, one of the two sons of the Iacobsons, Victor, would be secretary to the Russian Diplomatic Agency (Bezviconi 1972, 19-9). Thus, we have a long-term family connection with Russia.

Another influential family of officers that came from Russia, the Blarembergs, had powerful ties in the capital of the empire, but also in Ukraine and Finland. Jean Blaremberg (1772-1831) was a state counsellor in Russia while his brother, Constantin (?-1859), was a general and a supervisor at the imperial palace in Tsarkoe Selo. All Jean Blaremberg's children (two sons and four daughters) were born in Odessa and made important matrimonial alliances in Romanian, French, and Russian families (Sturdza 2004). After the death of Jean Blaremberg, Constantin became the head of the extended family (Opaschi 2005, p. 121). Jean's son, Vladimir Blaremberg (1811-1846), was a commanding officer in the Russian army that occupied Wallachia, but he had fallen into disgrace for frequenting Romanians who sought emancipation like the Filipescus and their conspiracy of 1840 (Opaschi 2005, p. 125). From being adjutant to the ruling prince of the time, he was reduced to a mere clerk.

These two Russian families are important for the present study as the person selected for the post of school principal had to come from a family of Russian origin who enjoyed a certain prestige in the eyes of the Russian former occupiers, who had left in 1851. Iacobson met this criterion that could not be stated publicly.

Prince Barbu D. Știrbei decided on 27 August 1852 that the headmistress post should go to Mrs Anna Iacobson. Works on the construction of the premises had failed—they had been started in the yard of the Church of Saint Spyridon New, but had subsided because of the

unsuitable ground—so the state rented for three years the former house of Manuc Bey, then the property of a merchant. On 12 November 1852, the Princely Pensionnat for Young Ladies, which the Gazette announced was under the direction mentioned above and 'situated on the road of the Outside Market in the house that is called Manuc's.' (*Vestitorul Romanesc*, no. 90/1852, p. 357; ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor si Instructiunii Publice, 288/1851; Radulescu-Pogoneanu 1934, 705). The pensionnat operated with interruptions—because of the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853-1856)—until 1857. Anna Iacobson was active in running it and advanced money from her own funds until the state refunded expenses. When the war ended, late in 1856, she presented her resignation from the post of school principal, citing family reasons (ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor si Instructiunii Publice, 146/1857, f. 14-15; Radulescu-Pogoneanu 1934, 723). Her resignation coincided with a reduction in Russian influence in the region and the appointment of a new ruler of Wallachia, approved by the three political actors involved at regional level (Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and the latter's allies in the Crimean War): Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica (1796-1862). He was still a *kaymakam* (1856-1858), a substitute for the ruling prince, and thus in a somewhat temporary position. Again, the situation was difficult, but for the Russians he was a good guarantee: he had a long-lasting love affair with Countess Elisabeta von Suchtelen (née Lanskoi), the wife of a Russian officer of Swedish origin (Tomi, 2013) and he had previously favoured the Russians when he ruled Wallachia (1834-1842). As a counterbalance to the still-existing Russian influence, the forty-eighter emigrés now returned to Wallachia and the collective guarantee of the Great Powers was instituted. Russia was no longer the sole vector of political influence in relation to the Porte: the national party (represented by the forty-eighters) and European arbitration were part of the European political arena.

4.2. A second school principal and the public competition for the job of running the state girls' school in Bucharest

Following the resignation of Anna Iacobson and to keep up democratic appearances in front of the Great Powers, rather than an appointment by invitation, a public competition was organized for the post of headmistress of the state girls' school (the Princely Pensionnat). Early in 1857, the following announcement appeared in the gazettes:

Publication
On 25 March coming, competition will be opened for the post of headmistress of the Princely Pensionnat for girls in the capital. Ladies aspiring are invited to present themselves in the chancellery of this Ephorate [of Schools] from 1 March onwards to register their names and to present legal attestations regarding their morality.
No. 172
Feb. 9, 1857

We may notice that, in contrast to the previous selection, in 1851, there is now no mention of the criterion of capacity or of administrative and pedagogical abilities or the criterion of experience. However, among the few remaining private *pensionnats* after the war, hope appeared. Four candidates registered, none of them Romanian: the Countess of Grand Pres, Caroline Vaillant, Hermiona Lukasievici, and Elisa Blaremberg. Each made an application. The first three specify their achievements and why they should be taken into consideration:

The Countess of Grand-Pré had:
--- the recommendation of the Ministry of the Navy. The Commandant of the French Troops in the Orient, signed 10 October 1856;
---a letter from the ruler of the neighbouring Principality of Moldavia, Mihail Sturdza,
'in which he attests to the lady's morality of good direction all the time she ran the pensionnat in Iași';
--- 'the letter of Mr Polizu thanking her for the good upbringing of his daughters';
--- the fact that she was known to the Ephorate of Schools and to the previous administration.

