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Crusading between the Adriatic and the Black Sea: Hungary, Venice and the Ottoman Empire after the Fall of Negroponte

In early 1474, almost ten years had elapsed since Matthias Corvinus' last and failed major anti-Ottoman attempt. The rather peculiar, given previous and later events and developments, Habsburg-Hunyadi 'crusader' plan of 1466-1467 had ended in the Transylvanian rebellion and the ensuing Moldavian campaign of king Matthias. Over the next years, the king focused on his Bohemian and Habsburg problems and claims, while the crusader plans drafted in 1471 were once again basically brought to a halt by another conspiracy against John Hunyadi's son. Less than three years later, the Ottoman raid on Oradea (Nagyvarad, Grosswardein), as well as Venetian financial offers, compelled the king to re-take anti-Ottoman action. His unsuccessful negotiations with sultan Mehmed II (1472-1473), alongside the aid rendered during the Walachian-Moldavian conflict to Stephen III of Moldavia (1470/1471-1473), also brought back the king to the crusader frontline. While having to restore good connections to pope Sixtus IV, eager, in return to strengthen his Western credit by crusader actions and plans, Matthias Corvinus had also to deal with the Habsburg and Jagellonian attempts to weaken his position and diminish his influence in crusader matters too, in Hungary as well as in the neighboring areas.
Newfound sources, namely Italian, Milanese in particular, archival data, provided the grounds for new perspectives on Matthias Corvinus' Ottoman and anti-Ottoman actions in the mid 1470'. They allow us to take a closer look at the chain of events, decisions, propaganda, rivalry and disinformation that led to the Habsburg-Jagellonian charges of 'crusader incompetence' against Matthias Corvinus and also to the failure of the planned Hungarian-Moldavian 'trap' for sultan Mehmed II in the second half of 1476. Most of the explanations for it can be looked up in the immediate political context, complicated by the anti-Ottoman Muslim talks, by Usun Hassan's failure, respectively by the conflicts between Tartar factions. Yet, as in many cases of similar nature, the main explanations usually rely on quite simple facts. The 'anti-Ottoman' coalition of the mid 1470' consisted basically of former, more recent or traditional, rivals, such as the Rome, Venice, Hungary or Moldavia, which had a direct impact on the outcome of their crusader style attempts and actions. Another important aspect which should be emphasized in this context is the relation between Matthias and Transylvania after 1467, in connection to the local Transylvanian ties, via Walachia, with the *Turk*. Such structural details, beyond the various forms of modern, but also medieval, bias, have ensured an almost constant advantage to the Ottoman Empire, more and more a partner, rather than an enemy.

In 1474, 10 years had passed since the last major royal Hungarian anti-Ottoman action. In 1464, Matthias (Mátyás, Matia) Corvinus' second Bosnian campaign had been a relative success. In 1468, an Ottoman-Hungarian truce had been reached.

The truce, valid probably for two years, was renewed in 1470 and 1472. The Ottoman-Hungarian negotiations of 1473 failed however. Hungary was once more on collision course with the High Porte[1].

The realm's eastern neighbor, Moldavia, was already on this course. For the territorial 'link' between Buda (Ofen) and Suceava, the royal province of Transylvania, a clash with the *Turk* was by far no priority. The memory of the devastating campaign led by Murad II (1437-1438) or of more recent Ottoman raids into the Voivodate of Transylvania, which had occurred in spite of the Ottoman-Hungarian truce (e.g. in 1469 and 1470), was still vivid[2].

In 1474, the Ottomans raided Hungary's central administrative bridge, connecting Buda to the Transylvania. It was the most important Ottoman act of aggression on the realm, since 1438. Ottoman-Hungarian tensions had mounted. Neither king Matthias, nor Mehmed II had managed to diplomatically convince his counterpart to give in to his proposals (1472-1473[3].

The Hunyadi Crusader Legacy in the Context of Roman, Venetian and Ottoman Politics

In late 1472, cardinal Bessarion died. He was the last survivor of the *Latin* and *Greek* political generations that had fought for Byzantium's rescue. Except for the pro-Ottoman king of Poland, Casimir (Kazimierz) IV, for Frederic III, the reluctant emperor, and for Mehmed II, none of the other major political figures in power had taken an active part in the events of the 1440'-1450'. These events had, on one hand, shaped the aims of the later crusader decades and, on the other, by the demise of the main actors, had left the way open for major crises[4].

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1 MDE, II, no. 46, p. 76; *Długosz* (1887), pp. 495, 510, 525, 546; *Bonfini* (1936-1941), IV, pp. 15-23; Dan-Ioan Mureşan, 'La place de Girolamo Lando, patrician vénetien et titulaire du Patriarcat de Constan tinople (1474-1497), dans la politique orientale del'Église de Rome', *AIRCRU*, VIII (2006), pp. 153-258.

2 For instance: Gyula Rázsó, 'Die Türkenpolitik Matthias Corvinus', *AHASH*, XXXII (1986), 1-2, pp. 19-23, 444; Al. Simon, *Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin. O coexistenţă medievală* [Stephen the Great and Matthias Corvinus: A Medieval Coexistence] (Cluj-Napoca 2005 [2007]), pp. 201-210, 249-253.

3 E.g. [Támas de Nyirkállo], *Epitaphiums super excisione urbis Varadiensis*, in *SRH*, II (1798), p. 11; Aurel Decei, 'Incursiunea (Akîn) a lui Mihaloglu Ali Beg asupra Orăzii în anul 1474, pe temeiul istoriei lui Ibn Kemal' [Mihaloglu Ali Beg's Raid on Oradea, according to Ibn Kemal's History (1474)], in *Sub semnul lui Clio. Omagiu Acad. Prof. Ştefan Pascu* [*Festschrift* for Ştefan Pascu] (Cluj 1974), pp. 296-301.

4 For documentary and interpretive examples: ASV, Misc., Arm., II-7, ff. 388 (392)^{r}, 472 (476)^{v} (6th of May, 13th of July 1472); Oskar Halecki, 'Sixte IV et la chrétienté orientale', in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant*, II-1, *Orient Chrétien* (Vatican City 1964), pp. 241-264; Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571*, II, *The Fifteenth Century* (= *MAPS*, CXXVII) (Philadelphia 1978), pp. 281-285.

Failed Hungarian-Ottoman peace talks made too way for another set of long negotiated crusader actions. The Burgundian-Venetian-Roman-Hungarian crusader league of 1463 was history. Nevertheless, the talks and promises, made possible in particular by the political and military defeats suffered by Rome and Venice, created the illusion of a far greater league[5].

Oriental Solutions to Western Anti-Ottoman Problems at the Beginning of the 1470'

After the death of pope Paul II (1471), who had turned the crusade from the South to the North, once more against the Hussites, the need for a crusader *grand design* was more pressing. It had to compensate domestic troubles, both in Rome and in the rest of the 'free Christian world', and to restore the credit of the crusade, of the holy Christian war, at least to the level reached in the times of John (Ioan/ Iancu, János) Hunyadi and George (Đurađ) Castriota Skanderbeg. The means however seemed more reduced than decades prior[6].

The 'crusader congress' of Regensburg had made that quite clear in mid-summer 1471. Venice's military and diplomatic failures, as well as territorial losses during the ongoing war with the Porte, added to the complexity of the situation. Catholic Christendom apparently had run out of crusader options. 'Peculiar' solutions took center-stage once more. Talks with and on the *Muslims* (the Tartars and Uzun Hassan's Turks and Persians) and *Schismatics* (Russians, Walachians) were reinitiated (1471-1472).Victory was searched for in the East[7].

In order to make good for his contested pontificate, but also to further Bessarion's aims, the unsuccessful papal candidate of the last two elections and Venice's favorite, pope Sixtus IV approved these talks. They were also less costly than *Latin* negotiations. The niece of the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI, Zoe, was wed to Ivan III of Moscow (1472). In the Italian Peninsula and the West no major ruler wanted to marry her, because she only had a great name, but little money. The marriage should have brought the crusade to Russia[8].

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5 See also: Ferenc Szakály, 'Phases of Turko-Hungarian Warfare before the Battle of Mohács. 1365-1526', *AOASH*, XXXIII (1979), pp. 88-94. Karl Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus, Kaiser Friedrich III und das Reich. Zum Hunyadisch-Habsburgischen Gegensatz im Donauraum* (Munich 1989[2]), pp. 41-45.

6 For instance: MDE, no. 219, p. 332; Giuseppe Valentini, 'La sospensione della crociata nei primi anni di Paolo II (1464-1468). Dai documenti d'archivio di Venezia', *AHP*, XIV, 1976, pp. 71-101; Oliver Jens Schmitt', 'Skanderbegs letzte Jahre. West-östliches Wechselspiel von Diplomatie und Krieg im Zeitalter der osmanischen Eroberung Albanies (1464-1468)', *SOF*, LXIV-LXV (2004-2005), pp. 56-123.

7 E.g. Gugliermo Berchet, *La repubblica di Venezia e la Persia* (Turin), 1865, pp. 100-101; *Tursun Bey* (2007), p. 209; Johannes Helmrath, 'The German *Reichstage* and the Crusade', in *Crusading*, p. 64.

8 *Der Aufstieg Moskaus* (=*SGS*, V), edited by Peter Nitsche; II, *Vom Beginn des 15. bis zum Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Graz-Vienna-Cologne 1967), p. 135; Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, p. 318.

Later, namely from 1474 on, once more for both crusader and Italian reasons, Sixtus IV, eager to restore the balance of power in his tense relation with Venice, endorsed the talks for Matthias' marriage to Beatrice, the daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon, the king of Naples. On a dynastical, as well as strictly political level, few within the ranks of the traditional Euro pean monarchic elite wanted to get connected to Matthias or to Ferdinand. Still, the crusade and Rome could not afford to lose either of them, in particular the Hungarian monarch[9].

King Matthias Corvinus' Changing Ottoman Politics from Rome to Istanbul

In the mid 1460', Venice and Buda, allies against the Porte, competed for peace with the sultan. With support from Frederic, his friend at the time, Matthias had also an anti-Ottoman action in planning. In front of the Venetian envoys, Mehmed presented Matthias as a disloyal and corrupt politician, who made promises to all sides. After the Transylvanian rebellion and his failed Moldavian campaign, which ended his southern plans (1468), Matthias brought the same charges against Stephen of Moldavia, who had been instrumental during the events[10].

More than a decade after his death, Hunyadi was still his son's most valuable symbolical crusader asset. The Bosnian campaigns, Hungary's role of Christendom's bulwark and Ro man common praises assured Mathias a deserved crusader individuality, but not uniqueness. In fact, he had already surpassed his father in terms of charges of Ottoman dealings. For this he could not compensate by titles such as *athlete*, though Rome, in order to halt his (natural) financial claims, had exploited his weakness for the status of Christendom's *only hope*[11].

Namely in the 1440', Hunyadi was the only one who could have claimed such an honor. But he was no ruler from *god's grace*. In return, it was *Janko*, at a political low at that time (late1453-early 1456), not his son, who was viewed by the Greeks of his entourage as the *emperor, successor of the Romans*. It was thus quite natural that, after 1453, *Turks* viewed a *Janko*, the leader of the *Magyars*, of the northern *Benī asfer* nations, as the mythical founder of Byzantium. This was a great Ottoman compliment rendered to the *athlete* John Hunyadi[12].

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9 MDE, II, no. 56, p. 89; no. 176, pp. 251-257; *Malipiero*, p. 93; Péter E. Kovács, 'Magyarország és Nápoly politikai kapcsolatai a Mátyás-korban' [The Political Relations between Hungary and Naples in Matthias' Time], in *Tanulmányok Szakály Ferenc emlékére* [Studies in the Memory of Ferenc Szakály], edited by Pál Fodor, Géza Pálffy, István György Tóth (Budapest, 1998), pp. 229-231, 236 (in particular).

10 E.g. MDE, I, no. 213, p. 348; no. 211, p. 342; II, no. 31, p. 52; no. 56, p. 89; MKL, I, no. 149, pp. 211-213; *Notes*, IV,. nos. 162-179, pp. 250-270; *Regesten Friedrich*, XV, no. 212, p. 164; *Historia*, p. 84.

