

## THE POPE, THE HUNYADIS AND THE WALLACHIANS: THE CURIOUS CASE OF PIUS II

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*Cuvinte cheie:* Pius al II-lea (Enea Silvio Piccolomini), Ioan (Iancu) de Hunedoara, Matia Corvin, Vlad al III-lea Țepeș (Dracula), Mehmed al II-lea, cruciadă, umanist, construcție statală, identitate, corupție

One of the political letters, deemed worthy to be cited and copied by Pope Pius II (*olim* Enea Silvio Piccolomini) in his *Commentaries*, was the message allegedly sent by Vlad III *the Impaller* (*Dracula*), voivode of Wallachia, to Sultan Mehmed II on November 7, 1462.<sup>1</sup> The missive was the textual embryo of Book XI, chapter 12 (*Iohannis Dragule immanis atque nefanda crudelitas, eiusque in regem Hungarie deprehensa perfidia, et tandem captivitas*), covering over a fifth of the chapter.<sup>2</sup> The *Dragula* chapter was placed between the depiction (in chapter 11) of the Viennese conspiracy against Albert VI of Habsburg, the rival brother of Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg (April 1462)<sup>3</sup>, and the emphatic presentation (in chapter 13) of the royal anti-Ottoman request sent by Stephen Tomašević, the new king of Bosnia, to Pius II (roughly a year earlier, in the late

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<sup>1</sup> The main editions of the preserved manuscripts are *Pii II Commentarii rerum memorabilium que temporibus suis contigerunt* (= *Studi e Testi*, CCCXII–CCCXIII), edited by Adrian van Heck (Vatican City, 1984); *Pii Secundi Pontificis Maximi Commentarii*, edited by Ibolya Bellus, Iván Boronkai (Budapest, 1993). For reasons of accessibility, we use the so-called Johannes Gobellinus edition (available also online): *Pii Secundi Pontificis Maximi Commentarii rerum memorabilium que temporibus suis contigerunt* (Frankfurt, 1614).

<sup>2</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), 296–297 (last discussed by Matei Cazacu, *Dracula* (= *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages. 450–1450*, XLVI) (Leiden-Boston, 2017), 164–165).

<sup>3</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), 295–296. On Albert: Konstantin Moritz A. Langmaier, *Erzherzog Albrecht VI. von Österreich (1418–1463). Ein Fürst im Spannungsfeld von Dynastie, Regionen und Reich* (= J.F. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii*, suppl. XXXVIII) (Cologne-Vienna-Graz, 2015).

summer of 1461, a date the pope failed nevertheless to mention, though he extensively quoted both the oration of Tomašević's envoys and the subsequent papal response).<sup>4</sup> The case of *John Dragula* (the opening paragraph of chapter 12 was: *Austrialem sevitiā et crudele descripsimus Alberti facimus. Adicienda est Iohannis Dragule atrox ne-quitia et natura immanis, cuius inter Valachos, quibus prefuit, adeo nobilitata sunt scelera, ut nulla queant tragoedia superari*)<sup>5</sup> explicitly linked chapters 11 and 13 (the first words in the latter chapter read: *Stephanus circa idem tempus...*).<sup>6</sup>

Frequently overlooked, the chapters bordering the infamous deeds of the voivode of Wallachia formed its logical political context, founded on Matthias Corvinus.<sup>7</sup> The son of John Hunyadi, who had executed *John Dragula's* father, Vlad II *Dracul* (just *Dragula* according to the pope)<sup>8</sup>, was (as recorded also by Pius II): (1) the overlord (i.e. suzerain) of *John Dragula*, (2) the arch-rival of Frederick III,<sup>9</sup> and (3) the challenged suzerain of Stephen Tomašević.<sup>10</sup> Prior to the *Dragula* issue of 1462,<sup>11</sup> Pius II had loyally served Frederick as his secretary and envoy (from late 1442 until he was elected pope in August 1458)<sup>12</sup> and had

<sup>4</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), 297–298. On Pius II, who voluntarily mingled events, and Bosnia, see Emir O. Filipović, “The Key to the Gate of Christendom? The Strategic Importance of Bosnia in the Struggle against the Ottomans,” in *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century: Converging and Competing Cultures*, Norman Housley, ed. (New York, 2017), 151–168.

