

Notes and Documents on the Southern Background of Matthias Corvinus' Bohemian War

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By the end of spring 1468, within just a few months, the anti-Ottoman crusading had suffered two grievous losses, both unavoidable or, at least, expected. In mid-January, Skanderbeg passed away. With the exception of a few fortresses and of the Venetian possessions, Albania came under Ottoman rule. The difficult Hungarian-Ottoman negotiations of February–April led to the conclusion of a two-year truce between King Matthias Corvinus and Sultan Mehmed II. John Hunyadi's son left for his other crusade, against the *heretic king* of Bohemia, George of Poděbrady, whom he also accused, like Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy, of conspiring with the *Turk*. Of all the crusaders of 1463 (Rome, Burgundy, Hungary, Venice, and their auxiliaries), the Republic of Saint Mark was left alone in front of the Turk. Pius II's successor of 1464, Paul II, though a Venetian citizen, was much less inclined to the interests of the Republic than his predecessor and also less determined to pursue anti-Ottoman crusading. In return, he showed great zeal in deposing the King of Bohemia and pressured both Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg and his adoptive son (since 1463) Matthias Corvinus to take up arms against George. This would not have been a major problem for Venice (since 1465, it had been trying to make peace with the Porte) had it managed to secure an arrangement with Mehmed II (the Bohemian re-direction of crusading would have given Venice an excellent excuse to retire from the war).¹

1) In general for the late 1460s, see: Frederick G. HEYMANN, *George of Bohemia, King of Heretics*, Princeton N.J. 1965, pp. 419–424; Șerban PAPACOSTEA, *Un episode de la rivalité polono-hongroise au XVe siècle: l'expédition de Matia Corvin en Moldavie (1467) à la lumière d'une nouvelle source*,

Peace negotiations between Venice and the Ottoman Empire were extremely difficult. The Sultan was unwilling to conclude a treaty before he recovered the losses suffered in 1463–1464 following the Venetian and Hungarian attacks and subjected Skanderbeg's Albanian territories. Mehmed II skilfully exploited the crusader divisions between especially Venice and Buda. He alternated trilateral peace proposals (Buda, Venice and Istanbul), a solution which would have suited Venice (it could have thus secured its interests, as both Matthias, who had won against the Ottomans, and Mehmed II, who had recovered from his initial Venetian failures, would have had to come to terms, together with the Republic, in a *status-quo* system largely influenced by the latter), with bilateral peace proposals (Venice and Istanbul), the option that would have helped his interests (Venice could not have relied on Hungary's military force to pressure the Sultan, whereas Hungary, where Matthias tried to restructure the state administration and state politics after his coronation of 1464, would have been compelled to deal with the Sultan without the advantages won by the king following his conquest of Jajce and the Walachian-Ottoman loss of Chilia in 1465). Under the circumstances, the main problem for both Venice and Istanbul was Matthias, although the king's main target was, after the death of his wife Kunigunde/Catherine, George's daughter, his former father-in-law, against whom he had already offered Rome his services.²

Revue Roumaine d'Histoire 8, 1969, pp. 967–979; Giuseppe VALENTINI, *La sospensione della crociata nei primi anni di Paolo II (1464–1468). Dai documenti d'archivio di Venezia*, Archivum Historiae Pontificium 14, 1976, pp. 71–101; Theoharis STAVRIDES, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453–1474)*, Leiden – Boston – Cologne 2001, pp. 212–216; Emanuel C. ANTOCHE, *L'expédition du roi de Hongrie, Mathias Corvin en Moldavie (1467). Qui remporta finalement la bataille de Baia (14/15 décembre 1467)?*, Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire 83, 2003, pp. 133–165; Iulian-Mihai DAMIAN, *La Depositeria della Crociata (1463–1490) e i sussidi dei pontifici romani a Mattia Corvino*, Annuario del Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica 8, 2006, pp. 135–152; Antonín KALOUS, *Italská politika, Matyáš Korvín a české země*, Husitský Tábor 15, 2006, pp. 149–175 (here pp. 153–156); Oliver Jens SCHMITT, *Skanderbegs letzte Jahre. West-östliches Wechselspiel von Diplomatie und Krieg im Zeitalter der osmanischen Eroberung Albanien (1464–1468)*, Südost-Forschungen 64–65, 2004–2005 [2008], pp. 56–123 (in particular the extensive documentary appendix); Benjamin WEBER, *La papauté en Hongrie (1453–1481). Engagement financier ou militaire?*, Transylvanian Review 18, 2009, Nr. 3, pp. 55–64. The charges of Christian treason (i.e. Ottoman deals) against Poděbrady (who earlier had made his own anti-Ottoman bid, an attack on the authority of the papacy in fact) seem rather true given the complex (Venetian-Hungarian-Ottoman-Polish) framework of the events of 1467 and his relations with Stephen III of Moldavia, officially the vassal of King Casimir IV of Poland, the main East-Central European monarchical ally of Mehmed II since 1453–1456. We cannot rule out the possibility that Poděbrady's Ottoman connections dated back to the time of his conflicts with John Hunyadi and the contacts between the Hussite leaders and the anti-unionist party in Constantinople in the early 1450s, given also the peculiar role played by Hussites in strengthening anti-papal (anti-Latin for the Greeks) and anti-Hungarian stands in area since the 1420s (e.g. Robin BAKER, 'Constantine From England and the Bohemians': Hussitism, Orthodoxy, and the End of Byzantium, Central Europe 5, 2007, Nr. 1, pp. 23–46).

2) For these events, see e.g. Nicolae IORGA, *Un auteur de projets de croisades: Antonio Marini*, in: Études d'histoire du Moyen Âge dédiées à Gabriel Monod, Paris 1896, pp. 445–457; Roberto Sabatino LOPEZ, *Il principio della guerra veneto-turca nel 1463*, in: Archivio Veneto, 5th series 15, 1934, pp. 47–131; Halil INALCIK, *Les régions de Kruje et de la Dibra autour de 1467*, in: Deuxième conférence des études albanologiques à l'occasion du 5e centenaire de la mort de Georges Kastriote Skanderbeg, vol. II, Tirana 1970, pp. 221–237; Kenneth M. SETTON, *The Papacy and the Levant 1204–1517*. Vol. II. *The Fifteenth Century*, Philadelphia 1978 (= Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, CXXVIII),

King Matthias was however aware that he could not move against Bohemia until his southern positions were secured. Plus he had an obligation to Skanderbeg, born by the old plans of a simultaneous Hungarian and Albanian attack on the Ottoman Empire. Soon after he first declared his availability for a campaign against George of Poděbrady and rejected Mehmed II's peace offer (February–May 1465), Matthias started planning a professional anti-Ottoman campaign together with his former enemy, Frederick III (the emperor needed on one hand Matthias as a pressure factor against the King of Bohemia, while, on the other, he did not favour a military action against Bohemia and hoped that this new campaign would keep Matthias involved predominantly in anti-Ottoman warfare). Initially, the Habsburg-Hunyadi anti-Ottoman campaign should have taken place in 1466 when Mehmed II turned his forces against Skanderbeg. Dissent among the members of the *Reichstag* and the Ottoman threat on Belgrade halted the action. The campaign was postponed until 1467. Venice tried to counteract and offer King Matthias the best Ottoman deal possible in November 1466 (along with Ragusa, Walachia and Moldavia should have officially been listed as the protégés/vassals of both Mehmed and Matthias, something that the Porte always found difficult to accept until the end of yet another Venetian-Ottoman war in the early 1500s). Matthias declined Venice's offer and prepared for a war that might have saved Skanderbeg.³

In August 1467, Matthias was ready to cross the Danube, near Belgrade, into the empire. The Habsburg troops were to follow as soon as the Reichstag officially

pp. 231–238, 244–249; Ferenc SZAKÁLY, *Phases of Turco-Hungarian Warfare before the Battle of Mohács. 1365–1526*, Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae 33, 1979, pp. 65–112 especially, in comparison, pp. 88–89, 93–94); Sandra ORIGONE, *La fine del dominio greco nel Mar Nero*, Bizantinistica NS 8, 2006, pp. 245–272 (in particular pp. 255–269).

3) For an overview: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice, Senato Secreti, *Deliberazioni*, reg. 23, c. 12r (25 October 1466); edited in Iván NAGY – Albert B. NYÁRY (eds.), *Magyar diplomaciai emlékek. Mátyás király korából 1458–1490* (MDE) [Monuments of Hungarian Diplomacy: The Age of King Matthias. 1458–1490]. Vol. II. 1466–1480, Budapest 1876 (= Monumenta Hungariae Historica IV/2) no. 23, p. 41; Viaceslav MAKUSEV (ed.), *Monumenta Historica Slavorum Meridionalum vicinorumque populorum e tabularis et bibliothecis italicis derompta*. Vol. I–2. *Genua, Mantua, Mediolanum, Panormus et Taurinum*, Belgrade 1882, no. 4, p. 34; Vilmos FRANKÓI (ed.), *Mátyás király levelei. Külügyi Osztály* [The Letters of King Matthias. Foreign Correspondence]. Vol. I. 1458–1479, Budapest 1893, no. 59, pp. 78–79; Nicolae IORGA (ed.), *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XVe siècle*. Vol. IV. 1453–1476, Bucharest 1915, no. 136, p. 205; nos. 164–179, pp. 251–270 (in particular no. 146, p. 242; no. 162, p. 250; no. 176, p. 267); Jovan RADONIĆ (ed.), *Thyrath Kastriot Skenderbeg i Arbanija y XV beky (istoriska iratha)* [George Castriota Skanderbeg and Albania in the 15th Century: Historical Sources], Belgrade 1942 (= Spomenik XCV), nos. 357–358, pp. 198–199 (see also no. 383, p. 207); *Regesten Kaiser Friedrich III. (1440–1493)*. Nach Archiven und Bibliotheken geordnet. *Die Urkunden und Briefe aus den Beständen Reichstadt und Hochstift Regensburg des Bayerischen Hauptstaatsarchivs in München sowie aus den Regensburger Archiven und Bibliotheken*, eds. Franz FUCHS – Karl Friedrich KRIEGER, Cologne – Vienna – Graz 2002, no. 196, p. 156; no. 212, p. 164. Initially, according to the version of the campaign plan approved by the Reichstag of Nürnberg in November 1466, Matthias was to participate with only 5,000 soldiers (the empire contributed 20,000), to be placed, like the entire 'crusader force', under the experienced command of Ulrich von Graveneck, who was to use Belgrade and Severin as base camps. At first, Venice had not been explicitly left out from the Habsburg-Hunyadi project of 1466, but its part in the plan (which however had no express major military target in any of the preserved versions) was limited to the republic's obligation not to conclude a separate peace with the Porte prior to the end of the German-Hungarian southern campaign.

