

MOLDAVIAN MERCHANTS AND COMMERCE IN CONSTANTINOPLE IN THE 15th CENTURY IN THE “BOOK OF ACCOUNTS” OF GIACOMO BADOER

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The *Book of accounts* kept by the Venetian merchant Giacomo Badoer during his stay in Constantinople between September 2nd 1436 and February 26th 1440 is one of the most remarkable documents of economic and social history that survived from the Levantine world of the 15th century.¹ Unfortunately, only a very small part of it was scientifically exploited by historians.²

I came in touch with Badoer's *Book of accounts* while studying the monetary currency in the Byzantine Empire and the Black Sea area during the 15th century. Soon I was glad to discover what a rich source of information I had taken in hand, among which a rather important number of data concerning the Mediaeval history of the Romanians. They reflect the evolution of the relations with the Byzantine world and the Genoese and Venetian Levant in a decisive historical period, when the ascension of the Ottoman Empire in that large geographical region was irremediably modifying the traditional political, social and cultural status of the area.

Although mentioned a long time ago, Badoer's *Book of accounts* was until now almost ignored by Romanian researchers.³ A valuable

¹ *Il libro dei conti di Giacomo Badoer (Constantinopoli, 1436—1440)*, edited by U. Dorini and T. Bertelè (*Il Nuovo Ramusio. Raccolta di viaggi, testi e documenti relativi ai rapporti fra Europae l'Oriente, a cura dell'Istituto Italiano per il Medio Oriente, vol. terzo*) Roma, 1956 (abbreviated *Badoer*).

² The volume was preceded by two papers published by T. Bertelè, *Il libro dei conti di Giacomo Badoer*, in *Byzantion*, 21, 1951, pp. 122—126 and *idem*, *Il giro d'affari di Giacomo Badoer: Precisioni e deduzioni*, in *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongress, München, 1958*, edited by Fr. Dölger and H. G. Beck, Munich, 1958, pp. 48—57.

According to the initial project, the text was to be followed by a second volume of commentaries, special studies of commercial technics, monetary problems, Ottoman problems, index, etc., which didn't appear until today.

The *Book of accounts* of Badoer was fully used by T. Bertelè, *L'iperpero bizantino dal 1261 al 1453*, in *RIN*, 5, 1957, pp. 1—21 and F. Babinger, *Contraffazioni ottomane dello zecchino veneziano nel XV secolo*, in *RIN*, 3, 1956, pp. 83—99. See also BN. Oikonomides, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople (XIII^e—XV^e siècle)*, Montreal—Paris, 1979.

Many studies were dedicated to Badoer's *Book of accounts* by the Soviet historian M. M. Shitikov, see for example his *Konstantinopol' i venetsianskaya torgovlya v pervoy poloviny XV v. po dannym knigi shchetov Dzhakomo Badoera*, in *Viz. Vrem.*, 30, 1969, p. 48—63.

³ The first reference to that source is in D. C. Giurescu, *Relațiile economice ale Țării Românești cu țările Peninsulei Balcanice din secolul al XIV-lea pînă la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea* (*The economic relations of Wallachia with the Balkan countries from the 14th to the*

exception is the analysis made by Mr. Octavian Iliescu for the *torneri vlachesci* recorded by Badoer⁴. I am deeply convinced that the whole document deserves a much more complex approach and a larger debate of the entirely new information on a yet little known aspect of the economic and commercial contacts between the Romanian countries and Byzantium in the 15th century⁵.

A) MERCHANTS

Badoer's *Book of accounts* offers some data concerning direct contacts with Romanian merchants in Constantinople. The first name noted by Badoer is that of *chir Jorgi Foti Vlacho — Master Iorgi (George), son of Photios, the Wallachian*. With small variants, it appears several times between the years 1436–1438 in relation with various transactions. Thus, we learn that on *September 2nd 1437*, *Jorgi Foti* was owing to a Venetian, Ser Marin Barbo, a sum of 72 hyperpera (perpers) and 12 carats (cca. 24 and 4/5 Venetian gold ducats), as a result of the acquisition of a bale of dark green cloth from the Flamish town of Wervieq (*Veroi*). The affair was mediated by the broker *Zorzi Zimador — Giorgio, the Clothcutter*⁶. The same day, the Romanian merchant had to pay another bale, this time a bale of Mantovan turquoise cloth, owned by the Venetian Francesco Trevisan and given to Badoer for sale by the Venetian bailiff in Constantinople, ser Cristoforo Marcello. This cloth was in a bad state, as Badoer scrupulously wrote: *molto malmenadi* and

middle of the 16th century), in *RSL*, 11, 1965 (history series), p. 173 and notes nos. 2 and 3. The author didn't know the source, directly receiving only oral information from O. Iliescu.

From D. C. Giurescu the information passed to Al. Elian, *Byzance et les Roumains à la fin du Moyen Age*, in *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, 5–10 September 1966*, edited by J. M. Hussey, D. Obolensky, St. Runciman, Oxford—New York—Toronto, 1967, p. 197 and to E. Stănescu, *Byzance et les Pays Roumains aux IX^e–XV^e siècles*, in *XIV^e Congrès internationale des études byzantines, Bucarest, 6–12 septembre 1911, Rapports*, vol. IV, Bucharest, 1976, p. 40.

⁴ O. Iliescu, *Ducații Țării Românești cu numele lui Basarab voievod*, (*The Wallachian ducats with the name of Basarab voievod*), in *SCN*, 6, 1975, pp. 145–146 and the footnotes nos. 76–78.

⁵ On the relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Romanian Countries in the 15th century see the papers of Al. Elian and E. Stănescu mentioned above. See also Al. Elian, *Moldova și Bizanțul în secolul al XV-lea (Moldavia and Byzantium in the 15th century)*, în *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare, culegere de studii (The Moldavian culture during Stephen the Great, selected studies)*, edited by M. Berza, Bucharest, 1964, pp. 97–179. The study is very critical and rather sceptical over the amount of the direct relations, the economic ones included.

⁶ Badoer., p. 207, lines 8–10. *Avere*. The cloth was officially measured at Peța, Badoer., p. 206, lines 11–20. *Dare*.

We kept Badoer's orthography unchanged. For an easier reading, we give the modern Italian forms and their English translation.

Badoer, as well as other Italian contemporary sources, informs us that, officially, one Venetian gold ducat was equal to three Byzantine silver hyperpera (perpers), Cf. T. Bertelè, *Moneta veneziana e moneta bizantina*, in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, vol. I, *Storia-Diritto-Economia*, edited by A. Pertusi, Florence, 1973, pp. 53–58 (Abbreviated *Venezia e il Levante*). One hyperperon was equal to 24 carats.