<sup>5</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), 296. Ștefan Andreescu (“En marge des rapports de Vlad Țepeș avec la Hongrie,” *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire* XVI, 3 (1977): 507–512) was the first to notice a relation between the Viennese and the Wallachian events of 1462.

<sup>6</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), 297. The words and the context of the Bosnian Roman *Habemus Fidem* oration of November 1462 (which Pius II logically used to chronologically connect *Dragula's* arrest by Matthias to the Bosnia issue) is most relevant for the stance of the pope towards *Dragula's* Christian master, almost nine months before the Habsburg-Hunyadi treaty of Wiener-Neustadt (see also van Heck’s critic edition *Commentarii*, II, 683–685).

<sup>7</sup> See also Constantin A. Stoide, “Luptele lui Vlad Țepeș cu turcii (1461–1462),” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie A.D. Xenopol* XV (1978): 15–38; Marko Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija (odnosi u XIV. i XV. st.)* (Sarajevo, 1996), 294–302.

<sup>8</sup> Francisc Pall, “Intervenția lui Iancu de Hunedoara în Țara Românească și Moldova în anii 1447–1448,” *Studii. Revistă de Istorie* XVI, 5 (1963): 1049–1072.

<sup>9</sup> Karl Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus, Kaiser Friedrich III. und das Reich. Zum Hunyadisch-Habsburgischen Gegensatz im Donauraum* (Munich, 1989<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>10</sup> See the collection of essays *Pad Bosanskog kraljevstva 1463. godine. Fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1453*, edited by Srđan Rudić, Dubravko Lovrenović, Pavle Dragičević (Sarajevo, 2015), chiefly the studies of Boris Babić, P. Dragičević, E. Filipović and Arandel Smiljanić.

<sup>11</sup> For Pius II and the Wallachians see Ovidiu Mureșan, *Renaștere, umanism, papalitate în secolul al XV-lea* (Cluj-Napoca, 2006); Andreea Mârza, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini și cruciada târzie* (Cluj-Napoca, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Martin Wagendorfer, *Die Schrift des Eneas Silvio Piccolomini* (= *Studi e Testi*, CDXLI) (Vatican City, 2008); Barbara Baldi, *Il cardinale tedesco. Enea Silvio Piccolomini fra impero,*

sent a crown for Stephen Tomašević's royal coronation on Christmas Day 1461 (against the opposition of Matthias, whose Bosnian rights Pius II claimed however, in his *Commentaries*, to have defended).<sup>13</sup>

### Political Context and Papal Wording

Although he spoke and wrote highly of John Hunyadi, chiefly for his anti-Ottoman crusader merits<sup>14</sup> Pius II was hardly a supporter of Matthias' contested reign and policies (he vividly described Matthias' election as king of Hungary in January 1458 as: <he> *rolled from prison onto the throne*).<sup>15</sup> When writing prior to the *Crusade of Ancona* (where the pope met his end in August 1464) about *John Dragula's* deeds<sup>16</sup>, Pius II was also fully aware of the developments in East-Central Europe<sup>17</sup>: 1. *Dragula's* actions had rapidly become the object of written anti-Hunyadi propaganda in German, after Albert VI, Matthias' ally, had triumphed over Frederick III in December 1462 (a year later however, Albert passed away).<sup>18</sup> 2. Matthias and Frederick had come to a Hungarian royal arrangement (very costly for the Hunyadis)<sup>19</sup>, less than two months after

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*papato, Europa (1442–1455)* (Milan, 2013); Daniel Luger, *Humanismus und humanistische Schrift in der Kanzlei Kaiser Friedrichs III. (1440–1493)* (Vienna-Cologne-Weimar, 2016), 49–63.

<sup>13</sup> On this lasting controversy, triggered chiefly by Pius II' duplicitous policy (understandable otherwise, given also the region), see especially D. Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti (sveta kruga ugarska i sveta kruga bosanska). 1387–1463* (Zagreb-Sarajevo, 2006), 341–350.

