

At the Turn of the Fourteenth Century: Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Wallachian Princely “Stars” of the Fifteenth Century*

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Abstract: *In late spring 1398, the noble judges of the Inner Szolnok County rejected John Toth as the legal representative of Stephen I, voivode of Moldavia. Toth (i.e. the Slav/ Slovak, chiefly in later centuries) was in fact merely the procurator of Stephen's appointed procurator (representative), a certain John, the son of Costea. Mircea I the Elder, the voivode of Wallachia, was experiencing similar legal problems at the time in the Voivodate of Transylvania. In January 1399, his procurator, Nicholas Dobokai of Ludaş, the son of Ladislav Dobokai (the relative of Mircea's step-uncle, Wladislaw I Vlaicu), had to admit he did not know the exact boundaries of the estate of the Hunyadi castle, recently granted by Sigismund of Luxemburg to Mircea. The two documents, almost trivial in essence, point towards two neglected issues: the first Transylvanian estates granted by a king of Hungary to a voivode of Moldavia and to the transalpine origins of the Hunyadi family. Placed in the context of other edited and unedited sources (charters and chronicles), the documents in question provide new perspectives on the beginnings and actions of famed Wallachian personalities of the next century.*

Keywords: *Doboka (Dăbâca), Hunyadi, Transylvania, Wallachia, Sigismund Luxemburg, Mircea I of Wallachia, Stephen I of Moldavia, John Hunyadi.*

In late spring 1398, the noble judges of the Inner Szolnok County¹ rejected John Toth as the legal representative of Stephen I, voivode of Moldavia. Toth (i.e.

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¹ For the counties in the area and their peculiarities: András W. Kovács, "The Authorities of Middle Solnoc and Crasna Counties in the Middle Ages", and Géza Hegyi, "The Affiliation of the Sălaj (Szilágy) Region in the Mirror of Social Relations", in *Institutional Structures and Elites in the Sălaj Region and in Transylvania in the 14th-18th Centuries* (=Transylvanian Review, XXI, suppl. 2), edited by A. W. Kovács (Cluj-Napoca, 2012), pp. 31-66 (at pp. 43-45), 67-99 (at pp. 77-86).

the Slav/ Slovak) was in fact merely the procurator of Stephen's appointed procurator (representative), a certain John, the son of Costea.² The case apparently went cold.

Nos Leusthasius de Zilagthew, Iohannes, filius Iacobi de Zilkerek, iudices nobilium comitatus de Zonuk interiori, memorie commendamus quod, quia Iacobus dictus Toth coram nobis sic dicebat quod ipse procurator magnifici viri Stephani, vayvode Moldaviensis, esset et in persona ipsius coram nobis setit, cum tamen comes comitatus de Zonuk interiori litteram procuratoriam postulasset et coram nobilibus comprovincie legere fecisset, tamen litera procuratoria non tenebat quod prefatus Iacobus dictus Toth esset procurator magnifici viri Stephani, vayvode Moldaviensis, sed procurator Iohannis, filii Coztha; ideo, nobiles comprovincie, in sede nostra iudiciaria consedentibus, taliter decreverunt quod procurator procuratorem facere non posset, declarato, tamen, quod prefatum Iacobum dictum Thoth, Iohannes, filius Coztha, officialis viri magnifici Stephani, vayvode Molda-viensis, procuratorem constituisset.// Datum in Dees, feria quarta proxima ante festum Penthecosthes, anno domini MCCC nonagesimo octavo (Dej, May 22, 1398).³

Mircea I *the Elder*, voivode of Wallachia, was experiencing similar legal problems at the time in the Voivodate of Transylvania.⁴ His procurator, Nicholas of Luduș, the son of Ladislav Dobokai, the *relative* of Mircea's step-uncle, Wladislaw I *Vlaicu*,⁵ had to admit that he did not know the exact boundaries of the estate of the *Hunyad* castle, recently granted by Sigismund of Luxemburg to Mircea. Nicholas thus asked for time so that he could grow familiar with the estate. His request was granted.⁶

² For the document, see also Matei Cazacu, "À propos de Iațco de Suceava: entre le mythe et la réalité", in *Istoria ca lectură a lumii. Profesorului Alexandru Zub la împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani*, edited by Gabriel Bădărău, Leonid Bociu, Lucian Năstasă (Iași, 1994 [1998]), pp. 97-114, at pp. 101-102.

³ Magyar Országos Levéltár, Budapest, Diplomatikai Levéltár (DL), [no.] 27382; partially edited in *Documenta Romaniae Historica* (DRH), D. *Relațiile între Țările Române, I. 1222-1456*, edited by Ștefan Pascu, Constantin Cihodaru, Konrad G. Gündisch, Damaschin Mioc, Viorica Pervain (Bucharest, 1977), no. 102, pp. 169-170; calendared in *Documenta Historiam Valachorum in Hungaria illustrantia*, edited by Imre Lukinich, László Gáldi, Antal Fekete Nagy, László Makkai (Budapest, 1940), no. 455, p. 504; and afterwards in *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, [general-editors Elemér Mályusz, Iván Borsa, Norbert C. Tóth,] I. *1386-1399*, edited by E. Mályusz (Budapest, 1951) (ZsO), no. 5330, p. 587.

⁴ The legal aspects of such (political) relations have been downplayed rather frequently.

⁵ Romanian historiography apparently paid no attention to the identity of Mircea I's procurator ever since the source was officially brought to its attention in the 1950s. For the relation between Wladislaw I and Ladislav Dobokai, to whom he granted estates in the Transylvanian Duchy of Făgăraș: DRH, D, I, no. 60, p. 104 (1372). For the history of the branches of the Dobokai family (of Dăbâca), including that of one ban of Severin, Mikud (in the 1260s-1270s): Marius Diaconescu, *Structura nobilimii din Transilvania în epoca angevină* (Cluj-Napoca, 2013 [2014]), pp. 185-188.

⁶ The source first discussed of Iosif [József] Pataki, "Ceva despre relațiile Țăii Românești cu Ungaria la sfârșitul veacului al XIV-lea", *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, II (1957), pp. 421-429, at p. 424.

[...] *Nicolaus de Ludas, pro magnifico viro domino Meche, waywoda partis Transalpine, cum procuratoriis litteris eiusdem in nostram [...] castrum Hunyad, simulcum possessionis Saluasara predicta ac aliis possessionibus et portionibus possessionariis, ad idem castrum pertinentibus, de novo [...] per regiam maiestatem [...] collatum existere allegans retulit eo modo, quod ipse de cursibus metarum seu signorum metalium possessionum predictarum et per omnia inscius haberetur [...]* (Turda, January 23, 1399).⁷

The two documents, almost trivial in essence, point towards two neglected issues: (1) the first Transylvanian estates granted by a king of Hungary to a voivode of Moldavia⁸ and to (2) the *transalpine* origins of the Hunyadi family,⁹ although the *Hunyad* estate (and castle), granted to Mircea, was usually identified with the Bologa castle, near Huedin (*Bánffy-hunyad* in later records), west of the city of Cluj.¹⁰ Each of the issues seemingly stand at that very basis of the Wallachian policies in the 1400s.

The Princely Wallachian Roots and Claims of John Hunyadi. A most peculiar copy of the *Chronicle of the Counts of Cilly*, altered prior to 1504 in the entourage of King Matthias Corvinus' illegitimate son, duke John, claimed that John Hunyadi had in fact been Mircea I's offspring (i.e. son).¹¹ John Hunyadi was usually rumoured to have been Sigismund of Luxemburg's natural son (the rumor, launched against John Hunyadi in order to explain his spectacular political rise, was strongly refuted by his son, Matthias; entourage, though it would have supported the royal candidacy of Matthias' own illegitimate child, John, the only member of the Hunyadi family to officially bear the name Corvinus).¹² At the time of the royal donation of

⁷ MOL, DL 28768. Calendared in ZsO, I, no. 5680, p. 627. Passages from the document were edited in DRH, D, I, no. 104, p. 171.

⁸ Stephen III was conventionally considered the first Moldavian recipient of such Transylvanian estates, in the last part of Matthias Corvinus' reign (see also M. Diaconescu, "Contribuții la datarea donației Ciceului și Cetății de Băltă lui Ștefan cel Mare", *Analele Putnei*, IX (2013), 1, pp. 91-112).

⁹ For an overview of the issue: András Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex* (Budapest, 2008), pp. 7-12.

¹⁰ For the confusions between *Vajdahunyad* (Hunedoara) and *Bánffy-hunyad* (Huedin), designating also the nearby fortress at Bologa (otherwise known as *Sebesvár*): Pál Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301-1457*, I-II (Budapest, 1996 [CD version 2000]).

¹¹ Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (BStB), Abendländische Handschriften, Codices Germanici Monacenses (CGM), [no.] 5350, pp. 89-263: *Gräff Zillische Cronnica*. Preserved in a copy written after 1624 (because of the reference to the Habsburg embassy to Istanbul, at p. 41), the version was drafted after 1492 (according to the notes on pp. 242, 256), under the patronage of Hartmann Schedel (1440-1514), the known humanist from Nürnberg; his library also contained the only preserved copy (1502) of the so-called *Moldavian-German Chronicle* of Stephen III of Moldavia (BStB, Codices Latini Monacenses (CLM), 952. *Chronica breviter scripta Stephani dei gratia voivoda terrarum Moldannensium necon Valachyensium*). This version that has eluded the learned comparative edition of Franz von Krones (*Die Freien von Saneck und ihre Chronik als Grafen von Cilli*, I-II (Graz, 1883)) can be dated under the circumstances only to the days of John Corvinus († October 1504), more precisely after his return to actual Hungarian power (1496-1498). Otherwise, the glorifying "adaptation" of the chronicle would not have aided any member of the *Corvinus* family.

¹² On John's rise: P. Engel, "Hunyadi pályakezdése", in *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania. Az erdélyi román nemesség*, edited by M. Diaconescu, Ioan Drăgan (Satu-Mare, 1997), pp. 91-109.

1398,¹³ Mircea of Wallachia already held the Amlaş and Făgăraş duchies in southern Transylvania¹⁴ and was married to a high-ranking Hungarian lady.¹⁵

[The sub-chapter] *Iohannes Corvini origo, patria et parentes* [began with] *Merckh* [name placed above the actual text as sort of title] *dessen Herkommens Corvinus gewesen <ist>. Corvinus war von sainem Vathern ein Wallach, von der Muther ein Kriegh [Greek] und hat sein Geschlecht durch mancherley ritterliche Thathen zu grossen Ehren bracht, und ist für sich selbst auch nit von schlechten Leithen gebohren gewest. [...]* [The classical presentation of the Roman roots of the Wallachian followed. Then, starting at John's birth in *Corvino* (Cuvin/ Keve on the Danube), like in Antonio Bonfini's *Decades*, the story returned – by means of the Wallachian-Serbian-Hungarian *melting-pot* on the Danube¹⁶ – to the origins of John's mother.] [...] *Die Mutter ist von Reiss, alter Geschlechte* [i.e. John's mother was from *Rascia*/ Serbia.]¹⁷ [...] [The presentation in the altered chronicle concluded with John Hunyadi's "apotheosis".] [...] *Was Corvinus für ein Mann gewessen? Er war ein solcher Mann in welchem erschiene die römische Dapfferkhait, Waisheit und treue Mannheit. [...]*.¹⁸

At about the same time (c. 1399), the influential monk, Nicodimus of Tismana, of princely Serbian descent, closely connected to Sigismund of Luxemburg,¹⁹ left Wallachia. He settled in the Hunyad County (for some six years),

¹³ The above-quoted charter prevents us from endorsing a much earlier dating. The donation was probably a result of the failed crusade of Nicopolis (1396). Hence, the donation took place the earliest in 1397. The same largely applies in the case of Stephen I.