approved the money for them and for the German soldiers that were to represent the final anti-Ottoman striking force. Mehmed was in Albania, crushing Skanderbeg's last men. An attack from the north would have forced him to retreat. Then a Hungarian rebellion broke out, first in Transylvania. Matthias was accused of tyranny. The local rebels, the spearheads of the main conspirators, barons and prelates, called for a general uprising. Matthias was forced to redeploy his army. He moved swiftly to the general surprise. Throughout September and October, the king annihilated the Transylvanian rebels. He constantly negotiated with the Porte, trying to avoid its intervention. In November he entered Moldavia which should have aided him against the *Turk*, but instead had supported the rebels (Stephen III of Moldavia was in close contacts with Imre Szapolyai, Matthias' main Hungarian opponent at that time, and George of Poděbrady). His campaign ended in disaster in late December. Back in Buda, in January 1468, the wounded king reopened peace talks with the Sultan. They led to the conclusion of a mutually beneficial two-year truce (twice prolonged in 1470 and 1472). Venice was henceforth on its own. With the Hungarian menace contained, Mehmed II was not interested in concluding peace with it. By May, Matthias was ready to leave on his Bohemian crusade which soon turned, in his own words, into *the war that never should have taken place*.⁴

In this course of events the decisive moments of December 1467 had been carefully observed in Venice, as well as by her official and unofficial Italian rivals. King Matthias' Moldavian failure was viewed even as *the salvation* of the Republic. Venetian officials thought that he would thus have to come to terms with the Sultan and rely on her for a settlement with Mehmed II. Peace seemed at last in sight. Venice

4) For an overview of the build-up and the evolution of the confrontations of 1467, see e.g. ASM, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco (A.D.S.), Potenze estere, *Venezia*, cart. 353, 1467, fasc. 9, Settembre, nn (17 September 1467); Biblioteca Capitular Colombiana, Seville, Codices, Cod. 82-4-8, *Joannis Pannonii Vitesii episcopi Quinque Ecclesiarum Silvaruni Liber et Epistolae*, f. 94v (2 January, 1467); Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv, Hofkammerarchiv, Hofffinanz, *Ungarn*, Rote 1B, no. 137 (31 December 1467); Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Mainzer Erzkanzlerarchiv, *Reichstagakten*, 1a, fasc. 2, ff. 53r-57v (3 December 1466-15 January 1467), 97r-100r (10-15 June 1467); Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Diplomatikai Levéltár [Diplomatic Archive], [nos.] 16853 (17 May 1469), 27916 (1 October, 21 November 1467); 36393 (23 March 1468), 59550 (27 December 1467); Lajos THALLÓCZY – Sándor HORVÁTH (eds.), *Jajcza (Bánság, vár és város) története 1450-1527* [The History of the Banate, Fortress and City of Jajcze. 1450-1527], Budapest 1915 (= Codex Diplomaticus Partium Regno Hungariae Adnexarum. Magyarország Mellékartományainak Oklevéltára IV; Monumenta Hungariae Historica I/40), nos. 33-34, pp. 42-43; Francisc PALL, *I rapporti italo-albanesi intorno alla metà del secolo XV*, Archivio Storico per le Provincie Napoletane 83, 1966, no. 67, p. 208; no. 72, p. 213; no. 80, p. 219; MDE II, no. 37, p. 64; no. 42, p. 74; no. 46, p. 76. For the impact of Matthias' Bohemian campaigns and his subsequent regrets, see here Lajos ELEKES, *La politica estera di re Mattia e gli Stati italiani nella seconda metà del secolo XV*, in: *Rapporti veneto-ungheresi all'epoca del Rinascimento*, ed. Tibor Klaniczay, Budapest 1975, pp. 243-255 (here pp. 248-253); Gyula RÁZSÓ, *Una strana alleanza. Alcuni pensieri sulla storia militare e politica dell'alleanza contro i turchi (1440-1464)*, in: *Venezia e Ungheria nel Rinascimento*, ed. Vittore Branca, Florence 1973, pp. 79-100 (here pp. 88-89). For the anti-Hunyadi contacts of 1467 between Stephen III, Imre Szapolyai and Poděbrady (as well as Casimir IV): Petre P. PANAITESCU, *Contribuții la istoria lui Ștefan cel Mare* [Contributions to the History of Stephen the Great], *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice* [Annals of the Romanian Academy: Memoirs of the Historical Section], 3rd series, 15, 1933-1934, pp. 61-80 (here pp. 63-66); František ŠMAHEL, *Die Hussitische Revolution III*, Hannover 2002 (= MGH Schriften 43/III), p. 1965.

however misjudged the king. Its networks of informants also seemed to fail it. News arrived with delay. The Milanese reports from Venice, edited below, indicate the general confusion and the distortions (some induced by the Republic itself who did not want its true actions to come to light) that surrounded these moments. The Republic had already sacrificed Skanderbeg, refusing him help until its help was not sufficient anymore, in the hope of thus preserving and even expanding (to Skanderbeg's detriment) her Albanian possessions. Naturally, Milan, whose intelligence network was basically the only Christian match to that of Venice, assumed a prudent approach towards these eastern dealings, also because the Republic had long been her adversary. Milan preserved this attitude throughout the 1470s even (and perhaps especially) after Venice's anti-Ottoman hopes began to rise again. They relied in particular on Matthias (whose, failed, dethronement, it had supported during another Hungarian conspiracy in 1471) and Stephen of Moldavia (the eastern author of Matthias' disaster of 1467).⁵

Documentary Appendix

All subsequent reports were authored by Girardo d(e)i Colli da Vigevano, Milan's experienced representative (and spy) in Venice (1460s-early 1470s). Sent between the 26 January and the 18 February 1468 to Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza, the reports (*dispacci*) deal chiefly with the Ottoman and Hungarian questions of the time, yet always – with the mainly apparent exception of the last report – in the framework of the Italian concerns of the age. Their main source of information was of Venetian origin to which de Collis added his own sources, if available, refraining however from passing judgments or imposing his own analysis, unless obvious and unavoidable. The selection and decision-making process belonged to the duke (and to his trustees in Milan). Therefore, even apparent contradictions and ensuing changes were not actually discussed or solved in the reports, a feature common to the other reports sent to his suzerain by Girardo di Colli on a virtually daily basis.

5) For Milan's diplomatic network: Paolo MARGAROLI, *Diplomazia e stati rinascimentali. Le ambascerie sforzesche fino alla conclusione della Lega italica (1450-1455)*, Florence 1992. For Baia as the salvation of the Republic; Petre P. PANAITESCU, *Bătălia de Baia (1467) în izvoare venețiene* [The Battle of Baia (1467) in Venetian Sources], *Revista Istorică* [History Review] 8, 1922, Nr. 3-4, pp. 47-50 (according to one of de Colli's reports, from 26 March 1468, because Matthias' had ties to Florence, Venice's rival, and had a truce with the sultan, the Venetians *dichano che la rotta ha hauto in Transilvania* [!], *he stata iudicum dei et la salite de stato de essa Signoria*; in ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Venezia*, cart. 354, 1468, fasc. 3, Marzo, nn; misedited in MDE II, no. 46, pp. 76-77). Venice's relation to Hungary and Albania after 1467-1468: Mágda JÁSZAY, *Contrastes et diplomatie dans les rapports de Matthias Ier Corvin et la République de Venise*, *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 35, 1989, Nr. 1-4, pp. 3-39 (here pp. 16-23); Oliver Jens SCHMITT, *Das venezianische Albanien (1402-1479)*, Munich 2001, pp. 604-612; Bernard DOUMERC, *Venise et la protection de son domaine colonial dans les Balkans: une croisade tardive (1463-1503)?*, *Études Balkaniques*, NS [14], 2007, Nr. 3, pp. 115-132. For Milan's attitude in the 1470s towards Venice and her anti-Ottoman allies and efforts: Emilio MOTTA, *Un ambasciatore tartaro a Venezia, 1476*, *Ateneo Veneto* 19, 1889, pp. 145-153; Franz BABINGER, *Relazioni visconteo-sforzesche con la corte ottomana durante il secolo XV*, in: Idem, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte Südosteuropas und der Levante III*, Munich 1976, pp. 185-207.

The reports are preserved in ASM, A.D.S., Potenze estere, *Venezia*, cart. 354, 1468, fasc. *Febbraio*, [we use nn (not numbered / unnumbered) in reference to the documents in the State Archives of Milan because the reports in the carteggi in the Potenze Estere series are not preserved in the order of their numbering and also because the reports usually have multiple numbering]. To each of these Milanese reports a series of notes and commentaries were appended, also in the aim of revealing the functioning of the balance of information and interpretation between the Italian Peninsula and eastern or northern parts of Christendom, as scholarly work on their medieval history is still often largely dependent on the sources in the Italian archives and libraries (a similar statement can be made in relation to German archives). Due to space limitations, citations were chiefly limited to relevant secondary works containing further references to edited and unedited primary sources of the significance for the discussed topics.

