

# **‘Le Coquin Grec’ vs. ‘le Vérable François’ Being a foreigner in the Danubian Principalities in Eighteenth Century**

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## **Abstract**

*Being foreign in the Romanian lands in the eighteenth century is the subject of this investigation. The article starts from the particular case of the Linchou family, who, through their diplomatic activities in the Levant and the Romanian Lands, open up an entire dossier regarding the process of identification staged by a foreigner. With the help of diplomatic correspondence and commercial archives, we observe how François-Thomas Linchou engages in a series of social and political games aimed at attracting advantages and privileges to uphold the commercial activities he had developed in Wallachia and Moldavia. However Linchou’s attempt to remain in the sphere of social representations, claiming privileges, without accepting the status of re’aya was to lead to the failure of his integration into a social network and consequently his decapitation.*

**Keywords:** Social Status, Wallachia, Moldavia, Foreigner, Self-Fashioning

My Lord, please, secure a counter-*firmân* from the Porte to summon that Greek, who is *truly a rascal*, urgently to Constantinople, as he tries to slander my brother, who is a *true Frenchman*. My brother will without any doubt come to the trial to prove that his cause is just.<sup>1</sup>

The words are those of François-Thomas Linchou, secretary to Constantine Racovitza, Prince of Wallachia<sup>2</sup>, and they are addressed to the French ambassador to the Porte, Charles Gravier comte de Vergennes. In 1752, Joseph Linchou, through the Linchou Company, entered into an association with the Greek candle-maker

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\* I would like to express my gratitude to Michal Wasiucionek who contributed with comments and useful suggestions to this paper. My special thanks for the English translation of this study are addressed to Dr. James Christian Brown (University of Bucharest). This study was supported by the project Luxury, Fashion and Social Status in Early Modern South-Eastern Europe (LuxFaSS), with number ERC-2014-CoG no. 646489, financed by the European Research Council and hosted by New Europe College, Bucharest.

<sup>1</sup>‘Je vous prie, Monseigneur, que, puisque ce Grec est un *véritable coquin* et qui cherche de faire une avanée à mon frère qui est *véritable françois* d’obtenir de la Porte un contre-firmanat qui ordonne de ramener ce Grec à Constantinople, où mon frère se rendra sans faute pour faire connoître la justice de sa cause.’ in Ioan C. Filitti, *Lettres et extraits concernant les relations des Principautés roumaines avec la France (1728-1810)* (Bucharest: Imprimerie Professionnelle Demètre C. Ionesco, 1915), 153: 23 September/4 October 1755.

<sup>2</sup> Constantine Racovitza ruled as Prince several times in Moldavia (1749–1753, 1756–1757) and Wallachia (1753–1756, 1763–1764).

Sterio to set up a candle factory in Iași. The Linchou Company brought capital to this venture, while Sterio contributed with his experience as a master candle-maker and with his connections in the network of Moldavian guilds and in political circles. The venture never came to fruition, but it unleashed a major political, economic and diplomatic scandal which would spread beyond the borders of Moldavia, involving, in addition to the Linchou family, the Phanariot rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia, the Ottoman Empire and France. Considerable correspondence was generated around this diplomatic dispute<sup>3</sup>, correspondence that will help us to understand not only the status of foreigners in the Ottoman Principalities but also the manner in which an individual fashioned themselves and others according to their surroundings and immediate interests. Moreover, these insights allow us to see how symbolic or material resources (such as honour, prestige, gifts, and social networks) were handled on multiple social and political fronts in order to negotiate social status or membership within a specific social group.

In my paper, I propose to analyse the criteria of definition and identification applied to a foreigner in the Danubian Principalities. Who were the foreigners who arrived in the Danubian Principalities at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? How were they qualified and classified in the social hierarchy? How were they received and how did they manage to integrate?

The definition of the term foreigner (i.e. *străin* in Romanian) is somewhat difficult to contextualise. The first essential criterion in the definition of the ‘foreigner’ concerns geographical belonging to a given territory.<sup>4</sup> Might this be sufficient to define the status of a person? The historical sources speak of ‘native-born’ (i.e. *pământenii* in Romanian) and ‘foreigners’, those ‘from here’ and those come ‘from other lands’. But the documents operate with great ambiguity when they speak of the others, the foreigners, who may originate from beyond the imaginary frontiers of various sorts of community, whether delimited in confessional, social or geographical terms. Thus, at a certain moment someone may be considered foreign in relation to someone else.<sup>5</sup> But in relation to whom can a foreigner be defined? The question might equally be raised, what is a Moldavian/Wallachian? Do the

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<sup>3</sup> For earlier comparative studies on transregional dispute/ scandal see Tolga U. Esmer, “Notes on a Scandal: Transregional Networks of Violence, Gossip, and Imperial Sovereignty in the Late Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 58 no. 1, (2016): 99-128.

<sup>4</sup> See Edhem Eldem, ‘Foreigners on the Threshold of Felicity: The Reception of Foreigners in Ottoman Istanbul’, in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe, II. Cities and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400-1700*, ed. Donatella Calabi and Stephan Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 114–131; Rossitsa Gradeva, ‘Turks and Bulgarians, Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries’, *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1995): 173–187.

<sup>5</sup> See also Simona Cerutti, *Étrangers. Étude d’une condition d’incertitude dans une société d’Ancien Régime* (Paris: Bayard, 2012); Peter Sahlin, *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and After* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

documents operate with the notion of Moldavian/Wallachian in order to oppose it to the concept of foreigner? Or is the opposition rather between subjects and others?<sup>6</sup>

Foreigners in the Romanian lands were largely merchants and tradesmen, men of letters and diplomats, monks and mercenaries; for each of them, integration and social recognition followed a converging series of stages. Given the depopulation resulting from the wars and epidemics of the period, the Romanian lands were functionally dependent on all these foreigners. Their princes encouraged whole population groups to come and settle, granting privileges and tax exemptions for colonies made up largely of farmers, constituting the so-called *slobozii* (freeholds).<sup>7</sup> But this type of 'large-scale' migration is not what interests us at the present moment. Rather we shall direct our attention particularly to certain individual cases, trying to analyse the modalities of integration in the upper levels of the social hierarchy.

