

# BRANCHO'S SON AND THE WALLACHIANS: A MILANESE PERSPECTIVE ON THE BATTLE OF BAIJA (I)

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To say that Stephen III the Great of Moldavia lost at Baia in December 1467 or only to allude that the battle had been undecided was often viewed as crime of *lèse-majesté* on Romanian soil. Reactions such as these, rather natural for the 1900s, remained 'natural' long afterwards. To even think that king Matthias Corvinus, younger than Stephen III by some five years, had been defeated in that borough in the east was generally deemed as blasphemy in Hungary. It was hard to let go of pivotal concepts from the speech of the Magyar Millennium or the inter-war discourse. There were also exceptions, on both sides of the over-fenced border, exceptions that examined the sources and logic, before they proposed an outcome to the clashes of late 1467.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, it is as difficult as ever to attempt an analysis of the battle of Baia and in general of the events of 1467, even though the reasons for this are slightly different from those of earlier times. The expanding documentary basis for the political evolutions and military conflicts in the second half of 1467, in particular, implies also a multiplication of the meanings and of the connections between those events. Some of them are as easy to accept as the identity of the victor at Baia. In this respect too, modern stands resemble medieval stands. One preliminary explanation for this is that Baia was both the climax for mounting tension and an unexpected clash. These aspects too had to be built into the overwhelmingly political narratives on the battle.<sup>2</sup>

## Late Medieval Political Uses, Presentations and Places of the Battle of Baia

As in most modern analysis, little doubt surrounds the identity of the victor of Baia in the majority of the medieval sources (reports or chronicles) on the clash(es). Stephen and Matthias' contemporaries had usually a very clear idea about who had won. In general, only

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<sup>1</sup> For the foundations of these 'trends,' see for instance Mór Wertner, *Magyar hadjáratok a XV-ik század második felében*, in "Hadtörténelmi Közlemények," XIII, 1912, 1, pp. 200-206; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria lui Ștefan cel Mare*, București, 1966<sup>4</sup>. For a concise approach, see Emanuel C. Antoche, *L'expédition du roi de Hongrie, Mathias Corvin en Moldavie (1467). Qui remporta finalement la bataille de Baia (14/15 décembre 1467)?*, in "Revue internationale d'histoire militaire," LXXIII, 2003, pp. 133-165. See also the reaction of local traditional hard-liners, signed by Manole Neagoe, *Campania din 1467 și lupta de la Baia*, București, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Ioan Ursu, *Ștefan cel Mare și turcii*, București, 1914, pp. 39-46; Ferenc Julier, *Magyar hadvezérek*, Budapest, 1930, pp. 108-110, 125-127, 129-130; Șerban Papacostea, *La politique extérieure de la Moldavie à l'époque d'Etienne le Grand: Points de repère*, in "Revue roumaine d'histoire" (hereafter: RRH), XIV, 1975, 3, pp. 423-440; Pál Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary. 895-1526*, London, 2001, pp. 307-308. Apparently, up to the last two decades, the effort to (scientifically) contextualize the clash of Baia was made only once or twice per generation or every second generation.

a few nuances regarding the actual extent of the victory and its real human and material costs came up in such 'memoirs' and 'reports.' In general, leaving the Italian Peninsula, well versed in propaganda techniques, aside, these nuances are concentrated in Polish sources. Krakow did neither favor Matthias, to say the least, for Hungarian, Bohemian or Moldavian reasons, nor fully support Stephen (officially its vassal), due to the latter's political double-dealings and due to the influential Moldavian boyars in exile in Poland. However, time went by and these nuances became history.<sup>3</sup>

An understandable tendency, medieval, as well as modern, to focus on the clash itself frequently deprived the regional context and the Hungarian and Moldavian domestic backgrounds of the battle of full attention. The fact that Matthias and Stephen alike did not take significant actions, immediately after the end of the combats, against those who were responsible for their domestic situations was easily overlooked. In return, they unleashed their anger upon second rank 'culprits.' At any rate, contemporary politicians were quicker than modern historians to notice this. The ways in which the monarchs, though only one was constantly acknowledged as such, placed guilt and punished provided valuable clues as to the manner(s) in which they actually perceived and assumed the events of 1467. Their propaganda patterns and networks were largely developed and put into action based on their own 'models' of dealing with the second half of 1467.<sup>4</sup>

### 1. The Image of the Battle in the *Christian* Context of the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century

Due especially to the considerable investments made in contradictory stories about it, the battle seems to have mattered considerably on the regional level. With the Porte's apparent exception, quite significant, though, likely, due especially to the 'egocentric' nature of Ottoman chronicles, major powers with Eastern interests got involved in the 'propaganda battle.' As far as it is known, Rome kept its distance. Paul II's lack of anti-Ottoman interest was well-known and his real Hungarian goal was to send Matthias on crusade against Hussite Bohemia. Even so, in the West, he had the advantage of his monarchic rank and his Humanist diplomacy. Stephen was no king, maybe a *duke*, but 'mostly' a palatine of a Hungarian/Polish province. He had no Pannonius or later a Thuróczy or Bonfini. Yet, in

<sup>3</sup> N. Iorga, *La lettre d'Etienne le Grand, prince de Moldavie sur la bataille de Baia (1467)*, in "Revue historique du Sud-Est européen" (hereafter: RHSEE), XI, 1934, 7-9, pp. 349-253; Lajos Elekes, *Mátyás és kora*, Budapest, 1956, pp. 44-49. For the 'collateral' historiographical effects, see Ioan Aurel Pop, *Numele din familia regelui Matia Corvinul: de la izvoarele de epocă la istoriografia contemporană*, in "Studii și materiale de istorie medie" (hereafter: SMIM), XXVI, 2008, pp. 111-128; Radu Lupescu, *Istoriografia română și maghiară referitoare la Ioan de Hunedoara (I)*, ibidem, pp. 139-161.