¹⁴ Despite the obviously nationalist title, see also Ilie Minea, *Din trecutul stăpânirii românești asupra Ardealului. Pierderea Amlășului și Făgărașului* (offprint *Convorbiri Literare*, XLVIII) (Bucharest, 1914).

¹⁵ The Hungarian charters recorded her only as the wife of Mircea. The same later applied for Vlad III *Dracula*'s first wife, closely related to Matthias. The Wallachian sources named her solely the mother of Michael, Mircea's son and heir. Because of her estates in Hungary proper (near Balaton), she was considered a member of the Bánffy family of the Tomai kindred (see also Ioan-Aurel Pop, "Stăpânirile lui Mircea în Transilvania", *Revista de Istorie*, XXXIX (1986), 7, pp. 685-695, at p. 693).

¹⁶ See in these matters also Péter Kulcsár, "Antonio Bonfini és műve", in A. Bonfini, *A magyar történelem tízedei*, translated by P. Kulcsár (Budapest, 1995), pp. 915-922. The manuscript of Bonfini († c. 1502) was well in political circulation by the time of the Congress of Vienna (1515).

¹⁷ For further information on these questions: Al. Simon, "La parentèle ottomane du roi Mathias Corvin", in *Matthias Corvinus und seine Zeit: Europa am Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit zwischen Wien und Konstantinopel* (=Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, CDX), edited by Christian Gastgeber, Ekaterini Mitsiou, I.-A. Pop, Mihailo Popović, Johannes Preiser Kapeller, Al. Simon (Vienna, 2011), pp. 25-33. Because of the various Serbian-Byzantine matrimonial ties, the statement above did not actually contradict the previously asserted Greek origins of John's mother. In effect, in the end, the story implied a Hunyadi (*Corvinus*) genetic synthesis between the Romans (through the Wallachian father of John) and the Greeks (through his Serbian mother).

¹⁸ BStB, CGM 5350, pp. 174, 176-177. An edition of this version could prove most useful.

¹⁹ See also the data in Đurađ Sp. Radojčić, "Bulgaroalbanitoblahos et Serboalbanitobulgaroblahos: deux caractéristiques ethniques du Sud-Est Européen du XIV^e et XV^e siècle. Nicodème de Tismana et Grégoire Camblak", *Romanoslavica*, XIII (1966), pp. 77-79.

most likely at the Prislop Monastery.²⁰ In stories on Nicodimus' miracles, Matthias occasionally took Sigismund's place as the Hungarian king impressed by Nicodimus' *Orthodox* virtue.²¹

Rather unsurprisingly, while on the eventually disastrous road to Varna (1444), John Hunyadi confirmed Sigismund's privileges²² for the monastic foundations of Nicodimus in Western Wallachia (i.e. Oltenia): Tismana and Vodița.²³ In 1473, when Usun Hassan's victory over Mehmed II in Asian Minor seemed sealed (the opposite occurred), Matthias granted special freedoms to the Monastery of Cozia (similarly in Oltenia), the necropolis of Mircea I of Wallachia.²⁴ Both father and son, John (who had been promised the crown of Bulgaria in mid-1444), and Matthias, focused on the Monasteries of Tismana, Vodița and Cozia, on the eve of major anti-Ottoman offensive. These onslaughts were – supposed – to alter the status of Wallachia, and consequently that of its western parts (northern Oltenia, i.e., the Gorj region, if not entire Oltenia, named the *Land of Severin*, had been united with the Land of Hațeg until the 1270s, when the latter was incorporated into the Hunedoara County).²⁵

In 1409, roughly a decade after the royal donation of *Hunyad* to Mircea, and also after Nicodimus' return to Wallachia (by 1406),²⁶ Sigismund officially granted

²⁰ See I.-A. Pop, Al. Simon, "Misiunile Sfântului Nicodim în contextul politicilor bisericești ale Venetiei și Ungariei", *Mitropolia Olteniei*, LVIII (2006), 9-12, pp. 234-252. We use the Hungarian denomination of the county instead of the Romanian one (Hunedoara) because of issue of the identities of the *Hunyad* castles of 1399 and 1409. The name <Bánffy->*Hunyad* was later applied to the Huedin borough in the vicinity of the Bologa fortress (in Cluj County). The name *Hunyad* stood for both the fortress and the county (Hunedoara), where the transalpine members of the Hunyadi family settled. Nicodimus' temporary residence was in nearby Prislop (at least at the end of stay in Transylvania). There, in 6912 (1404/1405), he was *in his sixth year of refuge*, according to a manuscript note. Within probably a year (certainly by 1406), Nicodimus returned to Wallachia, prior to the Severin meeting and reconciliation between Sigismund and Mircea (November 1406).

²¹ For these hagiographic relations: Virgil Ciociltan, "Întelesul politic al *minunii* Sfântului Nicodim de la Tismana", *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, XXII (2004), pp. 153-168, with further references.

²² DRH, D, I, no. 276, pp. 384-387. The charter was issued at the start of the campaign of Varna (that ended in disaster on November 10), in Orșova (on the Danube), on September 20, 1444.

²³ DRH, D, I, no. 125, pp. 204-205; nos. 128-129, pp. 210-212; no. 169, pp. 266-268. All royal (Hungarian) privileges (1419-1428) were issued after Mircea I's death (1418). Only *Drachendespot* Stephen Lazarević, Nicodimus' relative, granted a (Serbian) privilege during Mircea's rule (1406).

²⁴ DRH, B. *Țara Românească, I. 1250-1500*, edited by P.P. Panaitescu, Damaschin Mioc (Bucharest, 1966), no. 144, pp. 240-241. The royal deed was issued on June 29, 1473. At that time, Mehmed II was fighting Usun Hassan in Asia Minor. The sultan eventually won in early August. Supported by Matthias Corvinus, Stephen III then attacked pro-Ottoman Wallachia in November 1473.

²⁵ King Louis I of Anjou "returned" to the lords of (unified) Wallachia only (the Duchies of) Amlaș and Făgăraș. The "return" of Hațeg would have signified the complete loss of direct royal control over the Southern Carpathians, except the Saxon centers of Sibiu, north-west of Amlaș, and Brașov, east of Făgăraș (with emphasis on the 1360s, see I.-A. Pop, *From the Hands of the Schismatic Wallachians: The Romanians and Power in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary (13th-14th Centuries)* (New York-Oxford-Frankfurt-am-Main-Basel-Vienna, 2013), pp. 414-434, 457-478).

²⁶ In addition to the abovementioned "coincidences", the events must be viewed in connection because of the debates on the actual date when the *Hunyad* estate was donated to Voicu. The royal deed of 1409

the *Hunyad* castle, in south-western Transylvania (in the Land of Hațeg),²⁷ to Voicu and his kindred, including his son, John, the future John Hunyadi.²⁸ *Jancho* (Johnnie in Serbian) in Balkan, Wallachian, as well as in Italian milieus,²⁹ John Hunyadi, already regent (governour) of Hungary at that time, claimed – for a short while – the throne of Wallachia for himself (in early December 1447), after executing the illegitimate son of Mircea, Vlad II *Dracul*, father to the infamous Vlad III *the Impaler* (*Dracula*).³⁰ Albeit rather fictional, the idea of Matthias Corvinus' retaking *parental Wallachia* – as king of Hungary (moreover) – made quite an “international” career until the end of the fifteenth century, reaching even Burgundy and also France in Western Europe.³¹

was also viewed as a reconfirmation of an earlier royal grant (for an overview: Radu Lupescu, “Matthias Hunyadi: from the Family Origins to the Threshold of Power”, in *Matthias Corvinus, the King: Tradition and Renewal in the Hungarian Royal Court 1458–1490*, edited by Péter Farbaky, Enikő Spekner, Katalin Szende, András Végh (Budapest, 2008), pp. 35–49, at p. 39).

²⁷ Church history might be useful for the understanding of these issues (usually dealt with separately): Hațeg vs Amlăș and Făgăraș. In the 1390s, the Greek rite authority over Transylvania (the voivodate and its Hungarian “appendixes”) was divided – north vs south – with the approval of the royal crown and the benediction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (for the context: Ș. Papacostea, “Byzance et la création de la Métropole de Moldavie”, *Études Byzantines et Post-Byzantines*, II (1991), pp. 133–150). The northern parts, down to the Someș rivers, were entrusted to the Peri stavrophiha (in the Maramureș County), founded by the Dragoș family. The southern parts reverted to the Metropolitanate of Wallachia (*Ungrovlachia* in official records). The only exception was the Land of Hațeg (i.e. the Hunedoara County). Certainly between 1404 and 1407 (precisely on the eve of the first official record on the Hunyadi family in the region, in 1409 and during Nicodimus' stay at Prislop, between 1398/1399 and 1405/1406) the land was under the ecclesiastical control of the Metropolitanate of Severin (Vladimir Agrigoroaiei, “An *Interpretatio Wallahica* of Serbian Cultural Patterns: The Cases of Ribița, Streisângiorgiu and Crișcior (but also Râmets)”, in *Transylvania in the Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries: Aspects of the Formation and Consolidation of Regional Identity* (= *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, XVI, 2), edited by Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu (Alba Iulia, 2012), pp. 105–136, at pp. 110–112). The natural connection between the Severin (the Banate of) and Hațeg influenced also the beginnings of John Hunyadi's career. He made his military and political debut on the Danube, under Pippo Spano and Stephen Lazarević (hence also the Cuvin/ Keve legend).

²⁸ For a summary of his rise (based on the main known sources and literature): Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, pp. 7–13; Lupescu, “Matthias Hunyadi”, pp. 38–44.

²⁹ For more information on these matters: I.-A. Pop, “The Names in the Family of King Matthias: From Old Sources to Contemporary Historiography”, in *Matthias Rex 1458–1490. Hungary at the Dawn of the Renaissance* (= *Ethnographica et folkloristica Carpathica*, XVII), edited by Elek Bartha, Róbert Keményfi, Zsófia Vincze Kata (Debrecen, 2012), pp. 11–40.

³⁰ MOL, DL 29793 (4th of December 1447; last edited in DRH, D, I, no. 286, pp. 394–396). *Johannes de Hunyad, regni Hungariae gubernator ac, Dei gracia, parcium Transalpinarum wayuoda*, issued the charter *in civitate nostra Tergouisthya* [Târgoviște, the capital of Wallachia]. For the Hungarian–Wallachian–Ottoman context: Francisc Pall, “Intervenția lui Iancu de Hunedoara în Țara Românească și Moldova în anii 1447–1448”, *Studii. Revistă de Istorie*, XVI (1963), 5, pp. 1049–1072.

