

SVISHTOV MERCHANT ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR NETWORKS ACROSS WALLACHIA AND MOLDAVIA (ROMANIA) DURING THE 19TH CENTURY

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Abstract: The paper aims to shed light on the social/entrepreneurial networks established and maintained by the Bulgarian merchant entrepreneurs from the town of Svishtov in Wallachia and Moldavia (later Romania).

Numerous published and unpublished primary sources have been examined. They encompass the period from the 1820s to the 1870s. The unpublished sources are stored in different institutions (Archives, Museums, etc.) both in Bulgaria and in Romania.

The Bulgarian entrepreneurs from Svishtov managed to “build” and maintain durable commercial webs in the Bulgarian interior. Some of the networks were local (in the region of Svishtov, Nikopol, Ruse, etc.), while others were broader. Svishtov merchants also expanded their networks in the Danubian Principalities (later Romania). They managed to establish and maintain business and personal contacts with “friends” (mostly Bulgarians, but also Greeks and Romanians) in such settlements as Kronnstadt (Braşov), Bucharest, Zimnicea, Alexandria, Brăila, Galaţi, Craiova, Calafat, etc.

Using different kinds of webs, Svishtov entrepreneurs exported large quantities of agricultural and craft items (tobacco, hides, rice, grain, sumac, etc.) to/in the Danubian Principalities (Romania). On the other hand, they imported valuable goods (colonial goods, salt, etc.) to the markets on both shores of the Danube River. They also delivered financial resources which stimulated the local (i.e. Bulgarian) economy. They relied on the financial and moral aid of such powerful businessmen as the members of the Stamu family, Evlogi and Hristo Georgievi, Konstantin Chokan and others.

Regardless of being grocers, commissioners or wholesalers (and their commercial companies), they used the networks established to run their economic activity, to receive and/or to send letters and/or money, to buy and to sell items. Moreover, they acquired the needed business information through the other participants in the network.

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The aim of the paper presented is to shed light on some important but neglected research problem, namely the social/entrepreneurial networks established and maintained by the Bulgarian merchant entrepreneurs from the town of Svishtov in Wallachia and Moldavia (Romania) during the 19th century. There are some publications in which separate and static facts have been proposed. However, they are not thoroughly analyzed¹. From this point of view, the article proposed will build upon the author's previous publication² with the main intention of pushing existing knowledge further. More data for a long period of time will be presented and analysed. It is important to note that the extracted information is of uniform content. However, it can give ground for some firm conclusions.

In order to accomplish this aim, numerous unpublished commercial and private letters, trade ledgers and other documents have been examined. They are stored at the Bulgarian Historical Archive in the National Library³, in the Scientific Archive at the Bulgarian Academy of Science, Central State Archive – Sofia, History Museum of Svishtov, First Bulgarian Reading Room “Elenka and Kiril D. Avramovi” (Historical Archive of Svishtov and its surroundings), and in the National Archives of Romania, Bucharest⁴. On the other hand, some

¹ See for instance: Стефан Ганчев. *Свищов. Принос за историята му. Фототипно издание* (Свищов: Международна фондация „Алеко Константинов“, 1996), 250–271, 379–401; Юлия Николова. *Достойно ест: Свищов през деветнадесетия век и първото десетилетие на XX век. Личности, събития, факти* (София, второ прер. и доп. издание, 2008), 118–126, 140–152, 230–449; Иван Русев, *Търговската модерност на Българското възраждане като култура и практика. Изследване и извори* (Велико Търново: Ровита, 2015), 444–453, 572; Мариана Друмева, “Търговски знания и търговски практики в Свищов през Възраждането”, *Диалог*, № 4 (2016): 103–118; Мариана Друмева, *Търговската дейност на Цвятко Радославов през втората половина на 50-те години на XIX в.* (Известия на ЦСНИ, т. 1, 2016), 254–273; Мариана Друмева, *Стопанското развитие на Свищов и дейността на търговските фирми на Цвятко Радославов през Възраждането. Дисертация за придобиване на образователна и научна степен „доктор“* (София: УНСС, 2018) and quoted here previous publications.

² Ivaylo Naydenov, “The entrepreneurial networks between the central part of the Balkans and the Danubian Principalities/Romania during the 19th century,” in *Regional Networks in Context. Economy and Trade in the Lower Danube Balkans of the 19th century*, eds. Maria Baramova, Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev (Münster/Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2023), 151–168.

³ More about those archival materials see in: Вера Василева, *Опис на документите за стопанската история на България, запазени в Българския исторически архив на Националната библиотека „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“*, Част първа (1648–1879) (София: Национална библиотека „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“, 2019).