We shall indicate all the prices both in hyperpera and in Venetian gold ducats, as they were stable and well known money.

molto mal in ordine e senza bole, e tal . . . senza invoia. Under those circumstances *Jorgi Foti Vlacho*—for the first time the name is accompanied by the mention of his nationality—paid only 77 hyperpera and 14 carats (25 and $\frac{4}{5}$ Venetian gold ducats) for that bale of cloth initially evaluated at 99 hyperpera (33 Venetian gold ducats). The broker of this second transaction was again *maistro Zorzi Zimador*.⁷

Another note of *September 2nd 1437* stipulates once more that the two bales of cloth were not paid in cash.⁸

Master *Iorgi* the Wallachian did not buy only cloth from the Italian merchants in Constantinople, but he had some more dealings, for which he was receiving or transferring money on account of the debts. On *September 26th 1437*, Badoer notes that the banker *Kaloianmi Sophiano* (Caloiani Sofiano or Sufiano) had to transfer a sum of 100 hyperpera (33 and $\frac{1}{3}$ Venetian gold ducats) for part of the cloth bought by *Jorgi Foti* three weeks before.⁹ The same day, *Sophiano* had to pay 47 hyperpera and 14 carats (15 and $\frac{4}{5}$ Venetian gold ducats), on account of *Jorgi Foti* for a quantity of copper *Giacomo Badoer* had bought from him. The two cantars and 80 rotoli of copper (133.42 kg) were in form of small change, named in the text *tornexi Vlachesci*—Wallachian tornese.¹⁰ I shall insist further on over that important transaction.

On *October 17th 1438*, as a consequence of the discount of those former acquisitions of cloth, Master *Iorgi* the Wallachian had to pay a remaining of 4 hyperpera and 12 carats (1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ Venetian gold ducats).¹¹

Five months later, on *February 13th 1438*, *chir Jorgi Vlacho* made a new acquisition of cloth from Badoer. This time he bought two bales of cloth of the type *bastardo*, belonging to *Piero Michiel*, *Gerolamo* and *Giacomo Badoer*. In the *Book of accounts* is mentioned that one bale was scarlet and the other one was green. The cloth being not of the best quality, although initially appreciated at the value of 78 hyperpera each (26 Venetian gold ducats), it was sold in the end at a total sum of 155 hyperpera (51 and $\frac{2}{3}$ Venetian gold ducats). The affair was facilitated by a Greek broker whose name was illegible.¹² Some days later, on *February 19th 1438*, Badoer noted that *Iorgi* bought other four bales of

⁷ Badoer, p. 143, lines 7–10. *Avere.* and p. 177 lines 28–30.

⁸ Badoer, p. 240, lines 1–6. *Dare.* That time the turquoise cloth is evaluated again at 77 hyperpera and 14 carats.

⁹ Badoer, p. 236, line 5. *Dare.* Probably the number 117 of the paper sheet from the first *Book of accounts* (*charta*) is wrong, in fact being the number 119, on p. 241, line 2. *Avere.*

¹⁰ Badoer, p. 241, lines 3–4. *Avere.* and p. 212, lines 7–8. *Dare.*, with the difference that Badoer is charged with that sum as a buyer.

From Badoer's *Book of accounts* it results that all the merchandises were weighed either at the public Genoese balance in Pera, or at the imperial one in Constantinople. From the text of Fr. Balducci Pegolotti, *La Pratica della mercatura*, edited by A. Evans, Cambridge in Mass., 1936, p. 32 we learn that the Constantinopolitan pound (*libra*) was equal to that of Pera, weighing 317.664 g, see P. Rocca, *Pesi e misure antichi de Genova e del Genovesato*, Genova, 1871 p. 108, apud M. Halard, *La Romanie génoise* (XII^e—début du XVI^e siècle), vol. 11, Rome, 1978, p. 897. A cantar of Pera (or Constantinople) is equal to 150 pounds or 100 rotoli, that is 47.65 kg.

¹¹ Badoer., p. 178, line 48. *Dare.*

¹² Badoer., p. 625, lines 4–6. *Avere.* The transaction is mentioned in short at page 580, line 42. *Dare.*, but Badoer made a mistake, writing about the buying of 8 bales of cloth.

Lorenzo Dolfín let us known that in March 1438 the price of the Wervicq cloth is

cloth. They all belonged to Ser Marin and Carlo Zeno and were evaluated to 56 hyperpera each. The whole affair rose to 207 hyperpera and 18 carats (cca. 69 Venetian gold ducats). The broker was a Greek merchant of timber, named Manoli.¹³ On the occasion of this transaction, we learn that *chir Iorgi Vlacho* had an associate (*so chompagno*), whose name and nationality, unfortunately was not notified.¹⁴ The two were partners only in some cases, as he acted most of the time on his own.

The last entry concerning *Iorgi Foti Vlacho* appears in the *Book of accounts* later that year, on *October 17th 1438*,¹⁵ when all the dealings made through the Venetian company whose representative in Constantinople was Giacomo Badoer were settled.

Another name which draws our attention was that of *Jani Vlacho* — *Ianni (John) the Wallachian*. The character appears as a buyer of a bale of green cloth of the type *bastardo*, belonging to Piero Michiel, an associate of the Badoer brothers. Although the bale was recorded with the value of 77 hyperpera and 12 carats, *Jani Vlacho* not only obtained no reduction but, on the contrary, accepted to pay the desired green cloth with 79 hyperpera and 6 carats (26 and 1/2 Venetian gold ducats). The affair was mediated by a Greek broker whose name was illegible in the text.¹⁶

In another entry, dating from *November 14th 1438*, Badoer noted a transaction of cloth *made by a Wallachian (...da un Vlacho)*, whose name was not given. The Wallachian merchant can be neither Iorgi nor Ianni, both well known to Giacomo Badoer. Most probably he was a casual customer, having a name difficult to remember for the Venetian, compared to Iorgi or Ianni, names so often met in the Greek society of Constantinople. The unknown Wallachian bought a bale of the variety *bastardo* from the joint property of Piero Michiel and the Badoer brothers, at the price of 128 hyperpera and 12 carats.¹⁷

The fact that all the three merchants—Iorgi, Ianni and the unnamed Wallachian—made their purchases from the same lot of cloth, in two cases even using the same broker, suggests that there must have been some connections among them. Anyway, they were of the same nationality and so in position to know each other.

From the many names of Greeks, subjects to Byzantium, Venice, the Ottoman Empire or to the Empire of Trebizond, registered in the *Book of accounts* of Giacomo Badoer, I noticed the name of a ship owner, called *Giorgio (Zorzi) Vlachiano*. Badoer recorded that his ship was

70 hyperpera per bale „... (panni) vervi, pp. (i.e. perperi) 70...”, see: F. Mells, *Documenti per la storia economica dei secoli XIII—XVI, con una nota di paleografia commerciale a cura d. Elena Cecchi* (Istituto internazionale di storia economica F. Datini Prato — Pubblicazioni, ser. I, Documenti), Florence, 1972, p. 194 (Abbreviated Documenti.)

From the same letter of Lorenzo Dolfin we learn that the Mantovan cloth is sold with 105 hyperpera per bale: „... (panni) da Mantoa, pp. 105...”, and that of the type *bastardo* with 65 hyperpera a bale: „... panni bastardi, pp. 65.

¹³ Badoer., p. 447, lines 22—25. *Avere*. The business is noted in short on p. 634, lines 6—7. *Dare*.

¹⁴ Badoer., p. 634, lines 6—7. *Dare*.

¹⁵ Badoer, p. 178, line 48. *Dare*.

¹⁶ Badoer., p. 625, lines 7—8. *Avere*.