<sup>14</sup> Still, when writing to Pope Nicholas V (1449) about the disaster at Varna (1444), a battle he singled out among the misfortunes that had befallen Christendom, Piccolomini, in Frederick III's service at that time, emphasized: "[...] Even then, John, the voivode, unless he had fled, would have fallen, but he sought safety in flight. And this man, a Wallachian, knowledgeable about the region and quick of wits, fled without trouble the peril into which he had led others [...]" (*Reject Aeneas, Accept Pius: Selected Letters of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pius II)*, Thomas Izbicki, Gerald Christianson, Philip Krey, eds. (Washington, DC, 2005), no. 71, 289).

<sup>15</sup> Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini, *Historia rerum Friderici III imperatoris*, in *Analecta Monumentorum Omnis Aevi Vindobonensia*, edited by Adam F. Kollar, II (Vienna, 1762), 1–476, at 475–476 ([...] *ex carcere ad regnum evolaverat* [...]).

<sup>16</sup> Emily O'Brien, *The Commentaries of Pope Pius II (1458–1464) and the Crisis of the Fifteenth-Century Papacy* (Toronto-Buffalo-London, 2015), 15–17. The *Commentaries* began with Piccolomini's early years (he was born in 1405). They were written and frequently revised between mid-/ autumn 1462 and the summer of 1464, when Pius II departed for Ancona.

<sup>17</sup> B. Baldi, *Pio II e le trasformazioni dell'Europa cristiana (1457–1464)* (Milan, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Ebendorfer, *Chronica regum Romanorum (= Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, NS, XVIII, 1–2) edited by Harald Zimmermann, II (Hannover, 2003), 860–865 (Albert and Matthias against Frederick), 917–924 (the story of Vlad).

<sup>19</sup> Through the Habsburg-Hunyadi treaty of Wiener-Neustadt (July 1463), concluded five months prior to Albert's mysterious death, Matthias explicitly renounced his ties to Frederick's rival Austrian brother (Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus*, Appendix, 202–203).

Mehmed II had Stephen Tomašević beheaded, following the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia's capital, Jajce, in May 1463.<sup>20</sup>

The letter sent by *Dragula* to Mehmed, publicly addressed towards the end of 1461<sup>21</sup> also in the name of Pius II in the hope of converting the sultan to Christianity, must be perceived within this formally wide, but in fact rather narrow, political framework, well-suited for Renaissance rhetoric.<sup>22</sup> The pope never truly refuted the allegations that he had authored the *Epistle to Mehmed* in the eventually vain, but rather common humanist hope, of injecting Turkish (i.e. *Trojan*) primal stamina into decayed Christendom.<sup>23</sup>

*John Dragula's* letter is the only extant proof for his treason against Matthias, a treason left unrecorded by all other parties involved in the Wallachian-Hungarian-Ottoman affairs of 1462, including Frederick (who spearheaded a printed *Dragulian* anti-Hunyadi campaign in the late 1480s).<sup>24</sup> For his part, Matthias' stance, known largely from sources posterior to *John Dragula's* release from custody by the same king (1473–1474), was that he had imprisoned *John* at the end of November 1462 because of the innumerable cruelties of the vicious voivode.<sup>25</sup> These cruelties, against both Muslims and Christians, formed – along

<sup>20</sup> Tamás Pálosfalvi, "The Political Background in Hungary of the Campaign of Jajce in 1463," in *Stjepan Tomašević (1461–1463): slom srednjovjekovnoga Bosanskog Kraljevstva*, edited by Ante Birin (Sarajevo, 2013), 79–88.