11 E.g. EMC, no. 3, p. 6; no. 13, pp. 17-18; no. 19, p. 26; no. 45, p. 67; *Malipiero*, pp. 40-41; *Rapporti*, p. 134; Halil Inalcik, 'The Ottoman Turks and the Crusades, 1451-1522', in *Crusades*, VI, pp. 317-325.

12 In this respect, see FHDR, IV, *Zotikos Paraspondylos*, pp. 392-397, *Tevârih-i*, I, pp. 55-56; II, pp. 72-73; Stéphane Yerasimos, 'Enquête sur un héros: Yanko bin Madyan, le fondateur mythique de

Though until 1473 Matthias did not make use of the Walachian ancestors of Mehmed II in order to promote his blood-ties with the sultan, both he and his adversaries, namely after his failed Moldavian campaign of 1467, had spread rumors on the great political and matri monial deals offered to him by Mehmed. It could well be that the early 1470' were more than a prequel to the 1480' and the Djem crisis. 'Otherwise', Thuróczy could not have printed the alleged statement of Mehmed. According to the sultan, Matthias was his only equal (1488)[13].

I. The Royal Province of Transylvania and Buda and Istanbul's Vassal States

Since the death of John Hunyadi (1456), Transylvania had not taken center stage in the confrontations between *Christendom* and the *Turk*. Still, even in Hunyadi's time, whether he had acted as voivode of the province (e.g. 1444-1445), as governor (e.g. 1447-1449), or later as captain-general of the kingdom (e.g. 1454-1455), Transylvanian anti-Ottoman involvement had been a problem. The problem itself dated in fact far back to the rule of king Sigismund (Zsigmond) of Luxemburg, to his royal troubles at the turn of the century (e.g. 1398-1401)[14].

1. Transylvanian and Walachian Crusader Bridges and Threats in the 15th Century

During king Matthias's first 15 years of rule, some Ottoman raids had been viewed, in an altogether exaggerated fashion, as devastations of Transylvania. Długosz too had described in this manner the Ottoman attacks of the late 1460' and the early 1470'. Nevertheless, also on the basic level of the relations between Buda and Istanbul, the Transylvania zone was no real priority, in terms of war (a late proof for it was also the fact that until the year 1493 no actual major Ottoman attack took place), but not in those of late medieval diplomacy[15].

Constantinople', in *Mélanges offerts à Louis Bazin par ses disciples, collégues et amis*, edited by Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, Rémy Dor (Paris 1992), pp. 213-217; D.-I. Mureşan, 'Le Royaume de Hongrie et la prise de Constantinople: croisade et union ecclésiastique en 1453', in *Between Worlds*, II, p. 341.

13 E.g. *Documente Ştefan*, II, no. 135, p. 304; *Notes*, V, no. 73, p. 55; *Thuróczy* (1985), pp. 285-286; Şerban Papacostea, 'Un episode de la rivalité polono-hongroise au XV^e siècle: l'expedition de Matia Corvin en Moldovie (1467) à la lumière d'une nouvelle source', *RRH*, VIII (1969), 6, Appendix, p. 977.

14 E.g. Gustav Gündisch, 'Siebenbürgen in der Türkenabwehr 1396-1526', *RRH*, XIII (1974), 3, pp. 426-435; Al. Simon, 'Stephen the Great and his Involvement in Transylvania', *TR*, XIII (2004), pp. 39-44.

15 E.g. *Hurmuzaki*, XV-1, no. 64, p. 37; nos. 106-107, pp. 61-62; nos. 115-116, p. 66; nos. 123-124, pp. 70-71; no. 131, p. 75; *Cronaca di Ser Guerriero da Gubbio dall'anno MCCCL all'anno MCCCCLXXII*, edited by Giusseppe Mazzatini, in *RIS*, XXI (1902), 4, pp. 87-88; *Długosz* (1887), pp. 525, 537.

The Ottoman Effects and Limits of Transylvanian and Walachian Oriental Trade

Due in particular to the rather flexible policies of the Saxon cities of Braşov (Kronstadt, Brassó) and Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Szeben) towards sultan Mehmed II and his transalpine favorite, Radu III *cel Frumos* (the Handsome), ruler of Walachia, Transylvania had grown into a communication channel between Buda and Istanbul. This feature of the voivodate, mainly in its southern areas, best came to light in the late 1470' and in the 1480', during the rules of Basarab III Laiotă, Basarab IV *Ţepeluş* (the Little Impaler), Vlad IV *Călugărul* (the Monk). All three had previously found shelter, as contenders to the Walachian throne, in Transylvania[16].

The political feature had been noticed in the early 1450', but also during the Ottoman campaign of Murad II, at times when, both for the dying king Sigismund and, later, for John Hunyadi, Transylvania should have played a rather different part in the policy of the realm towards the empire. Transylvania turned from a major anti-Ottoman factor into a 'balance factor' between the colliding powers. This turn had crucial effects on anti-Ottoman warfare[17].

Prior to the battle on the 'Field of Bread' (*Câmpul Pâinii*, *Kenyérmező*), in 1479, and prior, mainly, to the Ottoman raid of 1493, major, nevertheless temporary, alterations were brought to the Transylvanian status by Moldavian means. Especially the conflict between Moldavia and Walachia was instrumental in this respect. The conflict had re-irrupted at the end of the 1460'. The feud, at the time, between Radu III and Stephen III *cel Mare* (the Great), involved both the zone of the Danube Mounds and Moldavia's Lower Country (*Ţara de Jos*)[18].

The conflict was also a major challenge for the Hungarian kingship, because it touched the important areas of the Transylvanian Szeklers and Saxons, and for the Ottoman Porte, as the fighting put an end to the equilibrium between the 'buffer states' of Walachia and Moldavia. In the Lower Danube area, they separated the Hungarian realm from the Ottoman Empire. The situation was particularly tense after, in 1471, king Matthias sided, once again, as he had done also during the events of 1465-1466, with Stephen III, his former enemy[19].

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16 *Hurmuzaki*, XV-1, no. 123, p. 70; no. 131, p. 75; no. 137, p. 80; no. 141, p. 82; *Documente 1346-1603*, no. 130, p. 126; *Unrest*, p. 108; A[lexandru]. D[imitrie]. Xenopol, 'Lupta între Drăculeşti şi Dăneşti' [The Fight between the Houses of Dracul and Dan], *AARMSI*, 3rd series, XXX (1907-1908), pp. 207-211.

17 E.g. Al. Simon, 'În jurul bătăliei de la Vaslui (1474-1475). Consideraţii asupra relaţiilor dintre Regatul Ungariei, Moldova şi Ţara Românească' [Around the Battle of Vaslui (1474-1475). Thoughts on the Relations between the Kingdom of Hungary, Moldavia and Walachia], *SUBBH*, XLIX (2004), 2, pp. 9-10.

18 EMC, no. 60, p. 80; no. 62, p. 82; *Actae*, nos. 30-31, pp. 31-33; *Długosz* (1887), pp, 540, 550-551; Szakaly, 'Phases', pp. 93-95; Rázsó, 'Türkenpolitik', pp. 10-11;Gündisch, 'Siebenbürgen', pp. 433-440.

19 E.g. MDE, II, nos. 11-13, pp. 20-25; Leodrisii Cribelli, *De expeditione Pii Papae II adversus Turcos* (= *RIS*, XXIII (1948), 5), edited by Giulio C. Zimolo (Bologna 1950), p. 85; *Długosz*

Royal Hungarian Options and Limits between Bosnian and Moldavian Stands

The developing Moldavian-Hungarian entente was a challenge for all their neighbors. Still, major problems existed between Buda and Suceava, despite their mutual agreements and official tokens of trust. The problems were best revealed in the fall of 1474 when the *Hungarians* (i.e. Transylvanians) and Moldavians, which should fought together the Ottomans and the Walachian party loyal to the sultan, fought each other over the Walachian throne[20].

The problem was more than obvious. Matthias and Stephen had pushed each other into the open conflict with Mehmed. Since 1471, at the 'crusader *Reichstag'* of Regensburg, it had been stated that the *Walachians* would take arms against the Ottomans, in case the Hungarian king took the field against the sultan. At about the same time, Stephen refused to support the Polish attack on Matthias and offered his help to the contested monarch[21].

Since 1470, Stephen III was at war with Walachia. The stakes were the trade routes between the West and the Danube Mounds. From a later perspective, his actions could be viewed as pressures on the Porte. In order to achieve calm in the area, Mehmed II should have abandoned his favorite ruler of Walachia and accepted Stephen's control of the routes. Due to his war with Uzun Hassan, Mehmed II post-poned a final decision on the matter[22].

At the time, trapped in his Bohemian war and forced to install Nicholas (Miklós) Újlaki, his former enemy, as king of the vassal state of Bosnia (1471-1472), Matthias applied similar tactics in his relation to the Porte. Mehmed II tried to gain time by a peace offer which added to Sixtus' IV Hungarian worries. In fact, Mehmed had no intention of giving in to Matthias[23].

(1887), pp. 478, 510, 525, 537; Ş. Papacostea, 'Politica externă a lui Ştefan cel Mare: opţiunea polonă (1459-1472)' [The Foreign Policy of Stephen the Great: The Polish Option (1459-1472)], *SMIM*, XXV (2007), pp. 13-28.

20 E.g. *Hurmuzaki*, XV-1, no. 133, p. 77; *Nachträge*, no. 147, p. 162; no. 255, p. 273; *Documente Braşov*, no. 272, p. 328; *Letopiseţul anonim al Ţării Moldovei* [The Anonymous Chronicle of the Land of Moldavia], *Cronica moldo-germană* [The Moldo-German Chronicle], in *Cronicile*, pp. 15-17, 30-32.

21 For instance: HHStA, M.E.A., 1b, fasc. 1, ff. 157^{r}-170^{r} (14th of May 1471); 2, fasc. 1, ff. 32^{r}, 40^{r}-46^{r} [May-June 1471]; MDE, II, no. 167, p. 233, *Reichstagsakten Friedrich*, VIII-2, nos. 94-95, pp. 323-327.

22 *Tursun Bey* (2007), pp. 227-235; *Letopiseţul anonim*, p. 17; Randal Munsen, 'Stephen the Great: Leadership and Patronage on the Fifteenth Century Ottoman Frontier', *EEQ*, XXXIX (2005), 3, pp. 269-297.

23 E.g. Franz Babinger, *Mehmed der Eroberer unde seine Zeit. Weltenstürmer einer Zeitenwende* (Munich 1959^{2}), p. 373; Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, p. 320; Simon, 'Consideraţii', pp. 9, 19.

2. Warfare on the Lower Danube as a Crusader Complement and Alternative

Between 1462 and 1484, Stephen III invaded Walachia at least 13 times. The maximal estimated number of invasions would be 17. In average, the Moldavian troops entered the *other Walachia*, inhabited by those *worse than the Turks*, as Stephen III himself put it, every year and half. Stephen's attacks on Walachia intensified beginning with February 1470[24].

In 1471, the crisis developed. Some claimed that Matthias would attack Frederic III with *Turks, Serbians and Walachians*. In response, Casimir IV stated that he had Stephen's sup port against Matthias. In fact, Stephen was helping Matthias who, in return, supported him in Walachian matters. Both were still dependent on the Porte, though the break drew closer[25].

The Anti-Ottoman Development of the Moldavian-Walachian Border Conflict

The raids did not displease Buda or the Saxon cities, on the contrary. The commercial policy of Radu had grown increasingly protectionist, dramatically reducing thus the royal and Saxon profits from the southern trade of the Transylvanian Saxon cities. The political gap between Suceava and Buda was bridged by the common foreign threats that added extra pressure for Stephen and Matthias, already faced with great domestic troubles. The conflict of 1473 was thus no Walachian-Moldavian border conflict as previous military clashes[26].

In late fall 1473, after an apparent one year truce with the Walachian ruler, Stephen re-entered Walachia, more determined than ever. A major role in his decision must have been played by political power play in the area, the result namely of Venice's efforts to find aid in the East against the Ottoman Empire. Rome too tried to find support in the East[27].

Stephen's marriage to Mary of Mangop (1472) had, on one hand, fortified his position and interests in the Black Sea area. On the other hand, it had technically,

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[24] M. Guboglu,'Le tribut payé par les Principautés Roumains à la Porte jusqu'au début du XVI^{e} siècle d'après les sources turques', *REI*, XXXVII (1969), 1, p. 70; Simon, *Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin*, p. 496.