¹⁷ Badoer., p. 500, lines 30—31.

carrying goods from Caffa to Constantinople in 1437 — 1438.¹⁸ Although a Venetian subject, living at Candia, in Crete,¹⁹ it seems very plausible that his family was coming either from the Romanian countries (Wallachia and Moldavia), or from Thessaly, which at that time used to be called *Great Vlachia*, as it is obvious that the name *Vlachiano* is a derivate from Βλάχια.²⁰

The main Romanian partner of affairs of Badoer in the years 1437—1438, *chir Jorgi Vlach* appears again in the documents from Constantinople and Pera 15 years later, in 1453, under the form of *Georgici Jupanus Vlacus*. From the first document, written in Constantinople, in *loggia Catalanorum*, on *January 30th 1453*²¹, we learn that *Georgici Jupanus Vlacus* gives mandate to a Genoese, Inoffio Pinelli (*Pinello*), to represent him in a financial dispute he had with two Greeks — Ioannes Bassiliko (*Vassilico*) *Grecus de Constantinopoli* and his partner, Thomas Syropoulos.²² The same day, in Pera, Pinelli came to an agreement with the two Byzantine bankers and merchants.²³ The Wallachian obtained a respite of 40 days for the payment of a debt of 700 hyperpera (cca. 233 and 1/3 Venetian gold ducats). On the same occasion, they agreed over an arbitration committee, made up of Fabrizio *Arconerius*, Bernardo Strolao and Niccolo Pollo, which was going to mediate between the parts in case the money would not have been paid until March 12th 1453. For unspecified reasons, the sum of money was not paid in due time by the debtor and a new agreement was settled in Pera, on *March 8th 1453*.²⁴ The two Greeks offered a new respite until March 30th 1453. We don't know how

¹⁸ Badoer., p. 454, line 26. *Dare.* and p. 493, line 10. *Avere.*

¹⁹ Thê Veneto-Cretan Niccolo Pollo and his brother had great commercial interest in Cetatea Albă-Moncastro in 1453. Niccolo's brother and another member of the family, Ioannes Pollo even lived in Moncastro, cf. N. Iorga, *Lucruri noi despre Chilia și Cetatea-Albă* (*News about Chilia and Cetatea-Albă*), in *ARMSI*, 3rd series, 5, 1925—1927, pp. 326—328. Niccolo's brother can be but Georgio Pollo de Albo Castro, present in Lwow in 1465., cf. N. Iorga, *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. XXIII, *Acte străine din arhivele Galiciei, vechii Prusii și Țărilor de Jos*, (*Studies and Documents regarding the Romanians' History, Acts from the Archives of Galitzia, ancient Prussia and Low Countries*), Bucharest, 1913 p. 296, no. XIV (Abbreviated *Studii și documente.*)

²⁰ The family name of Georgio Vlachiano is made up following the same rule as in the case of several levantines' name such as *Giovanni de Vicina*, *Giovanni de Gibeletto* or the family name of *Tartaro*.

²¹ A. Roccatagliata, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare, Atti rogati a Pera e Mitilene*, t. I, 1, *Pera—1408—1490*, Genova, 1982, pp. 92—93, no. 25 (Abbreviated *Pera*.) The author didn't read correctly the word *Jupanus* (*Inpanus* in her lecture) which accompanies the name of Georgici. The term was clarified by St. Andreescu, *Aux temps de la chute de Constantinople : nouvelles données sur les relations roumano-génoise*, in *RRH*, 23, 1984, 3, pp. 327—333. He emphasizes the importance of the Genoese documents published by A. Roccatagliata for the history of Romania. He also hypothetically identifies *Georgici Jupanus Vlacus* with the comte (*comis*) Giurgică, mentioned in the Moldavian documents of 1452—1454.

²² The reading of *Piropulos* given by A. Roccatagliata to the family name of Thomas is not correct, being that of Syropoulos, an aristocratic family mentioned by Badoer, as well as Ioannes Bassiliko and Kaloianni Sophiano.

²³ A. Roccatagliata, *Pera*, pp. 94—95, no. 26. The Wallachian's name is written *Georci*, i.e. = Iorgi and *Georgici* = Iorghici.

²⁴ A. Roccatagliata, *Pera*, p. 107, no. 34. The writing for the name is *Georgici* = = Iorghici.

that disagreement was closed, during the siege and then the conquest of Constantinople by the Sultan Mohammed II.²⁵

It is for sure that our *Dominus Georgici Jupanus Vlacus* survives the tragical events, as we shall find him mentioned in several documents from the years 1468–1472.

Undoubtedly, *Jorgi Foti Vlach* and *Georgici (Georci) Jupanus Vlacus* are one and the same person with *Georgius Vollata nobilis et prestans vir, habitator de Albi Castri*,²⁶ whom Nicolae Iorga identified, for good reasons, with *pan Iurghici*,²⁷ the governor (*pîrcălab*) of Cetatea Albă (Moncastro or Asprocastron) between 1443–1447 and a member of the Prince's Council of Moldavia²⁸. The identification is confirmed both by the close form of the spelling of the name in the documents and the mention of the title of *Jupan (Jupanus)* given to the governors of the town from the Dniester lagoon in the 15th century.²⁹

The character is a member of the high Moldavian aristocracy.³⁰ Badoer's *Book of accounts*, as well as the recently published acts of Pera offer important information on the career of Jupan Iurghici Vollata from Cetatea Albă as a man of affair, as he was best known as a political figure until now. The participation of members of that impor-

²⁵ The Venetiano-Cretan Niccolo Pollo was taken in slavery, together with his whole family and later released for a ransom of 1,000 Venetian gold ducats and the paying of other spendings during their captivity, see N. Iorga, *ARMIS*, 3rd series 5, 1925–1926, p. 326.

Inoffio Pinelli, the procurator of *dominus Georgici Jupanus Vlacus*, succeeded to run away, being mentioned in Chios, in 1454, cf. A. Roccatagliata, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare, Atti rogati a Chio (1153–1454: 1170–1171)*, Genova, 1982, pp. 107–108, no. 71 and pp. 180–182, no. 107.

²⁶ A document from 1468, but referring to events from 1465–1466, mentions *Georgio Vollata... citadino di Moncastro...* cf. N. Iorga, *Acte și fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor adunate din depozitele de manuscrise ale Apusului, (Acts and Fragments Regarding the History of the Romanians Collected from the Western Manuscripts Stocks)*, vol. III, Bucharest, 1897, p. 13 (Abbreviated *Acte și fra m.*), His name appears again in 1469, in the safe-conduct issued by Genoese authorities on August 8th to: *...nobilis et prestans vir Georgius Vollata habitator de Albicastro ita nobis carus...*, see A. Vigna, *Codice diplomatico delle colonie Tauro-Ligure durante la signoria dell'Uffizio di S. Giorgio (MCCCLIII – MCCCLXXV)*, in *ASLSP*, 7, 1871, 1, 3rd part, pp. 617–618.

His son *Dymitr, domini Jurgi Walata filio de Alba Castro* or *Dimytr, Here Jurgi Walata von Weysenborg*, Zones is attested in Lwow between 1471–1472, see N. Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, pp. 305–306, no. XLII and p. 306, no. XLV. Although the name of Jurgi Valata is not accompanied by the term *quondam*, there is not sure that he still lived by 1469.