The appended translations try to fill in both informational and apparent logical gaps. Both types are largely due to the manner in which such reports were written and much less to the reasoning of their authors, as well as of their recipients. In the first case, repetitions and the various (ab)uses of pronouns can be added as cause. In the latter, it should be stressed out that medieval Italian was still dominated by Latin vulgarizations and strongly marked by regional dialects, which at times even make medieval Italian more understandable via (<more> modern) Spanish. In spite of these peculiarities (and less true difficulties), interventions into the structure of the reports and in particular into their phrasing was kept to a minimum in order to preserve – as much as possible – the contemporary tone and its immediate – expected and achieved or not – implications. When necessary, short explanations and identifications were inserted into the modern translation.

I.

Venice, 26 January 1468

I.1. Original Italian Text

Illustrissimo Signore Mio Singularissimo,

Erj scripsi al compimento a Vostra Celsitudine de le occurentie de qua, al presente non glie altro di novo./ Credo pur che or may Vostra Excellentia deba intendere per via de Roma in che modo si move lo papa circha la pace./ et si stano anchor sopra quello freneticho de dare provixion a Bartolomeo, dato ch'io creda che la Signoria domanda/ questa cossa per mostrare de compiacere a Bartolomeo, ho vero vendere la mercantia sua piu cara in altre/ cosse et per compiacere a questo siano poy loro compiazutj in altra maior cossa.

Bartolomeo omnj giorno cassa gentedarme Deifobo et don Stayno [fo crossed over followed], si dice hano hauto licentia da luy et sono/ aconci con la Signoria. Jtem si dice che don Constantio, figlolo del Signor Alexandro, ha tolto licentia et debe

essere tornato a/ Pesaro. Intendo che Bartolomeo non ha in Romagna V cento cavalj che potesaro cavalchare, pero che tutj sono/ scortichatj et destructj per difecto de stramj et non po stare dove le ne in Romagna. Ex V giornj credesi/ venira a Malpaga et havera speso li dinarj et guadagnato la rognà ho lepra.

Si dice nel vulgo che lo re de Ungaria he in differentia con alcunj soy baronj del regno, maxime con uno chiamato Ombrig, et lo veschovo Colocensis, noviter factò cardinale, quali sono rebelatj ala corona sotto pretexto de/ inputar lo re che cercha acordio con lo Turcho, ma re vera si dice che sono rebelatj per gara et jnvidia/ ano tra loro, et per che lo re fa piu extima de Tuciano et Rosgonianus ch'a de alcunj altrj baronj etc./Li Turchi vano pur scorando li paesi confine, et senpre conduce via molte anime in modo fa desabitare li/ paese, et poy luy si ne fa Signore de la pace. De esso Turcho, la Signoria non ne fa piu mentione.

Anci alcunj, sperando che la pace deba seguire in Jtalia et gia metandola quasi certa, dichano che non vorebano/ che dicta pace del Turcho havese hauto effecto per mente, ma non ho pero manchato da loro, pero che li/ ano usato omnj jngiegno et studio per farla, ma luy non li consentira may s'il non po venire in lo/ Arcipelago con sua armata quo casus piglaria lo dominio del mare ala Signoria. A Vostra Excellentia me ricomand.

Veneciis, die XXVI Ienariis, 1468.

Eiusdem Vestrae Illustrissimae Excellentiae Fidelissimus Servitor Gerardus Collensis

1.2. Modern English Translation

My Most Illustrious and Unique Lord,

I wrote yesterday to Your Highness on the events here; at present I have nothing new. I believe however that now more than ever Your Excellency should find out via Rome in which way the pope [Paul II] moves in the matter of the peace, and if they [i.e. the papal entourage] are still as frantic to aid Bartolomeo [Co(1)leone Bergamasco], given the fact that I believe that the Signoria [Venice] requires this thing in order to show willingness to comply with Bartholomew, or in reality in order to sell her dearest merchandise in other matters; and in order to comply with this they then have indulged themselves in another major matter¹.

Each day, Bartolomeo dismisses soldiers of Deifobo <Anquillara>, and Sir Stayno [?] has received his permission <to go/ leave>, and <they> are entangled with the Signoria. Likewise, it is said that Sir Constantio [Constanz(1)o Sforza], the son of Lord Alessandro [Sforza], has received permission <to go from Venice and from Colleone> and must have returned to Pesaro. I hear that Bartolomeo does not have 500 horses in Romagna that could be used for a raid, because they are all skinned [i.e. skinny] and destroyed [i.e. damaged] due to a shortage of mulches and cannot stay in there in the Romagna. It is believed that in 5 days <time> he will come to Malapaga and <by then he> will have spent the money and earned <himself> the scabies or leprosy.

It is said among the people [i.e. the mob] that the king of Hungary [Matthias Corvinus] has disputes with some of the barons of the realm, chiefly with one named [Emerich (Imre) Szapolyai, count of Zips], and with the bishop of Kalocsa [Stephen (István) Váradi, archbishop of Kalocsa], recently made cardinal, which have rebelled against the king under the pretext to impute the king that he seeks an agreement with the Turk [Mehmed II]; but a true thing is said <when it is said> that they have rebelled because of the strife and of the envy they have among them and because the king thinks higher of Tuciano [John (János) Thuz, ban of Slavonia] and Rosgonianus [John (János) Rozgonyi] than of some of the other barons. The Turks meanwhile ravage the neighbouring lands and always take with the them many souls in a manner <in which> he [Mehmed] has the land depopulated, and then he makes [i.e. calls] himself Lord of the peace. The Signoria does not mention this Turk anymore^{II}.

Still some, hoping that the peace will follow in Italy and already regarding her as almost certain, say that they did not want the said peace of the Turk to have come into effect, but not due to their own shortcoming, <as> still they have used every trick and plan to make it [i.e. peace], but he [i.e. Mehmed II] will never consent to it if he cannot come into the Archipelago [i.e. the Tremiti islands in the Adriatic] with his army, <and> because of this he will pillage the sea dominium of the Signoria. I recommend myself to Your Excellency^{III}.

Venice, the 26th day of January 1468.

The Most Loyal Servant of Both Your Illustrious Excellencies [Galeazzo Maria Sforza and his mother Bianca Maria] Girardo de Colli

II.

Venice, 14 February 1468

II.1. Original Italian Text

Illustrissimo Signore Mio Singularissimo,

Ali XIII de questo, ho receuto una de Vostra Celsitudine de VIII de questo, continente la receuta de le mie de XX / et ultimo del passato, et, como Vostra Excellentia aspectava intendere, quello havera deliberato lo papa circha la pace, et como Vostra Excellentia / he contenta si pigla lo pardo per cento cinquanta ducatis et che lo Illustrissimo ducha de Calabria dovea partire merchorj ho zobia per tornar/ in Toschana etc.

Circha la parte de la pace, non so che dire, si non che me pare una cossa facta ala inpressa et pocho considerata. Questa brigata/ mostra star di malla voglia per rispetto che la bisogna intrar in liga, et per questo dichano che le potentie de la liga aceptera/ de bona voglia questa pronuntia del papa, ma havendo loro volunta solum confirmare la liga vechia, fa piu per le pottentie/ de la liga che la Signoria non

v'intra. Sono pero alcunj che dubitano che la liga non acceptera questa pace, maxime che divulgato/ che la Maesta del re et Signori fiorentini gia anno determinato non l'acceptare, si per non essere tributarij de Bartolomeo, si perche si avedano/ che havendo visto le stantie sue divisae in tre parte, como si dice, cioe in Romagna, in Fererese, et in Bresana, questo/ he un volere metere il freno ale pottentie de la liga, et assidiar Bologna, che Vostra Excellentia non la potese sucorere ad/ omnj bisogno, in somma la pare uno volupo et garbuglio a chi intende et tenesi non sera per niente acceptata.

Io scripsi per le mie de XII, datis al Corer di mercatantj, como da uno Raguseo havea adviso che del re de Ungaria,/ qual con lo exercito era ito in Transilvania, ultra lo Danubio, per debelare cortj soy paesi rebelatj chiamatj Seculj,/ et Septem Castra, che quelli da Buda erano statj XL giornj che non haveano hauto novella de esso, ne de suo exercito,/ et che per soy ynimicj era stato piglatj alcunj passi, dove non si li poteva andar, ne tornar, dove luy era,/ et dubitavasi ho non fuse mal capitato, ho havese receuto alcun sinistro etc.

Lo Turcho era mosso da la Sofia et ito in Bulgaria, a Nichopolj et Moncastro, presso al Danubio. Si extima l'abia facto/ per che in questi giornj gela lo Danubio et sopra lo giazo fa passare Turchi coradorj et spoglia quella Transilvania et/ Valachia de anime. Quello ambaxatore del capitano del Smedreo, che era venuto per far la Tregua da Belgrado et lo/ Smedreo, he ritornato senza far niente, per la absentia del re de Ungaria etc.

Lo Turcho domanda a Ragusey de tributo ducatis V millia l'anno, dove non pagavano si non II millia. Scanderbeg he morto./ Si dice etiam che Uson Casano havea piglato Trabesonda, et ch'el Turcho havea mandato XII fuste et havea/ sucorsso lo castello, ma questa novella non sia pero certa. La si crede pero che quello paese de Capadotia maxime/ infra terra he de Uson Cassan, et quelli de Trabesonda li sono affectionatj pero ch'el fu genero de lo imperatore de/ Trabesonda, et pretende aspectar a luy la heredita. Altro non li è de novo, salvo che questa brigata con devotione/ aspecta si Vostra Excellentia acceptera la pace ho non, et spesso sono domandato s'io ho novella da Milano etc./ A Vostra Illustrissima Signoria me ricomando.