³¹ E.g. Philippe de Commines, *Mémoires*, edited by Joseph Calmette, I. 1464–1473 (Paris, 1924), p. 339; II. 1474–1483 (Paris, 1925), pp. 335–338; III. 1484–1498 (Paris 1925), p. 169. Much of the information was probably circulated in the late 1480s, when King Matthias attempted to secure the custody of Sultan Bayezid II's brother, Djem, who was held by the Knights Hospitaller in their centres in the French realm (Al. Simon, “Lumea lui Djem. Buda, Suceava și Istanbul în anii 1480”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie George Barițiu*, XLVIII (2005), pp. 11–43).

Moldavia and the Heirs of Dragoș (of Maramureș) and Voicu (of Hunyad). The Hunyadi princely Wallachian claims seemingly exceeded medieval relations and facts.³² Yet they appear to have been well-rooted in Sigismund's deeds and charters from the end of the 14th (1398-1399)³³ and the beginning of the 15th century (1405-1409)³⁴. Almost naturally, the Wallachian deeds of Sigismund were chronologically separated by the Hungarian pro-Angevine rebellion that nearly brought his reign to an end.³⁵ Almost paradoxically, the latter events return our attention to Stephen I.

³² It would be the safest assumption under the present circumstances (see also Péter E. Kovács, "A Hunyadi család", in *Mátyás király. Emlékkönyv Mátyás király halálának 500. évfordulójára*, edited by Gyula Rázsó, László V. Molnár (Budapest, 1990), pp. 29-51). The extant medieval information also enables "bolder" perspectives. At any rate, Voicu's rank of court knight clearly indicates that he belonged to the "better families" (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, pp. 8-9). Drag's son, Alexander (1419), enjoyed the same status, even after his father's downfall (ZsO, VII. 1419-1420 (Budapest, 2001), no. 1174, p. 287), and so did, Vlad II *Dracul*, the illegitimate son of Mircea I, and later also member of the Order of the Dragon (see also DRH, D, I, no. 172, pp. 273-274; no. 179, pp. 279-280).

³³ In effect, the charters on Stephen I's and Mircea I's Transylvanian (feudal) concerns (May 1398 and January 1399) point – because of their necessary legal background – towards the Diet of Timișoara (E. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund in Ungarn (1387-1437)* (Budapest, 1990), pp. 46-48, 136-166). Unfortunately, unlike in the case of the Hungarian Diet of April 1467 (that approved direct royal control over Amlaș, Făgăraș and Rodna, in view of their granting to the voivodes of Wallachia and Moldavia, on the eve of another planned anti-Ottoman offensive) no records from the file of Diet of September-October 1397, related to the lords of Wallachia and Moldavia, have been identified so far. In relation to the 1390s and to the early 1400s, the matter is of particular importance because – on ecclesiastical soil (where the Church largely followed the lines laid down by the secular administration, either through stately units or through large estates, such as those of the Dragoș) – Hațeg belonged to a different "entity". Though nominally a part of the Voivodate of Transylvania, the land (included in the Hunedoara County) belonged to structure around Severin, basically an extended version of the so-called *Land of Severin* (that – under the last Arpadians – had encompassed Western Wallachia/ Oltenia). In effect, Severin (proper), Oltenia and Hațeg formed – from a royal perspective – one entity. At least two thirds (Severin and Oltenia) were held by Mircea, ban of Severin. The acceptance of the "Olt union" between Oltenia and Muntenia (central Wallachia) was been one the main issues in the relation between the Angevine kings and the first voivodes of (Transalpine) Wallachia (Ș. Papacostea, "Prima unire românească. Voievodatul de Argeș și Țara Severin", *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, XXVIII (2010), pp. 9-24).

³⁴ In this chronological framework, we must single out the meeting between Sigismund and Mircea at Severin (a Hungarian-Wallachian *condominium*) in November 1406, most likely brokered by Nicodimus (P.P. Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, edited by Gheorghe Lazăr (Bucharest, 2000²), pp. 368-369). In that context, Nicodimus' monastic foundations received grants from both Mircea and despot Stephen Lazarević (reconciled on this occasion with the lord of Wallachia), one of the "founding members" (as a Greek rite Christian) of the Order of the Dragon in 1408 (M. Popović, "The *Order of the Dragon* and the Serbian Despot Stefan Lazarević", in *Emperor Sigismund and the Orthodox World* (= *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, CDIX), edited by E. Mitsiou, M. Popović, J. Preiser-Kapeller, Al. Simon (Vienna, 2010), pp. 103-106).

³⁵ For an outline of the events between 1398 and 1403: Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, pp. 59-68. The Wallachian involvement in the crisis still has to be researched. In comparison, we re-draw attention to the role of Dan I (c. 1382-1386), Mircea's step-brother and predecessor, in the previous Hungarian civil war, more precisely to a passage, *ad annum 1386*, from a passage in Hector von Müllich's chronicle

The archenemies of Stephen I's House (of Bogdan), the Drágffy family (i.e. the House of Dragoș),³⁶ previously Sigismund's loyal supporters, were among the king's main opponents during that rebellion.³⁷ Based in the County of Maramureș, north of Transylvania, the Drágffys, who had previously acted as mediators between the king and the Wallachians in the Land of Hațeg,³⁸ also held important estates in the Inner Szolnok County.³⁹ These estates were – now – bordered by Stephen's lands.⁴⁰

(c. 1420-c. 1490): [...] *Am Sant Jacobs Tag* [July 25 <1386>] *kam der Wasserwaider von Ungern* [Dan I of Wallachia] *and den Groß Grafen von Ungern* [count-palatine Nicholas (I) Garai] *und schlug den im Veld zu Tod und enthauptet ainen Ritter, der den Künig Karl von Pülen* [Charles of Anjou/Durazzo] *ermudet hett, und pracht die Künigin von Ungern* [Elisabeth, Louis I's widow, accompanied by her daughter, Maria, Sigismund's wife] *zu Väncknus, die das Mord gestiftet hett, da ward Sigismund* [of Luxembourg] *Künig zu Hungern, der hernach Kaiser ward* [...] (*Die Chronik des Hector <von> Müllich, 1348-1487*, in *Die Chroniken der schwäbischen Städte*, III. Augsburg (=Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte vom 14. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert, XXII), edited by Franz Roth (Leipzig, 1892), pp. 1-274, at p. 29; cf. Alexandru Ciociltan, "Din biografia cavalerului Friedrich von Kreuspeck", *Revista Istorică*, NS, XXI (2010), 5-6, pp. 537-550, at p. 545, note 44).

³⁶ M. Diaconescu, "Dragoș descălecătorul Moldovei: între legendă și realitate", in *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania*, pp. 77-90. Dragoș was a "royal creation". He made his fortune serving Louis I.

³⁷ For an "eastern perspective": K.G. Gündisch, "Siebenbürgen und der Aufruhr von 1403 gegen Sigismund von Luxemburg", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, XVI (1976), 3, pp. 399-420.

³⁸ For a discussion of the sources: Radu Popa, *La începuturile Evului Mediu românesc: Țara Hațegului în secolul al XIV-lea* (Bucharest, 1988), pp. 291-293. Without entering any "pan-Wallachian" rhetoric, it is obvious that the Dragoș kindred (who – furthermore – had preserved their *Greek* rite even under Louis I) had at that time the dominant position among the Wallachians in the Hungarian realm, with a – seemingly direct – impact over both "Wallachian borders" of the kingdom (see also M. Diaconescu, Erika Kató, "Incursiunea moldovenilor în Maramureș în 1395. Noi aspecte ale relațiilor moldo-polone", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol*, XXXII (1995), pp. 147-155). In order to have an insight into the complexity of these border relations, we must note that in early 1395 Sigismund attacked Moldavia via its southern pro-Hungarian *Lower Country*, and Stephen I responded with a raid in northern Maramureș, by then the "fief" of the Dragoș family. The same pattern ("plus" a Moldavian attack on the Szeklerland in eastern Transylvania) applied for the confrontations of 1467-1469 between Matthias and Stephen III (Ș. Papacostea, "Un épisode de la rivalité polono-hongroise au XV^e siècle: la campagne de Mathias Corvin en Moldavie (1467) à la lumière d'une source inédite", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* (Bucarest), VIII (1969), 6, pp. 967-979). In reference to the events seven decades earlier, we also recall the royal (Arpadian) administrative "foundation" of future Moldavia, the *Borkoth County* (north of the *Lower Country* of Moldavia), designation featured in a neglected papal charter from 1327 (Al. Simon, "Principele Dominic, secuii și Țara de Jos a Moldovei", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol*, LI (2014), suppl., pp. 59-76).

³⁹ Lajos Thálloczy, *A Kamara Haszna* (lucrum camerae) *története kapcsolatban a magyar adó- és pénzügy fejlődésével* (Budapest, 1879), Appendix, no. 37, pp. 180-185. The data from 1427-1428 (more than two decades after the downfall of the family) reveals the significant extent of the estates of Drágffy in the Inner Szolnok County, as well as a multitude of voivodes in the region, altogether a rather problematic local feudal system.

⁴⁰ The involvement of the judges of the county and the presence of the procurator(s) of Stephen I can only be associated with a feudal matter within the boundaries of the Inner Szolnok County. In the absence of any other evidence, we must presume that the issue of the estate(s) did not predate the reign of Sigismund (and, given the extant sources, the rule of Roman I, the only time span between 1387 and 1396/1398 when Sigismund was not in conflict with the rulers of Moldavia), even though it would be tempting to connect the matter of the estate(s) to the establishment of Angevine suzerainty over

Within a few years (1395-1398),⁴¹ Stephen went from Sigismund's foe (Stephen's pro-Ottoman⁴² and pro-Polish enthronement had led to an instant royal Hungarian campaign against him)⁴³ to his vassal (with lands in Transylvania, registered after the Nicopolis disaster).⁴⁴ The Drágffys turned away from Sigismund. They lost almost all influence, until Matthias Corvinus' reign.⁴⁵ The Drágffys' return to power largely coincided with the marriage between *Mary*, the daughter of King Matthias' trustee Bartholomew Drágffy,⁴⁶ and Alexander, the Moldavian heir of Stephen III, in the summer of 1489.⁴⁷ After Sigismund of Luxemburg's grant to Stephen I, almost a century earlier (at any rate, a risky royal Hungarian decision for it also implied areas defined by strong feelings of local autonomy⁴⁸), Stephen III was

Moldavia around 1377-1378 (see Ș. Papacostea, "Domni români și regi angevini: înfruntarea finală (1370-1382)", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie* A.D. Xenopol, XXIII (1986), suppl., pp. 571-581). The *interregnum* of 1382-1386/1387 cannot be completely ruled out as potential candidate for an earlier dating of the donation (because – for instance – of the abovementioned Wallachian involvement in the Hungarian crisis). Yet the peculiar features of the region that included the Inner Szolnok County and the proximity of the estates of the growingly influential Dragoș family advocate caution.