²⁷ N. Iorga, *Noi descoperiri privitoare la istoria românilor, (New Finds Regarding the History of Romanians)*, in the vol. *Studii asupra Evului Mediu românesc, (Studies on the Romanian Middle Ages)* edited by S. Papacostea, Bucharest, 1984, pp. 221–225. See also our study, *International Trade and Politics in Medieval Moldavia of the 15th Century – The Case of Vollata Family*, in *RRH...*, 1990, 3–4, in print.

²⁸ See *DRH*, A, vol. Ist, nos. 225, 227–230, 232, 235, 237, 239–240, 242–243, 250, 252, 251, 255, 257, 260–261, 261–265 and 269–271 and *DRH*, A, vol. IInd, no. 4.

²⁹ His Christian name was George (Gheorghe in Romanian), pronounced in Greek, *Jorgi*. Iurghiei and Iurga are only hypocoristic forms of that name, as well as Giurgiu, Giurgea, Giurcă. The many variants of the name are not exceptions in the Moldavian documents of the 14th–15th centuries, thus the identification of the person being often difficult because of that practice.

On the use of the title *jupan* by the governors of Moncastro, see N. Iorga, *Acte și fragm.*, vol. IIIrd, p. 33 and 46 and *idem*, *Studii asupra Evului Mediu românesc*, p. 223. We think that all members of the Town Council (*pîrgarii*) wore that title.

³⁰ His Moldavian origin and his aristocratic class affiliation was already underlined by St. Andreescu, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

tant family in the great international trade on the route Constantinople-Pera-Moncastro-Caffa-Lwow-Braşov is not a unique case in the history of Moldavia during the 15th century, as there are many proofs that even the Moldavian Prince took part in the commerce.³¹

The case of Iurghici Vollata is of a special interest for the study of the evolution of the West Pontic hellenism too, Moncastro, with its ancient Byzantine tradition, being one of its most important centers.³² Although his name is twice written followed by the term *Vlacho* or *Valacus*,³³ there are clear proofs that the family of pan Iurghici was of Greek origin. In this respect, not only the family name of Vollata³⁴ and that of his father, Photios (*Foti*), mentioned by Giacomo Badoer,³⁵ lead to this conclusion, but even more the notification of *Grecus* or *Krychen* which accompanies the name of another member of his family in some acts from Lwow.³⁶

Both from the entries of Badoer's *Book of accounts* and the documents of Pera, jupan Iurghici appears as keeping close relations of affairs with the Greeks from Constantinople or Crete. He certainly knew both Greek and Italian, because the presence of a translator is never mentioned during the transactions.

The raising and the social and political position of the Vollata family in the Moldavian society of the 15th century represent one of the

³¹ See I. Nistor, *Handel und Wandel in der Moldau bis zum ende des 16. Jahrhunderts nach den Quellen Dargestellt*, Chernowitz, 1912, pp. 41–45 and N. Iorga, *Istoria comerţului românesc (The History of the Romanian Trade)*, in vol. *Opere economice (Economic Works)*, ed. by G. Penelea, Bucharest, 1982, pp. 514–516.

³² The Greek language is used in inscriptions celebrating the rebuilt of the citadel, see I. Bogdan, *Inscripţiile de la Cetatea Albă, (The Inscriptions from Cetatea Albă)*, in *AARMSI*, 2nd series, 30, 1908, p. 316 sqq. It also appears on the autonomous coins issued during the first half of the 15th century, with the legend ΑΧΙΠΟΚΑΚΤΡΥ, P. Nicorescu, *Monede moldovenesti bătute la Cetatea Albă, (Moldavian Coins Struck at Cetatea Albă)* in *Cercetări istorice (Historical Researches)*, 17, 1943, pp. 75–88.

For the history of Cetatea Albă — Moncastro, see: N. Iorga, *Studii istorice asupra Chilie şi Cetăţii Albe, (Historical Studies on Chilia and Cetatea Albă)*, Bucharest, 1899, pp. 76–164 (Abbreviated *Chilia şi Cetatea Albă*,); N. Bănescu, *Vechi relaţii ale ţărilor noastre cu genovezii, (Ancient Relations of Our Countries with the Genoese)*, in *Inchinare lui N. Iorga, (Homage to N. Iorga)*, Cluj, 1931, pp. 32–35, *idem*, *Maurocastrum-Moncastro-Cetatea Albă*, in *BSH*, 21, 1939, pp. 20–31 and C. C. Giurescu, *Tirguri sau oraşe şi cetăţi moldovenesti, (Moldavian Boroughs or Towns and Fortresses from the 10th to the middle of the 16th Century)*, Bucharest, 1967, pp. 204–205.

³³ In this case the term *Vlacus* means *subject of the Prince of Wallachia* (i.e. Moldavia) and not the ethnical origin. A similar case from the same geographic area is that of the Armenian Aswadur from the Moldavian town of Siret, which is named *Valachus* in a document from Lwow, see, N. Iorga, *Studii şi documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 322, no. CIV, See also the situation of several *Polish* or *Hungarian* Wallachians mentioned in the accounts of Massaria of Caffa, cf. N. Iorga, *Chilia şi Cetatea Albă*, p. 136.

³⁴ In the acts of Lwow the name is spelled *Walata*.

³⁵ The name of Photios (*Fotic* in Romanian) is unusual at the Romanians. During the 14th–15th centuries we know nobody being called that name in the documents from Moldavia or Wallachia.

³⁶ He is Kaloïanni Vollata, *Calyan Walata de Albo Castro*... or ...*dictus Calian Grecus*, as an act from 1473 specifies, see: N. Iorga, *Studii şi documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 307, no. I. In other documents he is named...*ffamoso Kaliano Greco de Albo Castro*, *ibidem*, p. 314, no. LXXV or ...*Calyan dem Krychen von Weissenborg*, *ibidem*, p. 303, no. XXXXIII.

Badoer spells in the same way the name of *chir Jorgi Foti Vlacho* and of *chir Jorgi Lascari*. It is obvious that *Jorgi* is the transliteration of the Greek Γεωργι.

rare known cases of penetration of the Greek element up to the highest level of the feudal hierarchy in the country.³⁷ Their local provenance from Cetatea Albă-Moncastro was a favourable factor, mainly during the reign of the Princes Stephen II (1435–1443) and Alexander II (1449–1453), when the presence of the head of the state in Southern Moldavia determined a growing economic and political role of Cetatea Albă – Moncastro into the Moldavian state affairs.

We do not have enough information to identify Ianni, the other Wallachian merchant. His supposed relation with Iorgi might lead us to believe that he was himself a Moldavian subject, although the name of Ianni suggests a Greek origin in his case too.

B) MOLDAVIAN GOODS ON THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN MARKET

The *Book of accounts* of Giacomo Badoer has several entries referring to indirect trade relations with Moldavia, mainly with Moncastro, for instance, the registration of insurance policies for ships transports, the sending of bills of exchange (*cambii*) or the reexportation of Moldavian goods, brought to Pera or Constantinople by other merchants.