⁴ Български исторически архив при Национална библиотека "Св. св. Кирил и Методий" (= БИА – НБКМ), фонд (= ф.), опис (= оп.), архивна единица (= а. е.);

published sources (such as the Hadjitoshevi family archive, the Archive of Commercial House Ioan St. Stamu) have been utilized⁵. They encompass the period from the 1820s to the 1870s and provide solid ground for profound investigation and firm conclusions. Last but not least, older and contemporary studies dedicated to the merchants of Svishtov, as well as the history of the town of Svishtov, have been exploited⁶.

It is important to note that while primary sources from the early 19th century are limited; they still offer an opportunity to make some conclusions. In contrast, there is abundant information available from the mid-1840s to the time of Bulgaria's liberation from Ottoman rule in 1878.

Due to its location on the Lower Danube important trade routes, Svishtov served as a vital commercial and transit point/hub in the region from ancient and medieval times. This role was preserved and even increased during the time frame between the 15th and the 17th century. As a result, an active local trading class of entrepreneurs emerged. They were willing to engage in risky otherwise highly profitable long-distance trade. In the time frame 16th-18th century, they reached Transylvania, while also being active in the trade with the Danubian principalities⁷.

Later, their number increased, and during the 18th and the 19th century (the so-called Bulgarian National Revival period), their presence in the mentioned geographical areas (Wallachia, Moldavia and Central Europe)

Научен Архив на Българска академия на науките (= НА – БАН), фонд (= ф.), опис (= оп.), архивна единица (= а. е.); Централен държавен архив – София (= ЦДА – София), фонд (= ф.) опис (= оп.), архивна единица (= а. е.); Исторически музей – Свищов (= ИМ – Свищов), инвентарен № (= инв. №); Първо българско читалище “Еленка и Кирил Д. Аврамови”. Исторически архив на Свищов и околията, инвентарен № (= инв. №); Archivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fond Casa Comercială „Frații Evloghie și Hristo Gheorghiev”, inventarele 1221–1224. The archival materials will be quoted in the appropriate place throughout the article.

⁵ Кирила Възвъзова-Каратеодорова и др. (съст.), *Семеен архив на Хаджитошеви*. т. 1 (1751–1827) (София: БАН, 1984); Dimitru Limona, Natalia Trandafirescu, *Documente economice din arhiva casei comerciale Ioan St. Stamu 1714–1876*, vol. I (București: Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului din Republica Socialistă România, 1983).

⁶ See the bibliography quoted in: Ивайло Найденов. “Промяната в менталността и стопанското поведение на свищовските търговци предприемачи през „дългия XIX век“, Известия на Института за исторически изследвания. т. 40. *Традиции и модерност: българското общество през „дългия XIX век*. Редакционна колегия: П. Пейковска, Р. Стоянова, Пл. Божинов (отг. ред.), Р. Лельова, М. Левкова-Мучинова (София: Институт за исторически изследвания, Българска академия на науките, 2025), 141-176.

⁷ Мариана Друмева, “Демографско-икономическият облик на Свищов до началото на Българското възраждане,” *Диалог*, 4 (2010), 63-78 and quoted sources; Константин Велики, “За търговията на българските градове с Австрия в края на XVIII и в началото на XIX в.,” *Исторически преглед*, № 6 (1959), 63-66, 68-70, 75; Мариана Друмева, Стопанското развитие на Свищов и дейността ..., 18-116 and quoted sources.

became much more visible due to the favorable economic conditions for the development of entrepreneurial activity⁸. Moreover, during the “long” 19th century, all representatives of the entrepreneurial elite of Svishtov were Bulgarians in contrast to other Bulgarian settlements on the Danube River (Lom, Ruse, Nikopol, etc.) where Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Ottoman Turks, etc. occupied the domain of commerce⁹.

Bulgarian entrepreneurs, in their turn, were newcomers who originated from Lovech, Vratsa, Vidin, Tarnovo, Sevlievo, Gabrovo, etc., who settled down in Svishtov. One can speak about people who were eager to develop a business and to profit themselves. The bulk of them settled down after the complete destruction of the Danubian settlement in the autumn of 1810 during the Russo-Ottoman war (1806-1812). On the other hand, numerous locals escaped their native town and found new places of residence in Bucharest, Alexandria, Galați, Brăila, Zimnicea, Brașov, etc.¹⁰ However, all of them were in constant personal and business contact with their relatives and fellow countrymen left behind. Others studied and/or worked as apprentices in Romania (for instance, in Bucharest, Galați, Brăila, etc.) and later they returned to their hometowns, initiating economic activity (such as brothers Dimitar and