[25] E.g. Felix Priebatsch, *Politische Correspondenz des Kurfürsten Albrecht Achilles, 1470-1486*, I, 1470-1474 (=*PKPS*, LIX) (Leipzig 1894), no. 721, pp. 555-556; *Korrespondenz Breslaus im Zeitalter des Königs Matthias Corvinus* (=*SRS*, XIII-XIV), edited by Berthold Kronthal, Heinrich Wendt, I, *1469-1479* (Breslau 1893), no. 59, p. 37; *Hurmuzaki*, XV-1, no. 133, p. 77; Papacostea, 'Politica externă', pp. 22-25.

[26] For instance: *Hurmuzaki*, II-1, no. 5, p. 4; MKL, I, no. 211, p. 296; *Acte*, III, pp. 54-55; *Documente Ştefan*, II, nos. 146-150, pp. 331-339; MDE, II, no. 183, p. 263; *Documente Sibiu*, nos. 1-2, pp.11-12.

[27] E.g. *Guerre*, no. 43, p. 44; no. 85, p. 106; no. 90, p. 112; *Notes*, IV, no. 275, p. 352; *Letopiseţul anonim*, pp. 17-18; *Cronica moldo-germană*, pp. 30-32; see Mureşan, 'Girolamo Lando', pp. 172-174.

but also partially, annulled the domestic effects of the sending of his and his first wife's, Evdochia of Kyiv, son, Alexander, as hostage to Istanbul, due to his Walachian actions of 1470-1471. After 1472, Stephen stopped paying tribute to the Porte. This fact increased his Ottoman problems, summed up in Mehmed's demands of 1476. One of them was the Danube harbor of Chilia. The harbor had been taken in 1465, with the consent of Matthias Corvinus, from Radu III[28].

Stephen had also other matters of concern. In 1473-1474 (namely), he had to retreat, almost each time from Walachia. He completed his return, of spring 1474, to Suceava by the execution of 700 of the numerous taken prisoners (hostages to a certain degree). This was vengeance, probably a gesture of domestic power, due to the contemporary political climate, and not a symbolic act meant to impress his Ottoman and Walachian, adversaries. By his actions of 1473, the ruler had taken great risks upon himself and his Moldavian throne[29].

The Defeat of Uzun Hassan, the Siege of Scutari and the Throne of Walachia

In 1473, Stephen had two major targets: the dethronement of Radu and the creation of a new anti-Ottoman front. The first goal was quickly achieved. Radu, of the House of Dracul, was replaced with Basarab Laiotă from the rival House of Dan, prepared by Stephen for the throne since 1472. Basarab lost his throne a month later. This was however not the greatest of anti-Ottoman problems. The real target of Stephen's attack 'was' very likely in Albania[30].

Prior to the end of 1473, it had become known that a renewed Moldavian attack on Walachia would determine the *Turk* to levy the siege of Scutari and turn against Moldavia. Venice had already promised king Matthias 30000 ducats if he succeeded in diverting the Ottoman attack on Scutari. A year later, in the fall of 1474, the king's men in Venice cashed in only half of the amount. The other half had probably been sent to Stephen of Moldavia[31].

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28 ASM, A.D.S., Potenze estere, *Ungheria*, cart. 650, fasc. 3, nn (23rd of May 1476); Al. Simon, 'Quello ch'e apresso el Turcho. About A Son of Stephen the Great', *AIRCRU*, VI-VII (2004-2005), pp. 141-169.

29 E.g. *Letopiseţul anonim*, p. 18; *Cronica moldo-germană*, pp. 31-32; Mayer J. Halévy, 'Les guerres de Etienne le Grand et d'Uzun Hasan d'apres la "Chronique de la Turquie du candiote Elie Capsali (1520)', *SAO*, I (1957), pp. 190-193; for the context, see Magda Jászay, 'Contrastes et diplomatie dans les rapports de Matthias Ier Corvin et la République de Venise', *AHASH*, XXXV (1989), 1-4, pp. 19-23, too.

30 E.g. ÖNB, Codices, cod. 6216, Stefano Magno, *Annali veneti e del mondo* [*1443-1478*], *Ad annum 1473*, ff. 561v, 576v [May, October-November]; Simon, Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin, pp. 209-211.

31 *I libri commemoriali della Republica di Venezia. Regesti* [edited by Ricardo Predelli], V, [*Registri XIV-XVII*] (Venice 1901), no. XVI-65, 73, pp. 213, 215; *Raguza*, no. 385, p. 631; *Malipiero*, pp. 41, 43

In view of the very costly anti-Ottoman involvement of Stephen, it was an advantageous deal for the Republic. The ruler took care of Venice's eastern interests. His actions captured, by (mainly) Venetian means, the attention of the Italian Peninsula. The optimistic tone of such reports on Danubian anti-Ottoman warfare, partially motivated by the time spans needed by information to travel from the frontline to the center, was contradicted by the events[32].

> [...] *Item a le nove avema cuj fresche de preso Pera fresche, se ha/ como lo Grant Turcho manda Turchi XX mille contra la Velachia Bassa; et d'altra parte se dice prepara de fae questo state gallie nove/ CL^ta^, car quelle ha sono vegle* [...] *Et se dice de certo per la dicta lettera mandata de Sio ha/ Monsegnor lo Mestro, et erj lecta cuj in lo conseglo/ como/ lo Turcho ha facto pace con Usson Cassan* [....] (16th of January). [...] *Item scrivevano i Valachi haver cridato guerra contra el Signor Turcho; et come el ditto Turcho haveva fato/ commandamento per tuto el suo paexe che tuti da anni 15 fin 60 se dovesseno a presentar ala sua porta./ Et come el Signor Turcho fazea passar zente in le parte de Natolia; et questo perche se diceva/ i fioli del Signor Usson Cassan fevano zente contra del Signor Turcho* [...] (15th of February 1474)

Prior to the Christmas of 1473, Laiotă had been chased away. Radu was once again the ruler of Walachia. The Ottoman troops raided southern Moldavia, as far as Vaslui. Stephen could not intervene. His response came in spring 1474. He entered Walachia and *burnt the country almost entirely*. His action was not as successful as expected, maybe because of the burnings too. In 1481, after another failed Moldavian (and Hungarian this time) action in Walachia, the failure of the campaign was attributed to the cruelty of the Moldavian army[33].

II. Anti-Ottoman Italian Information and Uses of Moldavian Military Campaigns

Years later, Stephen's propaganda in German blamed the bad weather in Walachia for his failure of spring 1474. His 'official chronicle' however did not make any reference to the events. Stephen's Walachian raids of August and October 1474 were also unsuccessful. In November, a joint Hungarian-Moldavian military

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[32] E.g. ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Turchia-Levante*, cart. 647, fasc. [3], nn (16th of January 1474); *Ungheria*, cart. 649, fasc. [2], nn (15th of February 1474); *Veneţia*, pp. 241-244; *Vite 1474-1494*, pp. 11-14.

[33] In this respect: HHStA, S.A., A.D.S., *Hungarica*, A.A., I-2, fasc. 2-4, f. 30r-v [March-April 1474; copy: MOL, DF 276099]; *Actae*, no. 34, p. 37; *Cronica moldo-germană*, p. 32; Simon, 'The Arms of the Cross: The Christian Politics of Stephen the Great and Matthias Corvinus', in *Between Worlds*, I, pp. 48-50.

action was staged, but the anti-Ottoman forces fought each other. Yet, the ensuing compromise made the victory of Vaslui possible[34].

1. The Peninsula and its Perspective on Eastern Affairs at the Beginning of the 1470'

Prior to November 1474, Stephen seemed to have pushed his relation with the Porte to the point of no return, in spite of Mehmed's rather questionable offers. Still it seems that, due to the situation in Asia Minor, even after the defeat of Uzun Hassan, the combats in Albania and also the on-going Venetian-Ottoman talks, the Porte did not want to create a major front north of the Danube. Given these aspects and also the Italian contemporary data, the need of Stephen III's propaganda in German to excuse his failure appears in a distinctive light[35].

Italian Allies and Enemies of Crusading Rome and Venice

Crusaders efforts were viewed with rather polite contempt in the West in the 1470'. This led to the widening of gap between personal and collective statements of crusader passion and the 'behind the scenes' mocking of the idea. The real problem was not so much the fact that France, England and Burgundy too viewed the actions of Rome and the 'Eastern' *Latins* as money schemes. The *Reconquista* was, at times, viewed in similar fashion. The problem was that this point of view was shared and (well) defended in the central parts of Europe[36].

In 1476, for instance, the 'invasion' of persistent Tartar, Walachian or Persian envoys caused Francesco Sforza's, duke of Milan, public discontent. The Easterners had learnt *bad habits* from the *Hungarian*. Like Matthias, they promised great help in return for rather small sums. Fortunately for the crusade, there were counter-arguments. First, warfare costed less in the East. Second, Sforza, like other contesters of the crusader action, but *politically correct* supporters of the idea, was not a highly credible or moral authority on the crusader matter[37].

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34 E.g. *Cronaca di Anonimo Veronese 1446-1488*, edited by Giovanni Soranzo (Venice 1915), p. 307; Antonio Hyvani Sarzanensis, *Historia de volaterrana calamitate* (= *RIS*, NS, XXIII, 4), edited by Francesco Luigi Mannuci (Città di Castello 1913), pp. 42-43; *Cronica moldo-germană*, pp. 31-32;

35 E.g. ASVe, S.S., *Deliberazioni*, reg. 26, cc. 22^{r}, 31^{r}-32^{v} 101^{r-v} (5th of July, 13th of September 1473, 15th of June 1474); *Frammenti*, p. 24; Andrea Navagero, *Storia della Repubblica Veneziana*, in *RIS*, XXIII (1733), cols. 1142-1144; *Aşik Paşa Zade*, *Mehmed Neşri*, in *Cronici turceşti*, I, pp. 95-96, 127-128.

36 Franklin Van Bammer, 'England, the Turk and the Common Corps of Christendom', *AHR*, L (1944-1945), pp. 26-48; John Edwards, '*Reconquista* and Crusade in Fifteenth Century Spain', in *Crusading*, pp. 172-175; Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, pp. 321-324; see Simon, 'Considerații', pp. 10-14.

37 E.g. ASM, A.D.S., Potenze estere, *Venezia*, cart. 362, fasc. 5, 9, nn (24th of May, 1st of September 1476; edited by Emilio Motta, 'Un ambasciatore tartaro a Venezia, 1476', *AV*, XIX (1889), pp. 145-153).

The Milan of the Sforzas was very far away from the crusader frontline. In particular due to its contested 'suzerainty' over the more than questionable, in terms of anti-Ottoman stands, city of Genoa, Milan had been closely linked to the 'crusader treasons' and the subsequent 'crusader disasters' of Nicopolis and Varna. In return, Milan was very interested in any political event and plan that might have affected the Italian schemes of the Sforzas[38].

In Milan's relations to Rome, Genoa, Venice or Naples, the *Turk* was such a factor. The Hungarian matter too played a major part, even before talks began between Naples and Buda for the marriage of Matthias to Beatrice. Reports, such as those of Milan's long-time representative in Venice, Leonardo Botta were of vital political importance, in particular after an 'anti-Ottoman' league was concluded between Milan, Venice and Florence in November 1474, to Sixtus' IV dislike. He viewed it as a challenge to his Italian and crusader authority[39].

Northern Political Aims and Southern Intelligence Reports in Ottoman Context

Two of Botta's reports of March 1474 confirmed and developed the information already sent from Ragusa to Buda (December 1473). Only months after Mehmed had crushed Uzun Hassan (August 1473), Christendom's 'great Muslim hope', the Ottoman troops, only those from Albania at that time, were expected to leave against Stephen. Still, Leonardo Botta had to focus on other 'details', sometimes omitted by his official and unofficial Venetian sources[40].