How did foreigners appear within the political elite, and how did foreigners appear outside political circles? Were they treated differently? Those who came to the princely court belonged to an intellectual elite, so to speak, as the Phanariot princes tried to surround themselves with doctors, teachers, painters – savants, in the sense specific to the period, a group distinguished by their mastery of science and art – a social and professional category quite different from the 'political' group around the prince. These *expatriates*, as Peter Burke calls them,<sup>8</sup> were invited by the Phanariot princes to contribute not only to the spread of knowledge but also to the setting up of educational and cultural initiatives necessary to their country of adoption. For various reasons, the subject has been neglected by Romanian historiography, although the term 'princely secretary' has become a commonplace, frequently used but often void of content<sup>9</sup>.

It should also be mentioned that foreigners neither received a separate juridical nor were there institutional debates necessary for their social classification. Thus, my research is concentrated on archival documents and on the interpretation of particular cases that are revealing for the process of identification<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Tracey A. Sowerby, Jan Hennings, *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c. 1410-1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> See also Andrew Robarts, 'Imperial confrontation or regional cooperation?: Bulgarian migration and Ottoman–Russian relations in the Black Sea region, 1768–1830s', *Turkish Historical Review*, 3/2 (2012): 149–167; Constantin N. Veclich, *La contribution de l'émigration bulgare de la Valachie à la renaissance politique et culturelle du peuple bulgare (1762-1850)* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1970).

<sup>8</sup> Peter Burke, *Exiles and Expatriates in the History of Knowledge, 1500–2000* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2017), 82.

<sup>9</sup> On the Ottoman Empire see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011); Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis, *Une société hors de soi: identité et relations sociales à Smyrne aux XVIII<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Peters, 2006); Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christian and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> See Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations. Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003), 6.

I am particularly interested in the metamorphoses undergone by the Linchou family in the course of a little over a century (between 1740 and 1850): from Linchou to Lenş and Linche de Moissac, between Marseilles, Istanbul, Bucharest and Paris, from Moorish converts to *true* Frenchmen, from Levantine merchants to Wallachian office-holders, ending up as the French comtes de Moissac. For this paper, however I shall limit myself to the first member of the Linchou family who opens this file of manoeuvring of multiple identities: François-Thomas Linchou.<sup>11</sup>

### **Pour l'honneur de la nation: From French Linchou to Ottoman Subject**

François-Thomas Linchou was born in Marseilles early in the eighteenth century, into a family of French merchants, the son of Maurice Linchou and Catherine Roux, the brother of Jean-Baptiste, Joseph-Marie and Pierre-François.<sup>12</sup> Arriving in Istanbul around 1739, as representative of the French company Manaire<sup>13</sup>, he was involved there in trade and later in diplomacy on behalf of the French embassy.<sup>14</sup> From this position, he managed to become integrated in the Phanariot network, and became close to the Racovitza family. As diplomatic agent of the Phanariot voyvoda Constantine Racovitza (1699–1764), François-Thomas Linchou carried out intense diplomatic and commercial activity, which is recorded in a rich correspondence. This correspondence reveals his gradual development of relations of friendship and clientelism with different political and commercial circles in Istanbul: the French diplomatic representation and the Phanariot elite. This latter group held important offices at key points in political decision-making: the Ottoman court, the Orthodox patriarchy and the Moldavian and Wallachian diplomatic representations in the Ottoman Empire<sup>15</sup>. For each, François-Thomas Linchou offered his services in the procurement of luxury goods: information for everyone, porcelain tableware for the Sultan’s mother, greyhounds for the French ambassador, thoroughbred horses for

<sup>11</sup> See Marian Coman, *François-Thomas Linchou (1720–1760)*, in *Călători străini despre țările române*, Suplimentul II (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2016), 253–258; Mihordea, *Politica orientală franceză și țările române în secolul al XVIII-lea (1749–1760)* [French Oriental Politic and the Romanian Principalities] (Bucharest, 1937).

<sup>12</sup> Information about this family is offered in M. André Borel D’Hauterive, ‘Notice Historique et Genealogique sur la Maison de Linche’, in *Revue Historique de la Noblesse*, publiée par M. André Borel D’Hauterive, tom II (Paris, 1841), 365–373.

<sup>13</sup> Archives Nationales, Paris, Fond Consulats. Mémoires et Documents. Affaires Etrangères, AE/B/III/253, ff. 3-4 (hereinafter: AN.AE). See also the index “Linchou” elaborated by Anne Mézin. I would like to express my gratitude to her for offering me the unpublished index.

<sup>14</sup> See also Christine Vogel, ‘The Caftan and the Sword. Dress and Diplomacy in Ottoman–French Relations Around 1700’, in *Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-Narratives*, ed. Claudia Ulbrich and Richard Wittmann (Würzburg, 2015), 25–45; Maurits H. van den Boogert, ‘Intermediaries par excellence? Ottoman Dragomans in the Eighteenth Century’, in *Hommes de l’entre-deux. Parcours individuels et portraits de groupes sur la frontière de la Méditerranée (XVIe-XXe siècle)*, ed. Bernard Heyberger and Chantal Verdeil (Paris: Rivages des Xantons, 2009), 95–114.

<sup>15</sup> On this topic see Christine Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2011).

diplomats, gold thread for *Madame la Princesse*, gold tobacco cases and perfumed tobacco for the prince, amber for the narghilehs of the boyars, among other wares.

While François-Thomas Linchou remained in this field of diplomacy, the family, through its representation 'Linchou & Compagnia' or 'Linchou père et fils', was pushed forward both for the occupation of 'posts in the Levant'<sup>16</sup> and in Levantine commerce. When his patron, Constantine Racovitza, became ruler in the Romanian lands, Linchou went with him as princely secretary, a post which he used to advance the position of his brothers in Balkan commerce and to obtain commercial privileges. Thus, between 1746 and 1757, we find the Linchou father and brothers sometimes in Bucharest, sometimes in Iași, sometimes in Galați, setting up the first French companies in the Romanian lands (1753 in Galați and 1754 in Bucharest)<sup>17</sup> and engaging in the trade of wax, honey, salted meat, skins, wine and wool, or handling the transit of porcelain, coffee, tobacco, horses, greyhounds, paper, mirrors and clocks.<sup>18</sup>

The Linchou family acted on the basis of privileges which they were continually requesting from the Phanariot ruler and from the French ambassador in Constantinople, and François-Thomas Linchou was able to keep this network active by means of a steady supply of information.<sup>19</sup> Trade in information and goods managed to enrich the Linchou brothers, but it also created a permanent dependence on their Phanariot patron and protector and on his networks. Furthermore, the Linchou company chose not become integrated in the Balkan trading network, which dominated the trade routes linking the Romanian lands to the Ottoman Empire, Russia and the Habsburg Empire, but to create its own trading network,<sup>20</sup> thus irritating various social and commercial interests.<sup>21</sup> In this venture, the family banked on their status as 'Frenchmen'. To be French was more important and more useful than to be a subject of the Prince, and thus a *re'aya*, paying taxes to the Ottoman

<sup>16</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 82-84: 7/18 December 1752.