Veneciis, die XIIIo februarii, 1468.

Eiusdem Vestrae Illustrissimae Excellentiae Fidelissimus Servitor Gerardus de Collis

II.2. Modern English Translation

My Most Illustrious and Unique Lord,

On the 13th of this <month February> I have received one of Your Highness' <letters> from the 8th of this <month February>, containing the reception of mine [i.e. my letters] from the 20th and the last <day> of the past <month>, and how Your Excellency awaited to hear what the pope [Paul II] had decided regarding the peace and how Your Excellency is satisfied if he can seize [i.e. take] the brown one [i.e. the brown Spanish (Pardo) horse] for 150 ducats, and that the illustrious duke

of Calabria [Alfonso II of Aragon, the son and heir of Ferdinand I of Aragon, king of Naples] was expected to leave [from Milan] on Wednesday or on Thursday <and> to return to Tuscany etc.

Regarding the matter of the peace, I do not know what to say, if not [i.e. unless] I say that it seems a thing done in a hurry and without much reflection. This company [i.e. this association/ Venice] reveals itself to be badly intended [i.e. reluctant] towards her need [i.e. the fact that she needs] to enter the league [i.e. the Milanese-Neapolitan-Florentine entente], and because of this they [i.e. the Venetians] say that the league will willingly accept the ruling of the pope, but given their desire only to confirm the old league [i.e. that established through the peace of Lodi of 1454], it would be more <advantageous> for the powers of the league if the Signoria did not enter yours [i.e. your league]. There are however others that doubt that the league will not accept this peace, <even though> foremost the Majesty of the King [Ferdinand I of Aragon, king of Naples] and the Florentine Lords [the brothers Lorenzo and Giuliano de Medici] have already decided not to accept it, because they do not want to be the tributaries of Bartolomeo [Colleone], because they can foresee that having seen – as it is said – his forces divided into three parts, that is in the Romagna, in the lands of Ferrara and in those of Brescia, this is a desire to check the forces of the league and besiege Bologna, which Your Excellency will not be able to save in every need [i.e. respect]; in sum, for who understands and holds <his ground>, this is a embroilment and snarl that will be accepted under no circumstances.

I wrote in mine [i.e. my letter] from the 12 [February], given to Correr from the merchants [i.e. most likely the secondary branch at the time of the family, not the one that had given birth to Pope Gregory XII and to Cardinal Andrea Correr] that I had information from a Ragusan that <of> the king of Hungary [Matthias Corvinus], who had left with his army in Transylvania, over the Danube [i.e. it might mean both North of the Lower Danube and East of the Middle Danube] to pacify some of his rebelled lands named Szekler and Transylvania, those in Buda had no received any news of him or of his army for 40 days, and that his enemies had seized certain passage ways [i.e. mountain cols], so that he could neither advance, nor return from where he was, and they [i.e. those in Buda] were asking themselves if his head not be badly injured or if had not suffered any other misfortune etc^{IV}.

The Turk [Mehmed II] had left Sofia and gone to Bulgaria [!], to Nicopolis and Moncastro [Cetatea Albă/ Bialogrod/ Akkerman, at the Dniestr Mounds however], next to the Danube. It is thought that this he did <in fact> because Danube freezes in these days and he can have the Turkish riders cross the ice and spoil that Transylvania and Walachia of souls. The ambassador of the Captain [i.e. bey] of Smederovo [Semendria] who had come to make the truce between Belgrade [stronghold under Hungarian rule] and Smederovo, had returned without having accomplished anything because of the absence of the king^V.

The Turk has asked 5.000 ducats a year in tribute from the Ragusans, of which that they pay only 2.000. Skanderbeg is dead. It is also said that Usun Hassan has seized Trapezunt [Trebizonda] and that the Turk had sent 12 [small and rapid] ships, and had saved the castle, but this news is uncertain. Here [i.e. in Venice] it is believed

that this land of Cappadocia, and foremost the lands of Usun Hassan and those of Trapezunt are very fond of him [i.e. of Usun Hassan] because he was the son-in-law of the emperor of Trapezunt [David Great Comnen], and want him to assume his heritage. I do not have anything else of new, except that this association [i.e. brigade, the Milanese “team” in Venice, in this case] awaits with devotion if Your Excellency will accept or not the peace, and I am often asked if I have news from Milan etc. I recommend myself to Your Illustrious Lordship^{VI}.

Venice, the 14th day of February, 1468^{VII}.

The Most Loyal Servant of Both Your Illustrious Excellencies [Galeazzo Maria Sforza and his mother Bianca Maria] Gerardo de Colli

III.

Venice, 18 February 1468

III.1. Italian Original Text

Illustrissimo Signore Mio Singularissimo,

Scripsi ali die passatj como gia XL giornj in Ungaria non si sapeva novella del re, ne del suo esercito, et che si dubitava/ non li fuse acaduto qualche sinistro etc. Ogi me sono abbochato con uno mio intimo, qual me ha dicto alcune novelle vere, tra le altre/ como la Signoria ha littere da lo orator de Ungaria continente malle et pessime novelle del predicto re. Essando rebellatj alcunj populi ala/ Corona chiamatj Seculj, lo predicto re ando in quel paese con V millia cavalj et altretantj a pede et essendo lo Bianco, suo patre, originario de/ dicti Seculj, credeva debelarlj facilmente con pocha gente, et ala prima punta sachezo alcune terre et abruxo. Vedendosi malmenare,/ domandono adiuto a soy vicini chiamatj Valachi, quali antichamente furo Romanj et tengano lo lor parlare latino et romano fin in questo tempo,/ et sono valenti hominj a cavallo et parte de essi anchor che siano ultra lo Danubio, dano tributo al Turcho. Li altri, piu lontanj dal Danubio,/ versso Polana, vivano secundo le sue leze quasi in liberta, et si ano alcun vayvoda per Signore, li dano pocha cossa de tributo; costoro si mosaro/ con grande multitudine et tagliano la via ali Ungarj et funo ale mane in una silva, dove fecero facto d'arme octo giorni che omnj giorno/ erano ale mane. Lo re, vedandosi inferior de gente, si reduxi in le munitione de le sue carre, havea cinquecento carette dele quale si/ fece spaldo. Tandem fecero una ultima bataglia, qual duro un die et una nocte, et li fu morto piu de XII millia persone, ab utraque parte/ et infine obtene li Valachi et Seculj, et ano tagliato a peze tutj li Ungarj; lo re he stato ferito de una lanza in uno brazo,/ ano piglato le carre, le munitione, bandere, paviglone et omnj cossa, et solum he [f crossed over followed] campato lo re con mancho de V cento cavalj,/ con pocha reputatione et molto dampno, et he reducto a Buda de qua dal Danubio. Lo Turcho, udito questo, ando versso Bulgaria,/ a Nichopolj, presso

lo Danubio, per dar caldo et favorj a questj ynimicj delo Ungaro, et per temptare si li po haver a sua hobedientia.

Preterea, me ha dicto ch'el papa ali die passatj, intendendo ch'el re de Ungaria era a stricta praticha con lo Turcho de far la tregua, lj/ scripsi uno breve strenzandolo et comandandolj che non facesse dicta tregua, pero che luij havea la pace de Italia in mano, et similiter/ quella de Franza, et che le faria omnino, do poy voleva far una ditta dove voleva astrenzere tute le pottentie de Christiani, maxime/ quelle de Italia, a farlj un grande adiuto contra lo Turcho, et in dicto brevj lo menazava che s'il faceva tregua che lo interdiria et/ excomunicaria etc. Lo predito re, a questa sua tornata, ultra lo fracasso receuto, ha trovato questo breve, et, trovandosi de malla voglia,/ ha scripto qua ala Signoria voglia pregare lo papa che sia contento ch'el faci tregua, perche altramente va ad pericolo de perdere tuto lo reame,/ et ha mandato per quello oratore dal Smedreo, qual era venuto per fare corta tregua tra Belgrado et Smedreo, et, non havendo trovato/ lo re, he tornato ala Porta del Turcho. Dubitasi pero, ch'el non tornara piu, pero che li Ungarj da Belgrado, durando la praticha de dicta/ tregua, sono corsi al Smedreo, et ano tagliato a peze CC Turchi. Po mo considerare Vostra Excellentia qual ha maior bisogno de adiuto/ et qual seria miglor spesa ho adiuatar lo re de Ungaria, ho Bartolomeo Coleone, pero che s'il Turcho spontassj Iaiza et passasi la/ Sava, il poria venir a mano salva fin in Friolj.

Preterea, dice che la Signoria ha hauto per malla novella la morte de Scanderbeg, pero che la mugliere e lo figlolo hano abandonato tuto lo paesse,/ et li Turchi ano piglato omnj cossa si non Croya. La prefata Signoria li manda adesso ducati V milia, et molte munitione et formenti per sustenire/ quelli amicij de Scanderbeg. Alla prefata Vostra Illustrissima Signoria semper mj ricomando.

Venecij, die XVIII Februarij 1468.