Caroline Vaillant ran a pensionnat in Bucharest and had connections in the literary world of the time. Of French origin, she had received subsidies from the state before 1857 in recognition for her efforts. Caroline was also the wife of a well-known cultural figure in Romanian society, who was at the beginning of his activity a tutor and a teacher at the state school for boys (Saint Sava School): Jean-Alexandre Vaillant. He was a supporter of the Romanian liberal/national party, of the forty-eighters and an abolitionist who published extensively in French for the Romanian cause.[2]

Hermiona Lukasievici ran a pensionnat in Bucharest (ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor si Instructiunii Publice, 146/1857, f. 27; Radulescu-Pogoneanu 1934, 724).

The only one who simply asks to be taken into consideration, without any further details (ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor si Instructiunii Publice, 146/1857, f. 16), is Elisa Blaremberg.

Photo 1. Charles Doussault, *Portrait of Mademoiselle Elise of Blaremberg* (1843). Source: *Boabe de grau* (1934).

She was already known to the state, going back to 1850-51 and the first discussions about a state *pensionnat*. She had twice received state subsidies, and although the members of the board protested that she was taking this step too often, her third request was also approved. Elisa Blaremberg won the post. In the report of her selection, the following details are specified:

> *Today, 28 March 1857, being examined the evidence relating to the qualities and merits of the applicant such as are shown in her application among the headmistresses of private girls' pensionnats in the capital for the post of headmistress of the Princely Pensionnat, which post has become vacant through the resignation of the former headmistress the Polcovniceasă Iacobson, and being seen the result of the examination that Mrs Hermina Lukasievici has sat, the Ephorate is satisfied that Miss Eliza Blaremberg brings together all the qualities required for this important function. She is provisionally appointed headmistress of the Princely Pensionnat for Girls in the capital, having as recompense [the right] to enjoy all the benefits accorded to the previous headmistress of the said Pensionnat. This appointment of Miss Blaremberg will be submitted for confirmation to His Highness the Interim* (caimacam) *Ruler.* (ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor si Instructiunii Publice, 146/1857, f. 29).

In 1857, as mentioned, the interim ruler was Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica, the brother-in-law of Elisa Blaremberg's brother, and he approved the choice. The board itself, besides the military officer Emanoil Florescu, included Gheorghe Costaforu, who was indebted to Ghica for sending him in his youth with a scholarship to study in Paris. We thus have a network of venality favourable to the Russophile party, under the mask of a competition democratically organized. A look at the manner in which the competition itself proceeded reveals how much it mattered what was officially announced in the gazette regarding the criteria of eligibility.

What, in fact, was taken into consideration? As we can see from the announcement published in the two gazettes, *Buletin Oficial* and *Anunțătorul Român*, the only condition presented to the public concerned the morality of the applicant. Nevertheless, after the registration of the four ladies mentioned above, each with her own plus points, came the examinations referred to in the board's report. From these examinations (not from the announcement), and thus informally, it emerges that two aspects were essential: pedagogical abilities, including knowledge of foreign languages, and the administrative skills necessary for the running of a *pensionnat*: in fact, the same that had been stated officially at the appointment of the first headmistress, Anna Iacobson.

None of them had a diploma attesting studies or graduation from a Western pensionnat, superior in the preparation it offered to the private establishments in existence in Wallachia at the time. As regards 'management', it was considered that the mere fact of having run a girls' *pensionnat* for an extended period demonstrated each woman's abilities

as a school principal. Regarding the building and its maintenance, another aspect may be noted. The best private *pensionnats* received subsidies from the government; nevertheless, they operated in rented houses, to the upkeep of which the headmistresses had to devote attention equal to their interest in pedagogical activity. While the majority of pensionnat headmistresses had to manage to the best of their abilities and keep expenses within the budget of the school, made up of income from tuition fees plus the state subsidy, the situation was quite different in the cases of Iacobson and Blaremberg. Iacobson was invited to be school principal, and until the building of the state pensionnat planned for the yard of the Church of Saint Spyridon New, she was offered space in one of the former houses of Manuc Bey, with the rent paid by the state.