<sup>17</sup> The (failed) attempt of the Linchou brothers to establish commercial links between France and the Romanian lands was recorded by Claude-Charles de Peyssonnel, French consul in the Crimea, Cana and Smyrna between 1753 and 1782. See Claude-Charles de Peyssonnel *Traité sur le commerce de la Mer Noire* (Paris: Cuchet Libraire, 1787), tom 2, 207–209.

<sup>18</sup> 'Linchou et fils' were working in Constantinople on 22 May 1750 when Maurice Linchou's involvement was mentioned in a commercial litigation regarding the selling of 36 ballots of wool. Balthazard-Marie Emerigon, *Traité des assurances et des contrats à la grosse* (Marseille: Mossy, 1784), vol. I, 323.

<sup>19</sup> See the Report of the French ambassador Des Alleurs, on January 1754, about the importance of the Romanian lands for the transit of information between Paris and Constantinople. Archives Des Affaires Etrangères, Paris, (hereinafter: AAE), Correspondence Politique, Turquie, 127, ff. 22-41.

<sup>20</sup> He insistently requests a commercial house in Constantinople for his father and brothers. Among other documents, see 'Recommandation pour une maison de commerce à Constantinople à la famille de S. Linchou', written by M. Potocki in Lublin, 2 December 1754, and sent to the French ambassador in Constantinople. AAE, Correspondence Politique, Turquie, 127, f. 356.

<sup>21</sup> On the importance of French commerce in Moldavia and France, see the memoirs of 1751, AAE, Correspondence Politique, Turquie, Suppl. 15, ff. 86, 89. See also, Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* [Documents of Romanian History] (Bucharest: Soccec, 1897) I<sub>1</sub>, 608–610.

Empire (or, as it is expressed in the correspondence, ‘to the Grand Seigneur’, in other words, the Sultan).

François-Thomas Linchou, at the helm of this operation, is the most visible and the most vocal. Linchou’s “self-fashioning” is constructed and deconstructed according to personal and contextual interests. François-Thomas insists on being defended by ‘the honour of the French nation’, but mixes with local boyars in pursuit of Moldavian offices, asks for it to be set down in black and white that he is French, while wishing to come closer to the local elite through a marriage of convenience.

But how do the others relate to this status? Do they bow before his claimed French superiority? The status of being French has no great relevance for the native elite, unless it is backed up by a powerful patron. On his arrival at the court in Iași (1749), princely secretary François-Thomas Linchou tries to protect his business interests by accepting an administrative office. He acquires the office of grand *sluger*,<sup>22</sup> and becomes *Leințul franțuju* (Linchou the Frenchman) to the boyar elite.<sup>23</sup> While his holding of an office annoys the ‘native’ wing of the boyars, his closeness to Constantine Racovitza, through his function as princely secretary, upsets the Greek faction in the Prince’s entourage: ‘l’accez libre que j’ay auprès de Son Altesse à quelle heure que ce soit excittent la jalousie de la plupart de boyard de Son Altesse, qui ignore les raisons de ce libre accez.’<sup>24</sup> On top of that, the arrival of his family in Moldavia annoys everybody. The Greeks<sup>25</sup> and the boyars ‘ne cessent de dire que je cherche à remplir la Moldavie peu à peu de François,’<sup>26</sup> he writes from Iași on 4 June 1753 to the French ambassador to the Porte, Roland Puchot Des Alleurs.<sup>27</sup> At the time he was trying to delay the coming of his father from Constantinople to Iași, after his brothers had long since descended on Wallachian territory. In any case, he writes, if his father arrived in Moldavia, he would quickly realise that ‘les marchands y

<sup>22</sup> His appointment may have been connected to his commercial activities, as the grand *sluger* (i.e. in Romanian) was responsible for the distribution, on the part of the princely court, of meat and candles to boyars and foreigners who enjoyed this right. With the reforms of Prince Constantine Mavrocordato, the office of grand *sluger* lost its traditional content, and its holder received specific duties from the prince. See Dionisie Fotino, *Istoria Generală a Daciei sau a Transilvaniei și a Moldovei* (first edition: *Historia tes palai Dakias ta nyn Transylhanyas, Wallachias, kai Moldavias ek diaphoron palaion kai neon syngrapheon syneranistheisa para Dionysios Photeinou*, Vienna: Typ. Io Varthol. Svekioy, 1818-1819), ed. George Sion (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională a lui Iosif Romanov & Compania, 1859), 292–293.

<sup>23</sup> Pseudo-Enache Kogălniceanu, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei de la domnia întâi și până la a patra domnie a lui Costandin Mavrocordat vv. (1733–1774)*, critical edition by Aurora Ilieș and Ioana Zmeu (Bucharest: Minerva, 1987), 50.

<sup>24</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 59. Constantine Racovitza considers him ‘one of the closest and most faithful office-holders’; AAE, Correspondence Politique, Turquie, vol. 127, f. 307, 20 July 1754.

<sup>25</sup> The reference is to the ‘Greeks’ who had come with the Phanariot prince and who occupied important offices in the princely council. See Lidia Cotovanu, “‘Chasing Away the Greeks’: The Prince-State and the Undesired Foreigners (Wallachia and Moldavia between the 16th and 18th Centuries)”, in *Across the Danube. Southeastern Europeans and Their Travelling Identities (17th-19th C.)*, ed. Olga Katsiardi-Hering and Maria A. Stassinopoulou (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 215–253.

<sup>26</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 58–61.