Eiusdem Vestrae Illustrissimae Excellentiae Fidelissimus Servitor Ge[rardus] Co[llensis]

III.2. Modern English Translation:

My Most Illustrious and Unique Lord,

I wrote to you one of these last days of the fact that in Hungary nobody had news of the king [Matthias Corvinus], or of his army, and that they [i.e. the Hungarians] doubted that no misfortune had occurred to him etc. Yesterday I talked <over dinner> with one of my intimates [i.e. sources], who gave some truthful news, among them how the Signoria [Venice] had letters from her envoy in Hungary [Francesco Diedo] containing bad and worse news on the above-mentioned king. Because some people of the Crown, named Szeklers, had rebelled <against him>, the above-mentioned king had gone to that land with 5.000 horses [i.e. riders] and the same on foot [i.e. infantry], and because his father was the Bianco [John Hunyadi] ^{viii}, a native of the said Szeklers, he thought that he could pacify them easily with a handful of

troops, and at first he sacked a few lands [i.e. estates] and some <mountain> villages. Seeing that they were mishandled [i.e. overwhelmed], they [i.e. Szeklers] requested help from their neighbours, called the Walachians, who were Romans in ancient times and who have kept their Latin and Roman until this time, and they are valiant men on horse and part of them, even if they are beyond the Danube pay tribute to the Turk^x. Others, more remote from the Danube, near Poland, live according to their laws basically in freedom, and if they have some voivode as their lord they give him [i.e. the Turk] little in tribute; these moved in great numbers and cut the road to the Hungarians, and they fought in a forest, where they did feats of arms for eight days, as each day they fought. Seeing that he was inferior in terms of men, the king retreated in the fortification of his chariots, he had fifty wagons on those that can be turned into bastions. Eventually, they did one last battle that lasted for a day and for a night, and more than 12,000 persons on each side died there, and finally the Walachians and the Szeklers have prevailed, and they have cut to pieces all the Hungarians; the king was hit by a lance in an arm; they [i.e. the Walachians and the Szeklers] seized the wagons, the munitions, the banners and the flags and everything <else>, and only the king escaped with less than 500 horses, with little reputation and great harm, and he has returned to Buda here at the Danube. The Turk [Mehmed II] heard of this, went towards Bulgaria, to Nicopolis, near the Danube, to give gift and favours to these enemies of the Hungarians and in order to attempt to have them under his obedience^x.

Afterwards, he [i.e. the source] told me that in the last days the pope [Paul II], hearing that the king of Hungary was in close negotiations with the Turk in order to conclude the truce, wrote to him, admonishing him and ordering him not to conclude the said truce because he [i.e. the pope] had the peace of Italy in his hand, and likewise that of France, and he going to do them altogether, afterwards he wanted to do [i.e. summon] a great Diet [i.e. congress] where he wanted to gather all the forces of the Christians, foremost those of Italy, <in order> to do a great help against the Turk, and in that letter he threatened to place him under <papal> interdict and excommunicate him if he concluded the truce. When he returned, aside from the received fracas, the abovementioned king found this letter and reluctantly wrote to the Signoria [Venice], asking her to pray the pope to be pleased that he is concluding a truce, because otherwise he is in danger of losing the entire realm, and <then> he sent for that envoy from Smederovo who had come to make a short truce between Belgrade and Smederovo, and, not having found the king, had returned to the Porte of the Turk. It is doubtful however that he [i.e. the envoy] will not return, even though, during the negotiations for the said truce, the Hungarians of Belgrade, rode to Smederovo and cut to pieces 200 Turks. And so Your Excellency can consider [i.e. judge for himself] which one needs help the most and which would be the most useful expense: to aid the king of Hungary, or Bartolomeo Colleone, because if the Turk takes Jajce [the former Bosnian capital, in Matthias' possession since 1463] and crosses the Sava he can fight his way to Friuli [Venice's mountainous gateway territory into Italy]^{xl}.

Afterwards, he [i.e. the source] said that the Signoria had received as a bad news the death of Skanderbeg, because his wife [Donika Kastrioti] and son [John (II)

Kastriota] *have abandoned the entire land, and the Turks have plundered everything, if not also Kruja* [Skanderbeg's capital]. *The abovementioned Signoria now sends 5,000 ducats, as well as many munitions and ferments. I recommend myself to Your abovementioned Illustrious Lordship for always.*

Venice, the 14th day of February, 1468.

The Most Loyal Servant of Both Your Illustrious Excellencies [Galeazzo Maria Sforza and his mother Bianca Maria] *Gerardo de Colli*

Notes and Commentaries

I. Bartolomeo Col(le)one/ Colleoni Bergamasco (cca 1400–1475), Francesco Sforza's former friend, turned arch-enemy in 1453, was Venice's captain-general since 1455, after spending almost two decades in and out the Republic's and Milan's service. He had learnt to hate the Sforzas. At Francesco's death in March 1466, he had thought of conquering the duchy. Colleone however soon found grounds elsewhere for his dreams, helped by Venice. She was opposed to a new war with Milan. In return, she wanted to inflict as much damage as possible (without officially going to war) on her main commercial rival on Italian soil, Florence (who was also Milan's ally). The aging commander (Paul II had wanted to name him captain of the papal crusader contingent, but Colleone had declined, stating that he was too old for such an endeavour) thus fought for the Albizzi who wanted to recover Florence (Colleone's ambition was seemingly to establish his own principality in the Romagna). Even though Colleone's campaign of spring-summer 1467 had ended in a truce (yet one of his apparent aims had been Milan), Francesco's son and heir, Galeazzo Maria still feared him greatly. The new duke thought, for a moment nevertheless, of buying off Colleone, in exchange for peace (de Colli was awaiting his orders to send the message further to Colleone and the Venetians). The king of Naples and Matthias' future father-in-law, Ferdinand of Aragon, Milan's ally for the time being, had also considered that option. Yet Colleone was not strong enough to push for more and his Italian adversaries (like his Venetian patrons) soon realized that. In spite of the compromise eventually reached in spring 1468, bad blood between Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Bartolomeo Colleone remained great until the latter's death amidst renewed plans of eternal glory. See mainly Luigi FUMI, *La sfida del duca Galeazzo Maria Sforza a Bruno Colleoni*, Archivio Storico Lombardo, 4th series, 18, 1912, pp. 357–392; Bortolo BELOTTI, *Vita di Bartolomeo Colleoni*, Bergamo 31951, pp. 373–375, 403–411; for Alessandro, the brother of the late Francesco Sforza, Galeazzo Maria's, and Costanz(i)o Sforza, the lords of Pesaro, as well as for the famed *condottiere* Deifobo Anguillara: Paolo CHERUBINI, *Deifobo dell' Anguillara tra Roma, Firenze e Venezia*, Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria 103, 1980, pp. 209–234; Francesco AMBROGIANI, *Vita di Costanzo Sforza (1447–1483)*, Pesaro 2003; both Deifobo Anguillara and Costazio Sforza had served Venice and Colleone in 1467 in the battles against Florence, but also Milan and Naples, the allies of the Medici, conflicts in which the future king of Naples, young Alfonso II of Aragon, duke of Calabria, made a name for himself as a *condottiere*.

II. Ever since the death of Sigismund of Luxemburg (1437), with rather short exceptions, Hungary lacked the domestic stability to successfully support anti-Ottoman warfare in the long run. Matthias was well aware of this fact (given in particular the experiences of his father). Yet, by personal nature and by context, his decisions (though aimed at achieving the much needed stability), worked against the preservation of a domestic balance. 1467 is a key example in this respect (and likewise 1471). The main conspirators against Matthias were all or had until recently been the king's trustees. Emerich Szapolyai, (Hospitaller) prior of Vrana since 1465, was rather recently viewed as the illegitimate son of John Hunyadi by Hungarian scholars in search of an explanation for Emerich's repeated defections (1467, 1471, 1474, maybe even 1478) and Matthias' constant forgiveness. The break between him and Matthias began to emerge after the Ottoman siege of Jajce of 1464. Emerich was virtually left alone to defend the Bosnian fortress conquered by the king the previous year. Matthias arrived only with great delay. The next year, along with Nicolas Ujlaki, the influential magnate, well connected both in the Italian Peninsula and the Ottoman Empire (whom the king had to enthrone as king of Bosnia after the Hungarian conspiracy of 1471), Emerich (and his younger, maybe half-, brother Stephen) was removed