<sup>21</sup> According to Francesco Gaeta (cf. also Kenneth M. Setton (*The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*) (= *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society*, CXIV, CXXXVI I, CLXI, CLXII), II. *The Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia, PA, 1978, 233, note 11), the letter must be dated after the Ottoman conquest of Trebizond (August 1461), a major historic event mentioned in the epistle. According to the same passage in the epistle (a manifesto in fact), Mehmed had conquered *some notable lands and defeated enemies* in Wallachia (alike in Serbia), but not subdued Wallachia (ruled by *John Dragula*): [...] *Fatemur: res claras maiores tui egere, nec tua minora sunt opera, qui Constantinopolim expugnasti et Peram e regione Genuensium coloniam et Peloponnesum magna ex parte in deditionem accepisti, et in Rastia et in Valachia non parum agri adeptus es et saepe tuos hostes fudisti; et hoc anno Synopem vetustam urbem, Mithridati Eupatoris patriam, et eius tyrannum cepisti et, Trapezunte direpta, incolas eius et imperatorem in captivitatem abduxisti; et Johannem Cassanum, proelio congregi ausum, superasti. Magna haec tibi videntur, nec nos parva dicimus [...]* (Luca D'Ascia, *Il corano e la tiara. L'epistola a Maometto II di Enea Silvio Piccolomini* (Bologna, 2003), 234).

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA, 2008); N. Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat. 1453–1505* (Oxford, 2012); James Hankins, *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, MA, 2019).

<sup>23</sup> M. Meserve, "Italian Humanists and the Problem of the Crusade," and Nancy Bisaha, "Pope Pius II and the Crusade," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, edited by N. Housley (New York, 2004), 13–38, at 16–19, and 39–52, at 42–44.

<sup>24</sup> See also Daniel Ursprung's recent article "Propaganda și popularizare. Povestirile tipărite despre Vlad Țepeș în contextul anului 1488", *Analele Putnei* XIV, 1 (2018): 45–60.

<sup>25</sup> The curious case of Antonio Bonfini, Matthias' last and best known chronicler (court

with the feud between the fathers of John and Matthias – Pius II' prologue to his edition (if one may dare to call it so) of the epistle sent by *The Impaller* to the famed *Conqueror of Constantinople*.<sup>26</sup>

Generally accepted and known, in Italy as well, because of Vlad III's report on his Danubian anti-Ottoman campaign at the beginning of 1462<sup>27</sup>, the cruelties alone would have sufficed to justify Vlad's condemnation.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, after admitting knowing of the report (that reached Rome by the end of March), Pius II chose to include John's epistle in his writings, granting it the same attention and extensive space the Bosnian oration and the papal response received on the next folio of the pontifical *Commentaries*.<sup>29</sup>

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historian), should be reviewed (cf. Andreescu, "En marge des rapports," 507–512). *Ad annum 1462*, Bonfini, writing at some point between late 1486 and Matthias' death (1490), distanced himself from Vlad's royal arrest and simply noted that no one knows (or understands) what happened then: [...] *Rex in Transalpinos ad liberandum Draculam e Turcorum manibus contendere dicebatur, cui mulierem suam quoque consanguineam legitimo matri-monio coniugarat. Illuc profectus, nescio, qua causa, quando id nemini satis compertum est, Draculam in Transylvania cepit, alterum vero Draculam [Radu III] a Turco in provincia prefectum preter omnium opinionem approbavit.* [...] (*Rerum Ungaricarum decades*, edited by József Fogel, Béla Iványi, László Juhász, III (Leipzig, 1937), 243). Afterwards, *ad annum 1477*, Bonfini tried to defend his king, accused of attempting to usurp the emperor. He stated that Matthias had even refused the imperial offer made by the Austrian rebels, who were besieging Frederick III's residence. Matthias had received the offer while marching *adversus Draculam*: [...] *Mathiam omni suspicione in hac re liberandum esse crediderim, quandoquidem, veluti supra dictum est, si quid ipse in imperatorem moliri voluisset, nunquam profecto occasionem illam pretermisisset, cum sibi adversus Draculam agenti Viennenses obsessum in arce Cesarem et ad extremam redactum inediam una cum urbe dedere voluere et instantissime, ut condicionem et imperium acciperet, efflagitarunt* [...] (Bonfini, IV (Leipzig, 1941 [Budapest, 1944]), 72). Whether *adversus*, instead of *versus* (towards), was an honest mistake or not is quite impossible to tell and in the end irrelevant. Bonfini, alike Pius II in his *Commentaries*, knew more than he wrote about the *Dracula* matter (and its relation to the Viennese rebellion).