<sup>4</sup> For these evolutions: Wilhelm Fraknoi, *Mathias Corvinus, König von Ungarn 1458-1490*, Freiburg in Breisgau, 1892, pp. 119-128; Vasile Pârvan, *Relațiile lui Ștefan cel Mare cu Ungaria*, in "Convorbiri literare," XXXIX, 1905, pp. 869-927; 1009-1080; Ioan Lupaș, *Chronicon Dubnicense despre Ștefan cel Mare*, in "Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice" (hereafter: AARMSI), 3<sup>rd</sup> series, X, 1928-1929, pp. 353-364; Péter E. Kovács, *Matia Corvino*, Cosenza, 2000, pp. 111, 124; I.-A. Pop, *Relations between Transylvania and Stephen the Great*, in vol. *Between Worlds*, vol. I *Stephen the Great, Matthias Corvinus and Their Time*, ed. by László Koszta, Ovidiu Mureșan, Al. Simon, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, pp. 126-129.

return, from Krakow out, Długosz largely took up this position for him. Poland and Bohemia were interested to promote Matthias' defeat (more than Stephen's victory).<sup>5</sup>

In 1467, 'Stephen's advocates' however could not rely on the Habsburgs, Matthias' allies at the time. Baia had also ruined Frederick III of Habsburg's (anti-Ottoman) eastern plans. In the long run, this did not seem to matter that much for a sovereign, usually, reluctant to (anti-Ottoman) crusading. Soon (1469-1470), the lingering conflict between Frederick III and Matthias broke out again. The Habsburgs thus turned to and developed the 'version' of Stephen III's victory over the *imposter* Matthias. In mid spring 1490, after Matthias' death, Frederick's son, Maximilian I obtained (temporarily) Stephen's support for the Hungarian crown. 'Hence,' Stephen became the monarch who had beaten Matthias Corvinus *and* sultan Mehmed II *in the same day*. By this (Burgundian) image, Stephen seemed to have broken for good Matthias Western 'deadlock.' Continental politics played in Stephen's favor too. After 1477, Burgundy had become Habsburg.<sup>6</sup>

The same Stephen had been *heavily defeated* by Matthias. This version was present predominantly in the Italian Peninsula and Charles the Bold's (†1477) Burgundy. From there it came to France, where court chronicler and diplomat Philippe de Commines, author of a more than positive portrait of Matthias, melted it into the king's *submission of Wallachia* (where, as Commines too wrote, Matthias' roots lay). This was largely the result of French-Hungarian anti-Habsburg and anti-Ottoman, eventually unsuccessful, contacts of the late 1470s and mid 1480s. For Habsburg reasons, Burgundy and France, like Bavaria, but not simultaneously, were interested in Matthias' victory, in particular after his break with Frederick III. The same break had returned the king into the favor of Frederick's Austrian opposition. (Brutally) Abandoned by Matthias after his deal of 1463 with Frederick III, the opposition had taken up Stephen III's 'version.' The tide then turned.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, vol. III 1392-1500, ed. by Antol Lewicki, Cracoviae, 1894, no. 224, p. 241; *Acta et epistolae relationum Transylvaniae Hungariaeque cum Moldavia et Valachia*, ed. by Endre Veress, vol. I 1468-1540, Budapest, 1914, no. 1, pp. 1-2; *Janus Pannonius összes munkái*, ed. by Sándor V. Kovács, Budapest, 1987, no. 375, p. 200; nos. 438-440, pp. 230-232; Vasile Bogrea, *Un umanist ungar despre noi*, in "Revista istorică," VI, 1920, 7-9, pp. 181-182; *Joannis Dlugosii Senioris Canonici Cracoviensis Opera omnia*, ed. by Alexandr Przewdziecki, vol. XIV *Historiae Poloniae libri XII*, Cracoviae, 1887, pp. 469, 495-497, 500; Antonio de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, ed. by József Fögel, László Juhász and Béla Iványi, vol. IV, Lipsiae, 1941 [Budapest, 1944], pp. 15-23.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Mollinet, *Chronique*, ed. by Georges Doutrepont, Omer Jodogne, vol. II 1488-1506, Bruxelles, 1935, pp. 199-200; Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Lupta de la Baia după izvoare ungurești*, in "Revista istorică," V, 1919, 11-12, pp. 216-224; P.P. Panaitescu, *Bătălia de Baia (1467) în izvoare venețiene*, ibidem, VIII, 1922, 3-4, pp. 47-50; I.-A. Pop, *Valoarea mărturiilor documentare despre expediția întreprinsă de regele Matei Corvin la 1467 în Moldova*, in "Revista de istorie," XXXV, 1981, 1, pp. 131-139. See also Adrian Andrei Rusu, *O sursă maghiară despre lupta de la Baia*, in "Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie A.D. Xenopol" (hereafter: AIIAI), XXIII<sup>2</sup>, 1986, pp. 713-716; for the original document: Magyar Országos Levéltár (hereafter: MOL), Diplomatikai Levéltár (hereafter: DL) 59550, 27 December 1467.

<sup>7</sup> For an overview: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codices, Cod. 7596, ff. 1<sup>r</sup>-8<sup>v</sup>, 1480-1485; Philippe de Commines, *Mémoires*, ed. by Joseph Calmette, vol. I 1464-1473, Paris, 1924, pp. 339-340; vol. II 1474-1483, 1925, pp. 335, 337-338; N. Iorga, *Încă ceva despre Vlad Țepeș și Ștefan cel Mare*, in "Convorbiri literare," XXXVIII, 1904, 4, pp. 382-383 (*Chronicon Mellicense*); George Ciorănescu, *La bataille de Baia*, in "Ungarn Jahrbuch: Zeitschrift für die Kunde Ungarns und verwandte Gebiet," IX, 1978, pp. 15-29; Al. Simon, *Ștefan cel Mare și Matia Corvin. O coexistență medievală*, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, pp. 204-210. Three decades later, in 1497, during another 'strange' crusader year, Stephen III's Moldavia was to 'save' once more Venice.

Still, the conflicting versions seldom added any 'novelties' to the 'pattern' laid out by Matthias' and Stephen's own letters. Something seemed to be hidden. Either nobody had won, or the victor and the loser had equally great secrets. Venice's stance stands out, as an omen for the decade(s) to come too. For Matthias' *strange ally* (since 1463), his defeat at Baia had been the *salvation of the Republic*. The origins of this statement did not lay in Moldavia. The ability of Venetian state apparatus to filter information was basically unrivaled. Doubts on Matthias' story were made public. Venice had no intention to accept disinformation in a context complicated, regardless of the 'designated' victor, by *Wallachian* and *Transylvanian* issues too. Bonfini (later) accused one of Transylvania's voivodes, John Szentgyörgy-Bozyn, that he had proclaimed himself king of Transylvania. This sounded rather false. Transylvania was only a province, who had never had a crown of its own (from Rome).<sup>8</sup>