from all his offices (the brothers were left only with the dignity of the perpetual count of Zips in Upper Hungary, dignity granted earlier to him by Matthias). Finally crowned king with the Hungarian Holy Crown in spring 1464 (and therefore the legitimate ruler of Hungary), Matthias was attempting to restructure the state administration and was soon to significantly increase the fiscal pressure in the realm. The opposition to him grew stronger. Although they should have been (some of) Matthias' most trusted advisors John Vitéz, archbishop of Esztergom (Gran), and his nephew Janus Panonnius, bishop of Pécs (Fünfkirchen), the main artisans of the subsequent Hungarian conspiracy of 1471, played a rather dubious role (in particular the former, like in previous years). The fact that Matthias had secured a cardinal's hat for Váradi (granted by Paul II in September 1467) and not Vitéz must have increased the latter's dissatisfaction, even though, according to de Colli's report from the 26th of January 1468 at least, it was Váradi who was more active against the king. Vitéz, Szapolyai or seemingly Váradi (probably joined by Ujlaki, who wanted to regain his former powers) feared their loss of authority in front of Matthias' new favourites. These favourites however were to distance themselves from the king, who was by no means an easy-to-live-with character. John Thuz joined the plot of 1471 (Matthias waited until 1481 when he had him beheaded). The Rozognyi brothers, with John's exception, used for Matthias' delicate Italian diplomatic missions, had apparently fallen from royal grace in 1461–1463 (when Matthias had first attempted to unite the offices of voivode of Transylvania and count of the Szeklers). The Italian powers (Rome and Venice in this first place) usually paid great attention to the Hungarian situation, following especially the problems at the time of crusade of Belgrade (1456). They frequently played out Matthias' financial needs (the sums granted to him for crusading were in fact crusader commissions for Matthias' private use, as in fact they could have hardly covered the costs of anti-Ottoman defence, not to mention anti-Ottoman offensive action; for instance, only the yearly costs of the southern Hungarian defensive system would have represented at least half of the constant papal budget). Consequently, they also viewed him as their instrument, much to the king's concern and distress. In the 1460s, some Roman plans even suggested that Hungary had to be run by cardinals as a papal crusader dominium. In this respect, the Ottoman-Hungarian truce of 1468 and Matthias' Bohemian campaign marked the beginning of a very fitful period (that lasted in fact until the end of his rule) in his relation to the papacy, as well as the start of a predominantly hostile period (complicated by the traditional Dalmatian and Croatian conflicts between Buda and Venice) in the king's relation with the Republic. Nonetheless, the king's financial and dynastic needs and Rome's and Venice's anti-Ottoman difficulties provided grounds for compromise until the Ottoman-Venetian peace of 1479 and Matthias' subsequent Ottoman actions. See also Karl NEHRING, *Herrschaftstradition und Herrschaftslegitimität: zur ungarischen Außenpolitik in der Zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 13, 1974, pp. 463–472; Benjamin WEBER, *La croisade impossible. Étude sur les relations entre Sixt IV et Mathias Corvin (1471–1484)*, in: *Hommage à Alain Ducellier. Byzance et ses périphéries (monde grec, balkanique et musulman)*, eds. Bernard Doumerc – Christophe Picard, Toulouse 2004, pp. 309–321; András KUBINYI, *Matthias Rex*, Budapest 2008, pp. 69–78; as well as Alexandru SIMON, *Between the Adriatic and the Black Sea: Matthias Corvinus and the Ottoman Empire after the Fall of Negroponte*, *Radovi Zavoda za Hrvatsku Povijest [The Proceedings of the Croatian Institute of History]* 42, 2010, Nr. 2, pp. 59–75, here pp. 64–68; see Norman HOUSLEY's recent analysis, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat. 1453–1505*, Oxford 2012, pp. 35–38, 41–45, 52–54.

III. In more than just one way, Venice's and Mehmed II's major problems were their expenses. Venice had already spent three quarters of its yearly 1,000,000 ducats budget on the war. Although his budget was (more than) twice the size of that of the Republic the Sultan, he had to borrow money for his campaigns (like in the case of his campaign of 1462 against Vlad III of Walachia, for which he took at least 300,000 ducats from the Jewish bankers in Constantinople). The two powers could compensate for them only by the Adriatic (which depended on the situation in Albania) and East-Mediterranean trade (which was dictated by the control over the islands in the region). In particular the latter was of major importance for both. Plus, Mehmed's demanded Venetian compensation of up to 1,000,000 ducats came in a package with the demand that the Republic should abandon her eastern conquests. These aspects, fuelled by the desire of each state for victory and glory (at least in terms of representation), hindered peace talks, until Venice was forced to concede that she could and had to stop the war after the conspiracy of the Pazzi that virtually destroyed the Italian balance of power, and after realizing that no neighbour of the Ottoman Empire, especially Hungary and Moldavia, were capable or interested anymore (Matthias' case) of aiding her against the Porte. On the other side, the Sultan had again failed to take Albanian Scutari. This made him thus significantly more inclined towards a settlement of the

conflict, under more favourable conditions for Venice than previously. A decade earlier as well, peace had been in sight for Venice, but Mehmed's demands (that eventually could have been reduced) and Matthias' politics (that in the end proved uncontrollable) had destroyed the hopes of the *Serenissima*, a title practically born in 1480 by the end of the Venetian-Ottoman war. For an overview of the difficult Venetian-Ottoman talks, see also Momčilo SPREMIĆ, *I tributivi veneziani nel Levante nel XV secolo*, Studi Veneziani 13, 1971, pp. 221–252, especially pp. 239–244; Maria Pia PEDANI, *In nome del Gran Signore. Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla guerra di Candia*, Venice 1994, pp. 105–107; Hans Peter Alexander THEUNISSEN, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: the 'Ahd-names. The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial Instruments together with an Annotated Edition of a Corpus of Relevant Documents*, Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies 1, 1998, Nr. 2, pp. 1–698, here pp. 129–131, 241–245; Diana Gilliland WRIGHT – Pierre A. MACKEY, *When the Serenissima and the Gran Turco made love: the peace treaty of 1478*, Studi Veneziani, NS 53, 2007, pp. 261–277.

IV. It is difficult to assert whether or not the information on the blocking of the *passi* was accurate, in particular because king Matthias had seemingly rapidly pacified Transylvania and upon his return, in spite of his Moldavian failure, his authority was not challenged anymore. In return, given the magnitude of the anti-Hunyadi conspiracy of 1467, we cannot completely rule out that possibility that his enemies (the Szapolyais did not come to terms with Matthias until January 1468) actually managed to close the Carpathian passes after Matthias entered Moldavia. Eventually, he did not punish any of the major conspirators. He only brutally executed (after his difficult return from Moldavia) some of the lower Transylvanian rebels. In the years to come, Transylvania remained nonetheless one of the king Matthias' main anti-Ottoman problems, with disastrous effects upon crusading, especially in 1476 and 1484. See in these eastern matters also Alexandru SIMON, *Antonio Bonfini's Valachorum regulus (1458, 1492): Matthias Corvinus, Transylvania and Stephen the Great*, in: *Between Worlds*, ed. by A. Simon (= *Mélanges d'Histoire Générale*, NS 1/1–2), I. *Stephen the Great, Matthias Corvinus and their Time*, ed. by László Koszta – Ovidiu Mureşan – Alexandru Simon, Cluj-Napoca 2007, pp. 207–226, mainly pp. 212–214; IDEM, *The Habsburg-Hunyadi Wars of Succession: Notes on the Transylvanian-Ottoman Background*, *Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis* 47, 2010, pp. 611–619, especially pp. 616–617.

V. In his letter to Casimir IV, on the 1 January 1468, although he claimed victory over Matthias and thought that the king would not return home alive, Stephen was much concerned by the possibility of an Ottoman attack on Moldavia. If we are to fully trust the report sent by de Colli and if we taken into account the fears expressed by Stephen III, the Sultan could have even achieved more, by attacking *Valachia* (Moldavia in this case; Radu III, the Sultan's loyal youth favourite, ruled over the other *Walachia*, *Transalpine Walachia*) and taking *Cetatea Albă*, the former Genoese colony at the Dniester Mounds. Weakened after his combats with Matthias, Stephen could not protect the altogether unreliable southern harbours (besides, he had nearly lost against Matthias because of treason among his northern councillors, whereas south-western Moldavia had rebelled against him and remained under Matthias' control until 1471 when the two reached an official compromise). In February 1465, when Stephen had conquered (with Matthias' consent, whose garrison had just been expelled from the city), *Chilia* controlled by Radu, the Moldavian lord had aroused Mehmed's wrath. Because Matthias refused his peace offer and because Stephen found the means to buy him off for a while, Mehmed calmed down. *Chilia* nonetheless remained a major target for the Sultan, like *Cetatea Albă*, constantly viewed in those decades as one of the four pillars of power in the Black Sea area (furthermore, both harbours, referred to, in late Byzantine, Ottoman and sometimes even Italian sources, as the *Harbours of the Hungarian*, had been the object of Hunyadi's attention, who planned to use them, in particular *Cetatea Albă*, for an attack on the Ottoman Empire). At any rate, in early 1468, partially due to the Sultan's own policy, partially due to Matthias own ruthless and double-dealing politics, Mehmed seemed to have complete superiority in regional (anti- and pro-) Ottoman affairs, especially if he secured a separate arrangement between him and the king of Hungary. With *Transalpine Walachia* firmly on the Sultan's side and *Moldavia* bitter and covered with blood, Matthias' Ottoman options were very limited, while to the south the number of his supporters was even lower in former *Bosnia* or *Serbia*, not to mention *Albania*, with *Skanderbeg* at the end of his career. Still, Mehmed II never managed to take the two harbours. They only surrendered to his armies for a short while in winter 1474–1475 when Stephen III's downfall seemed imminent. It was his son, *Bayezid II*, who managed to conquer them in 1484, when he was in a desperate position, at home and abroad. In these Pontic matters, see the data in Francisc PALL, *Byzance à la veille de sa chute et Janco de Hunedoara (Hunyadi)*, *Byzantinoslavica* 30, 1969, Nr. 1,