⁸ Друмева, *Стопанското*, 40-95; Cornelia Papacostea – Danielopolu, “Marchands Roumains et balkaniques dans le commerce Danubien (1829–1859). Aperçu bibliographique”, *Revue Roumaine d’ Histoire*, XX, № 4 (1981), 711–716; Constantin Ardeleanu, *International Trade and Diplomacy at the Lower Danube: The Sulina Question and the Economic Premises of the Crimean War (1853 – 1856)*, (Brăila: Editura Istros a Muzeului Brăilei, 2014), 51-130. A telling example for this lucrative trade provides the long-lasting entrepreneurial activity of the Georgievi Brothers and their relatives from the Pulievikin, see: Hristo Berov, “The Economic Advantages of the Political Periphery (The Case of Georgievi Bros. Activities)”, in *Regional Networks in Context. Economy and Trade in the Lower Danube Balkans of the 19th Century*, eds. Maria Baramova, Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev (Münster/Berlin: LiT Verlag, 2023), 179–186; Ивайло Найденов, *Възходът на едно търговско предприятие във възрожденско Карлово: фирмата на Евлоги и Христо Георгиеви (30-те – началото на 50-те години на XIX в.)*, in Иван Русев, (отг. ред.) *Стопанска история на българите в Османската империя, XV–XX век. том 2. Българите в стопанския живот на Османската империя XIX и началото на XX в.* (София: Национално издателство за образование и наука „Аз-буки“, 2025), 436–460.

⁹ Лукса Данаилова, *Материали за правна и стопанска история на град Свищов, Годишник на Висшето търговско училище „Димитър А. Ценов“– Свищов. Год. VI, 1941–1942* (Свищов, 1944, 30); Друмева, *Стопанското*, 75.

¹⁰ Иван Русев, “Войните и икономическото развитие. Случаят с българските земи през първата половина на XIX век”, *Известия на ЦСНИ*, Том 10 (2025), 133–137; Ивайло Найденов, “Руско-турските войни и българската революция като препятствие и/или възможност за свищовските предприемачи през XIX век”, *Известия на ЦСНИ*, том 10 (2025), 148-151, 154-155; Найденов, *Промияната*, 151 and quoted sources.

Petar A. Krastich (see: Appendix 1 and 2); their little brother Aleko also studied in Bucharest, and later he worked for Hristo St. Arnaudov in Istanbul)¹¹.

They also made efforts to establish commercial partnerships which most often were created on a familial basis (father and sons, cousins, uncles, etc.). In some cases (of Tsvyatko Radoslavov for instance), they became partners with prominent and influential local Muslims in order to secure their economic positions¹².

Regardless of their residence (in Svishtov and/or abroad) and financial resources they deliberately put efforts in order to establish and to maintain the needed entrepreneurial/social networks. The webs they created were local, regional, and international where various low-, middle- and high-level Bulgarian entrepreneurs (from producers/artisans/grocers to medium and big traders) undertook their business. They were hierarchically dependent on each other. Regardless of their level and financial resources, they put in efforts to build the needed social/entrepreneurial networks. Through the webs they exchanged vital intelligence regarding their commercial and financial transactions¹³.

At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, merchants from Svishtov continued to participate actively in the extensive export trade of large quantities of cotton, wool and hides in such thriving commercial hubs as Kronstadt (Braşov) and Hermannstadt (Sibiu) in Transylvania¹⁴.

The documents that are stored in the archive of the Hadjitoshevi family from Vratsa provide valuable information about the commercial activities of the Svishtov entrepreneurs before and during the Russo-Ottoman war (1806-1812). The relationship between the prominent merchants from Vratsa (hadji Tosho Tsenov and his son Dimitraki Hadjitoshev), and the merchant Atanas Parashkevov from Svishtov was particularly intensive. One can encounter the names of other entrepreneurs based in the Danube settlement such as Michal

¹¹ Ивайло Найденов, “В света на свищовските търговци братя Кръстич: предприемаческа култура, бизнес практики, етика и менталитет”, *Исторически преглед*, № 1 (2019), 61-66.

¹² Данаилова, *Материали*, 40-57; Друмева, *Стопанското*, 212; Русев, *Търговската*, 446-450.

¹³ More about networks see in: Mark Casson, “Entrepreneurial Networks in International Business”, *Business and Economic History*, vol. 26, no. 2. Selected papers presented at the forty-third annual meeting of the Business History Conference held jointly with the Association of Business Historians (Winter 1997), 811–823; Maria Baramova, Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev, Ivaylo Naidenov, “Regional Networks in Context: Introduction”, in *Regional Networks in Context. Economy and Trade in the Lower Danube Balkans of the 19th.*, eds. Maria Baramova, Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev (Münster/Berlin: LiT Verlag, 2023), 15–18; Naydenov, *The entrepreneurial*, 153–156 and quoted sources.