<sup>27</sup> He held the post from February 1747 to 23 November 1754, when he died in Constantinople. See AAE, Correspondance Politique, Turquie, vol. 127, ff. 433–434.

sont si meprisez, comme aussi tous ceux qui ne sont pas attachés à la principauté.<sup>28</sup> This contempt is shown in the way that a series of rules of good conduct are disregarded in the presence of foreigners precisely in order to underline the difference of status: 'les boyards grecs regardent avec beaucoup de mépris les marchands qui se trouvent sur le pays, puisqu'ils les laissent devant eux sans les faire couvrir ny les faire assoier.'<sup>29</sup>

As he stubbornly insisted on remaining a foreigner, adhering neither to one faction nor to the other, François-Thomas fell into disfavour with the grand *postelnic* (i.e. foreign minister), Iordache Stavarache. A Greek boyar, with an important office concerned with the handling of foreign affairs, Iordache Stavarache was supported by his father-in-law, Manolache Geanet, the *capucbeaia* (i.e., the agent, 'doorkeep,' *kapici*), of Phanariot ruler Constantine Racovitza at the Ottoman court. By incurring Stavarache's disfavour, François-Thomas thus lost much of his influence with Constantine Racovitza, who was dependent from a diplomatic point of view on his *capucbeaia* Manolache Geanet. *Lintu* the Frenchman, raised to the rank of grand *sluger*, had landed between the political factions that were struggling for precedence in relation to the Prince.<sup>30</sup>

The boyars in their turn accused him of arrogance: 'He had become very impudent and paid no regard to anyone,' writes Enache Kogălniceanu in his chronicle.<sup>31</sup> It should also be added that his being given a new office, that of grand *vameș* (i.e. head of customs), which was much more profitable than that of grand *sluger*, created tension among the boyars who had been pushed aside by a foreigner: 'la disgrâce du Sieur Linchou est produit par la jalousie de sa faveur et de ce qu'il est douanier du Prince, ce qui ôte une charge lucrative et principale à quelqu'un de la nation moldave, qui ne peut sans envie ni regret la voir remplir par un étranger,' writes the French ambassador.<sup>32</sup> Beyond the inherent envy provoked by his holding such a high office, the testimonies of contemporaries present François-Thomas Linchou behaving in an authoritarian manner, proud of the position he held, and which he used to obtain profits and privileges. Abbot Sinadon describes '*Linciu* the papist' as being arrogant, influential and powerful. The abbot confesses, on 24 October 1764, that only his fear of this powerful figure has made him turn a blind eye to some illegal purchases of estates: knowing 'what man was *musiu Linciu*,' 'the

<sup>28</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 89

<sup>29</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 59

<sup>30</sup> This rivalry has been interpreted by Romanian historiography in ideological terms, acquiring either social or national significance. In fact the boyar groupings defined as 'Greek' or 'native-born' were made and unmade according to immediate interests. For details on the conflicts in the time of Constantine Racovitza, see Mihai Mârza, 'Revolta boierilor moldoveni din vara anului 1750: Reconstituire factologică, ipoteze, semnificații', in *Elitele puterii, puterile elitelor în spațiul românesc (secolele XIV–XX)*, ed. Cristian Ploscaru, and Mihai-Bogdan Atanasiu (Iași: Editura Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2018), 257–289.

<sup>31</sup> Pseudo-Enache Kogălniceanu, *Letopisețul*, 70.

<sup>32</sup> AAE, Correspondance Politique, Turquie, Suppl. 15, ff. 282, Des Alleurs to Broglio, 16 August 1753, Constantinople.

vameş of His Highness Constantine Racovitza,’ who always acted with ‘arrogance’ and ‘force’.<sup>33</sup> The abbot’s ‘fear’ adds a new element to the definition of the foreigner: the religious dimension, Linchou is a Catholic, a ‘papist’. However, what abbot Sinadon’s account emphasises is the *vameş*’s marginality within the local elite, in which he tried to enter by immoral means, using his concubine’s connections to acquire landholdings which would have otherwise been subject to pre-emption rights.

François-Thomas Linchou took a further step towards social integration when his patron moved to the throne of Wallachia: marriage. Marriage was the most accessible method of social integration into a network. Practised successfully by the vast majority of the ‘Greeks’ who arrived in the Danubian Principalities in the suite of the Phanariot princes, marriage proved useful to both partners: the newcomer acquired social recognition among the native boyars, which gave him the right to settle in the Principalities, to buy properties, and to enter into the political game even after the removal of his political patron; the boyars in their turn were brought closer to the power group around the Phanariot prince.

On his arrival in Bucharest, in 1753, François-Thomas Linchou kept not only the job of princely secretary, but also his influence with Constantine Racovitza, since he received the office of grand *cămăraş*.<sup>34</sup> Caught up in complexities of politics and administration, and not knowing how much longer he would be tarrying in the Romanian lands, the Frenchman tried to create a new belonging for himself and to obtain the social recognition and support of the native elite. As such, he sought to follow the model whose efficiency was proven, namely marriage. His betrothal to Ancuţa Sturdza, the daughter of the Moldavian boyar Sandu Sturdza, had taken place already during his residence in Moldavia. The lineage of the Sturdza boyars was a very important one with not only enormous wealth but also important positions in the social hierarchy. François-Thomas Linchou judged that the engagement would be very advantageous for him: ‘à mon départ de Moldavie, s’étant présenté un mariage de convenance, soit par l’avantage du bien, aussi bien que de la famille, en la personne nommée Kokone Ankocha Sturdge, parente de Son Altesse, je me suis fiancé avant mon départ de Moldavie.’ His betrothed’s father had held the highest positions in the political apparatus, serving in turn as grand *ban*, grand *spătar* and even *caimacan*<sup>35</sup>, and he was known to be close to Michael Racovitza, the father of Constantine Racovitza.<sup>36</sup> The alliance would have included Linchou in one of the

<sup>33</sup> Ioan Caproşu, *Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului Iaşi* (Iaşi: Editura Dosoftei, 2005), V, 532–533, 538–540.

<sup>34</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 173. The *cămăraş* was responsible for the salt mines, and belonged, administratively speaking, to the ‘prince’s household’, Fotino, *Istoria*, 309.