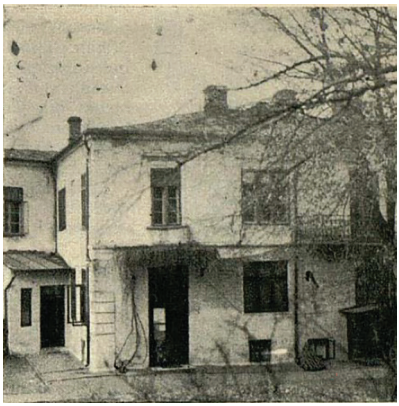

Photo 2a and 2b. Manuc House (outside view and from the interior court), photos from 1928. Source: Radulescu-Pogoneanu (1934, 707).

The planned building was never built. Elisa Blaremberg in her turn received a building belonging to the Ghica family, a veritable villa in comparison with the premises of the other private pensionnats including those of her counter-candidates. Neither of the buildings used in the middle of the nineteenth century as provisional accommodation for the girls' *pensionnat* exists today; both have been demolished.

Photo 3. Alexandru Ghica Palace on Coltei Street, at the intersection with Serafim Street. Photo from 1875, building demolished in 1890. Source: Radulescu-Pogoneanu (1934, 716)

Informally, Elisa Blaremberg started out with the advantages mentioned above: a family connection, through her brother Vladimir Blaremberg, with the interim ruler of Wallachia, Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica; a spacious and modern building in comparison with the others; and her belonging to an elite of Russian origin that was favoured because of the geopolitical context. The competition came as an unexpected inconvenience for the authorities, especially the registration of Lukasievici, the headmistress of a private pensionnat in Bucharest about whom they had not known. As the report shows, the two Frenchwomen were eliminated in the first phase. For the Countess of Grand-Pré, it was the second time during her residence in Wallachia that this had happened. Caroline Vaillant was

known to the state as a good school principal of a private pensionnat since she previously received financial help; however, her personal connections with the liberal/national party could have been an impediment to be selected. Thus, we have two Frenchwomen with experience in their field and already recognised for their activity as managers and teachers that are rejected. In the second phase, Elisa Blaremberg remained in competition only with Lukasievici, a newcomer in comparison with the experience of the others and a person who had maintained her pensionnat by her own efforts, without subsidies or interventions. The solution was to examine the two women as regards pedagogy and to carry out an inspection of the girls' pensionnats in the capital (ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor si Instructiunii Publice, 146/1857, f. 33). At the examination in subjects taught in a Wallachian girls' pensionnat, Lukasievici came out quite well, proving her knowledge before a board curious to know who she was:

Langue française	*bien*
Géographie	*bien*
Catéchisme	*bien*
Arithmétique	*très bien*
Grammaire valaque	*bien*

(ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor si Instructiunii Publice, 146/1857, f. 28, 143).

At the inspection of private pensionnats, her situation was not so good, and her building was relatively small and not as well equipped as Elisa Blaremberg's. Indeed, it could hardly have been otherwise. Combined, the two 'tests' eliminated Lukasievici from the race, and thus Eliza Blaremberg could say that she was the headmistress of a state school, albeit a provisional, interim headmistress.

We may notice that these stages in the selection process were not specified in the announcement of the competition; they appeared along the way. That this is the case emerges even from the certificate recognizing headship *capability* given by the state to Hermiona Lukasievici in 1860, once Elisa Blaremberg was no longer interim but a school principal in the full sense of the word. And regarding the sole criterion mentioned, there is a problem. If we return to the announcement, we can see that the only requirement publicly specified in the gazettes is morality. Anna Iacobson was the widow of a high-ranking Russian officer, a mother, and a woman whose strictness and rigour won her respect in society. In the second case, paradoxically, the only one of the four candidates for the