> […] *Ulterius questa matina, essendo di officii divini, el duce me disse che per altra via digna di fede erano/ advisati ch'el Turcho era in oppinione de soprafedere per questo anno circha li apparati ch'el havena/ ordinati per mare et divertere tute le forze soe contra li Valachi. Et el prefato duce mostra de/ credere che cossi l'habia afare et questa brigata ne sta molto de bona voglia* […] (25th of March). […] *Questa Signoria m'ha fatto vedere uno capitulo d'una lettera, gli scrive el suo/ ambassatore de Ungaria, continente la rotta data per li Valachi al Turcho, dovi adcio/ la Vostra Sublimità intenda il tuto, li mando qui aligato la copia d'esso capitulo* […] (28th of March).

[38] E.g. Franco Catalano, 'Il ducato di Milano nella politica dell'equilibrio, in *Storia di Milano*, VII, *L'età sforzesca* (Milan 1956), pp. 318-319; Al.Simon, 'October 1444-April 1455: Two Moments in the Relations between John Hunyadi and Genoa', in *Between Worlds*, II, p. 314; Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus*, p. 61.

[39] E.g. [Marino Sanudo Il Giovanne], *Vitae Ducum Venetorum Italice feriptae ab origine Urbis, sive ab anno CCCCXXI usque ad annum MCCCCXCIII*, in *RIS*, XXIII (1733), col. 1183; *Vite 1474-1494*, pp. 41-45, 61-62; Riccardo Fubini, 'La lega del 2 novembre 1474 tra Venezia, Milano e Firenze e i suoi pre iminari', in Lorenzo de Medici, *Lettere*, edited by R. Fubini, II, *1474-1478* (Florence 1977), pp. 485-490.

[40] ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Venezia*, cart. 361, fasc. 3, nn (25th, 28th of March 1474); *Raguza*, no. 385, p. 631; Ş. Papacostea, 'Venise et les Pays Roumains au Moyen Age', in *Venezia e il Levante fino alsecolo XV*, edited by Agostino Pertusi, I-2, *Storia-Diritto-Economia* (Florence 1973), pp. 602-605.

The Venetian ambassador in Buda had reported the news of victory of the Walachians over the *Turk*. It was a victory for which Stephen III never took credit. On the contrary, it could be said, he searched for explanations for his failure. Yet, this seems to have been of small Italian value, as 'Central European' data was often viewed separate from 'southern'data'[41].

Another fact seemed to have been overlooked. At the time of his attack on Walachia, Stephen had strong ties to Matthias' arch-rival, Frederic (Friedrich) III, who also tried to exploit the anti-Ottoman climate. This was probably regarded as a 'Hungarian matter', though the list of eastern Habsburg supporters on which Stephen III was placed was rather eloquent[42].

> <The documents issued by the Habsburg chancery of Vienna on> *VI Novembris 1473 Item litera passus pro patriarcha Anthioceno* (Lodovico Severi)/ *Item missiva ad consules et massarios in Caffa ad habendum eundem patriarcham recommisum, ut possit ire per certas eorum secure/ Item ad idem principi Megerili* [Mengli Ghiray], *domino Tartarorum*/ *Item ad idem ad principem Assembegk* [Uzun Hassan], *Persarum domino*/ *Item ad idem ad archiepiscopum de Magno Novagarda* [Feofil, archbishop of Novgrod] / *Item ad idem ad Vanoida* [Stephen of Mol davia], *in Walachia capitaneo*/ *Item ad idem ad Aleca, capitaneo de Plotzko* [Plock, in Masovia]/ *Item ad idem ad Martinum Gostoldo, capitaneo in Thino* [Knin, in Croatia]/ *Item ad idem ad Kazimiro* [Casimir IV], *rege Polonie; dominus ad voluntatem domini imperatoris dedit omnes predictas literas gratis patriarche predicto quia pauper fuit*.

In early November, Stephen had completed his victorious, for the time being, Walachian campaign. He seemed a pillar for the Habsburg scheme, which failed, in the end. The Latin Patriarch of Antioch, highly commended by Sixtus IV, due to his eastern crusader mission, eventually arrived in Buda, contrary to Frederic hopes. Matthias aided Severi who continued his journey to *Persia*, over Moldavia, as Matthias was also at war with Casimir. Whether as Frederic III's *captain* or as Matthias 'vassal', Stephen III stood on the main crusader road[43].

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41 In these matters, see also Al. Simon, 'The Use of the *Gate of Christendom*. Hungary's Mathias Corvinus and Moldavia's Stephen the Great Politics in the late 1400's', *QCR*, III (2004), pp. 204-206.

42 HHStA, Hs.S., Hs. W. 529, f. 261^{r} (6th of November; edited in *Regesten Friedrich*, supl. II-1, no. 3539, p. 523); Simeon Ljubić, *Dispacci di Luca de Tollentis vescovo di Sebenico e di Lionello Cheregato vescovo di Traù nunzi apostolici in Borgogna e nelle Fiandre 1472-1488* (Zagreb 1876), no. I-13, p. 46.

43 E.g. UKB, Mk 9, *mikulovsky rukopis*, ff. 228^{r}-229^{r} [Early 1474; abstract, under 1479, in *Quellen*, no. 91, p. 101); N. Pienaru, 'Proiectul scitic. Relaţiile lui Ştefan cel Mare cu Hoarda Mare' [The Scythian Project: Stephen the Great's Relations to the Great Horde], *RI*, XXIV (2003), 5-6, pp. 122-123 (especially).

2. The Hungarian and Moldavian Background of Italian Reports and Projects

The Hungarian news on the Walachian victory was strange also for another reason. In February 1474, the *Turks* burnt and ravaged Oradea (Nagyvarad, Grosswardein), a small Hungarian Saint-Denis. The royal and popular effect of the raid was huge. Matthias' already contested domestic prestige had been dealt a considerable blow. He managed to turn the tables in his favor and pushed the Hungarian Diet to approve the 1 florin tax *per porta*, even under the reserve that the money thus collected was to be used only against the *Turk*[44].

King Matthias Corvinus between Western Suspicions and Eastern Setbacks

Under the same less auspicious circumstances, king Matthias tried to turn the foreign situation in his favor. He attempted and partially succeeded in using Stephen's Walachian actions to his advantage. In these matters, Matthias could count also on Venice's troubles. The republic, under great political pressure both in the peninsula and in the East, had to turn once more to the king. However, she did not send him money before she saw some results[45].

Matthias had not the best of political images in Venice. Besides, further to the East, the fate of the entire Venetian-Ottoman affair was, more or less, in the hands of *Barbarians*, such as the Tartars and the Walachians. They were even more unreliable than the king. Moreover, Matthias ally and instrument in these matters was his former enemy and subject Stephen[46].

Between (1465) 1466-1467, Stephen III had been both Matthias', though he was already, on the Christian side, Casimir's vassal, and Mehmed's vassal. In return for his support for the king's Ottoman plans, he had been (formally) granted estates. In 1465, by Walachian means, he had been disloyal to Mehmed. In 1467, by Transylvanian means, he had been disloyal to Matthias. In 1465, he took, to Matthias' profit too, Chilia from the Walachian 'representatives' of the sultan. In 1467, Stephen III's former 'allegiance' almost costed king Matthias his life[47].

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44 For instance: *Nachträge*, no. 280, p. 298; GVU, [II], *1474*, art. 8, p. 215; *Chronicon*, pp. 199-201; *Kemal Paşa Zade*, in *Cronici turceşti*, I, pp. 306-307. *Historia*, pp. 59-60; Decei, 'Incursiunea', p. 292.

45 HHStA, S..A., A.D.S., *Hungarica*, A.A., I-2, fasc. 2-4, f. 30^{r-v} [March-April 1474]; *Libri*, V, no. XVI-65, p. 213; *Ammannati Piccolomini*, III, no. 569, p. 1577; no. 755, p. 1875; *Malipiero*, pp. 41, 43, 80, 171.

46 In these matters, e.g. ASV, Arm. XXXIX-10, ff. 256 (276)^{r}-257 (277)^{v} [1459-1460; cf. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, p. 262 (note 111)]; see Simon, *Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin*, pp. 483-484.

47 BCC, Cod. 82-4-8, *Pannonius*, f. 94^{v} (2nd of January 1467; copy: MOL, DF 290346); MDE, II, nos. 11-13, pp. 20-25; MKL, I, no. 62, p. 83; no. 77, p. 110; *Ub*., VI, no. 3544, p. 294; *Długosz* (1887), p. 478.

These were no tokens of Stephen's crusader reliability. Venice tried, on the diplomatic level, to look around them. She had basically done the same in the 1460' in case of Matthias relation to Bosnia and future Herzegovina, whose rulers had constantly accused the king of greed and treason. Still, Matthias stood less and less for an enduring option for the republic[48].

Buda' Southern and Eastern Politics and the Rise of Stephen III of Moldavia

A Florentine report of mid 1472, drafted for the Sforzas, recorded the revenues of the Hungarian bishops, the castles of the main lords of a Hungarian realm richer than portrayed by Matthias in his long quest for subsidies 'in view of a crusade'. The report also listed his crowns and the provinces of Hungary. Walachia, like Transylvania, but also Bosnia, Serbia or Ragusa, was recorded as a province, though a (vassal) state. In matters of finances and estates, the report was very accurate. It was probably also accurate in terms of politics[49].

[…] <*Le corone*>/
La prima Dalmacia/ La segonda Cornatia/ La terza Boemnia/
Le provicie/
Valacia, Transilvagnia, Sciavonia, Servia, Bossnia, Raguzia, Moravia, Silezia […]

In 1472, Radu III was at odds with Matthias. The ties between the king and Stephen had grown stronger. Probably, Matthias was ready too to make his move on *Valacia*, whether with Stephen's aid or with Mehmed's approval. Walachia was re-listed as a royal province. Radu, Mehmed's favorite, led an increasingly independent policy in relation to Buda, namely after the Hungarian-Ottoman truce of spring 1468. In mid 1472, this had to end, after Újlaki too had been crowned king of Bosnia in May, which further complicated Matthias relations to Rome[50].

The same year, Matthias took great official pride in having overcome, meaning outlived, the treason of Walachia and Moldavia. The second one was now at his side, but also at that of Frederic III, the other lawful king of Hungary according to his treaty of 1463 with king Matthias. Stephen's relations of 1473-1474 with

[48] E.g. ASVe, S.S., *Deliberazioni*, reg. 21, c. 219^{r} (31st of December 1463); MHS, I-2, no. 4, p. 166; no. 5, p. 190; MDE, I, no. 23, p. 33; no. 162, p. 224; *Frammenti*, p. 11; AAV, XXIV, no. 7240, p. 485.

[49] ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Ungheria*, cart. 645, fasc. 2, nn (edited by Péter E. Kovács, 'A leg gazdabb Magyarok 1472-ben. Egy követjelentés és a valóság' [The Richest Hungarians in 1472. An Am bassy and its <Historic> Value], *Sz*, CXXXIX (2005), 2, p. 428); MDE, II, nos. 176-177, pp. 251-257.

[50] E.g. ELTEK, *Kaprinai*, B, LXVIII, no. 6, p. 13 (1st of Novembrer 1472); *Teleki*, XI, no. 289, p. 470; *Hurmuzaki*, XV-1, nos. 137-138, pp. 79-80; *Ub*., VI, no. 3843, p. 479; *Documente Braşov*, no. 272, p. 328.

Frederic, to whom he had sworn allegiance in 1459, could've been 'paradoxically' also a result of his contacts to Matthias Corvinus[51].

The rise of Matthias' 'vassal' continued. In the summer and fall of 1472, Stephen seems to have been on the list of major *Christian* figures addressed by Uzun Hassan for a common fight against the *Turk*. Mary of Mangop, Stephen III's wife, and Catherine Comnenos, Uzun's wife, were cousins. This made Stephen III, whose wife was also related to Zoe Palaeologus, more trustworthy in Uzun Hassan's eyes. Nevertheless, both from the East and the West, Matthias Corvinus was the main East-Central European partner for any anti-Ottoman talks[52].

III. Venice's Oriental Connections and Necessities in Regional and Local Contexts

The fall of Negroponte (1471), the failure of the 'Muscovite plan' (1472), Uzun Hassan's defeat (1473), the difficult talks with the Tartars in view of their anti-Ottoman action (1473-1474), the even more difficult negotiations with Mehmed (in particular 1471-1473), the failed Ottoman 'palace coup' attempted by republic placed her in a delicate position. Her relation with Rome was still tense, while the relation to Milan could always turn into an open conflict. The republic needed a success in the East. She needed at least some anti-Ottoman hope[53].