<sup>35</sup> Grand *Ban* (the name of Slavonic origin) was the highest office in the political hierarchy of Moldavia and Wallachia; Grand *Spătar* (from Greek *spatharios*) was the official responsible for handling military affairs of the principality, while *caimacan* (from Ottoman *kaymakam*) carried out the duties of interim ruler, handling administrative duties in the absence of the ruler. See Fotino, *Istoria*, 265–266, 275–276.

<sup>36</sup> For details regarding the boyar Sandu Sturza see Mihai-Bogdan Atanasiu, *Din lumea cronicarului Ion Neculce. Studiu prosopografic* (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2018), 498–507



most powerful boyar families and would have brought him even closer to the Racovitza lineage, from which princes had been recruited for the thrones of the two Principalities. The marriage that he requested with such insistence, two years after the celebration of the betrothal, also had a very practical aim: the protection of the business that he had left in Iași on his move to Wallachia.<sup>37</sup> He thus had much to gain. The materialisation of the marriage, however, raised problems. These were much more political than religious in nature. The confessional difference between the Orthodox Ancuța Sturdza and the Catholic François-Thomas Linchou is nowhere mentioned, and the betrothal had already been celebrated without this minor detail proving an impediment.<sup>38</sup> It was not here that the problem lay, therefore, but rather in the status of the two persons: Ancuța Sturdza belonged to the boyar elite and was a Moldavian subject under the authority of Prince Matthew Ghika, and implicitly, that of the Ottoman Empire; as such, she needed a permit of passage and the agreement of the Prince for the finalisation of the marriage. François-Thomas Linchou was a mere merchant, a French subject resident in the Levant, and would have to submit to the laws of France.<sup>39</sup> The ambassador of France in Istanbul was agreeable to a compromise, promising that he would ‘turn a blind eye’ if the marriage took place, but he pointed out that ‘no French person in the Levant can marry without the agreement of the Minister [of the Navy].’ In other words, the French diplomatic representative in the Levant might tolerate the match, but he asked Linchou to write directly to the Minister of the Navy specifying his reasons for disregarding the ‘general rule.’<sup>40</sup> As he had left a considerable quantity of unsold wax in Moldavia, in the care of his brothers, François-Thomas desperately needed this marriage to prevent the confiscation of his goods and the ruin of his trade.<sup>41</sup> His

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<sup>37</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 376.

<sup>38</sup> According to the Orthodox canon law, such an alliance is forbidden. See *Îndreptarea legii (1652)* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1962), 179–180.

<sup>39</sup> For the matrimonial strategies of French merchants in the Levant see Edhem Eldem, ‘The French Nation of Constantinople in the Eighteenth Century as Reflected in the Saints Peter and Paul Parish Records, 1740–1800’, in *French Mediterraneans: Transnational and Imperial Histories* ed. Patricia M.E. Lorcin and Todd Shepard, (Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 2016), 131–159.

<sup>40</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 165–166. The understanding shown by Vergennes may be explained by the fact that he was in a similar relationship. Unable to marry Anne Testa, née Vivier, the widow of a Genoese doctor from Pera, he was to live in concubinage until 1768. Marriage would result in his being called back from his post. For more details see Orville T. Murphy *Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes: French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution, 1719–1787* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2009), 167–170.

<sup>41</sup> From his letter to the ambassador, it emerges that he had invested a considerable sum of money in the wax business, which, now with the return of Constantine Racovitza to Moldavia, he hoped, somehow, to recover. See his letter of 27 March 1757 (Filitti, *Lettres*, 217). Wax was one of the most important commercial products of interest to Phanariot princes, Turkish merchants and the Ottoman administration alike. For example, on 15 June 1755, the princely larder bought a considerable quantity of wax from merchants in Moldavia, and then sent it, through the merchant Mustafa Hagi Emir, to the market in Constantinople (Romanian Academy Library, Fond Documente Istoric, XII/34, 35, 36). In the same period, Sultan Mahmud I sent an order to the two princes to facilitate the acquisition by the Porte of a quantity of wax but to forbid the selling of this product to ‘enemy territories’. See

argumentation hinges on the fluidity of the borders of the Levant: the Romanian lands belong to Christendom, not to the Levant. As such, he is a Frenchman sent on a mission to the Prince of Wallachia with the agreement of the King, who should take into account the services rendered and grant him this favour: ‘je présume donc que la Cour me fairont la grâce de ne point désapprouver un mariage qui m’est avantageux.’<sup>42</sup> This is the status that he needs now: a Frenchman in a Christian country and not a Frenchman in the Levant. But he also needs to belong to the local boyar class, in the interests of social integration. All these forms of status are turned to his advantage when necessary: ‘Permettes-moi, Monseigneur, de vous représenter qu’il y a quelques différences entre moy et les autres François qui sont établis en Levant, attendu que je suis icy avec la connoissance et même l’aprobation de la Cour; outre qu’on peut regarder ce pays comme une partie de la Chretienneté et exclue du Levant. D’ailleurs ma residence icy est incertaine, et il se peut que je sois obligé d’y rester un très long temps.’<sup>43</sup> Social differences constitute another weak point in the contract: François-Thomas Linchou is a mere functionary in the service of Prince Constantine Racovitza, while Ancuța Sturdza belongs to the highest rank of the Moldavian boyar class and is related to the most important boyar families, being a first cousin of the same Constantine Racovitza. In the interests of social equilibrium, François-Thomas insistently requests that he be granted a noble title by the King of France, Louis XV, emphasising his merits in the service of the kingdom.<sup>44</sup>

Like all expatriates, François-Thomas Linchou and his brothers acquired a certain amount of linguistic, legislative and administrative knowledge, which they used in daily life. From this point of view, it would be interesting to know a number of small details regarding their everyday social life: what sort of language did François-Thomas use to communicate with the locals; what sort of clothes did he wear; what sort of house did he have; and with which circle of friends and acquaintances did he socialise in Iași and Bucharest?

On 19 December 1756, François-Thomas Linchou wrote to the French ambassador in Poland, Charles-François de Broglio, suggesting that he intervene before the king setting up a consulate in the Romanian lands.<sup>45</sup> The idea was not new: it had been raised by other French subjects who had tried to do business in the Romanian lands and had realised the necessity of diplomatic protection through a consulate. François-Thomas, however, was more insistent and more argumentative, out of highly personal motives. After petitioning the conte de Vergennes for the

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Valeriu Veliman, *Relațiile româno-otomane, 1711–1821. Documente turcești* (Bucharest: Arhivele Statului, 1984), 315–318.