¹⁴ Велики, *За търговията*, 66, 67, 69 – 70; Веселин Трайков, Николай Жечев, *Българската емиграция в Румъния XIV в. – 1878 г. и участието ѝ в стопанския, обществено-политическия и културния живот на румънския народ* (София: БАН, 1986), 167-168, 170-171, 174-175, 176.

Kurte, Bojan Ivanovich, Teodor Hadjidenku, Apostol Nicolau listed as “friends” of Hadjitoshevi. They traded in large quantities of wool, rice, leather, wax, silk, etc. The goods mentioned were exported to the lands north of the Danube River¹⁵.

The same can be said regarding the activities of hadji Hristo Rachkov from the town of Gabrovo. He constantly used the intermediation of Svishtov commissioners to export large quantities of silk and other goods from present-day (North) Central Bulgaria to Bucharest in the late 18th and in the first years of the 19th century¹⁶.

In the 1820s and especially during the 1830s, the commercial contacts of the entrepreneurs from Svishtov (and also from Vidin, Ruse, Lom, Nikopol) expanded. The main reason for that was the establishment of the Austrian steamboat navigation on the Lower Danube in 1834. It was a powerful impetus for the expansion and intensification of trade contacts with Walachia, Moldavia (later Romania), and the Austrian monarchy (Austro-Hungary from 1867)¹⁷.

A telling example of the intensive and lucrative business in the 1820s-1830s is provided by the activities of brothers Dimitar and Konstantin Stanchioglu. They fulfilled orders for Ioan Stamu. The Stamu family originated from Metsovo (in present-day Epirus in Greece). Members of the family resided in Ioannina and in Bucharest (where Ioan Stamu was located; he settled down there after 1820). The Stamu kin was one of the most active trading families in the Balkans in the late 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. Despite the changing political and economic conditions in the Ottoman Empire for many years, large quantities of goods (tobacco, various types of leather, wax, tallow) passed through the port of Svishtov to Bucharest and other places in Wallachia¹⁸. The letters exchanged among the already mentioned merchants Stanchioglu and Stamu clearly illustrate the important role of Svishtov as a transit point/station on a vital commercial route linking

¹⁵ See: Кирила Възвъзова-Каратеодорова и др. (съст.), *Семеен архив на Хаджитошеви*, doc. № 27, 31, 33, 34, 43, 74, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 85, 86, 89, 158, 193, 215, 252, 329-330, 362, 369, 384, 432.

¹⁶ Светла Янева, “Стопански практики през Възраждането – търговският тефтер на х. Христо Рачков, опит за микроанализ”, *Исторически преглед*, кн. 3-4 (2003), 33, 34, 38, 51.

¹⁷ Виржиния Паскалева, *Средна Европа и земите по Долния Дунав през XVIII–XIX в. (социално-икономически аспекти)* (София: БАН), 1986, 103–243; Ardeleanu, *International*, 51-130; Herald Heppner, “Structure Change in the Balkan Trade (18th – 19th centuries). An outline”, in *Regional Networks in Context. Economy and Trade in the Lower Danube Balkans of the 19th.*, eds. Maria Baramova, Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev (Münster/Berlin: LiT Verlag, 2023), 23–35; Cornelia Papacostea – Danielopolu, *Marchands*, 711–716.

¹⁸ See details in: Limona, Trandafirescu, *Documente*.

Central Europe and Asia Minor¹⁹. A significant part of the commercial traffic in the Balkans passed through the settlement, which provided local entrepreneurs the opportunity to profit²⁰. This is the case with the Stanchioglu, who had confidence and knew how to work with wholesalers such as the Stamu family members.

Other archival materials (such as incoming and outgoing correspondence, circular letters, commercial ledgers, bills of exchange, contracts, brief notes on the quantities of the commodities traded) encompassing the time frame from the 1850s to the 1870s, provide more details. The entrepreneurs and/or their commercial enterprises had their headquarters and storehouses in the town/port of Svishtov. Some of them possessed office branches in Bucharest, Braila, Galați, etc. Others settled in localities in present-day Romania (such as brothers Dimiter, Ivan(itsa) and Iliya D. Ivanov, located in Bucharest, Brăila and Galați²¹ or Yakov Iliev who lived and developed his entrepreneurial practice in Zimnicea)²².