<sup>26</sup> Quite astonishingly, none of numerous messages sent by Wallachian voivodes, chiefly by those of Wallachia, to the Porte (let alone the sultan), throughout the 1400s, have survived, not even as copies. The only exception would be the translation in *Commentarii*.

<sup>27</sup> For instance: Radu Lungu, "À propos de la campagne antiottomane de Vlad l'Empaleur au sud du Danube (Hiver 1461–1462)," *Revue Roumaine d' Histoire* XXII, 2 (1983): 147–158; Andrei Pippidi, "Noi izvoare italiene despre Vlad Țepeș și Ștefan cel Mare," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* XX (2002): 15–21, at 16.

<sup>28</sup> This was abundantly made clear by the German stories on *Dragula's* deeds (see M. Cazacu, *L'Histoire du prince Dracula en Europe centrale et orientale (XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)* (Geneva, 1996<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>29</sup> Franz Babinger dated the Bosnian oration in Pius II's *Commentaries* to November 1461 (in *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit: Weltenstürmer einer Zeitenwende* (Munich, 1953), p. 232/ *Mehmed the Conqueror and his Time*, edited by William C. Hickmann (Princeton, NJ, 1978), 216). Babinger's work was certainly not flawless, but his errors were due rather to interpretation than to personal neglect. He had just quoted Vlad's letter to Mehmed, under its given date,



“To the Emperor of Emperors and Lord of Lords that are under the sun, to the Great Emir and Great Sultan, Mahomet, blessed in all things, <I?> John Voivode and Lord of Wallachia, <offer> my humble allegiance. I, the servant of Your Great Empire, announce You that I am setting out today for my land, with a host, and I trust in God to obtain it, unless You command me otherwise. Therefore, I ask You to forgive my mistake and my great sin, for I, imprudently, sinned against You and did harm in Your land; and, may Your Clemency show me mercy and forgive me, so that I can send envoys to you. I know the entire part of Transylvania and entire Hungary and I am accustomed to the conditions and to the mat-ters of the places. If it pleases Your Highness, in order to atone for my sins, I can deliver the entire part of Transylvania into your hands, which, once in Your possession, will allow to subdue entire Hungary to Your power. My envoys will present You more. I, for as long I leave, will be your servant of unwavering faith. May God grant many years to Your Great Empire. Written at Rhotel, on the seventh day before the Ides of November, 1462”.<sup>30</sup>

Vlad (aka *John Dragula*) informed Mehmed II that he was about to leave for Wallachia and reclaim his throne.<sup>31</sup> Vlad’s brother and Mehmed’s favourite, Radu III *the Handsome*, had become ruler of Wallachia in August 1462, due not

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November 7, 1462 (*Mehmed* (1953), 223/ (1978), p. 208), that preceded the Bosnian oration in the *Commentaries* (ed. 1614, 296–297 and 297–298). The reason behind the error (?) appears to have been Pius II’ himself (the only one to record the oration). He wrote that Tomašević had become king just prior to the Bosnian embassy to Rome, upon his father’s death. Yet the latter had passed away in early July 1461.

<sup>30</sup> The only English translation, so far, of the letter belongs to Florence A. Gragg and can be found in *The Commentaries of Pius II*, [V.] Books X–XIII, edited by F.A. Gragg, Leona C. Gabel (Northampton, MA, 1957), 739–740 (available online). The differences between translations are rather numerous: (1) *Emir*, instead of *Amurato* [*Admurato* in the Latin text], (2) “I, the servant of Your Great Empire, instead of I, the servant of Your Majesty, (3) I am setting out today for my land, with a host, and I trust in God to obtain it, unless You command me other-wise, instead of I am setting out this day with an army for my own land and I trust in God that I shall reach it unless I am prevented by your command, or (4) Therefore, I ask You to forgive my mistake and my great sin, for I, imprudently, sinned against You and did harm in Your land; and [sed in the Latin text], may Your Clemency show me mercy and forgive me, so that I can send envoys to you, instead of Therefore I humbly beseech Your Majesty not to have regard to my error and my great sin, since in ignorance I sinned against you and did evil in your land. But may your clemency have pity on me and grant that I may send envoys to you”. The changes are due chiefly to the differences in knowledge of the context, limited to Franz Babinger’s and Nicolae Iorga’s works in the case of the otherwise stylish and mostly accurate American edition.