On August 16th 1437 an entry mentions the sending of a bill of exchange of 967 hyperpera towards Caffa by the way of Moncastro (*per via de Monchastro*), by the ship of the Genoese Giovanni Montaldo.³⁸ The note shows the use of a direct sea line between Constantinople and Cetatea Albă-Moncastro. Although shorter, that route was more difficult than the other one, along the shores of Anatolia, Caucasus and Crimea, because of the navigation against the North-Eastern currents and winds, so frequent in the Black Sea area. Most of the ships, including the Venetian *galia da Romania* visiting Moncastro after 1436, preferred to sail along the route Constantinople-Simiso-Sinope-Trebizond-Tana-Caffa.³⁹

The name of Moncastro appeared once more on May 26th 1438, when Giacomo Badoer noted an insurance policy for Alvise da Riva, who was going to transport goods evaluated at 150 hyperpera (50 Venetian gold ducats) to Moncastro (... *de qui fin a Monchastro*), by the

³⁷ On the presence of the Greek element into the Moldavian nobility of the 15th century see, C. C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, (*The History of the Romanians*), 4th edition, vol. IInd, 2, Bucharest, 1943, p. 458 and Al. Elian, *op. cit.*, p. 153. It is possible that their number is higher, especially of those coming from Chilia and Cetatea Albă, but their identification is difficult because of the names commonly given to the Moldavians too.

³⁸ Badoer., p. 354, lines 27–29. *Dare.*

Per via da Moncastro there arrives to Constantinople some importants political news from Tana and Caffa in June 1431, see Fr. Dupuigrenet Desroussilles, *Vénitiens et Génois à Constantinople et en Mer Noire en 1431 d'après une lettre de Martino da Mosto, baile à Constantinople au baile et aux conseillers de Negropont*, in *Cahier du monde russe et soviétique*, 20, 1979, 1, p. 120 and 122.

³⁹ For the inclusion of Moncastro along the route of the galleys *da Romania* see, Ș. Papacostea, *Venise et les Pays Roumains au Moyen Age*, in *Venezia e il Levante.*, vol. Ist, pp. 601–602 and F. Thiriet, *Les Vénitiens en Mer Noire. Organisation et traffics (XIII^e–XV^e siècles)*, in *Archeion Pontou*, 35, 1979, pp. 51–52. The port from the Dniester lagoon was visited by the Venitian galley in 1444 too, cf. *idem*, *La Romanie Vénitienne. Le développement et l'exploitation du domaine coloniale vénitien (XII^e–XV^e siècles)*, Paris, 1959, p. 373.

ship of Antonio Drago.⁴⁰ The insurance tax is 3 per cent of the value of the merchandises, rising to 4 hyperpera and 12 carats (1 and 1/2 Venetian gold ducats). The relative low amount of the tax, equal to those for goods sent to Caffa, Messembria or Porto de Zagora, (Varna?) indicates that the route of Moncastro was considered to be sure enough and commonly used by ships, rather than a shorter one.⁴¹ We don't know for sure what exactly Alvise da Riva brought from Moncastro in exchange for his goods, but it is possible that a certain quantity of wax from Wallachia, mentioned in Badoer's counts, was brought to Constantinople by him.

We receive much more information upon another merchandise coming from Moncastro, which is the object of a bargain recorded in the *Book of accounts* on January 15th 1438. At that date Badoer made a barter (*barato*) with Ser Aldobrandin di Giusti (*Aldrobrandin di Zusti*). Badoer offered 28 bales of cloth of Valence, estimated for 22 hyperpera each (7 and 1/3 Venetian gold ducats) for 68 cantars and 44 rotoli (cca. 3,261 kg) of dry ox hides from Moncastro (...*chuori de bo crudi da Moncastro*.), evaluated at 9 hyperpera per cantar. The whole business rose to a total value of 616 hyperpera (205 and 1/3 Venetian gold ducats).⁴² A condition was specified: the hides had to be of good quality and well dried (*boni chuori e ben sechi*). Aldrobrandin di Giusti agreed with a reduction of 16 hyperpera in favour of Badoer. The proposal of di Giusti was confirmed by the Genoese Cristoforo Palavicini, as he was probably the first to benefit from the offer.⁴³ The *Book of accounts* mentions several transactions in connection with the evolution of that important business.⁴⁴ The price of 9 hyperpera per cantar (3 Venetian gold ducats) of ox hides from Cetatea Albă-Moncastro was the usual one on the Constantinopolitan market of that year, maybe even higher for that type of merchandise. But it was lowered down through the reduction of 16 hyperpera accepted by the seller, so that the real price per cantar became in the end only 8 hyperpera and 18 carats. From the *Book of accounts* of Badoer we learn that, in general, the mean price for the salted ox hides was of 7 hyperpera per cantar and for the dried ones it was of 8 hyperpera per cantar.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Badoer., p. 45, lines 35–36, *Avere*.

⁴¹ The insurance tax for Venice is between 4 and 6 per cent, that for Anconna oscillates between 8 and 10 per cent and that for Mallorca and Saragossa, is evaluated to 19 per cent.

⁴² Badoer., p. 135, lines 30–32. *Avere*. The owner of the cloth was Ser Piero Soranzo, *ibidem*, p. 134, lines 24–26. *Dare*.

⁴³ Badoer., p. 346, lines 2–7. *Dare*.

⁴⁴ Badoer., p. 346, lines 2–3 *Dare* and p. 347, lines 1–3. *Avere*.

⁴⁵ From the Imperiale Tonso's letter sent from Pera to his brother in Nicosia, we learn that in June 1433 the price of ...*chuori de buffaro*... *pauce sunt valuta perperi XII in plus secundum bonitatem crudis*..., cf. L. T. Belgrano, *Documenti riguardanti la colonia genovese di Pera*, Genova, 1888, p. 202, no. XCIX, but Belgrano misreads Corni (?) *de buffaro* (buffalo's antlers) for *chuori*.

The year 1433 is a bad year for the Pontic trade, because of the fights in Crimea, in connection with the conquest of Cembalo, by the Lord of Mangop.

In March 1438, Lorenzo Dolfin writes that the price of ox hides is: ...*chuori crudi*, pp. (i.e. *perperi*) 9 1/2, *saladi*, pp. 8 1/2, *el non de sono*..., that means that they are lacking from the market, see: F. Melis, *Documenti*., p. 194.