From time to time, local (Svishtov) businessmen travelled to Bucharest, Giurgiu, Zimnicea, Brăila, Galați, etc. in order to negotiate with their partners, to supply with commodities, to sign commercial contracts, to solve disputes, etc. (see: Appendix 2). More often, they sent their agents and/or relied on trustworthy intermediaries. One can speak about complex links between economic agents at a different level. More powerful entrepreneurs relied on middlemen merchants (commissioners). The latter relied in turn on numerous workers – for instance porters to load up or to unload cargoes; forwarding agents (*kiradji*) who carried goods on land, owners and captains (mostly Muslims) of river boats (*kaiks*), etc.²³

There are numerous clues about the presence and business activity of Svishtov entrepreneurs on both shores of the Danube River. It is mirrored in their contracts and circular letters (written in Bulgarian, Greek and even

¹⁹ Ivan Rusev, “The Bulgarian Commercial Companies during the National-Revival Period – An Economic-History of the Town of Sliven”, *Bulgarian Historical Review – Revue bulgare d’histoire*, issue 1 (1993), 56-58, 86.

²⁰ Мариана Друмева, “Свищов като важен фактор за икономическото развитие на българските земи през епохата на Възраждането”, in *Историческата, юридическата и икономическата наука в полза на България. Сборник материали от научна конференция* – с. Равда, 30–31 май 2003. (Свищов: Университетско издателство „Стопанство“, 2004), 104–118; Мариана Друмева, “Свищов – балканска търговска врата през епохата на Възраждането”, *Известия по история* – ЮЗУ, т. 2 (2005), 38–53.

²¹ БАН-НА, ф. 34К, оп. 1, а. е. 829, 830, 916.

²² БИА – НБКМ, ф. 7, оп. 1, а. е. 528, 1-123.

²³ A lot of examples of the mentioned relations at different levels can be found in the numerous preserved letters stored at the mentioned institutions above.

French) left behind. They mentioned documents that shed light on the establishment or suspension of numerous Bulgarian commercial enterprises²⁴.

One can mention the following individuals and commercial enterprises active in the commercial exchange on both shores of the Danube in the 1850s-1870s: Iliya Katranov, Petar Popovich, Hristo Popovich, "Boro Nenovich and company", "Marinov and Yordanov", "L. Kostov and V. Nikolov", brothers Alexander and Dimiter Shishmanovi, "Hr. Ivanov and A.T. Nikolaev", brothers Popovi, Dimiter and his son Grigor Nachovich, Nikola Hr. Popov, Gavril H. Denkov, Atanas N. Karakashev, Miron and Anastas Beshkovi, etc.²⁵

All mentioned merchants and firms were in close and intensive contacts with various counterparts (Bulgarians, Romanians, Greeks) located in the already mentioned urban settlements such as Zimnicea, Alexandria, Bucharest, Brăila, Galați, Craiova, etc. Their role was intermediary. Most of them were in close economic and financial relations with the already mentioned powerful Bulgarian entrepreneurs Evlogi and Hristo Georgievi²⁶ along with other rich and influential Bulgarians such as Konstantin Chokan from the village of Arbanasi (near present-day Veliko Tarnovo), who resided and worked in Bucharest²⁷. They regularly credited and/or solicited in favor of the mentioned merchants and companies from Svishtov.

Being commissioners, Svishtov entrepreneurs fulfilled the orders of the mentioned more powerful and wealthy merchants (Evlogi and Hristo Georgievi) to receive goods from the Bulgarian interior – from Northern and Southern Bulgaria. Their role was to dispatch the items to various clients located in numerous localities across Wallachia and Moldavia (later Romania), or in the Austrian monarchy. In some cases, the commodities received, were

²⁴ See for instance: БИА – НБКМ, ф. 170, II В 5043, p. 2; БИА – НБКМ, ф. 165, II В 5952, 5954, II В 6419, p. 51; БИА – НБКМ, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 699, p. 7; БИА – НБКМ, ф. 7, оп. 1, а. е. 1174, p. 2; ЦДА – София, ф. 253К, оп. 1, а. е. 38, p.1-2, а. е. 51, p. 1-10.

²⁵ Димитър Косев, Владимир Дикулеску, "Виржиния Паскалева, За положението и стопанската дейност на българската емиграция вав Влашко през XIX в. (До Руско-турската война 1877 – 1878 г.)", in Ангелов, Д. (съст.), *Българо – румънски връзки и отношения през вековете. Изследвания*. t. 1 (XIII – XIX в.) (София: БАН, 1965), 306, 309, 312, 330; Василева, *Опис на*; some brief notes about the life and economic activities of the entrepreneurs mentioned in: Николова, *Достойно ест*, 118–126, 140–152, 230–449; Ганчев, *Свищов*, 250–271, 379–401; Друмева, *Търговски*, 110–117; Найденов, *Промияната*, 141–176.