post of headmistress of a pensionnat (regardless whether private or state) who did not fulfil the condition of morality was precisely the winner. Elisa Blaremberg had a personal history that contrasted with those of her predecessor and her counter-candidates and indeed with the standard of respectability that was an implied requirement for the post. At the time of the competition, she was unmarried and had an illegitimate daughter, Iulia (Juliette), born in 1848 (Sturdza 2004). After she was abandoned by her partner, the French painter Charles Doussault (1806–1880), a celebrity among the aristocracy, the situation was—to use a present-day term—"whitewashed" by her family. Iulia (1848-1890) was adopted by one of her relatives (Opaschi, p. 132) to avoid possible scandal due to the relations of kinship between the Blaremberg family and the ruling family of Wallachia, the Ghicas. Moreover, Doussault had come to Wallachia in the suite of Prince Albert of Prussia in 1843, and at the request of the Romanian authorities he had painted a set of ten watercolours that were given to the prince as a souvenir. A bohemian wanderer, attracted by the picturesque of the Orient, Doussault frequented consular circles and the Romanian elite, through whom he received orders; his portrait of the great boyar Iordache Filipescu is perhaps his most well-known work from his time in Wallachia (Roman 2017-2018). Although the daughter, Iulia, was adopted, she grew up with her mother. However, this matter of morality is not mentioned in the report on Elisa Blaremberg's application, as it would have implicated figures from the elite and would have eliminated her from the start. Her personal story was known in the society of the time, but because of its ramifications at a high level, it became a taboo subject in the salons of Bucharest. As a solution to the problem posed by the unexpected competition, the preferred approach was, as we have seen, an administrative one. The two additional tests that appeared with ad-hoc boards established that her pensionnat was in good order. Thus, the official requirement, morality, no longer had any real value.

Elisa Blaremberg collaborated with the Ephorate of Schools, later the Ministry of Public Instruction, especially after her appointment was made definitive in 1860. Nevertheless, she presented her position twofold. In the internal administrative documents of the pensionnat, referring to teachers or to the grading of pupils, she names the institution that she headed 'The Blaremberg Young Ladies' Pensionnat' (*pensionatul de demoazele Blaremberg*) or *Institut de demoiselles du Gouvernement dirige par Mademoiselle Elise de Blaremberg à Bucarest*, while in external correspondence and communication with the Ministry she keeps to the

title preferred by the authorities, 'The Princely Pensionnat' (*Pensionatul domnesc*): simple, without any addition. Thus, while she as an individual considered herself entitled to see the pensionnat as hers, the state perceived the situation in a neutral, depersonalized manner. From 1857 to 1864, Elisa Blaremberg faced no contestation or competition regarding the running of the institution. In 1864, however, the latest inspection brought to light a shocking fact: the pensionnat had hygiene problems, and in any case, was in decline. This was the first challenge to her management (Radulescu-Pogoneanu 1934, 735), and she did not react at all well before the Ministry board: she affirmed her noble origin and threatened to take the twelve bursary-holding pupils that she had brought and leave. The board was unimpressed by arguments of this sort and allowed her to resign. In 1870, we find her opening a private pensionnat in Bucharest (*Românul* 1870 an 14), while the state girls' school would become the Central School. However, this is another stage in the story of secondary education for girls in Romania, with different staff, different norms, and different management.

5. Conclusions

The present inquiry brings to light four conclusions. In the first place, the presence of the authentic or real Western female teacher with experience as principal was not a reality at the level of state education. Candidates of French origin were eliminated from the start in favour of candidates of Russian origin. Hence the second conclusion. The appointment of principals for the state school was based on geopolitical convenience and not on merit. An exploration of the dynamics of the appointments shows the power of Russia's networks of influence in Wallachia, as both the principals appointed came from families of officers with links to the armies of occupation. Third, we may observe a permutation in the field of education of the Russian imperial policy of censorship and elimination from the political field. Hermiona Lukasievici, the only candidate who had set up a private pensionnat by her own efforts, without enjoying the advantages of the selected headmistresses (Iacobson and Blaremberg), was 'suspended' from activity from 1857, the year of the competition, until 1860, when Blaremberg's post was made definitive. Then she too was given her attestation and resumed her activity in the educational field in Wallachia, as there was now no possibility of any contestation. Fourth,

these appointments suggest that in Wallachia there was a controlling factor in the educational system that reflected the geopolitical interests of the time: an elite of bourgeois women familiar with and favourable to a Russian presence and culture. Thus, through education Russia aimed at creating a client state in the Romanian principality, engaging loyalties and assuring its influence in the region even though after the Crimean War it was no longer a protecting power.