pp. 119–126, especially pp. 124–125; Alexandru SIMON, *The Contested Sultan: The Backgrounds of Bayezid II's Moldavian Campaign of 1484*, Eurasian Studies 7, 2009, pp. 17–50, with additional sources; it is probably interesting to note the – less than accidental – similarities between John Hunyadi's – self-offered since 1451 – Italian involvement of 1452–1453 at the time of Byzantium's final downfall, associated nonetheless with quite functional plans, but also substantial anti-Ottoman demands, and Matthias' attitude of 1464/1465–1467/1468, where one hand he volunteered for the Bohemian crusade, however not without drafting and even attempting to put into practice real anti-Ottoman solutions; the duality revealed by such “combinations” might further indicate the actual nature, if the term can be used in these contexts, of the two main Hunyadis, a nature that does not seem to have been unique among the main figures near or within crusading). In the end, it should be noted that at that time (late 1467), Ali Mihaloglu was apparently already bey of Smederovo. He raided Oradea (Nagyvarad) in February 1474 (basically causing another Hungarian uprising against Matthias) and narrowly lost against Stephen (István) Báthory and Paul (Pál) Kinizsi at Câmpul Pâinii (Kenyérmező) in October 1479. What seems to be more important however in this context is that – according especially to Serbian and Ottoman tradition and sources – he was a direct descendent of the rulers of Walachia from the early 1400s, in 1460, he was the one to capture Michael (Mihály) Szilágyi, abandoned by his nephew Matthias, and also that Ali married the captured daughter of the *king of Hungary* (i.e. Matthias, who was probably related, via with father's Walachian ancestors, to the Basarab House of Walachia, though not as closely as he or his father, who even entitled himself – yet only for a short while – as the *voivode of Walachia by the grace of God* in November 1447, and their admirers would have wanted it). Such stories, together with reports as the one edited above, indicate the highly complex nature of the Hungarian-Ottoman border, as well the manifold implications it had or could have had on the general policy of the king. For more information, see Cristina FENEȘAN, *Mihaloglu Mehmet Beg et la principauté de Valachie. 1508–1532*, Journal of Turkish Studies 15, 1995, pp. 137–155; Ayşe Ezgi DİKİCİ, *Painting an Icon of the Ideal Gâzi: An Exploration of the Cultural Meanings of the Love Affair Episode in Süzî Chelebi's Gazavâtname of Mihaloglu Ali Bey* [MA Thesis, CEU], Budapest 2007, pp. 4–19, 63–66; as well as Ioan-Aurel POP – Alexandru SIMON, *Documents on the Prequels and the Aftermath of the Battle of Câmpul Pâinii (Kenyérmező, Brotfeld)*, Hadtörténelmi Közlemények [Studies in Military History] 124, 2011, Nr. 1, pp. 229–238.

VI. The news of Usun Hassan's alleged success might indicate that Venice was already using him as a pressure factor. In fact, the relations between her and the Mehmed's Muslim arch-rival became truly strong only after the Ottoman conquest of Negroponte (1470). The ambitious and ruthless Usun Hassan thus became Venice's main hope for victory or at least for a favourable peace, until his crushing defeat in the summer of 1473. Nonetheless, even afterwards there were periodical rumours on Usun Hassan's or his sons' attempts to regain power against the Ottoman Sultan. At any rate, in the winter of 1467–1468, the only good news on anti-Ottoman warfare were the rumours of Usun Hassan's victories. His marriage to the daughter of the late emperor David II the Great Komnenos seemed to give substance to them, as it did during the negotiations and joint anti-Ottoman plans of the early 1470s. Alongside, Stephen III of Moldavia's second wife, Mary of Mangop (i.e. Crimean Theodoro) and (nonetheless for a short while) Ivan III of Moscow's bride, Zoe Palaeologus, Theodora (?) (*Despina Hatun*), Usun's wife (related to the other two brides, both wed in 1472) should have been a Pontic cornerstone for Venice's anti-Ottoman success, giving her also access to the Black Sea Area and in particular to the vital positions still held in the Crimean Peninsula by the Genoese, Venice's traditional commercial rivals and nominally Milan's contested vassals. In the end, by the time Caffa fell to the Ottomans in the summer of 1475, Venice had managed to conclude a six-month truce with the Sultan, exploiting the anti-Ottoman victory of its new Moldavian favourite, Stephen III, of January 1475. If the Sultan's demands of October 1475 had been smaller, Venice would have most willingly turned that truce into a peace. Here, see also Mayer J. HALÉVY, *Les guerres de Etienne le Grand et d'Uzun Hasan d'après la Chronique de la Turquie du candiote Elie Capsali (1520)*, Studia et Acta Orientalia 1, 1957, pp. 189–199, mainly pp. 191–192; Mustafa Ali MEHMET, *La politique ottomane à l'égard de la Moldavie et du Khanat de Crimée vers la fin du règne du Sultan Mehmed II le Conquerant*, Revue Roumaine d'Histoire 13, 1974, Nr. 3, pp. 509–534, here pp. 522–527; Lajos TARDY, *Beyond the Ottoman Empire. 14th–16th Century Hungarian Diplomacy*, Szeged 1978, pp. 51–55; Thierry GANCHOU, *Une Kantakouzènè, impératrice de Trébizonde : Théodôra ou Hélène?*, Revue des Études Byzantines 58, 2000, pp. 215–229, in particular pp. 220–222; Alexandru SIMON, *The Western Impact of Eastern Events: The Crusader Consequences of the Fall of Caffa*, Istros 18, 2011, pp. 383–396, here pp. 386–387.

VII. The document was misedited and misplaced in MDE II, no. 60, pp. 94–95. Hence the source also led to the hypothesis that it might in fact date from 1469 (the dating of the document would have been *More Veneto*). The hypothesis is nonetheless impossible because of the content of the report and of the fact that Milanese reports from Venice did not use the Venetian year (1st of March–28/29th of February) for their dating. Such confusions are not very seldom and often have a major impact on our perspective of these events. For instance a significant, yet undated, document (ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Ungheria*, cart. 650, [1441] 1452–1490, fasc. 2, 1467–1490, nn), was mistakenly (due also to its misplacement within the carteggio) edited in the same MDE II, no. 167, pp. 230–237), under the year 1471, though it clearly mentioned the recent death of Pius II (August 1464), and was used as such for more than a century even though Ludwig von Pastor had already pointed out this mistake (see here his *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages* IV [1464–1484], London 21900, p. 81, note [2]).

VIII. John Hunyadi's various contemporary names are quite relevant for the 'East-West relations' of those times. In the Walachian environment John was commonly referred to as *Iancu* (name of Serbian origin), meaning Johnnie (his younger half-brother, also named John, was called *Ivaşcu*). At times, he was also named *Iovan* (likewise of Serbian origin) meaning basically (little) John. The name was also frequently used for Hunyadi by the Serbians, the Greeks and the Turks. It became also quite widely used in the Italian Peninsula (especially via Ragusa) to the extent that the Dominican Pietro Ransano, in king Matthias' service, later wrote that the Walachians and the Italians commonly used *Jancho* instead of John for Hunyadi. Meanwhile, due to the special antique and military ring attached to it, *Janus*, derived from the Hungarian form of John's name, *János*, was also often employed for the warlord. However, because Jancho nevertheless did not make that much sense in *Italia*, a *B* was attached to the name, first in the Italian milieu. *Iancho* was transformed into *Biancho* and afterwards Hunyadi into *the white knight of Walachia / of Hungary* (for instance, Marino Sanudo il Giovane wrote of *Janus vaivoda, ditto il Bianco*). Others, most likely mainly those more familiar with south-eastern politics, transformed *Iancho* into *Brancho*, because of the influential Serbian despot, George Branković (besides, *branco* meant *white* in Portuguese, and several Portuguese knights, i.e. especially the members of the Military Order of Christ, were active on crusader soil, whereas *branco*, as *pack* or *flock* in Italian, had a special ring, as attached to Hunyadi's forces, in that crusader context). With Branković Hunyadi had – what could be called – a love-hate relationship (Branković referred to him both as *traitorous bastard* and as *loving son*; plus Matthias first fiancé was Branković's granddaughter). Ethnic features are hard to assert beyond such documentary boundaries. Hunyadi's family at least on his father's side, came, probably in part, from Walachia. It had fled to Transylvania and had entered King Sigismund of Luxemburg's service at the end of the 14th century. Given the names used, for instance for John Hunyadi and his brother, and the special relation between the family and the Serbian Saint Nicodimus (also a refuge, for a while, in Transylvania, from Walachia too, in the same late 1390s), the family probably also had Serbian relatives. Going any further than that would be entering a political minefield for which John's son, Matthias, was best suited, in the late 1470s too, when he began talking of Mehmed II's *Walachian ancestors* and the Sultan responded by addressing the king as his *blood relative*. Besides, other associations are not too seldom the result of confusions, like in the case of de Colli's report from the 18th of February 1468 (and that of his informant), where he stated that Hunyadi was a *Sicul* (a Szeckler), which was not the case (neither on Hungarian, nor on Romanian soil). By *Siculi*, in this report at least (in his previous report from the 14th of February, he had mentioned two rebellious people/lands/*paesi* in Transylvania, the *Siculi* and the *Septem Castra*, one of Transylvania's traditional names, which gave birth to Transylvania's German name, *Siebenbürgen*, and thus probably stood, in that report, for the Transylvanian Saxons), de Colli probably meant in fact the entire population of Transylvania (at any rate, in late 1467, more Szecklers followed Matthias on his Moldavian campaign than opposed him). Yet neither did he emphasize the Walachian (Roman) roots of the Hunyadi (nor could he have done, as for de Colli the relatives of the king's father and the Walachians were two separate entities) in opposition to the other Walachians that defeated the king. In this respect too, it must be therefore stressed that Matthias Corvinus' personal Roman propaganda was posterior to these events, which, in their own turn, sparked a true propaganda battle over the victor of December 1467 (especially Bohemia, Poland and Venice had a clear interest in underlining and increasing Matthias' Moldavian failure). For instance, Philippe de Commynes later wrote, in admiration, of King Matthias that he had subdued Walachia from where his family had come. Given also Commynes' Burgundian background (when after Matthias' death in 1490, Stephen III of Moldavia decided to support Maximilian I of Habsburg, Frederick III's son and duke of Burgundy at the time, Burgundy knew the voivode of Moldavia as the

lord who had defeated Matthias and Mehmed on the same day), the line must be read, in connection to the battle of Baia. For the main information on the abovementioned aspects, see more recently Alexandru SIMON, *La parentéle ottomane du roi Mathias Corvin*, in: Matthias Corvinus und seine Zeit: Europa am Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit zwischen Wien und Konstantinopel, ed. by Christian Gastgeber – Ekaterini Mitsiou – Ioan-Aurel Pop – Mihailo Popović – Alexandru Simon, Vienna 2011 (= Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften CDX), pp. 25–33, in particular pp. 30–32; and Ioan-Aurel POP, *The Names in the Hunyadi Family*, in: Matthias Rex. Hungary at the Dawn of the Renaissance, ed. by Ildikó Hórn – Iván Horváth – András Véghe, Budapest – Geneva 2012, forthcoming, an interesting aspect under the circumstances is that on October 15, 1467, Pannonius wrote to Matthias, already on campaign in Transylvania and thinking of entering Moldavia, that if he did his job as monarch he could become the new Trajan, i.e. the conqueror of Dacia; Jenő ABEL, *Analecta ad historiam renascentium in Hungaria litterarum spectantia*, Budapest 1880, pp. 31–32.