²⁶ Косев, Дикулеску, Паскалева, *За положението*, 306–339; David Cohen, "Des relations commerciales entre les Principautés roumaines et les terres bulgares au cours des années 40 – 70 du XIXe siècle", *Bulgarian Historical Review*, № 3 (1974), 74–76.

²⁷ See for instance: БИА – НБКМ, ф. 7, оп. 1, а. е. 578, p. 198, 112, 113, 178, 180. About Konstantin Chokan see: Светла Атанасова, *Арбанаси, Търговия и търговски връзки през XVII-XIX в.* (Велико Тарново: Фабер), 120.

marketed in Svishtov, Zimnicea, Ploiești, Alexandria, Bucharest, Giurgiu, Brăila, Galați, etc.²⁸

The contacts of the Svishtov entrepreneurs with various “friends” can be illustrated through the following case studies. Brothers A. Krastich's firm, established in April 1858, sent a circular letter (see: Appendix 1) to 164 potential partners in 28 settlements north and south of the Danube River, in Central Europe, and in Istanbul. Dimiter and Petar spread the news about the newly established enterprise to possible commercial partners located in Brăila (Angel Kanovich, the firm “Brothers Georgiev and Tetorian”, Mr. Margeti, G. A. Dimou), Galați, Giurgiu (M. and A. Avramov), Iași, Bucharest, Zimnicea (Panaiotis Margetis), etc., in the Danubian Principalities (Romania)²⁹.

It is evident from the copies of the later letters scribbled in their copy books that Dimiter and Petar Krustich managed to establish close ties with entrepreneurs in the mentioned settlements without Iași. Accidental were the contacts with Brașov. Such rare (accidental) contacts were mostly related to particular services – forwarding of letters and money, providing information about the price of the given good, etc. On the other hand, there are periods in which Krastich were in active communication and mutual business dealings with Angel Repanov and Kircho Georgiev, located in Alexandria. With the assistance of their partners/friends, located in Brăila, Galați, Bucharest, etc., they (i.e. the Krastich brothers) delivered colonial commodities (sugar, different kinds of hardware, panes or large quantities of salt) in Svishtov, where the goods were redistributed to local clients or forwarded to the Bulgarian interior (Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Sevlievo, etc.). Moreover, the Krastich commercial house exported grain, corn, etc. north of the Danube River, mostly in Brăila and Galați³⁰.

The analysis of the data preserved testifies that Krustich were in contact with Bulgarians from their native Svishtov³¹ (for instance intensive and long-

²⁸ Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fond Casa Comercială „Frații Evloghie și Hristo Gheorghiev”, Pachetul I, № 24, 51, 74, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 120, 126, 137, 171, 179, 207, 209; Pachetul II, № 102, 107; Pachetul IV, № 172, 175, 177, 183, 188, 191, 206, 208; Pachetul VI, № 30, 59, 197, 226, 227, 243; Pachetul VII, № 29, 61, 98, 110, 178, 182; Pachetul VIII, № 34, 111, 115, 118, 127, 129, 136, 155, 164, 178; Pachetul IX, № 42, 44, 49, 62, 96, 102, 139, 158, 162, 169, 184, 194, 231, 235, 246; Pachetul X, № 14, 24, 53, 68, 105, 112, 131, 250, 307; Pachetul XI, № 39, 188; Pachetul XII, № 63, 84, 97, 106, 248; Pachetul XIII, № 5, 125, 180, 207, 210, 215. See also: Друмева, *Стопанското*, 48-95 and quoted sources.

²⁹ БИА – НБКМ, ф. 170, II В 5043 – 5046.

³⁰ See numerous documents (mostly out- and in-coming commercial correspondence) in: БИА – НБКМ, ф. 170, II В 3690 – 4924.

³¹ The circular letter from April 1/13, 1858 was sent to 20 commercial companies and individual merchants in the town of Svishtov, and to 4 other enterprises – the local (Svishtov) steamboat agency, the Wallachian salt agency (*Kamarashia Vlashka*), the

lasting communication with Angel Kanovich from Svishtov who resided in Brăila), or with compatriots from other Bulgarian settlements such as Sopot, Lovech, Arbanasi, Ruse, etc. who had settled down in Bucharest (hadji Toncho Hristov, “Ivan H. Lilov and sons”, Kiril Dimitrov Rusovich), Galați (“Nikola Brakalov and son”), Craiova (Petar Denkov), Turnu Magurele, Calafat (Ivan Atanasovitch). Some of their partners were Greeks, while only a handful of persons were Romanians³². It is interesting to note that there were sporadic contacts with Hristo Georgiev in Bucharest³³. It can be explained by the fact that Dimiter and Petar A. Krastich relied on other close “friends” such as the already mentioned Angel Kanovich and the commercial house “Stanco Arnaudov and Son” with two office branches in Gabrovo and in Istanbul³⁴.