Endnotes

1 The head of the provisional government was Neofit II, the metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia. The members were Christian Tell (army), Gheorghe Magheru (army), Ion Heliade Radulescu (publicist, writer, and professor), and Stefan Golescu. The secretaries of the government were C.A. Rosetti, Nicolae Bălcescu, Al. G. Golescu, and Ion Brătianu. The collaboration between the Church, the army, and the young cultural elite may easily be observed.

2 Selective publications by Jean-Alexandre Vaillant (1804-1886): *Grammaire roumaine à l'usage des Français*, Boucourest: F. Walbaum, 1840 (first edition in 1836); *La Romanie, ou Histoire, langue, littérature, orthographie, statistique des peuples de la langue d'or, Ardialiens, Vallaques et Moldaves, résumés sous le nom de Romans*, Paris, Arhus Bertrand, 1844 ; *Poésies de la langue d'or* [choisies et traduites par J-A. Vaillant], Paris, J.-A. Vaillant, 1851 ; *Actes diplomatiques constatant l'autonomie politique de la Roumanie*, Impr. de Soye et Bouchet, 1857 ; *Les Romes, histoire vraie des vrais Bohémiens*, Paris, E. Dentu, 1857.

Bibliography

Sources

Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale [National Archives Main Headquarters, abbreviated ANIC], Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice.

Bezviconi Gheorghe (1972). *Necropola Capitalei*, Institutul de Istorie 'Nicolae Iorga'.

Cernovodeanu Paul, Gavrilă Irina (2002). *Arhondologiile Țării Românești de la 1837* [The archondologies of Wallachia from 1837], Muzeul Brăilei-Editura Istros.

Regulamentul Organic: Întrupat *cu legiuirile din anii 1831, 1832* și *1833,* și *adăogat la sfârșit cu legiuirile de la anul 1834 până acum* [The Organic Statute: With all the laws issued in 1831, 1832 and 1833, and completed at the end with the laws from 1834 until now] (1847), tipărit la pitarul Z. Carcaleki, tipograful Curții.

Românul [The Romanian]

Vestitorul Românesc [The Romanian Annunciator]

Secondary literature

Alpern Engel, Barbara (1983). *Mothers and Daughters. Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth Century Russia*. Cambridge University Press.

Caramelea, Ramona (2007). *„*În spatele zidurilor...'' istoria școlilor *de fete din București (1864-1916)[„Before the walls... ''. The history of the schools for girls in Bucharest (1864-1916)]*, UNArte.

Drace-Francis, Alex (2016). *Geneza culturii române moderne. Instituțiile scrisului și dezvoltarea identității naționale, 1700-1900*, Polirom [The Making of Modern Romanian Culture : Literacy and the Development of National Identity, I.B.Tauris, 2006] .

Florescu, Radu R. (1998). *The Struggle Against Russia in the Romanian Principalities: A Study in Anglo Turkish Diplomacy, 1821-1854*, Center for Romanian Studies.

Iorga, Nicolae (1910). *Viața* și *domnia lui Barbu Dimitrie* Știrbei*: domn al* Țerei *Romînești (1849-1856) [The life and reign of Barbu Dimitrie* Știrbei*: Ruling Prince of Wallachia (1849-1856)]*, Tipografia Neamul Romanesc.

Jelavich, Barbara (1991). *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806-1914*, Cambridge University Press.

Maier Lothar (2008), The Revolution of 1848 in Moldavia and Wallachia. In Dowe Dieter, Haupt Heinz-Gerhard, Laugewiesche Dieter, Sperber Jonathan (Eds.). *Europe in 1848. Revolution and Reform*, transl. David Higgins. Berghahn Books.

Michaud Stéphane (2000), 'Femeia'. In Françoit Furet (ed.), *Omul romantic*, Polirom, p.105-136.