1. The Resorts and Grounds of Crusader Information Transfer in the 1470'

Venice's relation to Matthias had been rather poor, since the failed German-Hungarian crusader plan of 1466-1467. Still, he was the one most likely to provide this success for the republic. The king of Poland, Casimir IV, was still on friendly terms with the sultan and at odds with Matthias. Stephen III of Moldavia was equally a promise and a liability for the crusade, due to his previous actions and changes of policy, namely in 1462 and in 1467[54].

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51 MKL I, no. 77, p. 111; no. 189, p. 266; *Regesten Friedrich*, supl. II-1, no. 3539, p. 523; *Bonfini* (1936-1941), IV, pp. 32-33; Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus*, pp. 24-26; Simon, 'The Arms of the Cross', p. 52.

52 MDE, II, no. 170, pp. 239-240; *Hustinskaja lietopiś* [The Chronicle of Hust], in *SRPol*, II (1874), p. 304; Thierry Ganchou, 'Une Kantakouzène, imperatrice de Trébizonde: Théodôra ou Hélèna?', *REB*, LVIII (2000), pp. 215-220; Mihailo Popović, *Mara Branković-Leben und Wirken einer Frau an der kulturellen Schnittstelle zwischen Serben, Byzantinern und Osmanen*, PhD Thesis (Vienna 2005), pp. 144-146.

53 E.g. MHS, I-2, no. 14, p. 46; *Guerre,* no. 90, p. 112; MKL, I, no. 211, p. 296; *Długosz* (1887), pp. 597-600, 602-603; Theocharis Stavridis, *The Sultan of the Vezirs. The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453-1474)* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, 2001), pp. 232-234.

54 E.g. *Dogiel*, I, nos. 21-24, pp. 65-68; *Frammenti*, pp. 17-18; Gy. Rázsó, 'Una strana alleanza. Alcuni pensieri sulla storia militare e politica dell'alleanza contro i turchi (1440-1464)', in *Venezia e Ungheria nel Rinascimento*, edited by Vittore Branca (Florence 1973), pp. 95-101 (in

The Question of Crusader Credibility and the Extent of Anti-Ottoman Successes

Milan, well aware of these Venetian problems, was familiar with Venetian propaganda and disinformation. This had a direct influence on the Italian, namely Milanese, reception of Stephen's victory of Vaslui (January 1475). A series of Milanese reports, authored by the same Leonardo Botta (March-April 1475), are marked by several doubts regarding this victory. It took more than a month and supplementary data in order for the Duchy of Milan to accept Stephen III's victory of Vaslui and his 'encyclical' letter sent throughout Europe[55].

Previously his actions had been viewed, as in the case of the report sent from Genoese Chios, in October 1474, as part of a (personal) conflict with Radu, who, contrary to what was stated in the report, died probably only at the beginning of 1475. The anti-Ottoman aims of Stephen's actions were quite unknown. Except for reports such as the one sent from Venetian Candia to Milan, in the same month, little contemporary information established a link between Stephen III's combats and the general continental anti-Ottoman warfare[56].

> [...] *Lo Segnore de Volaquia Alta et morto, lo Segno*<re> *de la Velaquia Basa et intrato dentro lo paise et a/ un Segnore a lo so modo, lo quale metra apertene a lo Turco, lo qualle ge ne mandato uno con grande pessansa/ lo aceterano, sera contento caxo que no se terne ara goera con lo Segno*<re> *da la Velaquia Basa et con quelo que o facto,/ laqualle cossa fosse teneamo no poria fare, ny atendere a l'armata que de sopra dicto e; quello que ne seque que/ Vi avisero sempre la Exellentia Vostra maxime se yo intendro quea Voy piace* [...] (3rd of October, Chios).

> [...] *Usun Cassanus potentissima/ manu descensurus est in Asiam, & nisi divina dispositione turbetur, maxima facile subseqentur/ Turchus Constantinopolis munitioni invigilat, triremes & classem potentem parat de meo iudicio/ ex exhis que secretius percepi, preparationem habeant in ostentationem potius, & in maiorem opinonem de/ se princicipalis incutiendam, ac ut hostium suorum pecunias consummant, quodin verum rei effectum & executionem/ fieri autumo. Sentitur enim res suas maxime declinasse. Cenidere nanque multa millia hominum &/ potioribus & expectioribus, quos habbeat apud Usum Cassanum, apud Walachos & apud Scutarum, qui/ vix possunt una etate renovari tantum hec sunt in manu Dei* [...] (4th of October, Candia).

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particular); Lajos Tardy, *Beyond the Ottoman Empire. 14th–16th Century Hungarian Diplomacy* (Szeged 1978), pp. 58-59.

55 E.g. ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Venezia*, cart. 361, fasc. 3, nn; 2nd, 5th, 11th, 16th, 18th, 25th of March 1475); MDE, II, no. 209, pp. 301-302; *Acte*, III, p. 54; *Actae,* no. 16, p. 17; *Malipiero*, pp. 99-100.

56 E.g. ASG, A.S., *Diversorum Communis Januae*, 3055, nn (11th of January 1474); ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Ungheria*, cart. 649, fasc. 2, nn (3rd, 4th of October 1474); ASVe, S.S., *Deliberazioni*, reg. 26, c. 101r (15th of June); *Nachträge*, no. 234, p. 257; no. 251, p. 266; no. 255, p. 273; no. 280, p. 298.

Stephen III's importance grew constantly. News on his actions seemed more credible than data on similar Venetian or Hungarian combats. He was a relative newcomer and had previously played on both sides and namely on the Ottoman one. Information on the unrest caused by him in Istanbul appeared to be more than the usual rumors and disinformation of the time. Milan's reluctance thus focused not on him, but on his 'patrons', Venice and Buda[57].

In spite of his Venetian or Ottoman usefulness or of the 'panegyric' wrote by Lodovico Il Moro at Matthias' death, the king was not viewed as a trustworthy political partner by Milan, not even during the talks that led to the marriage contract between John Corvinus and Bianca Maria Sforza (1487-1490). In 1473-1474, Milan had declined Matthias' personal matrimonial offer. The Sforza opinion was partially shared by Venice, namely, for Ottoman reasons that, on the other hand, frequently compelled her to financially and politically support Matthias[58].

Anti-Ottoman 'Products' of Informational Delay and Venetian Propaganda

For such reasons, Venice shaped the 'crusader image' of the, previously 'unreliable', Stephen. For the time being however, Venice avoided to promote him as a direct challenge to the 'crusader front seat' of Matthias. The 'Walachian news' which arrived, with Venice's consent, in Milan, in March 1474, can be viewed also as a first step in this political direction[59].

It is highly improbable that the news of a Moldavian action in Walachia, regardless of its outcome, could have arrived in Buda and from there in Venice, until the 28th of March. Ac cording to the Moldavian-German Chronicle, Stephen 'burnt' Walachia on the 14th of March. For news to travel from Târgovişte to Buda it usually took two weeks. The same time span was need for a message to arrive from Buda to Venice. Venetian propaganda however 'speeded' things up. This feature lasted for decades in the Venetian-Moldavian case[60].

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57 E.g. *Vite 1474-1494*, pp. 76-83; Marco Pistoresi, 'Venezia-Milano-Firenze 1475. La visita in Laguna di Sforza Maria Sforza e le manovre della diplomazia internazionale : aspetti politici e ritualità pubblica', *SV*, XLVI (2003), pp. 31-69; Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, pp. 204 (note 18), 213 (note 49).

58 ELTEK, Codices, *Kaprinai*, B, LXVIII, nos. 4-5, pp. 11-12 (7th of September 1474); MDE, IV, no. 129, p. 182; *Acta in consilio secreto in castello Portae Jovis Mediolani* (= *AI*, IV, IX, XVII), edited by Alfio Rosario Natale, II, *11 aprile 1478-22 dicembre 1478* (Milan 1964), pp. 311, 315-322 (12th, 16th of November); Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, pp. 204, 213; Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus*, p. 188.

59 E.g. *Ammannati Piccolomini*, III, no. 755, p. 1875; no. 767, p. 1891; *Frammenti*, pp. 16-18; Simon, 'Consideraţii', pp. 12-14; Idem, *Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin*, p. 111; Mureşan, 'Lando', pp. 180-181.

60 E.g. ASG, A.S., *Diversorum Communis Januae*, 3056, nn (21st of January 1474); *Frammenti*, p. 19; Vladimir Segeš, 'Time, Space and Mobility in the Wars of the Late Middle Ages', in *Fight*, pp. 103-113.

In this highly delicate context that still poses several questions, Stephen made his great anti-Ottoman debut and Matthias re-entered the anti-Ottoman stage. For instance, we might presume that the Venetian report of March 1474, arrived, in part, in Milan, regarded the events of November 1473. Then, though we do not know that Radu had Ottoman support from the beginning, Stephen had won. Due to the great delay with which the news had arrived in Venice, the report thus made no reference to Radu's return to the throne (late December)[61].

Not even the news on Vaslui (10th of January 1475) arrived too quickly in Venice (6th of March 1475). Unofficially the victory was known in Venice already on the 17th of February. In this case however, the delay was caused by the 'fight' between Stephen and Matthias for the monopoly on the promotion of the victory. In general, whether it was an Ottoman victory or a failure, Venice learned of it within a month (e.g. in 1453, 1456, 1476, 1480-1481 or 1484). Due to the 'republic's Ottoman needs' of 1474, a delay in that case is highly improbable[62].

2. Regional Links between Western and Eastern anti-Ottoman Plans and Failures

Venice's attitude towards Transylvania is hard to rate, though the coordination between her anti-Ottoman pillars of Buda and Suceava depended on it. Due to her representatives' of Hungary and Moldavia almost desperate reactions during Mehmed II's Moldavian campaign of 1476, it is possible that the republic did not (fully) realize the problem. This incapacity is quite intriguing given only the fact that the Transylvanian rebellion and Matthias' subsequent Moldavian failure of 1467 ensured the *salvation of the republic*, in the words of her officials[63].

Though the political distances shortened and continental connections had become more frequent also for smaller states, connecting the different areas of interest was still a problem. This eventually led to the fact that in 1476 Mehmed II managed to escape from Moldavia, in spite of the planned Moldavian-Hungarian-Venetian-Tartar trap. Długosz went even as far as to blame Casimir IV, for he had not intervened and thus missed out eternal glory. However, Transylvania, the Volga and Crimean Tartars were only some of the 'crusader' symptoms[64].

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61 ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Venezia*, cart. 361, fasc. 3, nn (25th, 28th of March 1474); *Długosz* (1887), pp. 604-606; *Unrest*, pp. 107-108; *Letopiseţul anonim*, p. 17; *Cronica moldo-germană*, pp. 31-32.

62 *Codice*, II-2, no. 1117, p. 195; *Hurmuzaki*, II-2, no. 202, p. 224, *Veneţia*, no. 11, p. 255; no. 16, p. 257; *Malipiero*, p. 111; *Vite 1474-1494,* II, pp. 12, 14; Simon, *Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin*, p. 568.

63 E.g. MOL, DL 39311 (9th of July 1476); MHS, I-1, no. 1, p. 303; MDE, II, no. 46, p. 76; no. 223, p. 324; *Codex*, III, no. 258, p. 281; *Frammenti*, pp. 38-39; *Ammannati Piccolomini*, III, no. 871, p. 2059.

64 *Długosz* (1887), pp. 646-647; *Aşik Paşa Zade*, p. 97; *Tursun Bey* (2007), p. 239; Simon, *Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin*, pp. 360-361; see also R. Fubini's study, 'Diplomacy and Government in the Italian City-States of the Fifteenth Century: Florence and Venice', in *Politics and*

Hungarian Domestic Roads towards the Crusader Failures of 1476 and 1484

Given the context, even the reserved attitude in practice, enthusiastic in writing, of the Transylvanian nobility towards the anti-Ottoman actions of the 1470', towards the actions of their king or those of their neighbor, Stephen, could be viewed as quite justified. A fact must be recalled. In 1476 and 1484, Matthias had to bring troops from Hungary proper in order to aid Stephen. This worked quite well in 1476, however, with a significant delay that increased Venice's worst fears, for, during Mehmed's attack, little seemed to be done in Transylvania, in spite of talks and rumors. Eight years later, in 1484, this proved to be a complete disaster[65].