## 2. The Place of Baia in the Local Moldavian and Hungarian Monarchical Framework

In Hungarian and Moldavian memory Baia 1467 recalled Hindău 1395. The scenario was almost identical. Outside the war season, Sigismund of Luxemburg had entered Moldavia to dethrone Stephen I (February-March 1395), the unwanted successor of Roman I, Sigismund's ally on the anti-Ottoman level too (1393-1394). The king crossed the Oituz pass and headed for Suceava. Stephen I had tried to halt him by talks. Stephen III did the same in 1467 with Matthias. Sigismund had accepted. Matthias did not. Sigismund had been attacked by surprise and forced to retreat, but, back in Braşov, he had announced that Moldavia was his vassal again. It was not completely false. On the one hand, German sources recorded Stephen I and 1395 as the ruler and year that marked Moldavia's fall under Ottoman suzerainty. On the other hand, by 1398, Stephen I had received estates in Transylvania. In 1467 Stephen III should have become the second (known) Moldavian with estates in the kingdom.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Iván Nagy, Albert B. Nyáry, *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek. Mátyás király korából 1458-1490*, vol. II [1466-1480], Budapest, 1877, no. 46, pp. 76-77 (hereafter: MDE); Viaceslav Makušev, *Monumenta Historica Slavorum Meridionalium vicinorumque populorum e tabulariis et bibliothecis italicis deprompta*, vol. I-2 *Genua, Mantua, Mediolanum, Panormus et Taurinum, Belgradi*, 1882, no. 4, p. 34; W. Fraknoi, *Mátyás király levelei. Külügyi Osztály*, vol. I *1458-1479*, Budapest, 1893, no. 149, pp. 211-212 (hereafter: MKL); P.P. Panătescu, *Ştefan cel Mare în lumina cronicarilor contemporani din țările vecine*, in "Studii și cercetări științifice. Istorie," XI, 1960, 2, pp. 208-210; András Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, Budapest, 2008, pp. 82-83. In relation also to Bonfini's charge (*Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, vol. IV, p. 15), it is noteworthy that Matthias' only (known) action against Szentgyörgy after the rebellion was to deprive him of his Transylvanian office.

<sup>9</sup> *Documenta Romaniae Historica* (hereafter: DRH), D *Relațiile dintre Țările Române*, vol. I *1222-1456*, ed. by Ștefan Pascu, Constantin Cihodaru, Konrad Gündisch, Damaschin Mioc, Viorica Pervain, București, 1977, no. 102, p. 169; Ioannes Leunclavius, *Annales Sultanorum Othmanidarum a Turcis sua lingua scripti*, Francofurti, 1588, p. 312; Thomas Ebendorfer, *Chronica regum Romanorum*, ed. by Harald Zimmermann, vol. I, Hannover, 2003, p. 552; Radu Manolescu, *Campania lui Sigismund de Luxemburg în Moldova (1395)*, in "Analele Universității București. Seria Istorie," XV, 1965, pp. 65-72; Al. Simon, *Ştefan cel Mare și Matia Corvin*, pp. 93-94.

Thuróczy devoted much space to the campaign of 1395. Although Bonfini's predecessor did not lose, throughout his chronicle, any opportunity to 'lower' Sigismund in respect to Matthias, in terms of 1395, he completely took Sigismund's side. Stephen III's men did the same in relation to Stephen I. On the latter's new tombstone, carved during the tense renegotiations (1480) of the Hungarian-Moldavian treaty of 1475, Stephen III ordered the insertion of a unique specification among medieval Moldavian tombstones. Stephen I was <the one> *who had defeated the Hungarians at Hindău*.

Previously, nobody in Poland, as in 1467, Moldavia's suzerain, or Moldavia had claimed Stephen I's victory. Stephen III was the first one. The specification on the tombstone has the value of a thousand pages, especially if we consider that not even the written Hungarian opposition to Matthias recorded Baia as the king's defeat. Even the Chronicle of Dubnic accepted *tale quale* the official story.<sup>10</sup>

Documents, inscriptions or medieval and early modern traditions do not record any reward or church granted or built by Stephen in Baia's name. 'At home,' he did not celebrate his *victory*, except for a few words in his official chronicle. In Hungary, one used to say: 'we were at Baia'; in Moldavia, one did not. Though, since around 1472, the official discourse on Baia had been almost neutral, in 1479 the king still rewarded the warriors of 1467. Usually, these survivors did not pursue great careers afterwards, unless they already belonged to the elite. The fate of Stephen's 'helpers' of 1467 or of later (in 1486, at Șcheia, he spent a day amongst the corpses) was similar. In this respect, the decision of Casimir IV, who, unlike Długosz, did not fully trust Stephen's report on Baia, to order a (secret) investigation on the battle was very natural. The investigation revealed aspects which Stephen had tried to conceal. In return, disinformation 'offered' by Stephen on Matthias was fully accepted.<sup>11</sup>

The official, as well as 'undisclosed,' (forms of) need to take action against the former adversaries after the battle could also, 'technically,' provide clues as to the real identity of the victor of Baia. Matthias' desire to avenge his wounds was no real secret. Even the chronicler of Breslau, Peter Eschenloer, wrote that, when Frederick III *called him* to his Bohemian aid, in January 1468, Matthias was preparing a campaign against the *Wallachians* who had inflicted much damage to him (but, in all likelihood, he was not going

<sup>10</sup> *Acta et epistolae*, ed. by Endre Veress, vol. I, no. 32, p. 34, *Chronica Hungarorum impressa Budae 1473 typis similibus reimpressa*, Budapestini, 1900, f. 41r; *Chronicon Dubnicense cum codicibus Sambuci Acephalo et Vaticano, chronicisque Vindobonensi Picto et Budensi accurate collatum*, ed. by M. Florián, Quinque-Ecclesiis, 1884, p. 195; Johannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum*, vol. I *Textus*, ed. by Erzsébet Galántai, Gyula Kristó, Budapest, 1985, pp. 209-210, 287-288; A. de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, vol. IV, p. 124; *Repertoriul monumentelor și obiectelor de artă din timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare*, ed. by Mihai Berza, București, 1958, no. 59, p. 255 (1480).

<sup>11</sup> Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien (hereafter: HHStA), Erdödy Archiv, no. 701, L. 98, fasc. 8, no. 9, 28 April 1468; MOL, DL 16167, 18257, 18 August 1479, 16853/1-2, 17 May 1469, 36393, 23 March 1468; *A Zichy és vasonkeői gróf Zichy család idősb ágának okmánytára*, vol. XI 1469-1490, ed. by Ernő Kammerer, Ferenc Dóry, Budapest, 1915, no. 67, p. 123 (1472); Ș. Papacostea, *Un episode de la rivalité polono-hongroise au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle: l'expédition de Matia Corvin en Moldavie (1467) à la lumière d'une nouvelle source*, in RRH, VIII, 1969, 6, pp. 967-979; *Letopisețul anonim al Țării Moldovei, Cronica moldo-germană*, in vol. *Cronicile slavo-române din secolele XV-XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan*, ed. by P.P. Panaitescu, București, 1958, pp. 16, 29, 36; *Repertoriul monumentelor*, ed. by Mihai Berza, *passim* (tradition 'does not' mean documentary evidence).