⁴¹ Constantin Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Țara Românească și Moldova (a. 1324-1881)*, I. *Secolele XIV-XVI* (Bucharest, 2001), pp. 460-463. His rule ended under mysterious circumstances (possibly in battle against the Tartars). Nevertheless, like all Moldavian rulers (except for his successor Juga, dethroned and imprisoned by Mircea I in 1400) from Bogdan I († c. 1367) and until Alexander I (1400-1432), Stephen I was buried in the princely necropolis of Rădăuți.

⁴² For Thomas Ebendorf (*Chronica regem Romanorum (=Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, NS, 18)*, edited by Harald Zimmermann, I (Hannover, 2003), p. 552), 1395 was the year when Moldavia came under Ottoman domination. According to Johannes Löwenklau (*Annales Sultanorum Othomaniarum a Turcis sua lingua scripti*, (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1588), p. 312), Stephen was the first ruler of Moldavia to accept Ottoman suzerainty. This had in fact occurred under Peter I (c. 1390). His brother and – unwanted – successor – Roman I changed sides (1392-1394). Until, Stephen I came to power, Moldavia supported Sigismund and Mircea against the *Turks* (Al. Simon, "Bisericile Turcului: valahii lui Spandounes și geneza Mitropoliilor Țării Românești și Moldovei", *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Orthodoxa*, XVII (2010), 1, pp. 91-97, mainly at pp. 94-95).

⁴³ Radu Manolescu, "Campania lui Sigismund de Luxemburg în Moldova (1395)", *Analele Universității București. Istorie*, XV (1965), pp. 65-72.

⁴⁴ Without Stephen I's approval, Sigismund could not have made it, via the Danube Mounds, to Constantinople after Nicopolis. Moldavia controlled the Dniestr Mounds and partially the Danube Mounds (Al. Simon, "*Annus Mirabilis 1387*: King Sigismund, the Ottomans and the Orthodox Christians in the Late 1380s and Early 1390s", in *Emperor Sigismund*, pp. 125-150, at p. 143).

⁴⁵ For further information, see Richárd Horváth, "A Bélteki Drágfiak és a királyi udvar kapcsolata a Hunyadiak korában (1424-1490)", in *A Szilágyság és a Wesselényi család (14-17. század)*, edited by G. Hegyi, A.W. Kovács (Kolozsvár, 2013), pp. 167-212.

⁴⁶ Tibor Neumann, "Drágfi Bertalan politikai szerepe II. Ulászló király idején", in *A Szilágyság*, pp. 213-236. He became voivode of Transylvania (1493), aiding Stephen III of Moldavia against the Jagiellonian brothers, Wladislaw II, Jan Albert of Poland and Sigismund (1497).

⁴⁷ M. Diaconescu, "Peștorii nepoatei lui Ștefan cel Mare în 1517. Despre căsătoria lui Alexandru cu fiica lui Bartolomeu Drágfi", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie* A.D. Xenopol, XLIX (2012), pp. 55-70, at pp. 60-63.

⁴⁸ See in this respect Tudor Sălăgean, "«Contrat» et «révolte»: traditions politiques dans le nord-ouest de la Transylvanie à la fin du règne de Sigismund de Luxembourg", and Szilárd Süttő, "Spuren einer vom niederen Adel ausgeübten Autonomie im Siebenbürgen des ausgehenden 14. Jahrhunderts", in *A*

the first – known – ruler of Moldavia to receive (certainly two) estates in the Kingdom of Hungary.

Even though the issue was finalized almost a decade later, the first known official royal promise of an estate (i.e., a refuge castle) for Stephen III dates from 1482.⁴⁹ It was the result of a series of negotiations initiated some three years earlier, in which Stephen I “played his part”. On the new tombstone placed by Stephen III upon Stephen I’s grave in Rădăuți (1480), Stephen I was designated – a unique occurrence (among all contemporary tombstones) – as *the one who had defeated the Hungarians at Hindău*.⁵⁰ Previously, no one in Moldavia (or in Jagiello Poland, Hungary’s rival), had claimed that Stephen I had won *at Hindău*. Noteworthy enough, John Thuróczy (prior to 1488) and Antonio Bonfini (after 1486), Matthias Corvinus’ chroniclers, paid almost equal attention to Sigismund’s Moldavian campaign of January-February 1395 and to Matthias’ largely ill-fated expedition from November-December 1467.⁵¹

Stephen III’s lineage may prove relevant under our Sigismundian circumstances as well.⁵² He was Bogdan II of Moldavia’s illegitimate son (the most loyal to John Hunyadi of all Wallachian rulers⁵³), the illegitimate at best son of Alexander I *the Just*, the son of Roman I (i.e. Stephen I’s predecessor) and of his second wife, Radu I of Wallachia’s sister or cousin.⁵⁴ In 1400, less than a year after the death of Stephen I (Roman I’s son from his first – Lithuanian – marriage),⁵⁵ Mircea I, Radu I’s son,⁵⁶ enthroned the “Wallachian son” of Roman (Mircea’s ally during his

Century in History (= *Mélanges d’Histoire Générale*, NS, II, 1-2), II. *A Century in the History of Transylvania. The Later Crusades, Humanism, Church Union and Social Mobility at the End of the Middle Ages*, edited by I. Drăgan, I.-A. Pop, T. Sălăgean, Al. Simon (Cluj-Napoca, 2008), pp. 161-170, and pp. 185-195.

⁴⁹ Cristian Luca, Al. Simon, “Documentary Perspectives on Matthias Corvinus and Stephen the Great”, *Transylvanian Review*, XVII (2008), 3, pp. 85-112, at p. 88.

⁵⁰ *Repertoriul monumentelor și obiectelor de artă din timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare*, edited by Mihai Berza (Bucharest, 1958), no. 59, p. 255.

⁵¹ See also I.-A. Pop, Al. Simon, “The Venetian and Walachian Roots of the Ottoman-Hungarian Truce of 1468: Notes on Documents in the State Archives of Milan”, in *The Italian Peninsula and Europe’s Eastern Borders. 1204-1669* (= *Eastern and Central European Studies*, I), edited by Iulian Mihai Damian, I.-A. Pop, M. Popović, Al. Simon (New York-Oxford-Basel-Frankfurt-am-Main-Vienna, 2012), pp. 283-302, at p. 285.

⁵² For more information on his family, see Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, I, pp. 513-515.

⁵³ See Sorin Iftimi, “La politique de Jean Hunyadi en Moldavie”, in *Between Worlds* (= *Mélanges d’Histoire Générale*, NS, I-2), II. *Extincta est lucerna orbis. John Hunyadi and his Time*, edited by Ana Dumitran, Loránd L. Mádly, Al. Simon (Cluj-Napoca, 2009), pp. 365-378.

⁵⁴ E.g., Mark Whelan, Al. Simon, “A New Source on Moldavian Politics at the End of the Rule of Alexander I the Just”, *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, XXXI (2015), pp. 149-160.

⁵⁵ Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, I, pp. 460-473. The – sadly – more than dubious genetic analysis of the remains of the voivodes buried in Rădăuți prevents us from other assessments regarding Roman I and his family, Stephen I and his half-brothers included.

⁵⁶ Likely, unlike his brother and predecessor Dan I (whose downfall he apparently endorsed), Mircea I was Radu I’s son from his second marriage. 17th century sources claim that Mircea’s mother (her name was recorded as *Calinichia*, but at a time when she was already a nun) was the daughter of Lazar

short rule as sole voivode of Moldavia between 1391/1392 and 1394⁵⁷) and took Moldavia under his Wallachian suzerainty.⁵⁸ In the mid-1470s, Mircea, though quite voluntarily confused with nephew Vlad III *the Impaller* (*Dracula*) was regarded in a German pro-Habsburg treatise on the rise of the *Turks* as *Dracula de Molda et Walachia*, who had successfully fought against Sultan Bayezid I, victorious over Sigismund at Nicopolis in 1396.⁵⁹ After (reluctantly) acknowledging that Mircea I had indeed enthroned Alexander I in Moldavia, Stephen, notorious for his Wallachian ambitions,⁶⁰ took over, at least at the end of his rule, in his coat of arms

Hrebeltjanović, the father of Stephen Lazarević. Lazar's youngest daughter, Theodora, wed Nicholas II, the son of Nicholas I Garai, approximately a year after (March-April 1387) his father had fallen in combat at the end of July 1386, apparently against Dan I. Dan then lost his life (within a month or two), fighting John Shishman, Tsar of Bulgarian Târnovo, whose son, Alexander, had married Dragana, Theodora's younger sister, earlier that same year (for these Balkan connections: John V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, 1994²), 387-389, 395-398). After Lazar's death at Kossovopolje (1389), Mircea I (who most likely however did not support him) claimed Podunavia (in the Serbian-Hungarian-Wallachian *triconfinium*), formerly in Lazar's possession (Marian Coman, "Podunavia și relațiile sârbo-muntene în secolele XIV-XVI", in *Istoria. Utopie, amintire și proiect de viitor* <Festschrift Andrei Pippidi>, edited by Ovidiu Cristea, Radu G. Păun (Iași, 2013), pp. 239-258). The absence of additional reliable sources advocates caution (see also A. Pippidi, "Despre Dan voievod: Rectificări cronologice și genealogice", *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, XXXI (2013), pp. 47-96, at pp. 72-73, for the dating of Mircea I's enthronement).

⁵⁷ Simon, "Annus Mirabilis 1387", pp. 142-144. Roman I apparently also supported Sigismund against Wladislaw II Jagiello in their Podolian conflicts (Ilona Czamańska, *Moldavia i Woloszczyzna wobec Polski, Węgier i Turcji w XIV i XV wieku* (Poznań, 1996), 56-57). He may have even lost his life during them. Immediately after his enthronement, Stephen I swore allegiance to Wladislaw II in early January 1395, with Sigismund's troops at his border. The preparations for the campaign had begun in December 1394 (Manolescu, "Campania lui Sigismund de Luxemburg", pp. 65-66).

⁵⁸ Ș. Papacostea, "Aux débuts de l'état moldave. Considerations en marge d'une nouvelle source", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, XII (1973), I, pp. 139-158, at pp. 149-150. As part of the arrangement, Alexander conceded the direct connection between Hungary and the Danube Mounds (via the Oituz pass) to Mircea. The connection (part of the so-called *Lower Country* of Moldavia) had come under Moldavian control under Roman I, who had won the throne (1391/1392) against the sons of his brother, Peter I, the anti-Hungarian (and pro-Ottoman) ally of Mircea I and Wladislaw I, according to the arrangements of 1389-1390 (Simon, "Bisericile Turcului", pp. 94-95). Stephen III in his official chronicle had to admit Mircea I's role in the enthronement of Alexander I, though he omitted to mention the support he had received from Mircea's nephew, Vlad III *Dracula*, the son of Vlad II *Dracul*, in 1457 (*Letopisețul anonim al Moldovei*, in *Cronicile slavo-române din secolele XV-XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan*, edited by P.P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1959), pp. 6-23, at pp. 14-15).