Mihuț, Cosmin (2023). *Politică și discurs național în vremea domniei lui Alexandru Ghica (1834-1842) [Politics and national discourse during the reign of Alexandru Ghica (1834-1842)]*, Editura Universității ,,Alexandru Ioan Cuza".

Morris, J. (2021). Locating the Wallachian Revolution, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 64, issue 3, 606-625. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X20000345

Opaschi, Cătălina (2005). Un jurnal de călătorie inedit al colonelului Vladimir Moret de Blaremberg. In *Muzeul Național*, XVII-7, p. 113-155.

Pârnuță, Gheorghe (1976). Învățători și *profesori* în *revoluția de la 1848 [School teachers and professors during the 1848 revolution]*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică.

Platon, Alexandru Florin (2013). *Geneza burgheziei* în *Principatele române (a doua jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea–prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea): Preliminariile unei istorii* [The emergence of the bourgeoisie in the Romanian Principalities (second half of the eighteenth century–first half of the nineteenth century): The preliminaries of a history], 2nd edition, Editura Universității ,,Alexandru Ioan Cuza".

Potra George (1990). *Din Bucureștii de ieri*, vol. 2, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică.

Rădulescu-Pogoneanu, Elena (1934). *Școala Centrală de Fete din București* [The Central School for Girls in Bucharest], In *Boabe de grâu*, an V, no. 12, p. 705-768.

Roman, Nicoleta (2017). "De trebuință și cu mare căutare: Școala Lazaro-Otetelișanu din Craiova în perioada regulamentară" [Of great need and very much looked for: The Lazaro-Otetelișanu School in Craiova during the Organic Statute period], In *Revista istorică*, nos. 3–4, p. 361–397. 2017_3-4.pdf (iini.ro)

Roman, Nicoleta (2023). Émigrants et réviseurs scolaires dans la Valachie de la première moitié du XIXe siècle: transfert intellectuel et construction nationale. Étude de cas: Ioan Maiorescu. In *Plural. History, Culture, Society*, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 5-36. https://doi.org/10.37710/plural.v11i1_1

Roman, Nicoleta (2020). Educating the Other. Foreign Governesses in Wallachia in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century. In *Aspasia. The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History*, vol. 14/1, p. 37-56. https://doi.org/10.3167/asp.2020.140105

Roman, Nicoleta (2017-2018). Iordache Filipescu, the 'last great boyar' of Wallachia and his heritage: a world of power, influence and goods. In *Crohmos. Cyber Review of Modern Historiography*, vol. 21, p. 106-122. https://doi.org/10.13128/Cromohs-24551

Rosenman, Ellen Bayuk (2013). 'Bodies and Sexuality: Sexuality and Bodies in the Age of Empire'. In Teresa Magnum (ed.), *A Cultural History of Women*, vol. 5, Bloomsbury Academic, p. 47-65.

Schor Laura S. (2022). *Women and Political Activism in France, 1848-1852*, Palgrave Macmillan.

Sturdza, Mihai Dimitrie (2004). *Familii boierești din Moldova și Țara Românească. Enciclopedie istorică, genealogică și biografică* [Boyar families from Moldavia and Wallachia. Historical, genealogical and biographical encyclopaedia], vol. I, Simetria.

Tenorth, Heinz-Elmar, 'Educational Reform as Social Reform. The Revolution of 1848 as a Turning-Point in the History of Education'. In Dowe Dieter, Haupt Heinz-Gerhard, Laugewiesche Dieter, Sperber Jonathan (Eds.). *Europe in 1848. Revolution and Reform*, transl. David Higgins. Berghahn Books, p. 731-748.

Tomi, Raluca (2013). 'Corespondența dintre Elisabeta von Suchtelen și domnitorul Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica – izvor inedit al perioadei regulamentare' [The correspondence between Elisabeta von Suchtelen and domnitor Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica – an unpublished source for the regulation period]. In *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Modernă*, p. 67-85.
file:///D:/Tomi_SMIMod_2013-67-85.pdf

Vlăduț, Constantin (1973). *Ion Câmpineanu*, Editura Științifică.

Weeks Theodore R. (2006). 'Managing empire: tsarist nationalities policy'. In Dominic Lieven (ed.), The Cambridge History of Russia, vol. II, Cambridge University Press.

Wess Mitchell, A. (2018). *The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire*, Princeton University Press.