<sup>31</sup> Apparently, Vlad and Radu had fought each other (largely along the Wallachian-Hungarian border) until Matthias’ arrival in Transylvania. Matthias was in native Cluj on September 11 (Richárd Horváth, *Itineraria regis Matthiae Corvini et reginae Beatricis de Aragonia (1458–1476–1490)* (Budapest, 2011), 71). At that time, the Knights Hospitaller on Rhodes were certain

so much to Ottoman arms (Mehmed had withdrawn in July), but because of the endorsement of local boyars, tired of Vlad's excesses.<sup>32</sup> In effect, as recorded by virtually all Christian sources (chronicling Vlad's deeds, Pius mentioned his Danubian attack on Mehmed, but not the sultan's campaign against the voivode) and equally unanimously contested by the Ottomans<sup>33</sup>, Vlad had even forced Mehmed into retreat (although, for Matthias, Belgrade's defence had taken precedence over that of Wallachia in the summer of 1462).<sup>34</sup>

Christian (and Muslim) exaggerations aside, Vlad was in the capacity of offering a deal to Mehmed in autumn 1462.<sup>35</sup> In exchange for the sultan's pardon for his *imprudent* sins, Vlad was not to overthrow Radu<sup>36</sup> and promised to take Transylvania for Mehmed, opening the way for Hungary's conquest.<sup>37</sup> Vlad was familiar with Transylvania, who had largely disobeyed Matthias' anti-Ottoman commands.<sup>38</sup> According still to Pius, Vlad awaited the sultan's (urgent) response

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that Vlad had prevailed against Radu (*Documents concerning Rumanian history (1427–1601)*, edited by Eric D. Tappe (London, 1964), no. 2, 18–19).

<sup>32</sup> *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. 96, 130. Independently from Matthias, Transylvanian Saxon and even royal authorities, had come to terms with Radu as the new voivode by August 15 (Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, XV/1, *Acte și scrisori din arhivele orașelor ardeleni Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu, 1358–1600*, edited by N. Iorga (Bucharest, 1911), no. 99, 58).

<sup>33</sup> For instance, Mehmed II was confident enough to send a *Fetihname* (letter of conquest) on Wallachia to his former rival Ibrahim II of Karaman (Mihail Guboglu, "Vlad Țepeș și Mehmed al II-lea în lumina cronicilor turco-bizantine," *Revista Arhivelor* LIII, 4 (1976): 381–390, at 383–386).

<sup>34</sup> A recent balanced synopsis of the events of 1462: T. Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács: A History of Hungarian-Ottoman Warfare. 1389–1526* (Leiden-Boston, 2018), 204–205.

<sup>35</sup> This was in fact the main prerequisite for accepting Vlad's treason. Unless Vlad had something to bargain with, Mehmed had no use for him. One might even suspect Pius II of keeping silence on the actual situation in Wallachia in order to "promote" Vlad's offer.

<sup>36</sup> Irrespective of the name of the acting ruler of Wallachia, it was a matter of logic. If Vlad halted his advance (but only after he had left Transylvania, in order not to arouse Matthias' suspicions), Radu remained ruler (at least for a while). Neither Pius, nor Vlad said anything about Radu, although Pius had mentioned Vlad's brother (executed by John Hunyadi together with their *Dragula* father) and Radu's fate was furthermore clearly at stake.

<sup>37</sup> Given Vlad's willingness to relinquish Wallachia, if his treachery succeeded, his "unholy" profit was north of the Carpathians, the most obvious and neglected of innuendos.