In 1484, in spite of Stephen (István) Báthory's, the acting voivode of Transylvania, and Matthias' pressures, apparently nobody in Transylvania and few in the Banate took action in favor of Stephen. A likely explanation might also be that Matthias, though he tried, at times (1469-1470, 1476), to gather troops, via the traditional congregational channels, never called in the powerful Transylvanian assembly of estates, after the rebellion of 1467. After his death, the estates reconvened in 1493, the year of the great Ottoman attack on Transylvania[66].

The Transylvanian attitude has its place in a wider *Christian* context. The military and tax policies generally associated with crusader style actions, the non-Ottoman rivalries and interests favored namely a reserved attitude towards anti-Ottoman endeavors. This attitude is quite eloquent if we take into account the fact that, unlike the Italian or German powers and cities, the Transylvanian Voivodate was not far away from the 'Ottoman front', from which the Transylvanian area was separated only by the unstable state of Walachia[67].

Matthias' attempted to reform the realm's southern defense system, mainly after 1479. The reform focused on the establishment of three major defense units (Slavonia, the Banate, Transylvania), but was jeopardized from the start in its eastern part. Here regional security was better assured by diplomatic means and arrangements, than by military acts and measures[68].

Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, edited by Daniela Frigo (Cambridge 2000), pp. 39-40

65 ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Napoli*, cart. 244, fasc. 2, nn (9th of July 1484); *Ungheria*, cart. 645, fasc. 7, nn (19th of August 1476); SOAL, A.C.L., *Mohács előtti oklevelek*, 17-59 (16th of September 1484; copy: MOL, DF 265307); *Ub.*, VII, no. 4559, p. 357; *Actae*, nos. 18-20, pp. 20-23; *Frammenti*, pp. 38-39.

66 *Hurmuzaki*, II-2, no. 126, p. 146; no. XV-1, no. 124, p. 71; no. 137, p. 79; *Ub*., VI, no. 3330, p. 152; *Actae*, no. 19, p. 22; *Bonfini* (1936-1941), pp. 96-98; Simon, *Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin*, pp. 235-236.

67 For instance: MOL, DL 27714 (21st of October 1479); *Ub*., VII, no. 4670, p. 459; *Documente SBB*, no. 55, pp. 136-137; no. 57, p. 140; see also Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania. 1440-1514* [The Romanian Nobility of Transylvania. 1440-1514] (Bucharest 2000), pp. 93-98, 235-244, 326.

68 *Hurmuzaki*, XV-1; no. 99, p. 58; no. 171, p. 97; Géza Pálffy, 'The Origins and Development of the Border Defence System against the Ottoman Empire in Hungary (up to the Early Eighteenth

Plans and Promises to Compensate Regional Crusader Costs and Shortcomings

In spring 1475, prior to the fall of Caffa, a Venetian anti-Ottoman project was presented in Rome. Matthias should have attacked Mehmed II in Serbia and Bosnia. Stephen III, *voivode of Serbia and Moldavia*, together with Casimir IV, who, menaced by the Hungarian-Moldavian 'entente', sought a *Turkish deal*, was supposed to attack in Bulgaria. Realistic in terms of the military forces involved, the project was quite unrealistic on the actual military and political level. The authorities of Stephen and king Matthias were mixed up, while there was no real coordination planned between them. The Transylvanian link was thus not even mentioned[69].

> […] *Exercitus igitur hoc ordine conficiendus/ bellumque quatripartito inferrendum opera precium arbitrantur, quo celerrime maxima/ Europae parte pellendum hostem non dubitant. Polonous namque Serenissimus Rex facile ex-/ pertioribus bello Polonis ac Boemis vigintiquinque millium conflabit exercitum,/ sumptoque simul Stephano Servie sive Mundavie Vayvoda cum quinque millibus,/ transacto Dnubio per Bulgariam per hostem invadant. Ungarie vero Serenissimus Rex/ cum vigintiquinque millibus ex suis militia aptioribus et experit s per Serviam/ et iuxta Bossinam partier aggrediantur hostem* […].

The project's value of diplomatic nature, due also to the disputes for crusader subsidies arisen after Vaslui. Especially Venice made several promises to Stephen III. *Bulgaria* was probably promised too to him as she had been to Hunyadi in 1444. According to Moldavian records from the 1700', the Venetian promises were even greater, covering most of the lands between the Lower Danube and Istanbul. Because the East seemed to shelter the last anti-Ottoman resources available to Venice, such promises may have been actually made[70].

Century)', in *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs in Central Europe. The Military Confines in the Era of Ottoman Conquest*, edited by Géza Dávid, P. Fodor (Leiden–Boston–Cologne 2000), pp. 10-13 (in particular).

69 ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, cart. 640, *Illiria, Polonia, Russia, Slavonia*, fasc. 2, nn [April-May 1475; the document was edited, under 1462, in *Arbanija*, no. 226, pp. 128, a mistaken dating, because, for instance, Paolo Mauroceno, the Venetian representative in Rome, who sent the copy of the plan, was active in Rome in the mid 1470'; in this respect: Cristian Luca, Al. Simon, 'Bani pentru cruce. Roma, Veneţia, Milano, Buda şi Suceava în 1475' [Money for the Cross: Rome, Venice, Milan, Buda and Suceava in 1475], *RI*, XVIII (2008), 1-2]; *Codex*, III, no. 202, p. 223; no. 222, p. 243; no. 226, p. 246.

70 E.g. EMC, nos. 80-81, pp. 103-108; *Veneţia*, no. 20, pp. 260-261; Matei Cazacu, ‚Un voyageur dans les pays roumains et son Histoire de la Moldavie: Leyon Pierce Balthasar von Campenhausen (1746-1808)', in *Şerban Papacostea*, p. 414; Simon, Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin, pp. 379-380.

Venice's Tartar schemes eventually came to Stephen's advantage. In 1471, Stephen had crushed Mengli Ghiray's Tartars. This had a great impact on Vienna. The Habsburg report of 1474 on Stephen began with his victory over the *Tartar emperor*, which was chronologically mingled with his victory over Matthias (1467). This 'mixture' laid the foundations stones of the German legend of Stephen of Moldavia who could defeat two monarchs in the same day[71].

> *Steffanus weida in der Molda hats dem Thatarischen Kaisser/ ongeferlich vor 6 jaren* [i.e. 1467/ 1468] *gefangen und sein volk erschlagen,/ da hats dem gefangenem Thatarischen Kaisser eringtem fridt und/ plündung gemacht und sein leiblicher sonn dem gewaltem/ weida eingesercht* […].

Still, even after Stephen's challenges to the Ottoman supremacy in the Black Sea area intensified, Venice took into account the possibility of overrunning Moldavia with Tartars and Russians if it he did not take any further anti-Ottoman actions (1472-1473). In 1476-1477, the Volga Tartars came to Moldavia's border. Venice asked him to take the Tartars and conquer Bulgaria. Stephen politely refused. He did not want his state to stand for an oriental passage way. He had already accepted to fight the *Turk*, not for some ideals, but due to necessities[72].

Crusading in the Black Sea Area and the Defending the Adriatic Space

Anti-Ottoman actions were equally matter of the Churches, of Church union in particular. This had been made clear in the case of Ivan III's marriage to Zoe and Russia's crusader planned crusader action (1472). Rome's and Venice's Muscovite hopes, born, in this case, by Bessarion's designs, quickly faded away. The matter became more pressing. They had no *Greek* rite politician, other than Stephen III of Moldavia, to their avail. They focused on him[73].

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71 HHStA, S.A., A.D.S., *Hungarica*, A.A., I-2, fasc. 2-4, f. 30r; Jean Mollinet, *Chroniques*, edited by Georges Doutrepont, Omer Jodogne, II, *1488-1506*, (Brussels 1935), p. 199; *Cronica moldo-germană*, p. 32; N. Pienaru, 'Relaţiile lui Ştefan cel Mare cu Hanatul din Crimeea. O controversă: prima incursiune tătară în Moldova' [Stephen the Great's Relations to Khanate of Crimeea. A Controversy: The First Tartar Raid on Moldavia], in *Ştefan-Atlet*, pp. 298-302; Simon, *Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin*, p. 431.

72 In this respect, see also *Történelmi bizottságának oklevél-másolatai* [Safety Copies of Historical Documents], edited by Lipot Óváry, I, *Mohácsi vész elôtti okiratok kivonatai* [Documents prior to the Battle of Mohács] (Budapest 1890); nos. 550, 553, p. 141; *Guerre*, no. 85, pp. 106-107; no. 90, pp. 112-113; *Veneţia*, no. 20, pp. 260-261; *Malipiero*, pp. 41, 43, 73-74; Simon, 'The Arms of the Cross', pp. 60-61.

73 E.g. [Jacopo Amma[n]nati], *Diarium Concistoriale dell cardinale Ammanati atribuito dal Muratori a Giacomo Gherardi da Volterra*, în *RIS*, XXIII (1904), 3, p. 143; *Joannis Burkardi Liber Notarum ab anno MCCCCLXXXIII usque ad annum MDVI* (= *RIS*, XXXII, 1), edited by Enrico Celani, I [1483-1496] (Città di Castello 1906), p. 137; Gustave Alef, 'Diaspora Greeks in Moscow', *BStud*, VI (1979), 1-2, pp. 29-30.

Mehmed tried to respond to the plans also by means of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as he had probably done already in 1467, with royal Polish support. Patriarch Simeon I basically accompanied, through *Bulgaria*, Suleiman Beg's army, sent against Stephen III in late 1474. His repeated anti-Ottoman acts and Latin talks had resulted in a break with the Moldavian Orthodox hierarchs, namely with metropolite Theoctist I, the leader of the anti-unionist party. At the end of 1473, the hierarchs had left the princely council. They were never to return[74].

Western Solutions and Perspectives on Pontic Political Affairs

As Stephen III's Hungarian relations improved and the Walachian conflict developed, on the eve of his Crimean marriage, the ruler, who overcame also a major domestic plot (1471-1472), intensified his pressures on Caffa. The Ottoman tribute paying Genoese metropolis of Crimea, under Mengli Ghiray's protection in particular, was Stephen's main Christian rival in terms of north-pontic trade. He tried to increase his control over the harbors in his possession, former Genoese colonies and still largely autonomous in relation to Suceava (1473-1474)[75].

He eventually could not rely on them. Prior to the battle of Vaslui, which allowed him to retake possession over the harbors, Chilia and Cetatea Albă had surrendered to the *Turk*, as Caffa refused to engage in an anti-Ottoman alliance. Caffa's answer did not change after Vaslui. Still, also because Venice, Genoa's arch-rival, exploited Stephen's gain by concluding, in secret, a truce with the Porte, Caffa could not avoid Ottoman conquest in summer 1475[76].

Equally troubling was his control over his other apparent desired area of expansion. His Walachian political and military successes did usually not last longer than a month, whether he acted alone or, at least in theory, with Hungarian armed support. Frederic III's proposition made probably following the chancery report on Stephen, of early 1474, that Stephen should be granted rule over Walachia, in

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74 Vitalien Laurent, 'Les premiers patriarches de Constantinople sous la domination turque (1454-1476)', *REB*, XXVI (1968), pp. 268-269; Andrei Pliguzov, 'On the Title 'Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus', *HUS*, XV (1991), 3-4, pp. 343-344; Simon, 'The Use', pp. 214-215; Mureşan, 'Lando', pp. 170-171.

75 *Codice*, I, no. 120, pp. 307-309; no. 151, pp. 364-368; no. 377, p. 815; II-2, no. 658, p. 338; no. 1087, pp. 103-104 ; no. 1102, pp. 114-116; no. 1104, p. 122; no. 1117, p. 195; *Acte*, III, p. 50; for other data, see Al.Simon, 'Stăpânii porturilor. Problema moldavă între Napoli şi Milano în vara anului 1484' [The Masters of the Harbors: Naples, Milan and Moldavian Question (Summer 1484)], SMIM, XXVI (2008).