to take care personally of the retaliation action). This would place Matthias in the corner of the loser. Yet, if Matthias' men, as far as it is known, did not take any action after the battle and the Ottoman-Hungarian truce of early spring 1468, Stephen and his men burnt, over the next two years, numerous Wallachian (in Maramureş) and Szekler settlements east of Moldavia. This would mean that there were two losers following Baia, which 'is' a rarity.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. South-East and East-Central European Comparative Perspectives on 1467

At Christendom's border, both widening (for Bohemia was to become once more a crusader stage) and shrinking (because none of the Christian losses suffered over the last 10-15 years, from Constantinople and the Morea to Albania and Bosnia, had been truly compensated), the 'main events' of 1467 were neither in Transylvania nor in Moldavia. As much as modern sensibilities urge for such a status, as much as medieval sources (or their interpretation) shape an individual and even outstanding image for the conflicts on both sides of Hungary's eastern border, the 'great things' of 1467 occurred in Bohemia and Albania. Nonetheless, the 'link' between all these events was established via the combats and political attempts north of the Lower Danube. Due to Matthias Corvinus' 'multiple crusader commitments,' several contemporaries (but much less modern scholars) noticed the aspect.<sup>13</sup>

In mid April 1467, a few days after the long-awaited return of his long-term itinerant European embassy (winter 1465/1466 – spring 1467), George Podiebrad summoned the representatives of all Catholic powers and power structures, present in Prague. He presented them with an official protest and appeal against Paul II's excommunication. His act basically and legally suspended the enforcement of the excommunication and, at the same time, made a new Bohemian war inevitable.

All the great designs and diplomatic messages, drafted by Podiebrad and his entourage in the name of the anti-Ottoman fight of all Christians and with the aim of breaking the papal monopoly on crusader combat against the Turk as an instrument of ideal *continental* unity, turned against that very treasured concept of a fight. Following Rome's

<sup>12</sup> I. Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. II [1493-1503, 1458-1503], București, 1913, nos. 133-139, pp. 298-311; Peter Eschenloer, *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau*, ed. by Gunhild Roth, 2 vols., New York-München-Berlin, 2003, pp. 707-708; *Letopisețul anonim*, p. 16; Ileana Căzan, *Matia Corvin, asigurarea frontierei dunărene și armistițiul turco-ungar din 1468*, in "Revista istorică," n.s., III, 1992, 7-8, pp. 769-782; Nicolae Edroiu, *An Aspect of the Political and Private Relations between Matthias Corvinus and Stephen the Great: The Transylvanian Estates of the Rulers of Moldavia*, in vol. *Between Worlds*, vol. I, ed. by László Koszta, Ovidiu Mureșan, Al. Simon, pp. 151-153.

<sup>13</sup> *Codice Aragonese o sia lettere regie, ordinamenti ed altri atti governativi de' sovrani aragonesi in Napoli riguardanti l'amministrazione interna del reame e le relazioni all'estero*, ed. by Francesco Thrinchera, vol. I [1467-1468], Napoli, 1866, no. 18, p. 28; no. 100, p. 139; no. 271, p. 374; Stavri N. Naci, *À propos de quelques truchements concernant les rapports de la papauté avec Skanderbeg durant la lutte albano-turque (1443-1468)*, in "Studia Albanica," V, 1968, pp. 83-85; Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571*, vol. II *The Fifteenth Century*, Philadelphia, 1978, pp. 235-244, 250-255; Mágda Jászay, *Contrastes et diplomatie dans les rapports de Matthias I<sup>er</sup> Corvin et la République de Venise*, in "Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae," XXXV, 1989, 1-4, pp. 15-16.

and Vienna's footsteps, Matthias too rapidly abandoned Mehmed II and moved against Podiebrad. He was not George's ideal adversary.<sup>14</sup>

If Podiebrad's actions still bear also a (quite false) air of desperation, Mehmed II's endeavors of 1467 are (almost completely) deprived of such an appearance, though they had their fair share of risks. Mehmed II wanted to settle the 'Skanderbeg matter' once and for all. He did so very methodically. He spared neither nature, nor money, in order to assure the most favorable, in terms of arms, men and arrangements, Albanian and non-Albanian frame for his campaign. While Skanderbeg's resistance was crushed and Hunyadi's (main) 'successor' as anti-Ottoman symbol was forced to leave his devastated lands, his main regional ally was compelled to move from south to north and back, and to the east, in order to face his Hungarian proper, Bohemian, Transylvanian and Ottoman enemies. By the end of summer 1467, Albania was in ruins, while king Matthias' crisis deepened.<sup>15</sup>

It is still difficult to tell on what Podiebrad and Mehmed relied, on the regional level, when they made their moves of 1467. The former could not rely only on the formal aid of distant Paris, on the difficulties and changes of pace marking Frederick III's reign or on the Polish support, weakened by the cost of Krakow's recently concluded war with the Teutonic Knights (1466). Venice's need for peace and Skanderbeg's Italian problems were more than useful for Mehmed's Albanian plan but not sufficient. He and Podiebrad had one problem in common: Matthias. He had promised and was ready to aid Skanderbeg (first) and (then) fight Podiebrad. In between, he had his own mine field. Besides, since the late 1430s, a strong Hussite presence existed in Transylvania and Moldavia, determining violent, at least in writing, papal reactions. After 1453, the strength of Polish-Ottoman ties had increased. In the end, the Porte remained Suceava's most influential suzerain.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Malcolm Letts, *The Travels of Leo of Rozmitál through Germany, Flanders, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy 1465-1467*, Cambridge, 1957; *The Universal Peace Organization of King George of Bohemia. A Fifteenth Century Plan for World Peace*, ed. by Václav Venecek, Jirí Kejř, Prague, 1966; *De la Bohême jusqu'à Compostelle: aux sources de l'idée d'union européenne. Projet du roi Georges de Podebrady (1464). Récit du voyage en Europe du seigneur Léon de Rozmitál (1465-1467)*, ed. by Denis Péricard-Méa, Biarritz, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Franz Babinger, *Die Gründung von Elbasan*, in Idem, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte Südosteuropas und der Levante*, vol. II, München, 1962, pp. 201-210; Halil Inalcik, *Les régions de Kruje et de la Dibra autour de 1467*, in vol. *Deuxième conférence des études albanologiques à l'occasion du 5<sup>e</sup> centenaire de la mort de Georges Kastriote Skanderbeg*, vol. II, Tirana, 1970, pp. 221-237; Frederick G. Heymann, *George of Bohemia, King of Heretics*, Princeton, 1965, pp. 419-424; Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Venezia e la sua Albania. Percezioni reciproche di dominanti e dominati nel Quattrocento*, in vol. *Venezia, l'altro e l'altrove*, ed. by Susanne Winter, Roma, 2006, pp. 39-44; Idem, *Skanderbeg. Der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan*, Regensburg, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Mihail Dan, *Cehi, slovaci și români în veacurile XIII-XVI*, Sibiu, 1944, pp. 190-197; *Rozbízor krytyczny Annalium Poloniae Jana Długosza*, ed. by Jan Dąbrowski, Krystyna Pieradzka, vol. II 1445-1480, Krakow, 1965, pp. 229-230, 233; Matei Cazacu, *L'impact ottoman sur les pays roumains et ses incidences monétaires (1452-1504)*, in *RRH*, XII, 1973, 1, pp. 163-166; Robin Baker, *The Hungarian-Speaking Hussites of Moldavia and Two English Episodes in Their History*, in "Central Europe," IV, 2006, 1, pp. 3-24. For Matthias' initial 'partner' place (1464), alongside Casimir, in Podiebrad's 'anti-Ottoman' designs, see also N. Iorga, *Un auteur de projets de croisades: Antonio Marini*, in vol. *Études d'histoire du Moyen Âge dédiées à Gabriel Monod*, Paris, 1896, pp. 445-457.