⁵⁹ BStB, CLM, 14668, ff. 7^r-43^r, at ff. 23^r, 24^v

⁶⁰ Al. Simon, "From Wallachia to Dacia: International Politics and Political Ideology in the Last Decades of the Fifteenth Century", in *Government and Law in Medieval Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia* (=Studies in Russia and Eastern Europe, XI), edited by Martyn Rady, Al. Simon (London, 2013), pp. 91-100.

the colours (green and gold) of Alexander *Basarab*,⁶¹ married to Lady Clara *de Ungaria*,⁶² who was probably Radu I's mother.⁶³

Aside from Venetian “administrative records” related to the election of Matthias as king of Hungary in 1458⁶⁴ or from John Hunyadi's Wallachian “usurpation” of 1447,⁶⁵ the Moldavian sources may provide the sole contemporary evidence for the princely Wallachian roots of the Hunyadi clan⁶⁶. The chronicles of the Monastery of Putna, the necropolis of Stephen III and of his legitimate successors,⁶⁷ recorded Matthias's death and spoke highly of him (though they

⁶¹ Dan Cernovodeanu, *Știința și arta heraldică în România* (Bucharest, 1977), p. 67. The Wallachian princely coat of arms was discovered only in 1920 when the so-called Grave 10 was found in the Princely St. Nicholas Church in Curtea de Argeș, more than four centuries after Stephen's colored coat of arms (1502). The identity of the deceased (usually deemed to have been Radu I or his brother and predecessor Wladislaw I) was not established until recently, following ¹⁴C dating and DNA analysis (see Beatrice Kelemen, Adrian Ioniță, Alexandru Simon, “Între *Negru Vodă* și *Prințul Negru* al Țării Românești: mormântul 10 din Biserica Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc de la Curtea de Argeș”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol*, LI (2014), pp. 1-44). The visual identity between the two coats of arms (i.e. green and yellow/ gold, not red and white/ silver, Arpadian stripes) – separated by some 150 years (the very limit of medieval –oral – memory) is thus even more striking.

⁶² Pope Innocent VI recorded her in August 1360 as *Clara de Ungaria, Wayuodissa Vlachie* (Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Vatican City, Registra Avenionensis, [no.] 144. 1359-1360, f. 473^r). Alike (some two decades later) the Duchy of Moldavia (a *Latin* rite state between 1370 and 1385/1386), Wallachia had received its first crown from the Papacy, from Pope Clement VI (c. late 1345-early 1347), about a decade after the marriage between Alexander, the son of Basarab I, and Clara, probably – because of her title and because of the post-Arpadian royal Hungarian context – an illegitimate daughter of Charles-Robert, the father of Louis I (B. Kelemen, A. Ioniță, Al. Simon, “De la Biserica Argeș I la Biserica Argeș II: vremea Țării Românești și a Bisericii Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol*, LII (2015), pp. 1-58). She was the mother of Louis' *quandam suam consanguineam* (Anchop) for whom, in winter 1346-1347, permission to marry Stephen Urosh V, the son of Stephen Urosh IV Dushan (recently crowned emperor) was requested from Clement VI (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (ÖNB), Codices, 2042, f. 1^r, Sima Cirković, “O jednoj srpsko-ugarskoj alijansi”, *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*, XLIV (2007), 2, pp. 411-421, at pp. 420-421; this became a “very long engagement”).

⁶³ Wladislaw I and Radu I were certainly brothers, according to Dan I's charter of 1385 for – interestingly enough – Tismana, Nicodimus' foundation (DRH, B, I, no. 7, pp. 19-22). According to Pope Urban V in 1370 (*Acta Urbani P.P. V (1362-1370)* (= *Fontes*, III, 11), edited by Aloisie L. Tăutu (Rome, 1964), nos. 180-d, pp. 305-308; no. 193, p. 237). Clara, the mother of Anna of Bulgarian Vidin (the wife of John Stratsimir, John Shishman's half-brother and rival) and of *Ancha* of Serbia (the wife of Stephen Urosh V), was Wladislaw I's *noverca* (meaning primarily stepmother, but also adoptive mother and even mother-in-law). Alexander certainly had a son, Voislav (a typically Serbian name, never used afterwards by the Wallachian elites), buried next to him in Curtea de Argeș, according to Voislav's tombstone discovered – likewise – in 1920 (see also Virgil Drăghiceanu's notes in *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice*, X-XVI (1917-1923), pp. X, 264).

⁶⁴ Stefano Magno, *Annali veneti et del mondo*, I-IV [1433-1478] (=ÖNB, Cods. 6214-6217), III [1457-1468 (=Cod. 6216)], *Ad annum 1457 [More Veneto 1458]*, f. 6^r. Matthias was [...] *d'origine humile de progenie de Valacchia* [...].

⁶⁵ DRH, D, I, no. 286, p. 394; Pall, “Intervenția lui Iancu de Hunedoara”, pp. 1069-1070.

⁶⁶ In spite of numerous studies, this “detail” has passed unnoticed until quite recently.

⁶⁷ See also Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria-Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior. O istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Putna, 2005), pp. 9-13, 75-76.

emphasized “his Moldavian defeat” at Baia in December 1467).⁶⁸ All other deaths mentioned in these chronicles belonged to members of the House of Bogdan or to their relatives (by marriage).⁶⁹

The Putna chronicles acknowledged in effect Matthias as a relative of the House of Bogdan,⁷⁰ in a manner quite like that of Stephen III's own acceptance of Dragoș and of his sons as the first voivodes of Moldavia.⁷¹ Fact or fiction,⁷² the

⁶⁸ The texts were last edited in *Cronicile Slavo Române* (they predate the final preserved version of the Stephen III's “official chronicle”, though the latter ended with the year 1507): *Letopisețul de la Putna I*, pp. 43-52 (1359-1526), at pp. 49, 50; *Letopisețul de la Putna II*, pp. 55-66 (1359-1519), at pp. 62, 64.

⁶⁹ Such as Ivan Ivanovitch, the son of Ivan III of Moscow, married to Helena, the daughter of Stephen III and of Evdochia of Kyiv. He died a month before Matthias. Yet the chronicles (*Putna I* and *II*) recorded his death after that of Matthias. Stephen III's so-called “official chronicle” mentioned none of the two deaths and further omitted – in comparison to the deaths recorded in the two chronicles from Putna – the death of the influential metropolite of Moldavia, Theoctist I (1477), as well as that of Stephen III's first wife, Evdochia of Kyiv, who had passed away when Matthias entered Moldavia in November 1467.

⁷⁰ With the mention of Stephen III's death, these chronicles basically ended. *Putna I* briefly mentioned the enthronements of Bogdan III (1504) and Stephen IV (1517), Stephen IV's success over the Tartars (1519), the Ottoman victories over the Hungarians at Belgrade and Mohács (1521 and 1526) and the death of Peter, Bogdan III's son and Stephen IV's (half?) brother (25th of September 1526). The *Putna II* mentioned the enthronement and the death of Bogdan III, as well as the enthronement of Stephen IV, ending with the narration of Stephen IV's victory (i.e., of the captains of the – at that time – approximately ten year old prince) over the Tartars. Not even the death of Mary *Voichița* (Branković), the last wife of Stephen III and Bogdan III's mother (1510), was recorded, though she was buried in Putna, like her mother, Mary *Despina* (the wife of Radu III, the son of Vlad II). Her death in 1500 had been duly registered by both chronicles.

⁷¹ In Stephen III's “official chronicle”, Ladislas/ *Lațcu* (c. 1367-c. 1373), the first Moldavian monarch (as *Latin* rite duke since 1370) was deemed the son of Sas, the son of Dragoș, the (first) *founder* of Moldavia (in 1359. *Lațcu* had – thus – ruled before Bogdan I (who in fact ruled just before *Lațcu*, between c. 1363 and c. 1367). On the tombstone placed – similarly in Rădăuți – by Stephen III on *Lațcu*'s grave no mention was made regarding *Lațcu*'s father (In the chronicles from Putna, *Lațcu* was correctly placed after Bogdan I, as his son). All preserved (new) princely tombstones were placed in Rădăuți by Stephen III (for, in the chronological order of their installement, Roman I, *Lațcu*, Bogdan, Alexander I's maternal brother, Bogdan I and Bogdan, Alexander I's son) between mid-December 1479 and the end of January 1480, except for Stephen I's tombstone, with its special “Hungarian mention”. The latter was installed in the second half of May 1480 (*Repertoriul monumentelor și obiectelor de artă*, nos. 53-57, pp. 249-254; no. 59, pp. 255-256; we note in addition that Stephen III deemed Bogdan, Alexander I's brother, as his *grand-father*, though – officially – the father of Stephen's father, Bogdan II, was Alexander I).

⁷² Three matters might be of relevance in this respect, as the (medieval) question is (was) not so much what truth lay behind such relations, but what could have been accomplished through them. 1. “Like” the Hunyadis – Stephen III had *Serbian* claims related to both Hilandar, on Mount Athos (1466), and *Podunavia* (1475), prior to his marriage to Mary *Voichița* in 1478 (Luca-Simon, “Documentary Perspectives”, pp. 87-88). The only justification for them was on Wallachian genealogical soil, on his paternal side. His mother, *Oltea*, was from the *Lower Country* of Moldavia and was never designated – including by her son – a *lady* (Gorovei-Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior*, pp. 9-10). 2. According to Jan Długosz, a *sister* of John Hunyadi was given into marriage to – the much younger – Alexander II of Moldavia, a marriage “below the station” at the time of the Hunyadis (unlike in the case of the two Hunyadi marriages of Vlad III, the first one with a close relative of Matthias, an unknown cousin

princely Wallachian roots of the sons of Alexander I *the Just* of Moldavia, as well as of Voicu of Hunedoara were endorsed by medieval Moldavian monastic sources.⁷³

Wallachian Dynastic Alliances. Sigismund of Luxemburg was most aware of Wallachian princely “genealogies”⁷⁴. The three known daughters (*Ancha*/Alexandra,⁷⁵ Anna and Elisabeth) of Alexander of Wallachia and of Clara of Hungary⁷⁶ had wed: (1) Stephen Urosh V of Serbia (c. 1346-1347),⁷⁷ (2) John Stratsimir of Bulgaria (c. 1353-1354)⁷⁸ and (3) Wladislaw II of Oppeln (c. 1354-1355).⁷⁹ The daughter of Stratsimir and Anna, Dorothea (King Louis I’ favourite), had

or even an illegitimate daughter of John, and the second with the king’s maternal cousin, Justine Szilágyi). This calls for dynastic (family) reasoning (see Al. Simon, “Propaganda and Matrimony: *Dracula* between the Hunyadis and the Habsburgs”, *Transylvanian Review*, XX (2011), 4, pp. 80-90). 3. The *Putna I* and *II* chronicles remain the only contemporary written Moldavian sources to emphasize Transylvania in the politics of Stephen III through the *gifts* he received and the *gifts* he made (*Putna I*, pp. 49-50; *Putna II*, pp. 62, 65): (1) immediately after/ sometime after the battle of Baia (according to the chronicles) Matthias gave Stephen estates in the *Land of Transylvania* (*Ardeal* in the original, based on the Hungarian name of the province); (2) in 1497, Stephen made numerous gifts to his co-father-in-law, Bartholomew Drágffy, voivode of Transylvania, who had come to aid him against King John Albert of Poland; according to Maximilian I of Habsburg (1498), at that time, Stephen controlled half of Hungary, of Matthias’ royal legacy (*Correspondencia de Gutierre Gomez de Fuensalida, embajador en Alemania, Flandes é Inglaterra (1496-1509)*, edited by Jacob Fitz-James Stuart de Berwick-Alba (Madrid, 1907), p. 21).

