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Constanța VINTILĂ-GHIȚULESCU, Evgheniți, Ciocoi, Mojici. Despre obrazye primei modernității românești (1750-1860) [Adelige, Emporkömmlinge, Dorftrötel. Über die Gesichter der ersten rumänischen Moderne (1750-1860)]. Bucharest: Humanitas 2013. 356 S., ISBN 978-973-50-3854-0, RON 35,–

Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu's latest book is a penetrating and lively analysis of the Moldavian and Wallachian societies during more than a century of changes imposed by the modernisation project. As the author states, it is an attempt at examining the beginnings of Romanian modernity, but also an instrument for those who wish to further analyze this theme (11).

In the first chapter, the author discusses the great boyars' model of behavior: religiosity, generosity, philanthropy, hospitality, waste, display of luxury, the refusal of manual labor, but also servility in the presence of the prince, hypocrisy, and the pursuit of offices and decorations. The limited number of important state offices available for them favored discord and disputes which, in combination with their irresponsibility, disrupted the organisation of the state. They opposed the large-scale sale of offices by the prince, mainly because it allowed a great number of people from lower ranks, including merchants, to be ennobled. The significance the boyars granted to these high offices led to the neglect of their estates, especially in Wallachia. Nevertheless, given these limits, and in the context of the absence of a real middle-class, the boyars were the agents of modernisation.

The second chapter deals with communities, sociability and social identities. The lives of the petty townspeople were confined to their close neighborhoods; however, the state, in an attempt to regulate and to control the communities, penetrated more and more aspects of their daily life. When the mechanisms of the local communities for social control failed to function, the people themselves asked for the involvement of the power structures. Yet, these interventions were inefficient, due to their ambiguity, incoherence, and brutality. The state's efforts to count and register the population were met with refusal, suspicion, or ignorance. The Church attempted to oppose the process of secularisation, following the establishment of the Organic Regulations, as well as the measures for reforming the education of priests these regulations demanded. Furthermore, the Church was reluctant to pay for social projects, and simony and corruption continued to be a common occurrence. The priests were practically the only ones who could be used in a systematic way to 'civilize' and moralize the folk. It was for this reason that the state attempted to ensure its stability by demanding that the landowners cede land to the church and that the villagers to work for them. As a result, the tensions between the priests and communities grew stronger.

The third chapter examines the common people caught between poverty and the desire to occupy any state office, a position, which could have assured social and financial success. The way to achieve such a position was to either pay for the office or seek the protection of a great boyar. A basic education, but also submission and fidelity to the protector were needed in order to secure social ascension. As the state bureaucracy began to develop, the associated offices became increasingly desired by everyone. However, the lack of serious instruction and personal dependence on the protector led to corruption, incompetence, and inefficiency. This attractive system discouraged people from learning and performing

a steady craft and was an important factor in preventing the formation of the middle class. Yet some, like doctor Ștefan Episcopescu, tried to change the prevailing mentalities by emphasising other values such as modesty, thrift, saving, efficiency, education, rejection of public service, individualism, and private space. The author argues that these values were the trademarks of “bourgeois ethics” (288). The rural population continued to live in deep poverty, inhabiting unsanitary huts and without access to education. Attempts to “civilising” the villages, through regulations and advice articles in newspapers failed, and both the farmers and some of the landowners opposed the idea of an education, which could distract the children from their labor duties. Furthermore, the modernisation was burdensome for the villagers as the process imposed higher taxes and additional obligations to repair the roads and to build schools.

The author is commended for illustrating all of these complex aspects with an impressive quantity of edited and unedited sources, which are very well analysed and integrated into the general narrative of the book. Furthermore, the book covers a period of time that was insufficiently investigated by Romanian historiography, stressing the importance of studying longer periods of time and challenging traditional and rigid historiographical boundaries like those of 1821 or 1828. The social-anthropological analysis and interpretation of behaviors, mentalities, and the functioning of communities constitutes the most insightful part of the book.

However, the major shortcoming of this work is that the complex themes covered are bound together in a single narrative through the uncritical use of modernisation theory. Modernisation is presented in the work as a necessary stage towards the general progress of Romanian society. The author seems to agree with the Russian count Nesselrode in his suggestion that “the character and the morality” of the nation is responsible for slowing its general advancement (194). Even though she admits that tradition is an invention of modernity (18), the author adopts a modernising discourse by classifying everything as modern and if it is incapable of adapting to the “spirit of the time” (202, 280), to the “natural course of things” (330), as traditional.