<sup>38</sup> Mildly put by Pálosfalvi: "[...] it is unlikely that major forces crossed the border [...]" (*From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 211). Matthias' Transylvanian orders were issued prior to June 14, 1462, according to Pietro de Tomasso, Venice's representative in Buda. The latter feared the loss of Transylvania, [...] *che e due terzodi questo regno* (!) [...] (Iván Nagy, Albert Nyáry, *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek. Mátyás király korából 1458–1490* (= *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, IV, 1–4), I [1458–1465] (Budapest, 1876) (MDE), no. 91, 147).

in order to send envoys to him, with *more* on the planned rapt of Transylvania and the collapse of Hungary, of *Christendom's bulwark*.<sup>39</sup>

Vlad was dismantling, worse perverting, the anti-Ottoman power gathered by John Hunyadi as the *voivode of Transylvanian and Wallachia* (recorded as such in fall 1445 by Enea Silvio Piccolomini, not John's friend at that time).<sup>40</sup> This highly unstable – in kind and in fact – power (also because of the often strained relations between John and Wallachian lords, within and outside of Hungary) had made it difficult for Enea to defend John's reputation in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople<sup>41</sup>, in a debate – initiated by Enea – with Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki<sup>42</sup> about the true heroes of the Cross and the rightful rulers of Hungary (Habsburgs or Jagiellonians).<sup>43</sup> Since before Matthias became king and Enea pope, Pius II, alike Venice (in the absence of better options) or Frederick III (given also his and John's common enemy: Ulrich von Cilly),<sup>44</sup> had to cling on to

<sup>39</sup> Johannes Preiser-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: 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, J. Preiser Kapeller, Al. Simon (Vienna, 2011), 37–62, at 39–44.

<sup>40</sup> *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini* (= *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, II, 61–62, 67–68), edited by Rudolf Wolkan, I. *Briefe aus der Laienzeit. 1431–1445*. 1. *Privatbriefe* (Vienna, 1909), no. 180, 533 (letter sent by Enea from Vienna, on September 13, 1445, to his close friend Gregorio Lolli): [...] *iterum venturos wayvode Transsilvani atque Walachi exercitum parant* [...] (cf. József Marton, "Magyarország képe és megítélése Enea Silvio Piccolomini életművében," *Irodalomtudományi Közlemények* CX, 5 (2006): 457–477, at p. 464, note 26, with a typo: p. 523 instead of p. 533, and a confusion between Nicholas Újlaki, John's partner and co-voivode of Transylvania, and John, the voivode for Enea).

<sup>41</sup> When Byzantium fell, Hunyadi was ready to march (alone or together with his rival Ulrich of Cilly) into Italy, in the service of Milan, against Venice (F. Pall, "Byzance à la veille de sa chute et Janco de Hunedoara," *Byzantinoslavica* (Prague) XXX, 1 (1969): 119–126).

<sup>42</sup> For Oleśnicki and his politics: Harold Segel, *Renaissance Culture in Poland: The Rise of Humanism. 1470–1514* (Ithaca, NY, 1989), 22–25; Janusz Smółucha, "Kontakty Zbigniewa Olesnickiego z Eneaszem Sylwiuszem Piccolominim," in *Zbigniew Oleśnicki. Książę Kościoła i mąż stanu*, edited by Feliks Kiryk, Zdzisław Noga (Krakow, 2006), 205–210.

<sup>43</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III. *Brief als Bischof von Siena*. 1. *Briefe von seiner Erhebung zum Bischof von Siena bis zum Ausgang des Regensburger Reichstages* (23. September 1450–1. Juni 1454) (Vienna, 1918), no. 137, 245–253 (September 10), no. 177, 315–347 (October 27, 1453). On this neglected learned dispute, see in particular N. Bisaha, "Discourses of Power and Desire: The Letters of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1453)," in *Florence and Beyond: Culture, Society and Politics in Renaissance Italy. Essays in Honour of John M. Najemy*, edited by David Spencer Peterson, Daniel Ethan Bornstein (Toronto, 2008), 121–134, at 124–132.