⁷³ This literally meant claiming part of Hungary for Stephen and chiefly his successors by right of blood, as King Matthias’ relatives. John Corvinus died in October 1504, three months after Stephen’s death. The male line of the Hunyadi family died out by spring 1505. Post-1526 events tend to support this idea. Based on Eugenius IV’ decision of 1436, Moldavia (and not Wallachia) certainly had the Greek rite ecclesiastical rights over the eastern parts of Hungary (*Acta Eugenii PP IV (1431-1447)* (= *Fontes*, III, 15), edited by Georgio Fedalto (Rome, 1990), no. 421, pp. 229-230).

⁷⁴ We focus under the circumstances on the relations established prior to 1398-1399. For King Sigismund’s knowledge towards the end of the reign, see M. Whelan, Al. Simon, “The Moldavian Lady and the Elder Lords of the East”, *Transylvanian Review*, XXIV (2015), 3, pp. 113-129.

⁷⁵ *Ancha* was recorded also as *Helena* or *Slava* (Mauro Orbini, *Il regno degli Slavi* (Pesaro, 1601), p. 267; Giacomo di Pietro Luccari, *Copioso ristretto degli annali di Ragusa* (Venise, 1605), p. 60).

⁷⁶ The three daughters are listed in the – (needless to say) apparent – chronological order of their marriages. To this end, we have given the approximate dates based on the few preserved sources.

⁷⁷ ÖNB, Cod. 2042, f. 1^r. The letter sent by an unnamed (in the Viennese preserved medieval copy) Hungarian prelate to the pope suggest that – at least by proxy – the marriage was a *fait accompli* when the bishop asked Clement VI not to interfere with Louis I’ decision. On the other hand, it seems that the marriage was celebrated at a much later date because of Stephen Dushan’s changing policies (e.g. *Monumenta Serbica spectantia historiam Serbiae, Bosnae, Ragusae*, edited by Franz Miklosich (Vienna, 1858), no. 127, p. 147; Stephen Dushan’s charter for Ragusa, issued in 1349).

⁷⁸ Ivan Božilov, *Фамилията на Асеновци (1186-1460). Генеалогия и просопография* (Sofia, 1994), pp. 200-202.

⁷⁹ In this matter (highly debated at the end of the 1990s), see also Maciej Salamon, “Ladislaus von Oppeln: ein schlesischer Herzog zwischen der katolischen und der orthodoxen Welt”, in *Medieval Christian Europe: East and West. Traditions, Values Communications*, edited by Vassil Gjuzelev, Anisava Miltenova (Sofia, 2002), pp. 518-527, at p. 521, note 20.

wed Tvrtko I (1374)⁸⁰, the first king of Bosnia, Sigismund's southern nemesis.⁸¹ Ágnes-Elisabeth, the child of Wladislaw II of Oppeln and Elisabeth, was married to Jobst of Moravia (1372), Sigismund's – (most) unwanted – paternal cousin.⁸² In addition to these marriages (that basically connected the so-called “Visegrád group” to the “Belgrade-Vidin-Severin group”⁸³), there was already an abundance of Wallachian princely offsprings⁸⁴ that competed for the throne (the same applied for Moldavia, in particular after the death of Peter I, around 1391⁸⁵). More were to come until the end of Sigismund of Luxemburg's reign, following the death of Mircea I (1418). Mircea I had seemingly fathered an impressive number of *bastards* (as the late Byzantine chronicles noted with undisimulated satisfaction).⁸⁶ Sigismund's charters never listed Voicu and his family relatives of the House of Basarab.⁸⁷ Still,

⁸⁰ See also Mór Wertner, *A középkori délszláv uralkodók genealogiai története* (Temesvár, 1891), pp. 218-220, 226-227.

⁸¹ Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, pp. 391-392; Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, pp. 24-26, 31.

⁸² Dieter Veldtrup, *Frauen um Herzog Ladislaus (†1401): Oppelner Herzoginnen in der dynastischen Politik zwischen Ungarn Polen und dem Reich* (Warendorf, 1999), pp. 53-60, 80-86. One information, for which I am indebted to Professor Petr Elbl, might be relevant in this context. Apparently, in the 1390s, a Moravian noble fought against the *Turks* in Wallachia. He was created a knight by Mircea (Wallachia seemingly had its own order of knights prior to the creation of the Order of the Dragon), who gave him a ring on this occasion (for the ring, in private property, and its depiction: Heinz Rohlik, “Rohlik”, *Deutsches Geschichtsbuch*, LX (CCXIX) (2007), pp. 155-174, here at p. 166).

⁸³ The second lesser-known group predated the first. It consisted of the relatives and offsprings of Stephen Milutin, Basarab and Michael Sishman, pro-Tartar allies during Charles-Robert of Anjou's combats for Hungarian power. The wife of John Alexander, tsar of Bulgaria (since 1331), was Theodora, Basarab's daughter. The tsar's sister, Helena, had wed the new king of Serbia, Stephen Dushan, in 1332. The “Visegrád group” (Hungary-Poland-Bohemia) appears to have been created by Charles-Robert (1335-1339) also as response to this southern dynastic alliance. Noteworthy enough, the marriage between Alexander, the son of Basarab, and Clara (his second wife; given also Voislav's name, Alexander's first wife had been of Serbian origins) was concluded at some point between the main dates of the constitution of the “Visegrád group”, either prior or after the Byzantine sponsored Turkish attack on Bulgaria and Wallachia in 1337-1338 (for the main extant sources, see Kelemen-Ioniță-Simon, “De la Biserica Argeș I la Biserica Argeș II”, pp. 48-51).

⁸⁴ Not only Constantinople, Adrianople or Krakow possessed a “reservoir” of princely Wallachian candidates (hostages), but also Buda (Ferenc Forgach, *Rerum Hungaricarum sui temporis commentarii libri XXII* (Bratislava-Kosice 1788), p. 275).

⁸⁵ For both states, see the overview in Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, I, pp. 78-84, 446-471.

⁸⁶ E.g. [Michael] Dukas, *Istoria turco-bizantină (1341-1462)*, edited by Vasile Grecu (Bucharest, 1958), p. 250. This attitude was chiefly due to Mircea I's involvement during the Ottoman civil war (1402-1413). Still, Michael I too was viewed as morally decayed in the same Byzantine environment.

⁸⁷ Prior to Voicu, only four other Wallachians are known to have been courtiers: Carapciu of Receaș (in the Banate <of Hungary>), whose family had fled from Wallachia during the conflict between Louis and Alexander (1345-1347) and the sons of Sas, Balc (Baliță), Drag and John (I. Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania. 1440-1514* (Bucharest, 2000), p. 423). The safest assumption would be that Voicu had, at least, the royal Hungarian relevance of Carapciu. As to his princely Wallachian ties, because Voicu was seemingly never employed as a candidate for the Wallachian throne, they must have been on his mother's side, not on his father's (Șerb). The family's policy towards Wallachia indicates that their Basarab ties followed the lineage(s) of Wladislaw I, Dan I and Vlad I (Octavian Iliescu, “Vlad Ier, voivode de la Valachie: le règne, le sceau et les monnaies”, *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, XXVII (1988), 1-2, pp. 73-105). This would also suit Nicolaus Olachus' “story”. According to himself,

the grant of the *Hunyad* estate to Voicu (October 1409)⁸⁸ predated by only months a new conflict between Sigismund and Mircea. By May 1410, Mircea had attacked Transylvania.⁸⁹ The Polish defeat of the Teutonic Knights at Grünwald (July) halted the planned Hungarian campaign against Mircea.⁹⁰ The death of Rupert of Wittelsbach, King of the Romans (May) further distracted Sigismund from the Wallachian issue. He had to compete with Jobst for Rupert's succession (September-October 1410). At first, he lost in front of his cousin. Then, Sigismund prevailed.⁹¹

In an age of few coincidences, the grant of *Hunyad* to Voicu narrowly preceded the official outbreak of a conflict between Sigismund and Mircea.⁹² Earlier, the grant of the estate(s) in the Inner Szolnok County to Stephen I had – chronologically – stood at the beginning of the break between the Dragoș family and Sigismund.⁹³

Olachus was related to the Hunyadis on his paternal side via John's otherwise unknown sister *Marina* (*Ungaria.Atila*, edited by Antál Gyöngyvér (Iași, 1999), pp. 87-89).

⁸⁸ The final (privilegial) charter for the estate was issued on February 10, 1410 (Lupescu, "Matthias Hunyadi", p. 39), consequently further reducing the distance between the two events (see below).

⁸⁹ MOL, DL 73910 (May 8, 1410; edited in DRH, D, I, no. 113, p. 183; calendared in ZsO, II-2. 1407-1410, edited by E. Mályusz (Budapest, 1957), no. 7573, p. 355). Bologa (referred to also as *Sebeswar* or *Kalathazeg*, a rather confusing name) was generally deemed the *Hunyad* castle donated to Mircea (primarily because the village Șaula, *Saluasara* in the deed, was part of the estate). Bologa was again a royal castle in 1412 (Dezső Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában*, V (Budapest, 1913), pp. 299-300; cited by Pataki, "Ceva despre relațiile Țării Românești", p. 425).

⁹⁰ In relation to our topic (given also the special "anniversary features" of the age, i.e., the Warsaw Pact vs NATO/ "battle of nations"), see also Ștefan Ștefănescu, "Participarea românilor la lupta de la Grünwald (15 iulie 1410)", *Studii. Revistă de Istorie*, XIV (1961), 1, pp. 5-22.

⁹¹ For the context, see also Jörg K. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund: Herrscher an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit, 1368-1437* (Munich, 1996), pp. 263-266; Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, pp. 72-76.

⁹² Apparently, no connection was previously established between the two events, possibly also because the Wallachians who had attacked Transylvania and had to be punished were deemed to have come from Moldavia. Yet Moldavian attacks on the realm usually targeted the Maramureș (e.g., ZsO, II-1. 1400-1406, edited by E. Mályusz (Budapest, 1956), no. 3035, p. 357; no. 5152, p. 653; II-2, no. 5504, p. 32; III. 1411-1412, edited by E. Mályusz, I. Borsa (Budapest, 1993), no. 1093, p. 295; apparently, in spite of their old feud, the House of Bogdan supported the House of Dragoș during the latter's conflict with Sigismund). For the context: C. Rezachevici, "Implicarea Giurgiului în relațiile lui Mircea cel Bătrân cu Polonia", *Revista Istorică*, NS, XIII (2002), 3-4, pp. 149-159 (the last three, 1403, 1411, 1415, of the four major Wallachian-Polish arrangements under Mircea, were concluded in Giurgiu on the Danube, at a safe distance from the Hungarian border).

⁹³ See N. C. Tóth, "Szász vajda utódainak felemelkedése és bukása. A család vázlatos története 1365-1424 között", in *A Szilágyság*, pp. 135-166, at pp. 138-140, 142-143. The origins of the break between them and Sigismund might have dated back to 1390 (when they lost the countship of the Szeklers). Because of the key Constantinople mission entrusted to the brothers by the king in 1391 (Papacostea, "Byzance et la création de la Métropole", pp. 137-139), 1396 would however be the soonest estimate. That year, Balç and Drag lost Sătmăreș, the county that together with Maramureș and Ugocsa had formed the foundation of their power, since the mid-1370s. At any rate, in spring 1398, the relations between the Dragoș and Sigismund were no longer those from 1386-1387.