Wax was another important Moldavian merchandise. On *Novem ber 10th 1437*, Badoer writes in his *Book of accounts* that he owed to the Genoese Thomas Spinola a sum of 55 hyperpera and 6 carats (18 and 2/5 Venetian gold ducats) for 2 cantars and 8 rotoli (cca. 99 kg) of *wax from Wallachia (zera de Vlahia)*. Its price was 27 hyperpera per cantar.⁴⁶ Another quantity of two cantars and two rotoli was bought also from Thomas Spinola and sent to Venice on account of Gerolamo Badoer, Giacomo's brother, at the same price of 55 hyperpera and 6 carats.⁴⁷ The Badoer brothers are not the only clients of Spinola for the Wallachian wax. A group of several merchants, whose names were not mentioned, purchased 5 cantars and 7 2/3 rotoli (cca. 242 kg) of wax, at the price of 26 hyperpera and 12 carats per cantar, that is 109 hyperpera and 12 carats (36 and 1/2 Venetian gold ducats) for the whole quantity.⁴⁸ Alvise da Riva bought in his turn an unprecised quantity of wax from the same lot, for which he owed to the Genoese merchant 109 hyperpera and 3 carats (36 and 1/3 Venetian gold ducats).⁴⁹

In conclusion, Thomas Spinola sold a quantity of about 629 kg of *Wallachian wax* to several merchants registered in Badoer's accounts for a total amount of 220 hyperpera (cca. 73 and 1/3 Venetians gold ducats). He must have bought the wax during his visit in Moncastro, in 1437, while being embarked on the ship of Giovanni Montaldo. The Spinola family was otherwise well known at that time as specialised in wax trade.⁵⁰ We also learn that the beeswax of Wallachia was commercialized shaped in wax cakes (*panno* or *panneti de zera*), a merchandise actually often mentioned in the Moldavian documents under the name of *camănă* (Камънъ отъ воскъ).⁵¹

Among the very many entries of the *Book of accounts* of Giacomo Badoer concerning the beeswax transactions, the *wax from Wallachia* represents only a very small part, as compared to those coming from *Zagora*, or *Caffa* and *Tana*, often named after the region they came from: *de Zagora*, *de Turchia*, *de Savastopoi* or *de Rosia*. However, its acquisition price is the highest on the Constantinopolitan market—26 hyperpera and 12 carats to 27 hyperpera per cantar—certainly due to its better quality. The other brands are bought at the medium price of 25 hyperpera per cantar.⁵²

The only Romanian commodity Badoer bought directly from a Moldavian merchant was *copper*, more exactly the so called *tornexi vlaheschi*—the *Wallachian tornese*, small copper or bronze coins. Their

⁴⁶ Badoer., p. 283, lines 13–14. *Avere*. The note is recorded again, by error, on p. 283, line 14. *Avere*. The same information, without the owed sum, is found also at p. 514, lines 22–24. Here we learn the name of the broker too, Piero del Pozzo, (*Pozo*).

⁴⁷ Badoer., p. 283, lines, 19–20. *Avere*.

⁴⁸ Badoer., p. 283, lines 17–18. *Avere*.

⁴⁹ Badoer., p. 175, line 14. *Avere*.

⁵⁰ J. Heers, *Gênes au XV^e siècle. Activité économique et problèmes sociaux*, Paris, 1961, p. 369.

⁵¹ See, *DRH*, A, vol. Ist, no. 276 and vol. IInd, nos. 64, 65 and 138.

⁵² The price of 28 hyperpera for the cantar of beeswax from Zagora, indicated by Lorenzo Dolfin in March 1438 ... *zera iagora*, pp. 28 et non de sono..., see: F. Melis, *Documenti*, p. 194, the supposed scarcity of wax is not confirmed by the great number of the entries concerning this commodity from the *Book of accounts* of Badoer.

seller was *chir Jorgi Foti Vlaco*. The trade with that unusual merchandise is one of the biggest surprise offered by the *Book of accounts* of Giacomo Badoer. Badoer recorded several transactions with *tornexi vlachesci*. On September 26th 1437, he mentioned that *chir Jorgi Foti Vlacho* had to receive a sum of 47 hyperpera and 14 carats (cca. 15 and 4/5 Venetian gold ducats) for a quantity of 2 cantars and 80 rotoli of copper coins (133.420 kg).⁵³ Later on we learn from another entry that the barrel of *tornexi vlachesci* was acquired by Badoer on account of Ser Zaccaria Contarini and was sent to Crete, together with 14 boxes of copper plates. The initial transaction of copper coins had been done before December 18th 1436, between Iorgi, on one side, and Kaloianini Sophiano and Giacomo Badoer, on the other. The Greek banker and merchant commercialised in his turn a certain quantity of *Wallachian tornese*, as Badoer noted in his *Book of accounts*, for which, Sophiano had to receive from Bartolomeo da Rezo 85 hyperpera and 13 carats (28 and 1/2 Venetian gold ducats) before December 18th 1436 and another part of the debt — 337 hyperpera (112 and 1/3 Venetian gold ducats) — before February 25th 1437.⁵⁴ The total debt of da Rezo towards Kaloianini Sophiano raised to 422 hyperpera and 13 carats (140 and 4/5 Venetian gold ducats). Although the text doesn't explicitly describe the form of the copper bought by Bartolomeo da Rezo (in plates or ingots), we have good reasons to suppose that it must have been under the same form of small change — *tornexi vlachesci*. The transaction is recorded on the same file of the Sophiano's count where there is noted the debt to be paid to Iorgi for his *Wallachian tornese*. Badoer sent to Venice other three barrels of copper coins on account of Ser Piero Soranzo, for which he owed to Kaloianini Sophiano the sum of 472 hyperpera and 19 carats (about 157 and 2/3 Venetian gold ducats). The debt was to be paid before February 12th 1437.⁵⁵

The total amount of copper in *tornexi vlachesci* entered into several dealings from the same source, Iorgi the *Wallachian*, as recorded by Giacomo Badoer in his *Book of accounts*, rose to an impressive quantity of 2642.73 kg (about 56 cantars and 46 rotoli).

What *tornexi vlachesci* really meant is an important question, to which Mr. Octavian Iliescu tried to find an answer, considering the term was used for *bani* (anepigraphic oboles), struck by Vlad Dracul (1436 — 1448).⁵⁶ We don't believe them to be coins issued by Vlad Dracul, Prince of Wallachia, at least for the reason that the business recorded by Badoer was done sometimes between September 3rd and December 18th 1436, that is, before the beginning of Vlad's reign, in December 1436. On the other side, the Wallachian coins from the 15th century are always

⁵³ Badoer., p. 241, lines 3—4, *Avere*, p. 242, lines 7—8. *Dare*, and p. 124, lines 24—28. *Dare*., p. 243, lines 12—14. *Avere*.

The merchandise was sent farther to Alexandria by Leonardo Grimani's ship, Badoer., p. 678, lines 3—5. *Dare*. The text of that missing page was established by F. Melis, but he notes *follari*, instead of *tornexi*.

⁵⁴ Badoer., p. 7, lines 10 and 18. *Avere*.

⁵⁵ Badoer., p. 2, lines 17—19. *Dare*, and p. 3, lines 10—11. *Avere*.

⁵⁶ O. Iliescu, *op. cit.*, p. 145—146. See also T. Bertelè, *Appunto sulle monete del Rechenbuch edito da Hunger-Vogel*, in *BZ*, 56, 1963, p. 325 and foot-note no. 10.

from silver or billon, thus containing a certain amount of silver. The only copper coins were struck in this period in Moldavia. In our opinion, the Badoer's *tornexi vlachesci di rame* are in fact certain types of copper Moldavian issues of half groats, minted during the reign of the Princes Alexander the Good (1400—1432), Elias (1432—1437) and at the beginning of Elias joint reign with his brother, Stephen II (post August 1435).⁵⁷

How many coins of Wallachian *tornese* were sold by Iorgi? If we take into consideration that the medium weight of a half groat varied at that time between 0.44 and 0.32 g,⁵⁸ that means not less than about 6,000,000 to more than 8,250,000 pieces only for the 2,642.73 kg handled by Badoer! Such a huge quantity of *tornexi vlachesci* sold in Constantinople, probably represented old issues from Alexander the Good recalled out of currency, and not contemporary coins struck by Elias or Stephen II.