<sup>42</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 169–170.

<sup>43</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 169–170, 5 January 1757, Bucharest.

<sup>44</sup> AAE, Correspondance Politique, Pologne, vol. 250, f. 529. ‘Les lettres de noblesse contribueront beaucoup a terminer mon mariage avec la cousine germaine du prince qui seroit tres avantageux’, 19 December 1756.

<sup>45</sup> AAE, Correspondance Politique, Pologne, vol. 250, ff. 528–529.

erection of a consulate,<sup>46</sup> he then urged the conte de Broglio, who was in Paris, to request a French consul in Moldavia, and he even proposed a person for the job: his brother, who had been in Iași for six years and spoke ‘the language of the country’.<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere, Maurice Linchou describes his and his sons’ integration in Moldavian society as making good progress. ‘We are quite well, as if we were in the middle of France,’ he writes on 11 September 1753 to Ambassador Des Alleurs. At the same time, speaking of one of his sons, he presents him as ‘known and respected by the whole people,’ and especially by ‘the commandant here [Galați] and his servants’.<sup>48</sup>

Having lived for a time in Istanbul, the Linchou family were familiar with the Oriental costume worn in the Romanian lands, and used it for protection against any hostility and to ease their social integration. Such clothing duality was accepted in the period, and served a person’s immediate interests, especially when the nature of their profession required them to travel through various empires. Even the French ambassador, Vergennes,<sup>49</sup> adopted Oriental costume, and so did the Linchou brothers, adapting to their surroundings. The adoption of a specific local costume facilitated their access to the trading networks with which they formed business connections; similarly the Romanian language (and presumably also Greek) helped them to communicate and, most importantly, to conduct business. Thus, François-Thomas Linchou (and the whole family) took essential steps in the process of identification, adopting the lifestyle specific to the social elite among whom they pursued their activity. In Iași, François-Thomas began a ‘family’ life, living with a certain Vasilica, through whom he bought vineyards and estates in Bucium, a village close to the city. His concubine (as the documents label her: Romanian *fiitoare*), followed Thomas on his journeys between Iași and Bucharest, as Prince Constantine Racovitza moved from one capital to the other.<sup>50</sup> Speaking the language of the country, adopting the costume of the local elite, buying estates and living with a local woman, had not François-Thomas Linchou assimilated all the criteria that designated him as an Ottoman subject (*re‘âyâ*)?

### Re‘âyâ vs. François

Returning now to the candle business, it should be explained that the artisan of the Linchou business ventures was in the first place François-Thomas Linchou. As the political and diplomatic interface for the commercial dealings of the Linchou Company, François-Thomas got involved in and in fact took charge of the solution of this dispute. The litigation ended up being presented in Iași before the Prince, in Giurgiu before the kadi, in Bucharest before the vizier and the aga, and in Constantinople before the Divan. The venture brought to the foreground invented

<sup>46</sup> AAE, Correspondance Politique, Pologne, vol. 250, ff. 330-333, 1 July 1756, Linchou to Broglio.

<sup>47</sup> AAE, Correspondance Politique, Pologne, vol. 250, ff. 528-529.

<sup>48</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 91-93.

<sup>49</sup> See the portraits of the French consul and his wife by Antoine de Favray in the Pera Museum.

<sup>50</sup> Caproșu, *Documente*, V, 532-533.

identities, forged documents, networks and favours, used now by one side, now by the other. At present I can only give the point of view expressed by the Linchou family in their numerous correspondences with the ambassador of France in Istanbul, as I do not yet have access to more documents that would complete the picture.<sup>51</sup>

It seems that six months after the erection of the candle factory, Joseph Linchou, one of the brothers, was unhappy with the progress of the venture. Consequently he closed the factory and confiscated all the goods in the shop in order to recover the money he had invested: ‘Seeing that Sterio was squandering the capital, because of his bad behaviour, Joseph Linchou withdrew all the goods that were to be found in the shop in order to recover his capital and put the business in order.’ Sterio owed 3,800 piastres. He did not have the money, and thus ended up in the debtors’ prison. From this point on, a long revenge fell upon the Linchou brothers, who were dragged all over the Empire, sometimes in irons, often blackmailed, suffering violation of the privacy of their home in the middle of the night, and sent into exile or suffered the humiliation of the confiscation of their property. Each time, the key point of defence concerned identity: when Sterio brought the case before the Sultan, Joseph Linchou was cited as a *re‘âyâ* with business on Moldavian territory, while his brother, the experienced François-Thomas requested a *fîrmân* stating that Joseph was French, and thus benefitted from protection.<sup>52</sup> According to the capitulations concluded between France and the Ottoman Empire,<sup>53</sup> a French subject could not be dragged out of his home, as had happened to Joseph: ‘The *çavuş* (executive agent) came into Linchou’s house to seize him, which is contrary to the capitulations, for the house of a Frenchman may not be entered no matter where he is in Turkey.’<sup>54</sup> The *çavuş* sent by the Imperial Divan had even, François-Thomas believes, violated the laws of Moldavia, which stated ‘that he may not enter any house and that he must read the *fîrmân* before the Prince and request the person sought by the Porte.’<sup>55</sup> Without respecting the capitulations or the laws of Moldavia, the imperial *çavuş* had taken Joseph in irons, after he had been cited repeatedly to stand opposite Sterio before the Imperial Divan, a treatment which

<sup>51</sup> Despite searching a considerable number of Romanian archive fonds, I have been unable to find information about the Greek candlemaker Sterio. I have, however, found similar cases, which can provide information about how such litigation proceeded.

<sup>52</sup> The dispute involved two foreigners pursuing commercial activities on the territory of the Danubian Principalities. Sterio the *Greek* identifies himself according to stage of litigation and the courts he addresses: princely subject when he appeals to princely judgement, Ottoman subject when addresses the Ottoman courts. Cases between two foreigners were, as a rule, judged by the local courts, unless there was a numerous and well-organised community, as was the case of the Jews.