## I. Hungary and Moldavia in the Regional Political Context of the 1460s

About a week after Matthias returned to Transylvania prior to Christmas 1467, Stephen III wrote to Casimir IV that Matthias would most likely not reach his home alive. It was not for the first time that Matthias' survival was seriously doubted. After 1456-1457 and even after he had rolled from prison to the throne as Pius II put it, few had thought he was going to last for more than a couple of months, at best years. On the other hand, in Moldavia, Stephen's predecessors had seldom ruled for more than a few years. Both in Hungary and east, as well as south of the realm, the crusade and Venice's eastern interests rendered any political option difficult. Anxious to conclude peace with Mehmed II, just a few years after the outbreak of the Venetian-Ottoman war in 1463, Venice wanted Matthias to join it in this attempted peace with the sultan. Nonetheless, the Republic's money, promises and threats had little effect upon King Matthias Corvinus' stance.<sup>17</sup>

After Pius II's death in Ancona at the end of summer 1464, the attitude of the papacy towards the crusade had significantly changed. The new pope, the Venetian who despised his native city, which in return hardly contained its contempt towards him, Paul II had but one crusader priority and that was Hussite Bohemia. Except for the (official) group of the so-called *cardinali della crociata*, led by the main figures of anti-Ottoman planning in the mid 1450s, such as Bessarion (†1472) and Juan Carvajal (†1469), there were rather few high-ranking advocates of the anti-Ottoman crusade left in Rome. The king of Bohemia George Podiebrad, Matthias' former father-in-law, appeared to be more of a threat than Mehmed II himself. As much as they were opposed to basically every anti-Ottoman plan that would have (almost inevitably) jeopardized their regional interests, Vienna, in part, and especially Krakow could not endorse Podiebrad's dethronement.<sup>18</sup>

### 1. The Political Interests of Vienna, Venice and Krakow

Throughout Matthias Corvinus' first 5-6 years of rule, Frederick III of Habsburg had blocked Pius II's crusader efforts (1459-1464) and supported the attempts to overthrow Matthias (1458/1459-1462/1463). As Pius II, though formerly in the service of the Habsburgs, was forced, due to crusader necessities, to promote a compromise between the two and as Matthias too failed to 'overthrow' Frederick III in his Austrian lands with aid from

<sup>17</sup> Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. II/2 1451-1510, ed. by Nicolae Densușianu, București, 1891, no. 171, p. 188; vol. XV/1 *Acte și scrisori din arhivele orașelor ardelene Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu, 1358-1600*, ed. by N. Iorga, București, 1911, no. 114, pp. 65-66; Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini, *Historia rerum Friderici III imperatoris*, Vindobonae, 1762, p. 475; P.P. Panaitescu, *Contribuții la istoria lui Ștefan cel Mare*, in AARMSI, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, XV, 1933-1934, pp. 63-66; Robert S. Lopez, *Il principio della guerra Veneto-Turca nel 1463*, in "Archivio Veneto," LXIV, 1934, pp. 45-131; L. Elekes, *Hunyadi*, Budapest, 1952, pp. 402-404.

<sup>18</sup> Giuseppe Valentini, *La sospensione della crociata nei primi anni di Paolo II (1464-1468). Dai documenti d'archivio di Venezia*, in "Archivium Historiae Pontificiae," XIV, 1976, pp. 71-101; Iulian-Mihai Damian, *La Depositeria della Crociata (1463-1490) e i sussidi dei pontifici romani a Mattia Corvino*, in "Annuario del Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica," VIII, 2006, pp. 135-152; L. Elekes, *Nagy István moldvai vajda politikája és Mátyás király*, Budapest, 1937, pp. 10-12, 21-25, Idem, *Mátyás és kora*, pp. 131-132.



the local opposition, Frederic III and Matthias had to come to terms. The deal, mediated by the future Latin patriarch of Constantinople, Girolamo Lando, assured Matthias the return of the Holy Crown of Hungary at a very high political and financial price. Adopted by Frederick as his son, he remained *de facto* king of Hungary, but had to acknowledge Frederick as *de iure* (co-) king of the realm (1463-1464). Nonetheless, a new East-Central European power axis seemed to be in the making following these treaties.<sup>19</sup>

In mid 1466, Frederick III and Matthias began preparing an anti-Ottoman campaign. The plan recalled the 'crusader entente' between the emperor and John Hunyadi of the mid 1450s, born out of almost the same 'domestic' predicaments. In 1466, Frederick and Matthias had three major reasons to collaborate. The first one was Podiebrad. Frederick had recently abandoned him. Like Rome, Frederick promised the Bohemian crown to Matthias if he helped him against Podiebrad.