Even those incomplete figures offer a surprising vivid image of both the great amount of the Moldavian monetary issues during the first half of the 15th century and the important quantity of coins that went abroad in different ways. The exportation of coins as a bullion source is not something new in the Mediaeval world in general, but it clearly attested for the first time in the case of the Romanian countries. The buying of a great quantity of small change only for metal export was surely favoured by the advantageous exchange rates with silver or golden coins on the Moldavian market. It is obvious that at Cetatea Albă-Moncastro the price of a rotol of coined copper valued at least seventeen times less than the price offered on the Constantinopolitan market.⁵⁹ The exportation of small change can explain, in part, the extreme scarcity of certain types of Moldavian half groats.

The price of 17 hyperpera (5 and 2/3 Venetian gold ducats) per cantar of copper coins is the normal one paid by Badoer for the copper in any form in the years 1436—1440.

⁵⁷ On half groats types issued during 1400 (most probably after 1414) and 1449, see: G. Buzdugan, O. Luchian and C. C. Oprescu, *Monede și bancnote românești (Romanian Coins and Paper Money)*, Bucharest, 1977, pp. 58—71 passim, (Abbreviated MBR).

On the weight standards and the composition of the alloy, see: C. Moisil, *Istoria monedei în România, (The History of the Coin in Romania)*, in CNA, 2, 1921—1922, pp. 76—78 and O. Iliescu, in the vol. edited by C. Kirițescu, *Sistemul bănesc al țelului și precursorii lui, (The Monetary System of the Leu and its Forerunners)*, vol. Ist, Bucharest, 1964, pp. 90—92.

Mrs. C. Stirbu considers that "tornexi vlachesci" might be autonomous issues of Moncastro (see the types in MBR, p. 75, no. 573 — 576), dated between 1449—1455.

⁵⁸ The statistics were made using the weights given in MBR, by O. Iliescu and E. Isăcescu, *Cr. Col.-BARSR*, 51, ian.—iun., 1975, pp. 76—78 and C. Stirbu, *Colecția de monede medievale românești Dr. Rudolf Gassauer, (The Dr. Rudolf Gassauer's Collection of Romanian Mediaeval Coins)*, in BSNR, 75—76, 1981—1982, nos. 129—130, pp. 315—349 and *idem*, *Catalogul monedelor feudale moldovenești din colecția N. Docan, (The Catalogue of Mediaeval Moldavian Coins from N. Docan Collection)*, in manuscript. We are deeply grateful to Mrs. C. Stirbu for this information.

⁵⁹ According to Badoer's *Book of accounts*, in Constantinople the official value of a Venetian gold ducat was 576 Byzantine *tornexi* (i.e. copper follari), the equivalent of a rotol of minted copper.

C) CONCLUSIONS

The dealings of Iorgi the Wallachian noted by Badoer in his *Book of accounts* rose to a total sum of 666 hyperpera and 8 carats (about 222 and 1/10 Venetian gold ducats). 147 hyperpera and 14 carats (49 and 1/5 Venetian gold ducats) came from the selling of his goods and the rest of 519 hyperpera and 7 carats (172 and 9/10 Venetian gold ducats) from the value of the goods he acquired. We should add to that the value of the copper coins sold through Kaloïanni Sophiano, 895 hyperpera and 8 carats (298 and 2/5 Venetian gold ducats), those transactions being closely connected to Iorgi's activity too. This way we arrive to a sum of about 1561 hyperpera and 16 carats (about 520 and half Venetian gold ducats).

It is a pity that the concise *Book of accounts* gives little information on the goods of the Moldavian merchants, sold and bought. In Iorgi's case, the only mentioned merchandise are cloth he bought and copper coins he sold. The notary acts instrumentalised at Pera and Constantinople in 1453 are also incomplete in their respect: we learn that during the winter and spring of that year, the same merchant owed 700 hyperpera (233 and 1/3 Venetian gold ducats) to Kaloïanni Bassiliko and Thomas Syropoulos, as a result of certain transactions, for which unfortunately we receive again no detail.

The other two Moldavian subjects, Ianni and the anonymous Wallachian client of Giacomo Badoer appear with much smaller dealing values in the *Book of accounts*: 77 hyperpera and 12 carats (25 and 1/3 Venetian gold ducats), for the former, and 128 hyperpera and 12 carats (43 and 2/3 Venetian gold ducats), for the latter.

All in all, the Badoer's three Moldavian business partners sum up a figure of affairs of about 2385 hyperpera and 18 carats (795 and 1/4 Venetian gold ducats). Obviously it is a rather modest amount, if we take into consideration that during the 42 months of his stay in Constantinople, Giacomo Badoer handled goods, bills of exchange and trade services amounting to a total of 2,640,000 hyperpera, i.e. the huge sum of 880,000 Venetian gold ducats!⁶⁰ In such a context, the Moldavian part represents only 0.09 per cent! Although the most important commercial partners of Giacomo Badoer are the Venetian Genoese, Byzantine and Ottoman merchants, we have nevertheless to observe that the Romanians come before the Bulgarians, Georgians and the Armenians "from Russia" (Polish Red Russia?).

Among the Moldavian goods registered by Badoer, the well known *agricultural products* of the country, such as beeswax and ox hides rank first.⁶¹ The dry ox hides coming from Moncastro totalize about 3,019 kg

⁶⁰ See, T. Bertelè, *Akten.*, pp. 48—50. To be compared with the amount of 2,000 Hungarian gold ducats (equal to the Venetians) paid as a tribute to the Ottoman Empire in 1456 by Moldavia!!!

⁶¹ F. Thiriet, *op. cit.*, p. 373 and J. Heers, *op. cit.*, pp. 365—366 give a list of goods exported from Moncastro which includes: grains, hides, furs, wool, beeswax, honey and fish. Excepting for grains, no document is quoted in order to attest the trade with those products. Badoer confirms only the commerce with beeswax and ox hides.

and is evaluated to 616 hyperpera (in fact at only 600, (i.e. 200 Venetian gold ducats). For the moment, we can't establish the part of the Moldavian dry or salted ox hides from all the Badoer's dealings with that merchandise, until we have made a detailed study of the *Book of accounts*. Anyway, we know from many other sources that the export of ox hides took an important part in the international trade of Moldavia during the 15th century, not only with Levant, but also and mostly with Transylvania.⁶²

The other merchandise explicitly mentioned by Giacomo Badoer is the Wallachian beeswax. The *Book of accounts* registers about 629 kg, for a total value of 220 hyperpera or 72 and 1/3 Venetian gold ducats. Part of it was sent directly to Venice, for Gerolamo Badoer. Wax appears on many lists of Moldavian goods from that epoch. It is known to be another product of this country, much exported during the 15th century, both to Levant and to Transylvania and Poland.⁶³

Grains are missing from the list of Moldavian goods handled by Badoer, but a Genoese source, yet uncompletely exploited, informs us on such transports from Moncastro to Pera in 1450.⁶⁴

The only non-agricultural goods recorded by Badoer as coming from Moldavia is copper, imported under the form of small change, probably half groats. The fact is quite strange as Moldavia had itself to import copper from Transylvania and Poland, having not its own copper ores.⁶⁵ The efficiency of copper exportation in the form of coins could be explained only by both the cheap labour force in the Moldavian mints — which added almost nothing to the price of the bullion — and, maybe, the existence of a source of copper at lower costs. In this respect, Badoer's records can be taken as a new testimony for the supposed existence of economic relations, even mediated, between Moldavia and the Mediaeval Egypt.⁶⁶

We calculated that the total amount of Badoer's commercial activity in connection with Moldavia rose to the sum of 2886 hyperpera and 19 1/2 carats representing about 0.11 per cent of his total dealings in Constantinople. We must add that our figures are, of course, relative, they including only explicit notations for Romanian goods. Many other transactions registered in the *Book of accounts* of Badoer may refer to Wallachian goods as well, without the specification of their origin (beeswax, ox and buffalo hides, grains, furs, salted sturgeons and caviar etc.).