76 For instance: *Acte*, III, pp. 88-89; Andrei Pippidi, 'Lettres inédites de Leonardo III Tocco', *RESEE*, XXXII (1994), 1-2, pp. 69-70; Ş. Papacostea 'Moldova lui Ştefan cel Mare şi genovezii din Marea Neagră' [Stephen the Great's Moldavia and the Genoese of the Black Sea <Area>], *AIIX*, XXIX (1992), pp. 70-72.

return for his support of Habsburg action against Matthias was thus rather presumptuous. Vienna could not give what Buda failed to take for herself[77].

In 1473-1474, the main focus of the crusade was, not only in case of the Walachians and the Tartars, in the Black Sea area, as also a certain Constantine Great Comenos, *filz du duc de Trapezonde*, was sent from Dijon to Vienna. Moldavia remained, in Rome's, but also in Venice's perspective, a foremost pontic crusader force. In 1476, Sixtus IV asked Burgundy for help. The *Ungaris et Valacchis marique Helespontico* should not face the *Turk* alone. Yet, at the time, not even the relations between Suceava and Moscow were fully functional[78].

Constructing Crusader Alliances and Reducing Crusader Costs

The victory of Vaslui could be viewed as a great surprise. Few expected the Ottomans to be defeated and even fewer were willing to believe that. The different negotiations, rumors and expectations had prepared neither Poland or Hungary, nor the Italian Peninsula, for such an outcome. Fear immediately resurfaced. Sultan Mehmed's vengeance was unavoidable. In the end, like on the eve of the fall of Caffa, it all came down to two things: the *Turk* should attack somewhere else and, if he did so, may God give him a defeat as the one of Vaslui[79].

> [...] *L'armata del Turcho e intrata in Mare Magiore alla via de Capha/ per questo anno siamo liberati da terrore. Esso sta in persona a/ Constantinopoli, et questo anno non ha a moverse, potra forse mandare/ el suo bassa de Romania cum lo exercito a la via de Moldavia/ per cerchar de vindicarsi del dampno et iniuria quale el/ dicto bassa have questo zenario in dicti parti di Moldavia, che li/ fuorono tagliati in peze piu de 30^{m} Turchi, che s'el andara, prego/ Dio la secunda cavalchata corresponda ala prima* [...] (29th May 1475, Ragusa).

Finding a 'master-mind' behind the eastern events of the early 1470' (in particular 1472/ 1473-1474) is thus not easy. Yet, it is useful, due to the peculiar Muslim and Greek contacts involved, as the relations between Buda, Rome and Venice

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77 For instance: HHStA, S.A., A.D.S., *Hungarica*, A.A., I-2, fasc. 2-4, f. 30^{r}; *Długosz* (1887), pp. 609-612, 618-621, *Bonfini* (1936-1941), IV, pp. 61-62; see Al. Simon, 'The Hungarian Means of the Relations between the Habsburgs and Moldavia at the End of the 15th Century', *AIRCRU*, VIII (2006), pp. 259-296.

78 ASV, Misc., Arm., II-30, f. 44 (49)^{r} (25th of February 1476; edited in *Magyarország*, no. 101, pp. 111-112); *Relaţiile*, no. 9, pp. 61-62; Luise Michelson, 'Michael Alighieri, Gesandter Kaiser Davids von Trapezunt, am Hof der Herzöge von Burgund (1461-1470)', *ArchPont*, XLI (1987), pp. 190-192.

79 E.g. ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Illiria, Polonia, Russia, Slavonia*, cart. 640, fasc. 2, nn (14th of February); *Turchia-Levante*, cart. 647, fasc. 1, nn (29th of May); *Venezia*, cart. 361, fasc. 3, nn (28th of February, 5th, 11th, 16th, 18th, 22nd of March 1475); *Frammenti*, p. 27; *Długosz* (1887), pp. 622-623, 638.

were still tense, though this did not imply a break in anti-Ottoman talks. Matthias seemingly did not offer a traditional official greeting to Sixtus IV on his election (1471) until early 1475. After Bessarion's death (1472), a real coordination between Roman and Venetian *Greek* plans was reattempted, only at the beginning of 1474, when Girolamo Lando became Latin Patriarch of Constantinople[80].

Such gaps and doubts led to the idea of a crusader blueprint attributed to Bessarion, who had major ties to Greek, Latin and Muslim politicians. Whether or not the events of 1473-1474 were the result of his design, one aspect is certain. His 'crusade' worked better than the one granted, as consolation prize to another unsuccessful papal candidate and Latin Patriarch of Constantinople, Thomas (Tamás) Bakócz, archbishop of Esztergom (Gran), Venice's favorite (1513-1514). The 'crusade' of 1514 severally harmed the weakened Hungarian state, while the 'crusade' of the early 1470' had quite the opposite effect on the realm of St. Stephen[81].

The negotiations and plans of the early 1470' were, in essence, not too different from other projects and talks of the late 1400'. What made them 'special', for the moment, as well as, to a certain extent, over time, were the Danubian and Pontic combats of 1475-1476, in particular. These combats ended in an overall 'draw', by far the best anti-Ottoman result of the last decades. The 'draw' however costed the *Christians* more than it costed the Porte[82].

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ASM	Archivio di Stato di Milano, Milan

[80] E.g. *Monumenta Romana Episcopatus Vesprimiensis*, edited by József Lukcsics, III, *1416-1492* (Budapest 1902), no. 481, p. 329; VMPL, II, no. 221, p. 179; *Hurmuzaki*, II-2, no. 202, p. 224; *Nachträge*, no. 167, p. 180; *Anonimo Veronese*, p. 310; Fubini, 'Lega', pp. 486-488; Mureşan, 'Lando', pp. 173-174.

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ASV — Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Vatican City
Miscellaneorum Armarium/ Miscellanea Armadi [also known as Varia Politicorum] (Misc.), Armarium (Arm.), [series] II, [reg.], 7, 30.

ASVe — Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice
Senato Secreto [Senato Secreti] (S.S.), *Deliberazioni*,reg. 21, *1460-1463*, reg. 26, *1473-1474*.

BCC — Biblioteca Capitular Colombiana, Seville
Codices, Section 82, mss. 4-8, *Joannis Pannonii Vitesii episcopi Quinque Ecclesiarum Silvaruni Liber et Epistolae* (*Pannonius*) (copy: MOL, DF, section U 1223).

DJAN-Cluj — Direcţia Judeţeană a Arhivelor Naţionale, filiala Cluj [Romanian National Archives-Cluj County Branch], Cluj-Napoca
Acte medievale din afara Transilvaniei [Medieval documents from outside Transylvania] *Documente medievale din Regatul Ungariei* [Medieval documents from the Kingdom of Hungary], rols. XV-XVI (from MOL, FT, *Nehring*, rols. 30173-30174).

ELTEK — Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Könyvtár [The Library of the "Eötvös Loránd" University, Budapest
Kézirattár (Codices), *Kaprinai*, B (in 4°), [toms] XLVIII.

HHStA — Haus-, Hofs- und Saatsarchiv, Vienna (Wien, Bécs)
Handschriftensammlung (Hs.S.), Hs. W(eiss) 529.
Mainzer Erzkanzlerarchiv (M.E.A.), *Reichstagakten*, [Karton] 1a, 1366-1673 (fasc. 1a [-1, *1466-1571*, [reg.]. 2, *1442, 1453. 1454. 1456, 1466, 1467, 1470*, 3, *Allerhand Reichsanschläge 1431-1688*, 4, *1366-1673*]).
Staatenabteilungen (S.A.), Ausserdeutsche Staaten (A.D.S.), *Hungarica* (*Ungarische Akten*), *Allgemeine Akten* (A.A.), I, [Karton] 1 (I-1), 1, *1423-1525* (fasc. 1[-1 (A), *1463 Juli-1490 Mai*, 2 (B), *1423 April-1518 Mai*: 1, *Fridericiana* (Miscellanea), *1478-1487*, 2, *1423-1518*]).

MOL — Magyar Országos Levéltár [The National Hungarian Archives], Budapest,
Antemohacsiana [Medieval Documents prior to 1526]
(Q section) Diplomatikai Levéltár [Diplomatic Archive] (DL), 27714 (Q 320; Erdélyi Országos kormanyhátósági levéltár [The Government Archive of Transylvania] (F), KKOL, *Cista comitatuum*: *Kükülô*, *Szolnok Interior*, *Torda*), 39311 (Q 2; Bécsi levéltárakból kiszolgáltatott iratokból [Extradited Documents from the Archives of Vienna] (I), *Bécsi levéltárakból kiszolgáltatott iratokból*),
(U section) Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény [Diplomatic Collection of Copies] (DF), 265307 (U 618, SOAL, A.C.L., *Mohács előtti oklevevlek*), 276099 (U 815, HHStA, *Hungarica*, A.A., I-2). 290346 (U 1223, BCC, Cod. 82-4-8, *Pannonius*).
Filmtár [Microfilm Archive] (FT),
Nehring Karl gyűjtése [The Donation/ Legacy of Karl Nehring], rol. 30173-30174

ÖNB — Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (Wien, Bécs)
Handschriften-, Autographen- und Nachlass Sammlung (Codices), Cod. 6215-6217 (Stefano Magno, *Annali veneti e del mondo* [*1443-1478*]).

SOAL — Státny Oblastný Archiv Levoča [Regional State Archive of Levoča], Levoča (Lewocza, Leutschau, Lőcse).
[Section] L. Rody i panstavá [Families and Domains], I. Rody [Families] (L-I), Andráši (z Krásnej Hôrky) Archív/ Andrássy család levéltára [Archive of the Andrássy Family] (A.C.L.), [Section]: *Mohács előtti oklevelek* [Documents prior to Mohács], 17-59 (copy: MOL, DF, section U 618).

UKB — MasarykovyUniversitni knihovny [The Library of the "Masaryk" University], Brno
Mk 9, *mikulovsky rukopis* [The Mikulov Manuscript], ff. 210^{r}-283^{r} (copy: MOL, FT, *Nehring*, rols. 30173-30174).

Journals, Reviews and Collections (Series)

AARMSI — Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Sectiunii Istorice [The Annals of the Romanian Academy. The Memoirs of the Historical Section], Bucharest, 1880-

AHASH — Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest, 1951 [1952]-1990

AHP — Archivium Historiae Pontificiae, Rome, 1963-

AHR — The American Historical Review, New York, London, Washington, 1895-

AI — Acta Italica. Raccolta di documenti sulla amministrazione pubblica in Italia dal medioevo alla costituzione dello stato nazionale, edited by Gianfranco Miglio, Milan, 1960-

AIIAI — Anuarul Institutului de Istorie (şi Arheologie, from 1972) "A.D. Xenopol" [Yearbook of the "A.D. Xenopol" Institute for History <and Archaeology>], Iaşi, 1964-1989

AII(A)C	Anuarul Institutului de Istorie (şi Arheologie, 1971-1990) din Cluj- Napoca [Yearbook of the Institute for History <and Archaeology> of Cluj-Napoca], Cluj<-Napoca> (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár), 1958-
AIINC	Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Naţională din Cluj [Yearbook of the Institute of Na tional History of Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár)], Cluj, 1922-1945
AIRCRU	Annuario del Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica di Venezia, Venice, 1999-
AOASH	Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest, 1947-
Apulum	Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis, Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár, Weissenburg), 1939-
ArchPont	Archeion Pont(o)u, Athens, 1926-1934, 1941-1954, 1955-
ArchT	Archeografo triestino, Trieste, 1829-
ASLSP	Atti della Società ligure di storia patria, Genoa, 1858-1935, 1947-1957, NS 1960-
ASPN	Archivio storico per le province napoletane, Napoli, 1876-
AV	(Nuovo, 1891-1921) Archivio Veneto (Tridentino, 1922-1926), Venice, 1871-1890, 1927-
BStud	Byzantine Studies, Tempe, Arizona, 1974-
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift, Leipzig, Munich, 1892-1913, 1914-1949, 1950-
EEQ	East European Quarterly, Boulder, 1967-
FRA	Fontes Rerum Austriacarum.Österreichische Geschichts-Quellen: I, Scriptores; II, Diplomataria et Acta, Vienna, 1849-
FRT	Fontes Rerum Transylvanicarum. Erdélyi történelmi források, Budapest-Kolozsvár (Cluj, Klausenburg), 1911-1921
HUS	Harvard Ukrainian Studies, Cambridge, Mass., 1977-
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Cambridge, 1950-
JFBRI	J[ohann].F[riedrich]. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii*, Stuttgart, Frankfurt am Main, Innsbruck, Wien, Köln, Graz, 1829-
LK	Levéltári Közlemények [Archival Selections], Budapest, 1928-
MAPS	Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1933
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Hannover, [I] Scriptores, [sub-section 7] Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum. Novae Series (NS), Leipzig, Weimar, Munich, Berlin, 1826-
MHG	Mélanges d'Histoire Générale, Cluj (Kolozsvár, Klausenburg), [1922] 1927-1938, NS, [2004] 2007-
MHH	Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Magyar történelemi emlékek, I, Diplomataria; II, Scriptores; IV, Acta Extera, Pest, Budapest, 1857-1917
MMP	Monumenta Medii aevi res gestas Poloniae illustrantia, Krakow (Kraków, Krakau) 1861-1938
MVH	Monumenta Vaticana historiam Regni Hungariae ilustrantia, Budapest, 1881-1909