The other two reasons were the successions in the Holy Roman Empire and in the Hungarian realm. With a favorable king on the Bohemian throne, Frederick would have lifted many of the obstacles that lay in front of his very young son's (Maximilian) succession as king of the Romans. By his Bohemian action, Matthias could hope to receive the hand of one of Frederick's daughters in marriage (the same reasons eventually led to the break between king Matthias and Frederick III in early 1470).<sup>20</sup>

The anti-Ottoman campaign was intended to assure Matthias and Frederick the space needed to operate in the north. From late 1466 on, much to Venice's concern, the rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia too had been involved in the project, like Skanderbeg, who virtually paid with his life for the failure of this plan. In the summer of 1467, unrests irrupted in the eastern part of the Hungarian kingdom. Ottoman troops were attacking the south-western borders of the realm. Frederick III tried to react. War preparations were accelerated and he even convinced the Reichstag to provide money and troops for the campaign

<sup>19</sup> Státního Ústředního archivu v Praze, Archiv České Koruny, no. 149, 17 June 1462; Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Armarium, XXXIX-9, ff. 99<sup>v</sup>-100<sup>v</sup>, 18, 24 January 1460; Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Könyvtár (hereafter: ELTEK), Kézirattár, Kaprinai, A, XV, no. 193, p. 144, winter 1461-1462 [late medieval copy: Esztergomi Főszékesegyházi Könyvtár, Mss. II-393, p. 128; copy: MOL, Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény (hereafter: DF) 290345]; MOL, DL 15371, 19 June 1459; Th. Ebendorfer, *Chronica regum Romanorum*, vol. II, pp. 860-865; P. Eschenloer, *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau*, vol. I, pp. 414-415; G. Valentini, *La Crociata di Pio II dalla documentazione veneta d'archivio*, in "Archivum Historiae Pontificiae," XIII, 1975, pp. 249-282; Karl Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus, Kaiser Friedrich III und das Reich. Zum Hunyadisch-Habsburgischen Gegensatz im Donauraum*, München, 1989<sup>2</sup>, pp. 27-33, 43-45.

<sup>20</sup> N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. IV 1453-1476, Bucarest, 1915, no. 136, p. 205; no. 146, p. 242; no. 162, p. 250; no. 176, p. 267; *Regesten Kaiser Friedrich III. (1440-1493). Nach Archiven und Bibliotheken geordnet*, ed. by Heinrich Koller, Paul Joachim Heinig, vol. XV *Die Urkunden und Briefe aus den Beständen "Reichstadt" und "Hochstift" Regensburg des Bayerischen Hauptstaatsarchivs in München sowie aus den Regensburger Archiven un Bibliotheken*, ed. by Franz Fuchs, Karl Friedrich Krieger, Köln-Wien-Graz, 2002, no. 196, p. 156; no. 212, p. 164. It is interesting that, initially, according to the version of the plan approved by the Reichstag of Nuremberg in November 1466, Matthias was to participate with only 5,000 soldiers (the empire contributed 20,000), to be placed, like the entire army, under the command of Ulrich von Graveneck, who was to use Belgrade and Severin as base camps.

(August-November 1467). It was too late however. The situation had evolved in the favor of Istanbul, Venice and Krakow. The latter in particular was on very good terms with both Mehmed II and Podiebrad. After Poland's recent victory in the war with the Teutonic Knights (1454-1466), its old hostility towards Rome and the crusade had increased.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, alongside his mistrust towards Stephen III, Casimir IV declared in late fall 1467 that he did not believe that Matthias was attacking the Moldavian ruler. The Polish king had similar attitudes towards Suceava during the Ottoman campaigns in Moldavia in 1486, 1484 or 1485.

Furthermore, in 1467, the king, attached, like most of the local elite, to conciliarist values, supported, together with the Moldavian metropolitan, Theoctist I, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, under Ottoman control, to re-establish its authority over the Greek rite Christians in Poland-Lithuania. After Baia, he received Stephen's promise that he would pay him homage in person. Venice got even less from Matthias, who in March 1468 concluded his own truce with Mehmed II. Venice was forced to continue the war with the Porte, a war which cost it at least 60 percent of its yearly budget.<sup>22</sup>

## 2. Political and Monarchical Evolutions in Buda and Suceava throughout the 1450s and 1460s

Under Matthias' rule, the missionary conduct of the Hungarian realm, viewed by Rome as its apostolic extension, was rapidly declining. The costs of anti-Ottoman warfare were immense and Ottoman military superiority almost unquestionable. The reduced royal budget and the diminished estates of the crown placed Matthias in a highly disadvantageous position. Without his father's inheritance, his situation would have been disastrous.

Throughout 32 years of rule, he was able to increase the royal estates from 10 to 12 percent of the total area of the realm. However, after 1467, he tripled his revenues. But the time of the Black Army from the last years of his reign had not come yet. Besides, the

<sup>21</sup> Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze estere, Venezia, cart. 353, fasc. 9, nn, 17 September; HHStA, Mainzer Erzkanzlerarchiv, Reichstagakten, 1a, fasc. 2, ff. 53<sup>r</sup>-57<sup>v</sup>, 3 December 1466 – 15 January 1467, 97<sup>r</sup>-100<sup>r</sup>, 10-15 June 1467; MDE, vol. II, no. 23, p. 41; Jovan Radonić, *Thyrath Kastriot Skenderbeg i Arbanija y XV beky (istoriska iratha)*, Beograd, 1942, nos. 357-358, pp. 198-199, N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits*, vol. IV, nos. 164-179, pp. 251-270; *Joannis Dlugosii ... Opera omnia*, ed. by Alexandr Przedziecki, vol. XIV, pp. 1-2, 79. At first, Venice was not left out from the Habsburg-Hunyadi project of 1466, but its part in the plan (which however had no express major military target in the preserved versions) was restricted to the obligation not to conclude a separate peace with the Porte.

<sup>22</sup> *Codex epistolaris sæculi decimi quinti*, vol. I 1384-1492, ed. by August Sokolowski, Józef Szujski, Krakow, 1876, no. 224, p. 242; vol. III, no. 222, p. 243; no. 309, p. 330; I. Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. II, no. 133, p. 298; *Annali veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500 del Senatore Domenico Malipiero ordinati e abbreviati dal senatore Francesco Longo*, ed. by Agostino Sagredo, in "Archivio Storico Italiano," 1843, pp. 35-37; *Joannis Dlugosii ... Opera omnia*, ed. by Alexandr Przedziecki, vol. XIV, pp. 496-497, 510, 530; Dan Ioan Mureșan, *Bizanț fără Bizanț? Un bilanț*, in SMIM, XXVI, 2008, pp. 295-296.

rulings of the Diet of 1458 compelled him to wage war on his own expenses and just with his royal troops, unless Hungary itself was threatened. One of his first measures after the events of 1467 was to legislate on the ransoming of the nobility's military obligations.<sup>23</sup>