Another example of an entrepreneurial web is provided by the prominent entrepreneur from Svishtov – Tsvyatko Radoslavov Kanev (Sahatchiev) (1820–1880). He managed to establish and run several commercial houses that developed their activities in the time frame from the 1840s to the 1870s.³⁵

Initially, in the 1840s, he began to trade with hides, grain and craft items. Later, Tsvyatko Radoslavov’s social/entrepreneurial network extended to various settlements in present-day North and South Bulgaria. From there, Radoslavov exported large quantities of agricultural and handicraft products which he forwarded through Svishtov to the final clients in such localities as Zimnicea, Alexandria, Bucharest, Brăila, Galați, Craiova, Turnu Magurele, Pitești, etc. Tsvyatko and his partners (mostly Grigor Ikonov) even leased a plot of land with wood (near Bucharest) where they prepared/processed charcoal which was sold to local clients. Other quantities of the item mentioned were delivered to Svishtov. Moreover, in 1861, Tsvyatko Radoslavov managed to open an office branch of his firm in Brăila – an economically thriving Romanian port from which huge exports of grain to Western Europe were made³⁶.

There were several locations in Ottoman Bulgaria in which Radoslavov purchased large quantities of grain. He travelled alone or sent his partners/agents (known as *kalausi*) to buy needed quantities of wheat, rye, corn, etc. from the producers (peasants) and/or merchants on a local level in the vast agricultural areas of Svishtov, Nikopol, Sevlievo, Tarnovo, etc. Radoslavov and

Moldavian salt agency (*Kamarashia Moldavska*), the Svishtov customs agency. See: БИА – НБКМ, ф. 170, II В 5043, 2.

³² This is evident from the copies of letters scribbled in their copybooks, see: БИА – НБКМ, ф. 170, II В 5043 – 5046.

³³ БИА – НБКМ, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 699, p. 1-7. Compare with: БИА – НБКМ, ф. 170, II В 5043 – 5046.

³⁴ Naydenov, *The entrepreneurial*, 161-163.

³⁵ See details in: Друмева, *Стопанското*, 117-375.

³⁶ Друмева, *Стопанското*, 117-245.

other entrepreneurs even hired storehouses in Nikopol and Oryahovo to place the purchased goods (grain and/or salt, for instance). Later, the items were sold/redistributed to other clients/partners in various localities in present-day Romania³⁷.

There was intensive communication and business contacts between Ivan(cho) Stoyanov, known as the “Salt Merchant”. Ivan(cho) came from Ruse (*Ruscukë*). However, later during his life, he settled down in Giurgiu and became involved in trade with sea and rocky salt³⁸. He delivered large quantities of this commodity to Tsvaytko in Svishtov³⁹.

Another interesting example is provided by the large-scale entrepreneurial activity of the firm “Peter Belev and Filip Marinov”. Based on its main commercial ledger that encompasses the time frame 1870-1874, one can make several observations. The enterprise traded with grain (corn, wheat, etc.), sumac, livestock, timber, “timber from Bosnia”, pitch, different kinds of salt, etc. Some of the items were distributed from local counterparts (producers/peasants) as it was the case with the grain brought from the villages around Svishtov. The grain was forwarded to clients in Romania as it was the case with Nikola Tsenov who resided in Brăila. He paid 23 381 gurush to “Peter Belev and Filip Marinov” for barley. On the other hand, buffaloes were bought by “Peter Belev and Filip Marinov” in Vratsa (present-day North-Western Bulgaria) and delivered to the slaughterhouses in Svishtov. Moreover, Belev and Marinov supplied one of the local slaughterhouses with salt probably delivered from Romania⁴⁰.

Other primary sources (from the 1850-1860-s) shed light on the commercial and financial contacts between Dimiter T. Karakashev (and commercial house “Karakashev and Son”) and Nikolay Voinescu (probably a Romanian), located in Braşov, and the commercial house “Dimiter Nachovich and Ivan Stanchioglu” in Svishtov. It is evident that the transactions of goods (for instance, large quantities of sumac⁴¹), money and/or letters were not only regular, but also very intensive⁴². In this network, vital was the role of Hristo

³⁷ Numerous examples can be found in: ЦДА – София, ф. 253К, оп. 1, а. е. 7, 8, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 31, 33, 41, 46, 48, 51, 56, 73, 74, 75.

³⁸ Иван Марков, “Иван Стоянов - благодетелят на българската революционна емиграция”, *Алманах за историята на Русе*, Том 8 (2008), 146-169.

