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The European Policy of King Matthias Corvinus

The Foreign Policy of King Matthias During the First Years of His Reign (1458–1464)

This article is the first part of a longer paper, in which the author reviews the very complex European policy of the Hungarian-Croatian king Matthias Corvinus from his ascent to the throne in early 1458 until his sudden death in Vienna in the spring of 1490. The whole paper and analysis of events are based on research of various sources and literature.

In the introduction, the author provides a short overview of the life and works of Matthias Corvinus, which is followed by a brief analysis of Croatian and international literature and a review of the major sources of information about King Matthias and Central European history in the second half of the 15th century. The article is primarily dedicated to the foreign policy of Matthias Corvinus during the first years of his reign. In the first chapter the author deals with the relationship between the Hunyadi family, the Counts of Celje and King Ladislaus V the Posthumous of Habsburg, the short period while he was held hostage by George of Poděbrady in Bohemia, and finally his election as King of Hungary in January 1458. The author also gives a short overview of his relationship with his mother Erzsébet Szilágyi, his uncle Mihály Szilágy and George of Poděbrady, Governor of Bohemia. In the second chapter the author describes events that followed his coronation; marriage to Catherine, daughter of George of Poděbrady, and his war for the Holy crown of Hungary with Frederick III of Habsburg and Casimir IV of Poland. This conflict lasted for several years (from early spring of 1458 to the summer of 1463, when the Holy Crown was returned to Hungary) and ended in March of 1464 when Matthias was finally crowned with the Holy Crown. In this part of the text the author reviews the interpersonal relations between the most influential Hungarian and Croatian magnates (Ladislav Garai and Nicholas of Ilok), which reflected on Matthias' foreign policy during the whole period. The author has also analysed the relationship between Matthias and George of Poděbrady until the death of Catherine in February 1464. The last chapter is dedicated to Matthias' relations with the house of Kotromanić, who ruled the Bosnian kingdom at that time, and his dispute with King Stephen Tomašević, son of Stephen Thomas. The relations with Pope Pius II, along with correspondence between Matthias, Pius II and Sjepan Tomašević, are also mentioned and interpreted. The last part of the article deals with the fall of the Bosnian kingdom in May of 1463, the death of Stjepan Tomašević in June of 1463, and Matthias' war with the Ottoman Empire until the winter of 1464. The

war started in late spring of 1463, when King Matthias turned against the Ottomans, who were threatening his southern provinces after the fall of Serbia (in 1459), and Bosnia (in May, 1463). During the war against the Turks in Bosnia Matthias successfully defeated the Ottoman general Ali Pasha, and liberated the western parts of Bosnia along with the fortress of Jajce in December of 1463.

Key words: Hunyadi, Matthias Corvin, European policy, foreign policy, Mihály Szilágyi, George of Poděbrady, Ladislav Garai, Nicholas Ujlaki, Ivan Vitez from Sredna, Frederick III Habsburg, Bosnia, House of Kotromanić, Stephen Thomas, Stephen Tomašević, Pope Pius II, Mehmed II, the Ottoman Empire.