<sup>53</sup> Maurice H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beratlis in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

<sup>54</sup> ‘Le chaoux est venu dans la maison de Linchou pour l’y prendre, ce qui est contraire aux capitulations, puisqu’on ne peut entrer dans la maison d’un François dans quelque endroit de la Turquie que ce soit.’ See Filitti, *Lettres*, 394–395.

<sup>55</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 394–395.

François-Thomas judged to be ‘contraire à l’honneur de la nation française.’<sup>56</sup> More than that, the honour of the Prince of Moldavia was injured by such a violent intrusion, which had resulted in aggressive behaviour towards the officials who requested that the Moldavian laws be respected. ‘The Greeks say,’ writes François-Thomas, ‘that a subject (*re‘âyâ*) would have resolved this matter by now, even if he had not enjoyed protection’ as a French subject did, and that ‘Sterio would have received exemplary punishment.’ The very reputation of France had been affected by the prolongation of the matter, and by the non-involvement of the ambassador in the protection of the French and the defence of their rights. ‘The eyes of Moldavia are on us, curious to see what direction this matter will take,’ declaimed François-Thomas, ceaselessly invoking ‘the honour of the nation’ and implicitly ‘the honour of the French.’<sup>57</sup> The rhetoric of the Frenchman’s defence is obvious. In fact, Christian merchants from Moldavia and Wallachia, Ottoman subjects, often appealed to the judgement of the Imperial Divan, unhappy with the sentences or mediation offered by the local authorities, thus providing an occasion for the repeated interference of Ottoman envoys in the justice system.

Honour, nation, rights, protection are words that fashion the identity of a Frenchman. For Thomas-François Linchou, the capitulations are above any law; in fact, he shares the opinion of other Westerners regarding ‘the primacy of the capitulations’.<sup>58</sup> The status of *re‘âyâ* is invoked only to obtain privileges or to force the resolution of a conflict. François-Thomas’s attempt to combine his two identities and to enjoy only the advantages of each ultimately costs him his head.

On 14 March 1760, he was decapitated before Sultan Mustafa III, accused of grave offence to the Empire in his desperate attempt to restore Constantine Racovitza to the throne of Moldavia. The French embassy proved unable to give a definite answer to the Reis Effendi’s questions: ‘was Linchou a genuine Frenchman; was his service to the Prince compatible with this status; and as had he ever paid tribute to the Grand Seignior?’<sup>59</sup> The Frenchman’s death on the ‘scaffold’ took the French embassy in Constantinople by surprise. It had not had time to build a defence, or even to know the charges. According to Ambassador Vergennes, Linchou fell prey to his own intrigues, wishing to ‘make himself useful to Prince Constantine Racovitza, to whom he had linked his fate.’ Getting involved in a series of ‘schemes’, Linchou had apparently written a number of letters that were somewhat damaging to the Ottoman court, claiming that he had the agreement of the grand vizier.<sup>60</sup> It was the interception of the letters that led to his decapitation, confirming

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<sup>56</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 394-395.

<sup>57</sup> Filitti, *Lettres*, 394-395.

<sup>58</sup> Boogert, *The Capitulations*, 21.

<sup>59</sup> AAE, Fond Correspondence Politique, Turquie, vol. 136, f. 68.

<sup>60</sup> See ‘Relation du supplice de S. Linchou condamné comme traître et sedicieux par la Porte’, written by the first dragoman of the French Embassy, Deval, and attached to a letter of 17 March 1769. AAE, Fond Correspondence Politique, Turquie, vol. 136, f. 66-70; AN. Correspondance Consulaire. Constantinople, AE/B/I/437, ff. 9-10, 13-14.

his character as an “adventurer”, and thus merging him with the ‘Greeks’ of the Empire, who were often so described in diplomatic correspondence.<sup>61</sup>

However, Linchou had made so many efforts to fashion Moldavian status, albeit only for the sake of privileges, that rumour had already assigned to him the identity of a ‘rebel Moldavian boyar’, far from that of an honourable Frenchman. ‘Dass sie ihn nicht als einen Franken sondern als einen aufrührerischen moldauer Boyaren ansähen, der das Leben verwirkt hätte,’ writes Schwachhein, the Viennese ambassador, to Chancellor Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, on 18 March 1760.<sup>62</sup> If, in the eyes of the Turks, Linchou had put on the clothes of a rebel Moldavian boyar, to his conationals, the French Levant merchants, he had become an immoral ‘Greek’, who had dishonoured the French nation by his behaviour and as such deserved to die. In their petition, the French merchants expressed their concern with inability of their king to protect his subjects. They state that, together with his Greek clothes, Linchou has taken up tastes, manners and morals such as only Greeks are capable of, going so far as to maintain a harem in the Moldavian capital.<sup>63</sup> This behaviour has separated him from the honour of the French nation, noted the French merchants in the memoir, hiding behind the anonymity of the group. As Stephen Greenblatt pointed out, such constant adoption of new ‘masks’ would inevitably lead to ‘some loss of self.’<sup>64</sup> Although repeatedly invoking ‘the honour of being French,’ François-Thomas Linchou seems to have had difficulties in his attempts to integrate himself in the community of French merchants in the Levant. The latter claimed that Linchou became a *veritable Greek*, since not even the Turks could distinguish him any more from the other subjects of the Empire.<sup>65</sup> After the tragic event, the French authorities tried to distance themselves from the ‘adventurer’ Linchou, who had linked himself too closely to the ‘Greek prince,’<sup>66</sup> thus by his behaviour forfeiting any claim to French consular protection.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>61</sup> On this topic see the memoir ‘Caractère des gens du pays, leur commerce’, AAE, Correspondence Politique, Turquie, Suppl. 15, ff. 105-107, 1751, Constantinople.

<sup>62</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Documente privitoare la familia Calimachi* (Bucharest, 1903), II, 410.

<sup>63</sup> ‘On a souffert que le Sieur Linchou se vouat au service d’un Prince Grec de Moldavie, eut serrail de femmes dans la capitale de la province, et déshonorât enfin le nom français.’ Mihordea, *Politica*, 527.

<sup>64</sup> Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 2-9.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Il semble que l’habit donne les goûts, les manières, et souvent les mœurs de ceux qui les portent dès que les Turcs ne nous distinguent plus, ils ne sont pas fâchés de punir sur un Français travesti l’insolence apparente d’un Grec qui devant eux ose de méconnaître.’ Mihordea, *Politica*, 527. On his death in 1760, François-Thomas Linchou had a single son from a relationship with a woman from Istanbul. This natural son would inherit all his wealth. (Iorga, *Documente*, II, 411, no. 30).