After Nicopolis and the Diet of Timișoara (1396-1397),⁹⁴ Sigismund had deemed it wise to establish his vassals voivodes of Wallachia and Moldavia in the Voivodate of Transylvania, and not so far apart from each other (if we are to fully embrace the commonly accepted identification of Mircea's *Hunyad* with Bologa, west of the city of Cluj).⁹⁵ Sigismund would have thus supplemented the forces of his proven loyal trustee Stibor of Stiboricz, voivode of Transylvania,⁹⁶ and set a convenient distance between Moldavia, Wallachia and the – new in the case of Mircea I – Hungarian estates of their voivodes (once again, if *Hunyad* was not Hunyadi Hunedoara).⁹⁷

Sigismund's decision backfired in part also because of the general context.⁹⁸ A rebellion broke out, supported by the Dragoș family as well.⁹⁹ The Moldavian

⁹⁴ Polish-Moldavian relations prevent us from dating the reconciliation between Sigismund and Stephen I immediately after the royal campaign in Moldavia, though the king claimed a complete victory. Additionally, by late spring 1396, Mircea lost control over a significant part of Wallachia, occupied by Vlad I, supported by Wladislaw II; Vlad was eventually defeated and captured by voivode Stibor in winter 1396-1397 (Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, I, pp. 82-83). Because at the beginning of 1399, the Transylvanian representative of Mircea I excused himself for not knowing the exact limits of the estate of the *Hunyad* land (DRH, D, I, no. 104, p. 171), we must assume that both royal grants (from Mircea and Stephen) were related to the Diet of Timișoara convened by Sigismund in October 1397. The high offices held by non-Hungarians was one of the main points on the agenda of the Diet. The “ethnic” context of the donation of the estates was rather tense.

⁹⁵ Because no reference was made to the Hungarian wife of Mircea I and her rights in relation to the Hunyad castle of 1398 and because the *Hunyad* castle (if identified with Bologa) had previously been held by the voivode of Transylvania (Pataki, “Ceva despre relațiile Țării Românești”, p. 425), we have to presume that this estate was not part of the “dowry” of Mircea I's wife, but a proper royal grant for the voivode of Wallachia. The Bánffy-Losonczy family (to which his wife was also presumed to be related) only acquired Bologa towards the end of Sigismund's reign (i.e., in 1435).

⁹⁶ Daniela Dvořáková, *A lovag és király: Stiborici Stibor és Luxemburgi Zsigmond* (Bratislava, 2009). Stibor was among the high-ranking non-Hungarian officials explicitly “spared” in autumn 1397 by the Diet of Timișoara. We consequently underline that the Diet of Timișoara most likely did not view any of the Wallachian voivodes, who were granted estates in the Hungarian kingdom, as an “ethnic” threat to the stability of the realm (besides, Mircea's wife was a proper Hungarian lady).

⁹⁷ In Mircea's case, the motivation for the donation of *Hunyad* (Bologa?) may have also been related to the threats revealed by Vlad's rule, that touched, if not engulfed, also Amlaș and Făgăraș (see also M. Diaconescu, “The Relations of Vassalage between Sigismund of Luxemburg, King of Hungary, and Mircea the Old, Voivode of Wallachia”, *Mediaevalia Transilvanica*, II (1998), 2, pp. 245-282, at pp. 255-257, 265-271). The royal grant for Mircea in the Cluj County would be even more telling if the Bran castle near Brașov had been entrusted to Mircea by Sigismund following their treaty of March 1395 (concluded in the same city of the Transylvanian Saxons). Bran was certainly Mircea's in 1412 when Stibor deemed it to be *in foreign hands* (see also Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 235, note 19). Bran in south-eastern Transylvania was a significantly more delicate possession than Bologa in the north-west, for it largely controlled Hungarian-Wallachian trade.

⁹⁸ The absence of other known relevant sources limits any modern interpretation of his decisions, in relation to Moldavia, under Alexander I's rule (on this matter, see more below).

⁹⁹ R. Popa, *Țara Maramureșului în veacul al XIV-lea*, edited by A. Ioniță (Bucharest, 1997²), pp. 231, 236-238. The Drágffys' main local rivals were count Peter Perény and Theodore Koriatović. The latter's family was related to the House of Bogdan. Theodore had been supported by Roman I (and Sigismund), against Wladislaw II in 1393-1394 (Czamańska, *Moldavia i Woloszczyzna*, pp. 56-57).

grant was not renewed, not even after Mircea enthroned Alexander I.¹⁰⁰ Irrespective of the *Hunyad*'s identity, Mircea himself kept *Hunyad* for a decade.¹⁰¹ Additionally, when a new domestic crisis was blooming (1399-1400),¹⁰² Sigismund had major problems – especially in the Zala County – because of the behavior of Mircea's wife on her estates (Mircea's Hungarian wife was most likely related to the Cilly family, to which Sigismund's and Wladislaw II Jagiello of Poland's second wives belonged).¹⁰³

Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Rise of the Hunyadis. In this border context, the Hunyadis in the Land of Hațeg seem to have been King Sigismund's

¹⁰⁰ The charter of May 1398 did not contain any reference to the actual estate(s) and its/ their name(s). It dealt only with the matter of Stephen I's legal representative (DRH, D, I, no. 102, p. 169). Any assumption regarding the estate(s), its/ their extent and location would be speculation. Furthermore, the Moldavian raids in the Maramureș area during the royal Hungarian crisis made a renewal of the grant under Alexander I unlikely (see also N. Iorga, "O mărturie din 1404 a celor mai vechi *moldoveni*", *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, 3rd series, VI (1926), pp. 69-72).

¹⁰¹ Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza*, V, p. 300. Pataki ("Ceva despre relațiile Țării Românești", p. 425) challenged such a possibility (not even taken into account earlier) by simply stating that the mention of Bologa as royal Hungarian castle in the year 1412 was no evidence that Mircea I of Wallachia had lost the Transylvanian estate (even though this was precisely the obvious case).

¹⁰² *Zala vármegye története. Oklevéltár*, II. 1364-1498, edited by Imre Nagy, Dezső Véghely, Gyula Nagy (Budapest, 1890), no. 117, pp. 298-299; Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁰³ The hypothesis was first voiced by Panaitescu (*Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 59-61) in the 1940s. The key evidence in this respect were the lands in the Zala County, largely controlled by the Cilly. This interpretation, otherwise, generally accepted, was challenged chiefly by Pataki in the 1950s. He attempted to "counteract" Zala with Bologa, though no mention of Mircea's wife was made – in the sole known charter on the issue from 1399 – in relation to *Hunyad* castle. Considering also that (1) in 1400, when he wrote in anger to Mircea's wife, Sigismund did not call her by her name (*Zala vármegye története*, II, no. 117, pp. 298-300), the Tomaj (Tomaj) estate mentioned in the same context was connected to the kindred to which the Bánffys belonged (Pataki, "Ceva despre relațiile Țării Românești", p. 428), and that (2) the major Hungarian feudal fall after 1397 was that of the Lákffy family (P. Engel, "Zsigmond bárói: rövid életrajzok", in *Művészet Zsigmond király korában 1387-1437*, edited by László Beke, Ernő Marosi, Tünde Wehli, I. *Tanulmányok* (Budapest, 1987), pp. 405-458, at pp. 427-430), we cannot rule out a "Cilly genetic foundation" in the case of Mircea's Hungarian wife (see also Heinz Dopsch, "Die Grafen von Cilli: ein Forschungsproblem?", *Südostdeutsches Archiv*, XVII-XVIII (1974-1975), pp. 9-49), well-embedded however in the power relations of Hungarian clans that shaped policies in the realm prior to Sigismund's rise in 1387.

Although we cannot tell when it was celebrated exactly, the plausible Cilly marriage of Mircea I certainly predated those of the two kings. The earliest – uncertain – mention of Michael (the son of Mircea and of his Hungarian wife) as his father's associate in 1391 suggests that the marriage was concluded at the time of Sigismund's contested enthronement (in his "Despre Dan voievod", pp. 51-52, 81; Pippidi even presumed that Mircea's rule began already in March 1386; hence, Mircea, and not Dan I, would have been the voivode who – according to von Müllich – killed Garai).

safest “Wallachian gamble”¹⁰⁴, and – obviously – not Stephen I¹⁰⁵ or Mircea I, the self-styled *blood-relative* of King Wladislaw Jagiello,¹⁰⁶ as well as – conveniently for John Corvinus in the post-Cilly context of his days¹⁰⁷ – the *father* of John

¹⁰⁴ For an overview: I. Minea, *Principatele române și politica orientală a împăratului Sigismund* (Bucharest, 1919); Pippidi, “Despre Dan voievod”, *passim*. Vlad II Dracul, Mircea’s illegitimate son, and Dan II (III according to Pippidi), another illegitimate son of Mircea (and seemingly not the son of Dan I, Mircea I’s half-brother as usually presumed) in the 1420s and then 1430s proved also quite (given the medieval circumstances) loyal. In comparison to them, we must note that no known member of the Hunyadi family was in fact “pushed” towards the Wallachian throne, even after the death of Sigismund and the Ottoman campaigns “guided” by Vlad II into the realm (1437-1438), when John and his younger – half – brother John (Jovan/Ivașcu) were appointed bans of Severin (1439).

After that moment, John ceased to be called *John the Wallachian* in official Hungarian records (see also Lupescu, “Matthias Hunyadi”, p. 42). Given his time in royal service, John’s earlier designation as *the Wallachian* cannot be explained only by ethnic criteria in the context of his elevation to the rank of ban of Severin. He had spent too much time in Hungarian administration (fifteen years) in order for the Wallachian designation to become obsolete prior to 1439 (still, as a court knight, from 1434 onwards, he had been named *Johannes Olah de Hunyad*; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, p. 424; the emphasis placed on *the Wallachian* was futile, as long as he was further named *of Hunedoara*). The most plausible explanation seems of political nature. Once John became a high official (and *real baron*) of the realm (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, p. 13), Wallachia as a “career option” was out of the question, irrespective of how meagre or strong John’s ties to the Basarabs were). Still, as regent of Hungary (1447), John personally pushed for more: the throne of Wallachia (Pall, “Intervenția lui Iancu de Hunedoara”, *passim*). But John had to pull back and enthrone his *relative*, Wladislaw II.