⁶² N. Iorga, *Studii și documente.*, vol. XVIth, Bucharest, 1909, p. 122, no. XVI mentions a transaction of 3,000 ox hides acquired at Moncastro for 2,000 ducats and transported to Trani, via Ragusa.

For the exports of hides to Transylvania, see: Al. Gonța, *Legăturile economice dintre Moldova și Transilvania în secolele XIII—XVII*, (*The Economic Relations between Moldavia and Transylvania during the 13th—17th centuries*), Bucharest, 1989, pp. 39, 60, 62, and 64.

⁶³ *Ibidem.*, pp. 63—64.

⁶⁴ J. Heers, *op. cit.*, p. 369 and foot-note no. 7.

⁶⁵ Several copper acquisitions are mentioned by I. Nistor, *op. cit.*, 166 and Al. Gonța, *op. cit.*, p. 166. They date from the second half of the 16th century.

⁶⁶ At Bosia (Iassy county), a Mameluc coin from the 14th century was discovered. It is now in the collection of the Museum of National History of Romania, from Bucharest.

Abu'l Fida information on Akkerman (Moncastro) are rather correct and that could indicate Egyptian or Syrian merchants visits in that harbour at the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century.

The real volume of commercial affairs with Moldavia was certainly higher.

We can but regret the present impossibility, due to lack of information, to know which was the effect of the treaty signed between Venice and Moldavia in 1435 regarding the mutual trade in the Black Sea region. At least, Badoer makes no reference on any business done in the spirit of that treaty.

The *Book of accounts* of Giacomo Badoer is the earliest certain proof of the Moldavian merchants' presence in Constantinople and Pera during the first half of the 15th century. Up to now we have only indirect information regarding their presence there.⁶⁷ Thus we add more testimonies for what the late Prof. E. Stănescu said to be "une véritable colonie roumaine"⁶⁸ in Constantinople, paraphrasing the Byzantine historian Doukas.⁶⁹ The Romanian colony was made up of political exiles of princely blood and their supporters from aristocratic families, of adventurers and mercenaries, of merchants, of clergymen and slaves.⁷⁰

As regards the Wallachian merchants, both Badoer's *Book of accounts* and the acts from Pera discussed above show them perfectly integrated into the juridical, technical, economic and cultural system of the Levantine commercial world of that epoch, ruled by the Italian businessmen. They appear both as creditors and debtors, handle transactions and mandates, conclude contracts, use the services of the bankers and brokers, make associations. All these prove old and already verified relationships due, in part, to the direct human contacts too, which were based not only on economic interest, but also on mutual confidence.

Jupan Iurghici has personal relations with Italian merchants, both Venetian and Genoese, as well as with important representatives of the Byzantine world of affairs. Through Giacomo Badoer, whom he had met several times in Constantinople, the Moldavian merchant establishes trade contacts with other Venetians, such as: Marin Barbo, Zaccaria Contarini, Piero Michiel, Francesco Trevisan, Piero Soranzo, Gerolamo Badoer, Marin and Carlo Zeno. By 1453, he keeps direct relations with the Veneto-Cretan Niccolo Pollo, whose family has close ties with Moncastro, several members of this family being residents there.

Among the Genoese merchants he maintains the closest relations with Inofio Pinelli, who seems to play the role of his man of confidence for a certain period. Genoese too are Bernardo Arconerius and Bartolo-

⁶⁷ The reprisals licences from 1444, given for Angello and Craveotto Giustiniani, and mostly that of 1452, given for Pietro de Graivaico, mention the confiscation of all Moldavian merchants' goods in Pera, whether they were accompanied by their owners or given in *commandita*. see: N. Iorga, *Acte și fragm.*, vol. III^a, pp. 17, 27–29 and 30.

The earliest Moldavian we know in Constantinople is a clergyman, Isidor, attested in May 1401, cf. N. Popescu, *Preotul Isidor moldoveanul la Constantinopol—mai 1401*, in *BOR*, 52, 1934, pp. 3–12.

⁶⁸ E. Stănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁶⁹ Ioannes Doukas, *Istoria turco-bizantină*, (*The Turkish—Byzantine History*), edited by V. Grecu, Bucharest, 1958, pp. 156 and 250.

⁷⁰ For the presence of slaves of Romanian origin, see: A. Roccatagliata, *Pera.*, pp. 142–144, no. 56 who mentions a slave woman named Sophia.

The list of the Romanians in that region is very short due in part to the low number of documents from Pera dating from the first half of the 15th century, published until now

meo Strolao, as well as Bartolomeo da Rezo, with whom Iurghici has mediated dealings.

Among the Greeks from Constantinople, jupan Iurghici keeps contacts with Kaloianni Sophiano, who seems to be his banker by 1436—1438, with Ioannes Bassiliko and Thomas Syropoulos, both bankers and rich merchants, all three being at the same time members of Byzantine aristocratic families.

Several brokers appear in Iurghici's transactions, whom he knows personally, of course. Two of them are Italians — probably Genoese from Pera : Giorgio *Zimador* and Piero dal Pozzo. The other two are Greeks : we learn only the name of one of them, Manuel, *the timber merchant*.

Badoer let us know the names of several merchants and sailors who take part in the trade with Moldavia. Most of them are Genoese, such as Thomas Spinola, Alvise Riva, Antonio Drago and Cristoforo Palavicini, but there are also Venetians, such as Aldobrandin di Giusti and Niccolo Pisani, the broker of the transaction with the ox hides from Moncastro. Among them, until now, only Thomas Spinola is known to be from a family having had commercial ties with Moldavia for a long time.⁷¹

Although scarce, the information offered by Giacomo Badoer's *Book of accounts* represents a first hand document for the history of the relations between Moldavia and Byzantium, including the Levantine world during the first half of the 15th century. We are sure that a systematic investigation of the rather many Genoese and Venetian books of accounts preserved from that period, as well as that of private and official contemporary acts would give us many new data concerning the Romanians and their relations with the late Byzantine society.

⁷¹ Thomas Spinola is mentioned in 1450 during a process between the two branches of the family, from Caffa and Pera, implying also goods embarked at Moncastro, see : J. Ilicers, *loc. cit.*, In 1452 he is involved in a request for reprisals licence against the subjects of the Polish King and the confiscation of the Moldavian Peter Manou's goods, see : N. Iorga, *Acte și fragm.*, vol. III, p. 28.