In 1467, Matthias had only three years of legitimate rule behind him. His coronation had taken place in 1464. His Bosnian anti-Ottoman campaigns had consolidated his position (1463-1464). The strengthening of his domestic power could have been speeded up. The same was true nonetheless also for local resistance to 'authoritarian tendencies.' In this respect, the growing opposition could rely also on the old Arpadian *ius resistendi*, reconfirmed by Matthias. Still, overthrowing a king was more difficult than dethroning a Wallachian ruler. But, it was not impossible. In comparison, Stephen's situation was at least as difficult. Namely in order to survive, given the often changing faces of Hunyadi's politics, and in order to have a chance of obtaining the throne of Suceava, where the position of the pro-Ottoman party had grown stronger, he had abandoned the Hunyadi camp and did not return to it not even after Matthias' enthronement. Things did not change over the next years.<sup>24</sup>

Stephen's attitude towards Matthias, already modified by the failed Moldavian-Ottoman attack on Chilia (1462), started to change around mid 1464. It had become clear that Matthias' chances of restoring Vlad III to the Wallachian throne were minimal. After the Hungarian garrison was expelled by the end of that year from Chilia, transforming the old Hungarian-Wallachian *condominium* over the port into an Ottoman-Wallachian *condominium*, Buda and Suceava, who wanted to recover Chilia ever since Peter II had entrusted it to John Hunyadi, had to draw closer. In February 1465, Stephen took the port. By the offices of his loyal Wallachian ruler, Radu III, Mehmed immediately offered peace to Matthias. Matthias refused. Mehmed wanted to attack Stephen. Eventually gifts and a 50 percent increase of the tribute calmed matters down. Mehmed was not yet willing to open up a new war front north of the Danube, while Stephen still lacked the means to do more.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> S. Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, vol. IV, Venezia, 1973<sup>3</sup>, Appendix, no. 12, pp. 398-399; *Decreta Regni Hungariae. Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns*, vol. II 1458-1490, ed. by Ferenc Döry, György Bónis, Géza Erszegi, Zsuzsa Teke, Vera Bácskai, Budapest, 1989, 1458 (24 January), art. 2, p. 84; (8 June), art. 2, p. 91; 1468, art. 3, p. 173; MDE, vol. II, no. 31, p. 52; nos. 47-48, pp. 80-81; nos. 53-54, pp. 87-88; no. 60, p. 95; A. Kubinyi, *Die Staatsorganisation der Matthiaszeit*, in Idem, *Matthias Corvinus: die Regierung eines Königreichs in Ostmitteleuropa (1458-1490)*, Herne, 1999, pp. 5-96. The need for foreign aid in order to successfully overthrow the king had been made particularly clear by the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg.

<sup>24</sup> K. Nehring, *Quellen zur ungarischen Außenpolitik in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts (I)*, in "Levélári Közlemények," XLVII, 1, 1976, nos. 5-8, pp. 88-89; MDE, vol. I, 1876, no. 105, p. 168; nos. 204-215, pp. 331-352; MKL, vol. I, no. 62, p. 83; *Joannis Dlugosii ... Opera omnia*, ed. by Alexandr Przewdziecki, vol. XIV, pp. 377-380, 409-410; Ş. Papacostea, *La Moldavie, Etat tributaire de l'Empire ottoman au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, le cadre international des rapports établis en 1455-1456*, in RRH, XIII, 1974, 3, pp. 448-450. For further data, see also O.J. Schmitt, *Skanderbegs letzte Jahre. West-östliches Wechselspiel von Diplomatie und Krieg im Zeitalter der osmanischen Eroberung Albanies (1464-1468)*, in "Südost-Forschungen: internationale Zeitschrift für Geschichte, Kultur und Landeskunde Süd-osteuropas," LXIV-LXV, 2004-2005, pp. 56-123.

<sup>25</sup> Archivio di Stato di Genova, Archivio Segreto, Sala 34, Caffae-Massaria, reg. 590/1246, c. 63r, 11 March 1465; ELTEK, Kézirattár, Kaprinai, A, XV, no. 50, pp. 34-36, 18 February 1465; MDE, vol. I, no. 186, pp. 306-307; vol. II, nos. 11-12, pp. 20-24; vol. IV [1488-1490, 1458-1490], 1878, Appendix, no. 4, p. 290; MKL, vol. I, no. 59, p. 78; *Joannis Dlugosii ... Opera omnia*, ed. by Alexandr Przewdziecki, vol. XIV, pp. 408-409; M. Cazacu, *Du nouveau*

Neither his marriage to Evdokia Olelkovych, whose family, still in union with Rome, held Kyiv for Casimir IV, nor the birth of their son, Alexander (1463-1464), had been well received by the metropolitan Theoctist I, leader of the anti-unionist party and the 'second man' in the state. The promise made by the Tatar khan Mengli Ghiray to the papal envoy that he would personally make sure that Mehmed attacked neither Hungary, nor Moldavia, after the Moldavian conquest of Chilia, indicated even less auspicious prospects for the powerful pro-Ottoman members of the Moldavian elite. However, at that time, the main challenges to Stephen's rule were abroad. Peter Aron, who had been dethroned by Stephen III, was in Matthias' hands. Peter Aron's main advisor, chancellor Mihul, spent more than three decades in the proximity of Casimir IV's circle of power. Besides, there were the already traditional 'second rank' contenders housed in Buda, in Krakow or in Istanbul.<sup>26</sup>

### 3. The Political Actions of the Monarchs towards the End of Their First Decade of Rule

Like Matthias, Stephen had already played a different part than the one that was expected from him (both in relation to the Hunyadi party that had prepared him for the throne and in relation to the pro-Ottoman party that had eased his accession to the throne). In particular since 1462, Matthias had given positive responses to the otherwise questionable, due to the precedents, Moldavian overtures. The son of the *athlete* discussed with *pagans*, *heretics* and *schismatics*. There 'were' no *Wallachian ancestors* of Mehmed yet, but the path was already open. Like Stephen, Matthias had few options. He had to work with the people who had had his brother Ladislav executed in 1457. Stephen too had been compelled to accept, as partners, figures that were no strangers to his father's fall (1451) and Peter Aron's rise and that were usually not too affected by the changes of rulers. Yet, it had become clear that it would take the aid of a foreign power to overthrow Stephen III.<sup>27</sup>

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*sur le rôle international de la Moldavie dans la seconde moitié du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in "Revue des études roumaines," XVI, 1981, pp. 42-43; Al. Simon, *Ștefan cel Mare și Matia Corvin*, pp. 46-49, 204-205, 207 (note 130).