³⁹ ЦДА – София, ф. 253К, оп. 1, а. е. 56, р. 1-20.

⁴⁰ *Първо българско читалище “Еленка и Кирил Д. Аврамови”. Исторически архив на Свищов и околната, инв. № 46.*

⁴¹ БИА – НБКМ, ф. 7, оп. 1, а. у. 876, р. 36. A letter from October 8, 1858.

⁴² БИА – НБКМ, ф. 7, оп. 1, а. е. 873, 874, 875, 876; Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, Fond Casa Comercială „Frații Evloghie și Hristo Gheorghiev”, Pachetul VI, № 216; Pachetul VII, № 136, 174, 179, 182; Pachetul VIII, № 5, 109; Pachetul IX, № 40, 67, 97, 111, 116, 143, 146, 170, 182, 215, 233; Pachetul X, № 22, 27, 74, 78, 295, 304, 334, 337, 357; Pachetul XI, № 104, 109, 120, 122, 125, 135, 145, 159; Pachetul XIII, № 91.

Georgiev in Bucharest who frequently received and forwarded deliveries from Ottoman Bulgaria to Transylvania. It can be assumed that in the mid- and second half of the 19th century, Braşov continued to be part of the economic interests of some of the entrepreneurs from the town of Svishtov. However, in some cases, D. Nachovich and I. Stanchioglu preferred to defend the economic interest of their close “friend” Hristo Georgiev. For instance, in August 1856, they bought 26 866 *okka* sumac for Hristo Georgiev instead of supplying, with the commodity mentioned, their counterparts in Pest and Braşov⁴³.

Later, in the 1870s, and especially during the Ottoman – Russian war (1877-1878), Dimiter Nachovich continued his entrepreneurial activity importing goods (rice, sugar, candles, matchboxes, cigarettes, tea, etc.) in Svishtov from Central Europe through his trustworthy intermediary Evlogi Georgiev who was based in Bucharest. On the other hand, Nachovich relied on the commission agents P. Popovich and especially Jakim Popovich in Zimnicea⁴⁴. The mentioned items were distributed in Svishtov to local clients and especially to the Russian military officials and soldiers during the war from 1877-1878.

Along with the already mentioned firms, one can refer to “J. Popoff and Stefanovich” (established in December 1877) with main office in Zimnicea and various counterparts and clients in Svishtov (including aforementioned Tsvytko Radoslavov to whom it delivered large quantities of salt on commission)⁴⁵. Another example is provided by the brothers Ivan(itsa) and Iliya D. Ivanov. They managed to accumulate practical experience (working for the Georgievi brothers and the commercial house of Jacques Brunner in Bucharest, Brăila and Galaţi), financial resources and more importantly – to establish contacts with merchants in various localities along the Lower Danube basin. Later, in the period of the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), Ivan(itsa) and Iliya D. Ivanov discussed that the current times were suitable for profits. The idea was to settle down in the native Svishtov and to initiate economic activity for their own account⁴⁶.

To conclude, numerous merchant entrepreneurs from Svishtov actively participated in the commercial traffic between Ottoman Bulgaria, the Danubian Principalities (Romania) and the Austrian monarchy (Austro-Hungary) during the 19th century. For this purpose, they pragmatically managed to establish and direct different kinds of webs north and south of the Danube River. They were

⁴³ БИА – НБКМ, ф. 7, оп. 1, а. е. 874, п. 3. A letter from August 31, 1856.

⁴⁴ БАН – НА, ф. 34К, оп. 1, а. е. 737.

⁴⁵ ЦДА – София, ф. 253К, оп. 1, а. е. 51, 1-10.

⁴⁶ БАН – НА, ф. 34К, оп. 1, а. е. 829, 830, 916.

in constant contact with people from diverse ethnic origins who had highly varied roles, financial resources and contacts. However, all of them participated in some way in the given network – from producers and carriers to middlemen and wholesalers. The members of the local webs served the needs of the more powerful economic agents and their enterprises that penetrated international markets. In many ways, Svishtov entrepreneurs revolved around more influential merchants such as the Stamu family, Evlogi and Hristo Georgievi, and others. From this point of view, it can be said that the business of all merchants from the period of the Bulgarian National Revival depends on their ability to establish and to expand existing webs, and to attract more people who provide vital assets (commodities, intelligence, financial resources/credit, moral aid and support in all its forms).

Appendix 1

A circular letter about the establishment of the commercial house
“Brothers A. Krastich”, 1/13 April 1858, Svishtov
(Source: БИА – НБКМ, ф. 170, II В 5043, p. 2)