<sup>66</sup> On 10 October 1762, Ambassador Vergennes wrote to the French ambassador in Poland, Antoine-René de Voyer, marquis de Paulny: ‘la mort du Sieur Linchou, nous est étrangère, celui-ci ayant pris le service d’un prince Grec et s’étant mal adroitement engagé dans des intrigues très criminelles il en a été la triste victime.’ AAE, Correspondence Politique, Pologne, vol. 273, f. 632.

<sup>67</sup> On 3 May 1760, Etienne-François de Choiseul wrote to Vergennes: ‘Vous avez fait, Monsieur, tout ce qui pouvoit dépendre de vous pour sauver le Sieur Linchou, mais il faut convenir que le crime dont il a été accusé et dont il a en quelque sorte fait l’aveu au Sieur Deval meritoit le supplice auquel il a été

François-Thomas Linchou donned the clothes of identity according to context and interest, adapting to the times but always seeking protection behind ‘the honour of the French nation.’ Others would categorise him sometimes as *Moldavian*, sometimes as *Greek*, starting from the exterior and public manifestations of this French subject in search of social recognition.

### Conclusion

On 20 December 1842, the Collège Archéologique et Généalogique de France accepted the titles of nobility presented by Phillipe Jean-Baptiste de Linche for admission as a titular member.<sup>68</sup> Phillipe Linche (or Linchou), the nephew of François-Thomas Linchou<sup>69</sup> had succeeded where his uncle had failed: he had reached the highest level of the Wallachian boyar class, married a boyarress and accumulated a vast fortune. Having become a boyar and high office holder (under the name of Filip Lenș), with a mansion on the Mogoșoaia Road<sup>70</sup>, the main artery of Bucharest, Phillipe returned to his French noble roots, going back to the Linche de Moissac branch.<sup>71</sup>

The Linchou case speaks of the multiple processes of identification that individuals could use to traverse and adapt to empires. The distinction between locals (i. e. *pământeni* in Romanian) and outsiders (i.e. *străini* in Romanian) highlights a complex network of identity and status in which the boundaries of ‘Greekness’, ‘Moldavianness’ or ‘Frenchness’ appear somewhat fluid.

The story of the Linchou family is work in progress that highlights the evolution of the status of the foreigner in the Romanian lands in the course of a century. In the eighteenth century, foreigners were omnipresent, found in all strata of society, but it was only at the end of the century that an institutional and administrative debate took place, with the setting up of foreign consulates in the Romanian lands. Under pressure from the consulates, the Chancelleries for Foreign

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condamné. Nous ne pouvons pas exiger que l'article 22 de nos capitulations avec la Porte, renouvelées les 28 May 1740 soit applicables aux crimes de lèse Majesté et de trahison en matière d'Etat.' AAE, Correspondance Politique, Turquie, vol. 136, f. 98v.

<sup>68</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale de France (hereinafter: BNF), Fond Roumain 6. Documents généalogiques et administratifs relatifs aux familles de Linche et Carpișanu (1570–1855), f. 300.

<sup>69</sup> Philippe was the son of Jean-Baptiste Linchou, who settled in Wallachia after the death of his brother, first as a teacher of foreign languages and then as princely secretary at the court of Alexander Ypsilanti (1774-1782). The identity of his mother is uncertain. Jean-Alexandre Vaillant names a certain Maria Hodivoaianu, who he believes was a freed slave of the great boyar Constantin Filipescu, in whose entourage the young Filip Lenș grew up (Jean-Alexandre Vaillant, *La Roumanie, ou Histoire, langue, littérature, orographie, statistique des peuples de la langue d'or, Ardaliens, Vallagues et Moldaves, résumés sur le nom de Romans* (Paris: Arthus Bertrand Editeur, 1844), vol. 2, 311.

<sup>70</sup> The house exists to this day, under the address Calea Victoriei 133 and is managed by Writers' Union of Romania. Despite being one of the oldest and most beautiful mansions in Bucharest, it currently houses a casino.

<sup>71</sup> The first part of this Linchou file, deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale on 22 July 1929, by Alexandre de Linche de Moissac, gathers documents from the years 1570–1650 regarding the connections of the Linche family with Moissac. See BNF, Fond Roumain 6, ff. 1–47.

Cases began their activity,<sup>72</sup> with responsibilities including resolving litigation of ‘*sudit* [foreign protégé] with *raia* [*re’aya*]’ or ‘*sudit* with *sudit* of different protection.’<sup>73</sup> The Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire, such as Sterio the Greek, the candle-maker, integrated relatively quickly in the Romanian lands because of their faith and political proximity, and were assimilated into the social fabric, while Christians of different confessions (Catholic, Armenian or Protestant) bore the mark of difference. This was the situation of the Linchou family, who managed to integrate by way of commerce but would never manage to penetrate the social fabric of the community. Ultimately, François-Thomas Linchou adapted to every situation, trying to make as much profit as possible for himself and his family. It was this adaptability<sup>74</sup> that was held against him from all sides, the adaptability that helped him to survive, but negated the attributes of a distinct French nation in the Levant.

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<sup>72</sup> Exactly when these departments were founded in Wallachia and Moldavia remains unclear. For Wallachia there is as yet no study on the subject. If we are to believe the disposition given by John *Vodă* Caradja, the Chancellery for Foreign Cases functioned there from the end of November 1812 (Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (hereinafter ANIC), Fond Manuscrise, Ms. 1073, f. 2, 29 November 1812). For Moldavia, Stela Mărieș maintains that the respective Chancellery was founded some time between 1777 and 1780. Stela Mărieș, *Supușii străini din Moldova în perioada 1781–1862* (Iași: Editura Universitatea Al. I. Cuza, 1985), 40.

<sup>73</sup> ANIC, Fond Manuscrise, Ms. 1073, f. 1, 30 November 1812.

<sup>74</sup> See Ian Coller, ‘East of Enlightenment: Regulating Cosmopolitanism between Istanbul and Paris in the Eighteenth Century’, *Journal of World History* 21 (2010), no.3: 447–70.