<sup>26</sup> DRH, A *Moldova*, vol. II 1449-1486, ed. by Leon Șimanschi, Georgeta Ignat, Dumitru Agachi, București, 1975, nos. 124-152, pp. 179-222, November 1464 – July 1468, and in particular nos. 128-129, pp. 183-184, no. 138, p. 197, April-December 1465; Ferenc Forgach, *Rerum Hungaricarum sui temporis commentarii libri XXII*, Posonii-Cassoviae, 1788, p. 275; *Joannis Dlugosii ... Opera omnia*, ed. by Alexandr Przewdziecki, vol. XIV, pp. 409-410; C. Cihodaru, *Pretendenți la tronul Moldovei între anii 1504 și 1538*, in AIIAI, XIV, 1977, pp. 103-104; Al. Simon, *Quello ch'è apresso el Turcho. About a Son of Stephen the Great*, in "Annuario del Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica" (hereafter: AIRCRU), VI-VII, 2004-2005, pp. 149-153.

<sup>27</sup> Archiv Mesta Košic, Collectio Schwartzbachiana, no. 331, 10 August 1462 (copy: MOL, DF 270370; regest, following an eighteenth century copy from ELTEK, B, XXVII, no. 45, pp. 105-107, in K. Nehring, *Quellen zur ungarischen Außenpolitik*, no. 4, p. 88); A. Kubinyi, *Zur Frage des bosnischen Königtums von N. Újlaki*, in "Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae," VIII, 1958, p. 377; Idem, *Bárók a királyi tanácsban Mátyás és II. Ulászló idején*, in "Századok," CXXI, 1988, 1-2, p. 171; Andrei and Valentina Eșanu, *Vlaicu pârcălab (?-1484)*, in Idem, *Moldova medievală. Structuri executive și ecleziastice*, Chișinău, 2002, pp. 298-341; Al. Simon, *Lumea lui Djem. Suceava, Buda și Istanbul în anii 1480*, in "Anuarul Institutului de Istorie din Cluj-Napoca," XLVIII, 2005, pp. 21-23.

On the one hand, the crusader option was in general unpopular amongst the Moldavian elite. Hunyadi's Moldavian problems had been significant. A crusader choice implied, virtually by definition, 'collaboration' with the Latin Hungarian power. In this respect, most figures hostile to such a political line had close connections to Poland, the Christian warrant of Moldavia's pro-Ottoman course. On the other hand, the predominantly pro-Hungarian elite, concentrated in Moldavia's lower parts, was interested in changing this course, even if only in order to strengthen its traditional autonomy. To this one must add that the Genoese and Ottoman problems posed by Moldavian control over Cetatea Albă and Chilia were far from being over. At any rate, throughout his entire reign, as far as it is known, Stephen did not issue a single deed in the 'southern half' of Moldavia. Besides, in the 1470s-1480s, no Ottoman attack was apparently halted until it reached the 'northern half'.<sup>28</sup>

Stephen's army was still reduced. Its main force was the light cavalry, after Tatar model. His finances looked better. His main problem seemed to have been the estates. Apparently, in both Wallachia and Moldavia, the rulers could gather revenues, but not great estates, once the princely estate from the times of the foundations of the states had been reduced through repeated donations. This situation made it more difficult for Stephen to confront the Moldavian opposition, strong in particular amongst the high clergy, to a change of policy. In the mid 1460s, he apparently also lacked the Venetian and Hungarian political and financial support that eased his decision of removing (for good) all hierarchs from the princely council on the eve of his first major anti-Ottoman action (1473). In return, the final twist of the events and of his decisions of 1467 brought calm to his council. From 1468 on, Theoctist I and Stephen's designated heir, Alexander, coexisted in the princely council.<sup>29</sup>

Stephen III must have been aware of the fact that Matthias was not willing to invest everything against Mehmed. The death of Katarina (1464), Matthias' wife and Podiebrad's daughter, had broken the last ties between Buda and Prague. Matthias' northern aims became clearer, so too did the entente between Prague and Krakow, working also, in fact, in the favor of Mehmed. Given Matthias own reserve towards extended Ottoman warfare, Venice thus tried to adapt the anti-Ottoman plan of 1467 into a form of (lasting) political compromise between Buda, Venice and the High Porte.

[According to Venice's draft of the peace between the three parties] *recomandati nominandi in sufferentijs nomine Serenissime Regis Hungarie sunt isti, videlicet: Dominus*

<sup>28</sup> DRH, A, vol. II, nos. 64-265, pp. 94-409; vol. III 1487-1504, ed. by C. Cihodaru, Ioan Caproșu, Nistor Ciocan, București, 1984, *passim*; Ș. Papacostea, *Moldova lui Ștefan cel Mare și genezei din Marea Neagră*, in "Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol," XXIX, 1992, pp. 68-72; Al. Simon, *În jurul Carpaților. Formele și realitățile genezei statelor românești*, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, pp. 435-438, 455-456.

<sup>29</sup> DRH, A, vol. II, nos. 124-152, pp. 179-222; Ș. Papacostea, *Venise et les pays roumains au Moyen Age*, in vol. *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, ed. by Agostino Pertusi, vol. I-2 *Storia-Diritto-Economia*, Firenze, 1973, pp. 599-625; L. Șimanschi, *Politica internă a lui Ștefan cel Mare*, in "Revista de istorie," XXIV, 1982, 5-6, pp. 585-606; D.I. Mureșan, *La place de Girolamo Lando, patricien vénétien et titulaire du Patriarcat de Constantinople (1474-1497), dans la politique orientale de l'Église de Rome*, in AIRCRU, VIII, 2006, pp. 174-178; C. Cihodaru, *Pretendenți*, pp. 103-104; Al. Simon, *Ștefan cel Mare și Matia Corvin*, pp. 238-244, 256-258.

*Scanderbegus, Ragusini, Filij Ducis Stefani; Uterque Vajvoda utriusque Valachie et alij siqui sunt qui nunc tam de iure quam de facto pertinent ad Coronam (25 October 1466).*

Like Skanderbeg, like the heir of Stephen Košarca, the late duke of St. Sava, or Ragusa, Moldavia and Wallachia should be listed as Buda's official protégés (vassals). This would have meant an extended Ottoman-Hungarian condominium over both Wallachias, something that Istanbul only reluctantly accepted in 1503. In this respect too, Venice's proposal had no immediate political future.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senato Secreta, Deliberazioni, reg. 23, c. 12<sup>r</sup>, 25 October 1466 (edited in MDE, vol. II, no. 23, p. 41); *Annali veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500*, pp. 37-39; Francisc Pall, *Les relations entre la Hongrie et Skanderbeg*, in RHSEE, X, 1933, 4-6, pp. 135-139 (his note on the Venetian peace project remained unused). See also the perspectives on the 1460s in the recent histories of Hungary: A. Kubinyi, *Magyarország története 1458-1490*, Budapest, 1994<sup>3</sup>, pp. 26-28, 60-62; P. Engel, Gyula Kristó, A. Kubinyi, *Magyarország története 1301-1526*, Budapest, 1998, pp. 264-267.