¹⁰⁵ Stephen I was also open to “Catholic temptation” (Renate Möhlenkamp, “*Ex czeretensi civitate*: Randnotizen zu einem in Vergessenheit geratenes Dokument”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie A.D Xenopol*, XIX (1982), pp. 105-130). Both his father (Roman I) and his uncle (Peter I) had been *Latin* rite Christians prior to 1386-1387, under the influence for their powerful mother, Margarete of Siret (*Acta Gregorii P.P. XI (1370-1378)* (= *Fontes*, III, 12), edited by A.L. Tăutu (Rome, 1966), no. 248, pp. 493-494). Alexander I, Stephen I’s younger half-brother, also used to be a *Latin* rite Christian (Anton Kern, “*Der Libellus de notitia Orbis Johannes III (de Galonifontibus?) O.P. Erzbischofs von Sultanieh*”, *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, VIII (1938), pp. 82-123, at p. 104, note 12). Such “vulnerabilities” did not help settle the conflict between Byzantium (i.e. the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople) and Moldavia, although Sigismund apparently used his Byzantine credit to better relations, after he reconciled with Stephen (Simon, “*Annus mirabilis 1387*”, p. 145).

¹⁰⁶ In 1411, Mircea addressed Wladislaw as his *blood relative*. Even under medieval circumstances, this designation hardly matched a relation established through wives. However, a direct Moldavian genealogical link between Mircea and Wladislaw was impossible (Panaiteescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 59; Whelan-Simon, “A New Source”, pp. 154-155). Mircea’s exaggeration must have been rooted in the wives of the two monarchs. His *Hungarian* lady had given birth to Mircea’s heir and associate-ruler of Wallachia, Michael I, “his blood”. Anna was expected to give birth to Wladislaw II’s much needed son and heir (by the time of the Polish-Wallachian treaty of 1411, she had given birth only to Hedwig). Besides, the northern connections of Mircea were strong enough to support in 1416 a planned matrimonial union between him and Witold of Lithuania, Wladislaw’s cousin (ZsO, V. *1415-1416*, edited by I. Borsa (Budapest, 1997), no. 2023, pp. 545-546). Mircea was still married to Michael’s mother, who outlived him. Anna, Witold’s wife, passed away only in 1418. Their only daughter, Sophia, was married to Vasili I of Moscow. The only potential wedding must thus have been between Michael, who had two sons at the time of his death in 1420, and a relative of Witold.

¹⁰⁷ After Ladislas Hunyadi, Matthias’ elder brother, had Ulrich II of Cilly executed in November 1456, the family, deprived already of male and female offsprings, died out (Johannes Grabmayer, “Das Opfer war der Täter. Das Attentat von Belgrad 1456 - über Sterben und Tod Ulrichs II. von Cilli”,

Hunyadi and the husband of a member of the Cilly family.¹⁰⁸ Seemingly, less well-rooted in the growing House of Basarab than other Wallachian “applicants” in quest for Hungarian royal grace,¹⁰⁹ Voicu was apparently never prompted towards Wallachia’s throne, but was entrusted with a key-station at its Hungarian border.¹¹⁰

Endowed with *Hunyad*, he “cut” the princely web that spread on both slopes of the Southern Carpathians, connecting the Banate of Severin, Oltenia (i.e. the *Land of Severin*), the Duchies of Amlaş and Făgăraş and the Land of Haţeg.¹¹¹ The son of the natural son of Sigismund of Luxemburg (according to Hungarian rumors),¹¹² of Stephen Lazarević (in Serbian tradition)¹¹³ and of Mircea I (following Corvinus-Cilly

Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, CXI (2003), pp. 286-316). Ulrich’s widow, Catherine, the daughter of George Branković, died in 1491. By the end of the century, there was no one left to challenge the “Corvinus adaptation” of the history of the counts. By then, John Corvinus had also won the favour of Maximilian I of Habsburg (Paul Gwynne, “*Tu alter Caesar eris: Maximilian I, Vladislav II, Johannes Michael Nagonius and the renovatio Imperii*”, *Renaissance Studies*, X (1996), 1, pp. 56-71). Maximilian was Frederick III’s son. Frederick and John Hunyadi had been Ulrich II of Cilly’s main enemy (Konstantin Moritz Ambrosius Langermaier, *Erzherzog Albrecht VI. von Österreich: ein Fürst im Spannungsfeld von Dynastie, Region und Reich* (=J.F. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii*, suppl. XXXVIII) (Cologne-Weimar-Vienna, 2015), pp. 443-447).

¹⁰⁸ Basically (prior to the “Ottoman rediscovery” of Mircea I by Johannes Löwenklau in the 1580s), the Cilly marriage of Mircea I and his alleged fatherhood of John Hunyadi support each other in the context of this altered version of the chronicle of the by then extinct counts of Cilly.

¹⁰⁹ For an overview (from 1418 onwards), see Pippidi, “Despre Dan voievod”, pp. 82-93.

¹¹⁰ Voicu died (between 1414 and 1419) most likely before Mircea’s death in 1418 (see Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, p. 8; Lupescu, “Matthias Hunyadi”, p. 40). Because of his location, he should have played a major role in the subsequent events. The *Argeş castle* was occupied by Hungarian troops and temporarily turned into a royal stronghold (M. Diaconescu, Géza Érszegi, “Documenta quibus Hungariae, Valachiae et Moldaviae relationes melius illustrantur”, *Mediaevalia Transilvanica*, II (1998), 2, pp. 283-288, at no. 1, p. 283). At that time however, the head of the family was Voicu’s sonless younger brother, Radu (named also Ladislav). Radu (Ladislav) died before 1429.

¹¹¹ Usually, Haţeg was – historiographically – removed from this equation. Oltenia was accepted as part of it only in recent decades (Papacostea, “Prima uniune românească”, passim). In effect, in addition to the proper counties of Transylvania, a complex “appendix” (also meaning buffer-zone) stretched between Hungary and Wallachia (i.e., Muntenia east of the Olt). It consisted of the former Lands of Olt (Făgăraş, as well as Amlaş) and Severin (including Oltenia and Haţeg). The “link” between these lands was Haţeg, with the Duchy of Amlaş playing an important, yet rather neglected part. In 1520, it was still virtually impossible to draw a border between Haţeg and northern Oltenia (see I.-A. Pop, “Din relațiile Țării Hațegului cu Țara Românească în veacul al XV-lea și la începutul veacului al XVI-lea”, *Revista de Istorie*, XXXVIII (1985), 1, pp. 80-85).

¹¹² Not only to our knowledge, but this also supposed fatherhood was never accepted by Hunyadi loyalists. Voicu was “anointed” the official father of John. The only personal story promoted by Matthias himself was that of the *blood ties* between him and Mehmed II. This “tale” alone was more than enough. It was first recorded in the speech of the Hungarian envoys sent to the *Reichstag* of Nürnberg (BSTB, CLM 443, f. 176r; December 21, 1479), following the royal anti-Ottoman victory at Câmpul Pâinii (October 13, 1479). This also led to the first – rapid – official acknowledgment of the six-year-old John as the natural son of King Matthias (MOL, DL 27714; October 21, 1479).

¹¹³ Elegantly underlined by Kubinyi (in *Matthias Rex*, p. 13), the peculiar relation between John Hunyadi and George Branković, the son of Vuk, Stephen Lazarević’s younger brother (Momčilo Spremić, *Despot Djuradj Branković i njegovo doba* (Banja Luka, 1999³), p. 553, nota 79), is worth closer analysis, given: (1) the conflict caused by the special (Ottoman) deal of 1444 between George

“fashion”),¹¹⁴ Matthias, who often attempted to imitate Sigismund (without actually admitting it),¹¹⁵ had lessons to learn from his *German* predecessor.¹¹⁶ King Matthias Corvinus learnt them his own way, which usually proved to be the very hard way.

In spite of earlier promises,¹¹⁷ Matthias granted the estates of Ciceu and Cetatea de Baltă in central Transylvania to Stephen III only in the king's final days.¹¹⁸ John Hunyadi's son never returned the estates of Amlaş and Făgăraş, confiscated already by John from Wladislaw II in the early 1450s, to the various voivodes of Wallachia supported by Matthias throughout his reign.¹¹⁹ Matthias came close to restoring the duchies to Radu III, Vlad III's brother, and to handing-over Rodna (closer to the Moldavian border) to Stephen III,¹²⁰ on the eve of the “Hungarian plot” of 1467.¹²¹ Alike the planned and delayed Habsburg-Hunyadi military intervention in support of Albanian Skanderbeg, again under heavy Ottoman attack, the project was a complete failure, largely ushering-in a new Hungarian (and regional) conspiracy against *low-born* Matthias. This, at least, eased a significantly more valid arrangement, on Hungarian and Wallachian soils, between King Matthias and Stephen III of Moldavia (1471).¹²²

and John (P. Engel, “János Hunyadi and the *Peace of Szeged* (1444)”, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, XLVII (1994), 2, pp. 241-257); and (2), approximately a decade later, the “Catholic-Orthodox” engagement between Matthias and Elisabeth of Cilly, George's grand-daughter (see also Iulian Mihai Damian, *Ioan de Capestrano și cruciada târzie* (Cluj-Napoca, 2011), pp. 96-118).

¹¹⁴ BStB, CGM 5350, pp. 174, 176-177. For historiographical purposes, as well as a token of the limitations of local scholarly research, we must note that the text was copied for Nicolae Iorga as well and included in *Acte și fragmente privitoare la istoria românilor*, III. [1399-1499] (Bucharest, 1899). However, the text was never used (i.e., analysed), neither by its “editor” or by other historians.

¹¹⁵ István Bitsky, “Höfische Representation in Ungarn während der Herrschaft von Sigismund und Matthias Corvinus”, in *Das Zeitalter König Sigismunds in Ungarn und im Deutschen Reich*, edited by Tilmann Schimdat, Peter Gunst (Debrecen, 2000), pp. 191-208.

¹¹⁶ An “Eastern” (not only “Western”) comparison between them could prove most relevant. For an outline: Ferenc Szakály, “Phases of Turko-Hungarian Warfare before the Battle of Mohács. 1365-1526”, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, XXXIII (1979), pp. 65-112; J. Preisner-Kapeller, “*Sive vincitur Hungaria...* Das Osmanische Reich, das Königreich Ungarn und ihre Nachbarn in der Zeit des Matthias Corvinus im Machtvergleich im Urteil griechischer Quellen”, in *Matthias Corvinus und seine Zeit*, pp. 37-62.

¹¹⁷ Luca-Simon, “Documentary Perspectives”, p. 88 (1482).

¹¹⁸ See *Acta et epistolae relationum Transylvaniae Hungariaeque cum Moldavia et Valachia* (= *Fontes Rerum Transylvanicarum*, IV, VI), edited by Endre Veress, I. 1468-1540 (Budapest, 1914), no. 40, p. 44.

¹¹⁹ Antál Lukács, *Țara Făgărașului în Evul Mediu (secolele XIII-XVI)* (Bucharest, 1999), pp. 171-173.

¹²⁰ Biblioteca Capitulărilor Colombiana, Sevilla, Codices, Cod. 82-4-8. *Joannis Pannonii Vitesii episcopi Quinque Ecclesiarum Silvarum Liber et Epistolae*, f. 94^v (January 2, 1467).

¹²¹ A. Kubinyi, “Erdély a Mohács előtti évtizedekben”, in *Tanulmányok Erdély történetéről*, edited by István Rácz (Debrecen, 1988), pp. 65-73, at p. 67.

¹²² Ș. Papacostea, “Politica externă a lui Ștefan cel Mare: opțiunea polonă (1459-1472)”, *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, XV (2007), pp. 13-28; Pop-Simon, “The Venetian and Wallachian Roots”.