But how is modernisation defined? The author puts forward a unitary and all-encompassing definition: the process of modernisation followed “the transformation and rethinking of the entire political, administrative, economic, legislative system, the redefinition of tradition, family, relations with the Church, nation-building or the redefinition of social identities” (13). There seems to be only one type of modernisation, the Occidental, or more specifically the French version (331), which *had to* be adopted in order to narrow the gap towards Europe (13f.). The impression that the work leaves is that of a modernisation similar to a well-known and tested recipe, which is not theoretically problematic: a strong, enterprising middle class (93, 262f., 271f., 329), meritocracy (64f., 246, 287), mass education (172f., 251f., 314-316, 326f., 329), secularisation (163, 192, 203). However the application of these principles is problematic. The author does not discuss varying or conflicting models of modernisation because she does not successfully distinguish between multiple modernising actors who seek to obtain differing objectives, even though she acknowledges such a problem at the beginning of the book (14). Yet the examples presented reveal these tensions. One of the most striking tensions is that which occurs between the process of state-building (153,

205) towards more control and greater revenues, and the interests of the rural population (308-314, 326f.). This modernisation of the state is harshly criticised by doctor Episcopescu (285f.), who advocates individualism instead (287). His own model of modernisation also contains contradictions, as the author underlines at one point: because of the continuous work to increase the wealth of his family, the father does not have time for direct involvement in his children's instruction, which is a central factor in Episcopescu's thinking (285). The author also describes the negative impact that consumerism, brought by modernity, had on the rural population and the efforts undertaken by the state to counteract it (320f.).

Although the author does not draw explicit parallels between her subject and the present day, the book is likely to satisfy those readers who are unhappy with the process of contemporary "transition". The book to place blame on those "backward" people, especially on rural, uneducated people (318), who, in the past, as well as in the present, are responsible for slowing the natural process of progress toward modernisation and westernisation. However, the problems and contradictions posed by this paradigm of modernisation are revealed by the impressive documentation of the book itself, which surely constitutes an instrument for a much needed further analysis.

Bucharest

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Christine M. PHILLIOU, Biography of an Empire. Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution. Berkeley/CA, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press 2011. XXX, 286 S., 5 Abb., 4 Kt., ISBN 978-0-520-26635-3, US-\$ 27,95

Dies ist eine Biographie. Und doch auch keine. Zwar steht das Leben des Stephanos Vogorides (ca. 1778-1859), der u. a. außenpolitischer Berater zweier Sultane, Statthalter der Walachei und bedeutendes Mitglied im Tanzimat-Rat war, im Mittelpunkt, doch tut es dies im Sinne einer Lebensbeschreibung ganz auf Vogorides zentriert letztlich nur in sechs recht kurzen Abschnitten, von denen der erste zwischen Vorwort und Kapitel 1 steht (und „Stephanos Vogorides' Apologia. November 1852“ betitelt ist, 1-4), während die anderen fünf am Ende je eines Kapitels zu stehen kommen. Die eigentlichen, insgesamt sechs Kapitel des Buches beschreiben, Vogorides als Vorbild nehmend, mehr den Lebensweg eines (Muster-)Phanarioten und folgen den politischen wie gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen, die zwischen 1770 und 1860 das Osmanische Reich formten und beeinflussten.

Worum es der Autorin Christine M. Philliou also geht, ist, eine Geschichte der Phanarioten als Teil der Eliten im Osmanischen Reich zu schreiben, wobei die Karriere des Stephanos Vogorides als Blaupause dient. Als Sohn eines Viehhändlers in Kotel geboren, erhielt er den Taufnamen „Stoiko“, doch unter dem Einfluss seines Onkels, des Bischofs von Vratsa, hellenisierte er später selbst seinen Namen in „Stephanos“ und ging nach Bukarest. Dort studierte er am Colegiu Sfântul Sava und wandte sich daraufhin nach Konstantinopel, wo er zunächst als Lehrer arbeitete und 1799 als Dragoman in die osmanische Marine eintrat.