IX. De Colli was no court poet, but a bureaucrat and a diplomat. He presented however things in a manner otherwise viewed as defining for humanists. He knew that the Walachians lived also on the northern banks of the Danube, divided in two large groups, and that they are the descendants of the Romans and spoke *Latin and Roman*, a quite unique combination. He did not even mention Stephen, although the Walachians were portrayed as victors at Baia. He, like an *alcuno Vaynoda*, did not seem to matter in relation to the ‘Walachian community’ and Matthias (in this respect, given his European ‘king size’, Matthias suffered a great defeat at Baia). Moreover, he placed the Szeklers at the origin of the conflict. In this report, he said nothing about Transylvania. The Szeklers had rebelled against the crown. Faced with the plundering of Matthias army, they had called the Walachians to their aid. In sum, De Colli had the data that flatters as well as ‘tangles’ a modern national *orgueil*. This might be a Milanese feature in relation to both the Hunyadis and the Walachians, for Milan knew how Hunyadi had made the money that allowed him then to rise in Hungary (Hunyadi had been left by Sigismund of Luxemburg for two years, in the early 1430s, in the armed service of Filippo Visconti) and what he was actually doing on the eve of the fall of Constantinople (when Mehmed was besieging Byzantium, Hunyadi made no effort to attack the Ottomans on the Danube, but gathered his army, in order to attack Venice, in the well-paid service of Francesco Sforza; however, the news on the fall halted his campaign). It is highly unlikely that Matthias was unaware of these facts either. For an overview of these delicate questions, see Francisc PALL, *Relazioni di Giovanni di Hunedoara con l'Italia negli anni 1452–1453. Documenti inediti preceduti da uno studio* (I–II), *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 13, 1975, pp. 453–478, 559–594; Alexandru SIMON, *The Lion in Winter: John Hunyadi from Kossovopolje to Belgrade*, in: *Between Worlds*, ed. by A. Simon (= *Mélanges d'Histoire Générale*, NS I/1–2), II. *Extincta est lucerna orbis: John Hunyadi and his Time*, ed. by Ana Dumitran – Loránd Mádly – A. Simon, Cluj-Napoca 2009, pp. 491–522.

X. It is further noteworthy that for Girardo de Colli the identity of the leader of the victorious Walachians was of a secondary importance, if not completely irrelevant, as he had already made it clear that the authority of the voivode over the Walachians was quite relative and virtually temporary. These Walachians, as the Latin-speaking descendants of the Romans, possessed a noble simplicity, enjoyed their liberties, and, once they won, they attracted the attention of the Sultan. The Walachians had to be won over for the cross, before the Turk got the upper hand, but this was for the duke to decide (this is what de Colli's general approach suggests and also what the various crusader projects in which, from 1464 to 1471 for instance, the Walachians had to be included, according to the requests of various Italian ‘analysts’, indicate). It was a humanist platitude that the successes of the Ottoman Turks were largely due to their barbaric simplicity and vigour, whereas their civilized Christian opponents were corrupted by welfare and manners. In this respect, the Walachians could have been a match for the Ottoman Turks. But, less than a decade later, they too had learnt the *bad habits of the Hungarian* (in Galeazzo Maria Sforza's own words). Following Matthias' example, to Milan's great dissatisfaction, the envoys of various eastern, Asian and European, lords were coming to Italy and promising great anti-Ottoman support in exchange for just a few thousand ducats. For more information, see Alexandru SIMON, *Anti-Ottoman Warfare and Crusader Propaganda in 1474: New Evidences from the Archives of Milan*, *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 46, 2007, pp. 25–39; IDEM, *The Costs and Benefits of Anti-Ottoman Warfare: Documents on the Case of Moldavia. 1475–1477*, *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 48, 2009, Nr. 1–2, pp. 37–53.

It should be added that the message that had to be sent via Matthias' Walachian and the Szekler experience of 1467 took precedence rather clearly over the actual information. For instance, de Colli

mentioned that the king lost more than 12,000 men, returning with only less than 500 horsemen, after he himself had written that the king had left on campaign with 10,000 men, a figure close to that of 12,000 soldiers offered also by Bonfini for Matthias' troops when he entered Transylvania (where however he gathered around 5,000 men, chiefly Szeklers) before entering Moldavia and facing Stephen's at best 15,000 men strong army. In this last respect, given the military efficiencies involved and subsequent "choice" left by de Colli between Matthias and Colleone that the report also implied a comparison between the Battle of Baia and the battle of Riccardina/Molinella (25th of July 1467), where the allied troops of Florence, Milan and Naples defeated the basically equal in terms of number forces of Venice, led by Colleone. Yet there, of the 25,000–30,000 men fighting in total (a figure very similar to that of the troops at Baia), less than 2,000 lost there lives. For the Italian battle, see [Antonio Ivani <de Saranzo>] *Antonii Hyvani Sarzanensis Historia de volaterrana calamitate*, ed. by Francesco Luigi MANNUCI, Città di Castello, 1913 (= *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, NS XXIII/4), Appendix II. *La battaglia della Molinella e il bellum tumultuarium in Lunigiana (1467)*, pp. 37–38; *La cronaca di Cristoforo da Soldo. 1437–1468 [Istoria bresciana]* III, ed. by Giuseppe BRIZZOLARA, Bologna 1942 (= *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, NS XXI/3), p. 157; Andrea MATUCCI, *Storici e battaglie a Firenze*, in: *Renaissance Studies in Honour of Craig Hugh-Smyth I*, ed. by Andrew Morrogh – Fiorella Gioffredi Superbi – Piero Morselli – Eve Borsook, Florence 1985, pp. 163–175, here p. 168.

XI. This is probably the most sympathetic to the king's cause of all passages devoted to Matthias in Girardo de Colli's reports. Moreover, it comes after the description of Matthias' crushing defeat. It is also one of the few instances when Girardo de Colli presents his lord (as well) with an option (also based on the choices already made and/or to be made by Rome and Venice): finance Matthias, so that he keeps on fighting the *Turk* (thus avoiding an invasion of the peninsula), or pay off Colleone, so that the Sforzas have peace in *Italia*. De Colli's option was clear. He substantiated it by immediately mentioning the recent death of Skanderbeg on January 17 (while he had been alive he could hardly get 2,000 ducats from the Republic, but, now that he was gone, Venice was ready to pay 5,000 ducats to his followers), but also the rumours on Usun Hassan's Asian anti-Ottoman successes. The Hungarian case had to be particularly strong as Matthias had already been accused by Frederick III of Habsburg (prior to the Treaty of Wiener Neustadt in 1463) and Venice (both prior and after its treaty of 1463 with Buda) of embezzling crusader funds. Matthias's response to Paul II's threats (most likely, Venice and Matthias' adversaries had rapidly informed the pope of the king's attempts) was in no way viewed as a treasonable act, but as the logic consequence of a most unfavourable context (there was something more to this story, because a few months later, after concluding the truce with Mehmed II, and while preparing his Bohemian war, for which he needed the vital support of the pope, Matthias still personally blamed Paul II for his conduct of 1467 and for the fact that some, unnamed, conspirators, had been Hungarian bishops). Besides, Matthias had taken care of informing Venice and of asking her to explain to the pope that he had no other option (he thus gave hope to the Republic that if he was to conclude a truce with the Porte he would not do so without Venice, thus speeding up the Republic's own diplomatic efforts). The king knew that Paul II would not risk excommunicating him, regardless of the pope's menaces, given the papacy's two major crusader problems interconnected by King Matthias's realm: George of Poděbrady and Mehmed II. In the end, Matthias achieved his goals. For an overview of these events and their consequences: Alexandru SIMON, *The Arms of the Cross: Stephen the Great's and Matthias Corvinus' Christian Policies*, in: *Between Worlds I. Stephen the Great, Matthias Corvinus and their Time*, pp. 45–86, especially pp. 74–77; IDEM, *The Limits of the Moldavian Crusade (1474, 1484)*, *Annuario del Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica* 9, 2007, pp. 193–244, in particular pp. 200–202, 207–209; with regard to Matthias' future Bohemian actions, it is worth underlining the fact that the defensive tactics used by him in the fights in Moldavia, mainly the fortress of chariots, mentioned by Girardo de Colli, were of Hussite origin and had already been used by John Hunyadi, which might further indicate that in 1467 Matthias' main military core and staff were still that of his father; see here Emanuel Constantin ANTOCHE, *Du tábór de Jan Zizka et de Jean Hunyadi au tâbur cengi des armées ottomanes'*, *Turcica* 36, 2004, pp. 91–124, and John JEFFERSON's study on the events that played an influential role in the history both the South and the North until the 1460s and even 1470s, when the treaties of Olomouc and Istanbul-Venice were concluded in 1478–1479; *The Holy Wars of King Wladislas and Sultan Murad: The Ottoman-Christian Conflict from 1438–1444*, Leiden – Boston – Cologne 2012, pp. 34–35, 62–63, 164–166.