PKPS	Publikationen aus den Königlichen Preußischen Staatsarchiven, Leipzig, 1878-1913 (reprint 1966-1969, Leipzig)
QCR	Quaderni della Casa Romena di Venezia, Venice, 2001-
REB	Revue des Études Byzantines, Paris, 1943-
REI	Revue des Études Islamiques, Paris, 1933-
RESEE	Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes, Bucharest, 1963-
RI	Revista Istorica [Historical Review], Vălenii de Munte-Bucharest, 1915-1946, NS, 1990-
RIS	[Lodovico Antonio Muratori], Rerum Italicarum Scriptores. Raccolta degli storici italiani dal cinquecento al Millecinquecento, Mediolani (Milan), 1723-1751; Città di Castello-Bologna, 1900- (new extended edition, under the direction of Giosue Carducci, Vittorio Fiorini)
RRH	Revue Roumaine d'Histoire, Bucharest, 1962-
SAO	Studia et Acta Orientalia, Bucharest, 1957-
SMIM	Studii şi materiale de istorie medie [Studies and Materials in Medieval History], Bucharest, Brăila, 1956-
SOF	Südost-Forschungen: internationale Zeitschrift für Geschichte, Kultur und Landeskunde Südosteuropas, Munich, 1936-
Spomenik	Spomenik. Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti [Cenotaph. Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts], Beograd, 1888-1942, 1948-1956, 1959-
SGS	Slavische Geschichtsschreiber, Graz-Vienna-Cologne, 1958-1988
SRH	(1798) Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum Minores hactenus inediti, synchroni aut proxime coaevi (edited by Márton György Kovachich), Buda (Ofen), 1798 (2 volumes)
SRPol	Scriptores Rerum Polonicarum, Krakow (Kraków, Krakau), 1872-1917
SRS	Scriptores Rerum Silesicarum. Sammlung Slesischer Geschichts-schreiber (edited by Gustav Adolf Stenzel), Breslau (Wroclaw), 1835-1902
SUBBH	Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai, series Historiae, Cluj <-Napoca> (Klausen burg, Kolozsvár), 1958-
SV	Studi Veneziani, Venice, 1959-1976, NS, 1977-
Sz	Századok [Centuries], Budapest, 1867-
TR	Transylvanian Review/ Revue de Transylvanie, Cluj-Napoca, 1992-

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AAV	Giuseppe Valentini, *Acta Albaniae Veneta saeculorum XIV et XV* (Munich 1967-1979); 25 volumes/ 3 series. Pars tertia, *Saeculi XV Scanderbegianam periodum complectens* (1974-1979); 6 volumes (XX-XV). XXIV, *1459-1462* (1977).

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I, *1468-1540* (1914).

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I, *Secolul XV-mijlocul secolului XVII* [15th Century-Mid 17th Century], edited by Mihail Guboglu, Mustafa Mehmet (1966).

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Grigore Tocilescu, *534 documente slavo-române din Ţara Românească şi Moldova privitoare la legăturile cu Ardealul. 1346-1603. Din arhivele oraşelor Braşov şi Bistriţa* [534 Slavic-Romanian Documents from Walachia and Moldavia regarding the Relations to Transylvania. 1346-1603. From the Archives of the Cities Braşov (Kronstadt, Brassó) and Bistriţa (Bistriz, Besztrece)] (Bucharest 1931 [Vienna 1905]).

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II, *Hrisoave şi cărţi domneşti 1493-1503. Tractate, acte omagiale, solii, privilegii comerciale, salv-conducte. Scrisori 1457-1503* [Princely Charters and Documents. 1493-1503. Treaties, Homages, Commercial Privileges, Safe-conducts, Letter 1457-1503] (1913).

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EMC — *Mathiae Corvini Hungariae Regis epistolae ad Romanos Pontifices datae et ab eis acceptae* (= *MVH*, I, 6), edited by Vilmos Fraknói (Budapest 1891).

FHDR — *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae* (Bucharest 1965-1982); 4 volumes.

IV, *Scriitori şi acte bizantine, secolele IV-XV* [Byzantine Writers and Documents], edited by Horaţiu Mihăilescu, Radu Lăzărescu, Nicolae-Şerban Tanaşoca, Tudor Teoteoi (1982).

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Guerre Enrico Cornet, *Le guerre dei Veneti nell'Asia, 1470-1474. Documenti cavati dall'Archivio ai Frari in Venezia* (Vienna 1856),

GVU *Decreta Regni Hungariae. Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns*, edited by Ferenc Döry, György Bónis, Géza Érszegi, Zsuzsa Teke, Vera Bácskai (Budapest 1976-1989); 2 volumes.

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II-1, *1451-1575*, editor Nicolae Densuşianu (1891); II-2, *1451-1510*, editor Nicolae Densuşianu (1891); VIII, *1376-1650* [editor Ioan Slavici?] (1894); XV-1, *Acte şi scrisori din arhivele oraşelor ardelene Bistriţa, Braşov, Sibiiu, 1358-1600* [Documents and Letters from the Archives of the Transylvanian Cities Bistriţa (Bistriz, Besztrece), Braşov (Kronstadt, Brassó), Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Szeben), editor Nicolae Iorga (1911).

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Edgár Artner, *Magyarország mit a Nyugati Keresztény muvelodés védobástyája: a Vatikánai Levéltárnak azo okiratai, melyek oseinknek a Keletrol Európát fen yegeto veszedelmek ellen kifejet erofeszitéseire vonatkoznak (cca. 1214-1606)* [Hungary as "Propugnaculum" of Western Christianity: Documents from the Vati can Secret Archives (ca. 1214-1606)], edited by Szovág Kornél (Budapest 2004),

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MDE Iván Nagy, Albert B. Nyáry, *Magyar diplomacziai emlékek. Mátyás király korából 1458-1490* [Souvenirs of the Hungarian Diplomacy: The Age of King Matthias. 1458-1490] (= *MHH*, IV, 1-4) (Budapest 1875-1878); 4 volumes.
I,[*1458-1465*] (1875); II,[*1466-1480*] (1876); IV,[*1489-1490*;*1458-1490*] (1878).

MHS Viaceslav Makusev, *Monumenta Historica Slavorum Meridionalum vicinorumque populorum e tabularis et bibliothecis italicis derompta* (Warsaw (Warszawa), Belgrade (Beograd, Nándorfehérvár) 1874-1882); 1 tom/ 2 volumes.
I-1, *Ancona-Bononia-Florentia* (1874), I-2, *Genua, Mantua, Mediolanum, Panormus et Taurinum* (1882).

MKL Vilmos Fraknói, *Mátyás király levelei. Külügyi Osztály* [King Matthias' Letters. Foreign Section] (Budapest 1893-1895); 2 volumes.
I, *1458-1479* (1893), II, *1480-1490* (1895).

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IV, *1453-1476*; V, *1476-1500* (1915).

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XV, *Die Urkunden und Briefe aus den Beständen "Reichststadt" und "Hochstift" Regensburg des Bayerischen Hauptstaatsarchivs in München sowie aus den Regensburger Archiven und Bibliotheken* (2002); Supl. II-1, 2, *Das Taxregister der römischen Kanzlei 1471-1475 (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien, Hss. "weiss 529" und "weiss 920")* (2001).

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VIII-1, *1468-1470*, edited by Ingeborg Most-Kolbe (1973); 2, *1471*, edited by Helmut Wolf (1999).

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XI, *V.László király aczélmetszetü kép-évei és hét hasonmással* (1855).

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Križarenje između Jadrana i Crnog mora: Bugarska, Venecija i Osmansko Carstvo nakon pada Negroponta

Početkom 1474. godine proteklo je gotovo deset godina od posljednje, neuspjele protuosmanske ofenzive Matije Korvina. Habsburško-hunyadijevski "križarski" plan iz 1466.-1467. godine, prilično osebujan s obzirom na prethodne i kasnije događaje i razvoje, okončan je pobunom u Transilvaniji i moldavskim pohodom kralja Matije koji je uslijedio. Tijekom idućih je godina kralj se usredotočio na svoje čŕškr i habsburške probleme i pretenzije, dok je nova zavjera protiv sina Ivana Hunyadija još jedanput u osnovi zaustavila križarski plan koji je bio zasnovan 1471. godine. Manje od tri godine kasnije, osmanski napad na Oradeu (Veliki Varadin, Nagyvarad, Großwardein), kao i mletačke financijske ponude, ponukali su kralja da obnovi protuosmansku akciju. Njegovi neuspjeli pregovori sa sultanom Medmedom II. (1472.-1473.), pored pomoći koja je tijekom vlaško-moldavskog sukoba bila pružena Stjepanu III. Moldavskom (1470./1471.-1473.), jednako tako su kralja odveli natrag na križarsku bojišnicu. Iako je morao obnoviti dobre odnose s papom Sikstom IV., željan da križarskim akcijama i naumima ojača zauzvrat svoj dobar glas na Zapadu, Matija Korvin se morao nositi i s basburškim i jagelovićevskim pokušajima da oslabe njegovu poziciju i umanje njegov utjecaj i u križarskim pitanjima, kako u Ugarskoj tako i u susjednim područjima. Novootkrivena vrela, i to talijanska, napose milanska, arhivski podaci, pružili su osnovu za nove perspektive o osmanskim i protuosmanskim akcijama Matije Korvina sredinom sedamdesetih godina 15. stoljeća. Ona nam omogućuju da pobliže razmotrimo lanac događaja, odluka, propagande, suparništva i dezinformiranja koji je doveo do habsburško-jagelovićevskih optužaba za "križarsku nesposobnost" upućenih protiv Matije Korvina, ali i do neuspjeha nakanjene ugarsko-moldavske "stupice" pripremljene sultanu Mehmedu II. u drugoj polovini 1476. godine. Glavnina razjašnjenja za njih mogu se potražiti u neposrednom političkom kontekstu koji su komplicirali protuosmanski razgovori s muslimanima, neuspjeh Usuna Hasana, odnosno sukob između tatarskih frakcija. Pa ipak, kao i u brojnim slučajevima

slične prirode, glavna se objašnjenja u pravilu oslanjaju na prilično jednostavne činjenice. "Protuosmanska" kolaciji iz sredine sedamdesetih godina 15. stoljeća sastojala se u osnovi od prijašnjih, bilo skorašnjih ili tradicionalnih, suparnika, poput Rima, Venecije, Ugarske i Moldavije, što je imalo izravan utjecaj na ishod njihovih pokušaja i akcija koji su imali križarsku formu. Još jedan važan aspekt koji valja naglasiti u ovom kontekstu odnos je Matije i Transilvanije poslije 1467. godine, u sprezi s mjesnim transilvanskim vezama preko Vlaške, s Turčinom. Takve strukturne pojedinosti, onkraj različitih oblika suvremenih, ali i srednjovjekovnih predrasuda, osigurale su gotovo neprestanu prednost Osmanskom Carstvu koje je sve više bilo partner, a ne neprijatelj.

Ključne riječi: Matija Korvin, Osmansko Carstvo, Venecija, križarstvo, papinstvo
Keywords: Matthias Corvinus, Ottoman Empire, Venice, Crusading, Papacy

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