<sup>44</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, no. 256, 443–446 (February 14, 1454; Enea to Cardinal Juan Carvajal). Frederick III even wanted to have John as *universal captain* of the anti-Ottoman crusade.



the Hunyadis,<sup>45</sup> albeit having a personal eastern favourite<sup>46</sup> Matthias' late predecessor and John's unwanted king: Ladislas V *the Posthumous* († 1457).<sup>47</sup>

Secretary to Ladislas' warden (read guardian) and uncle, Frederick III, Enea Silvio Piccolomini had thought highly of young Ladislas, of his prospects, and even concerned himself with his education.<sup>48</sup> Enea thought little in return of Ladislas' other uncle, Ulrich of Cilly, to whom however Albert of Habsburg's and Elisabeth of Luxemburg's son was indebted for his political survival.<sup>49</sup> At first, Enea seemingly believed – not without reason – that Mathias had usurped Ladislas, not his throne, but his destiny.<sup>50</sup> It may well be that Enea, by then Pope Pius II, fully accepted Matthias only after John Hunyadi's son went to war

<sup>45</sup> Bisaha ("Discourses of Power and Desire", 131) rightly emphasized that Enea's views of Hunyadi were rather ambivalent, aptly quoting also *Briefwechsel*, II. *Briefe als Priester und als Bischof von Triest. 1447–1450* (Vienna, 1912), no. 23, 72–77 (November 25, 1448; the letter of Enea to Pope Nicholas V after John's new major Ottoman defeat at Kossovopolje).

<sup>46</sup> Before Frederick decided to challenge him in early 1459, Matthias' main rival was Casimir IV Jagiello of Poland, married to Ladislas V' sister, Elisabeth. Enea's animosity towards the Jagiellonians was evident since, according not only to him, Wladislaw III (Casimir's brother and John Hunyadi's benefactor) had usurped Ladislas V' rights in 1440 (*Briefwechsel*, I–1, no. 192, 563–579). Enea's personal views of Poland aided Matthias, rapidly and openly accused by Casimir of siding with Mehmed (MDE, I, no. 29, 41–42). Earlier, Matthias had received the brief, but vital support of the late Callixtus III, whose Pontifical vassals, the Teutonic Knights, were at war with Krakow.

<sup>47</sup> For an overview: T. Pálosfalvi, "V. László," in *Magyarország vegyes házi királyai*, edited by Gyula Kristó (Budapest, 2002), 139–150. A monograph on Ladislas is much needed.

<sup>48</sup> *De liberum educatione* in *Briefwechsel*, II, no. 40, pp. 103–158 [February 1450 (eight months before the Habsburg-Hunyadi arrangement on Ladislas)]. Last translated into English by Craig W. Kallendorf in *Humanist Educational Treatises* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 65–132. For further information: Klára T. Pajorin, "La pietà di Pio. Ladislao Postumo nella corrispondenza di Enea Silvio Piccolomini," in *Pio II nell'epistolografia del Rinascimento*, edited by Luisa Rotondi Secchi Tarugi (Florence, 2015), 23–32. With Hungarian learned support, Enea Silvio Piccolomini even created place for Ladislas in a/ the virtual *gens Iulia* of the 1400s. Enea greatly admired Julius Caesar and attempted to immitate him also by writing the *Commentarii*.

<sup>49</sup> Fabio Forner, "Enea Silvio Piccolomini e la congiura contro Ulrich von Cilli," in *Margarita amicorum. Studi di cultura europea per Agostino Sottili*, edited by F. Forner, Carla Maria Monti, Paul Gerhard Schmidt (Milan, 2005), 351–376; Stanko Kokole, "Mulle ibi uetustatis reliquie uisuntur: Evoking Marble Remains of Ancient Celeia Before and After 1400," *Zbornik za Umetnostno Zgodovino*, NS, XLVIII (2012): 35–66, at 36, 64–65.

<sup>50</sup> Marton, "Magyarország képe," 467–468 (with focus on Enea's *Historia Bohemica*. in *Opera geographica et historica* (Helmstadt, 1699), 1–128, at 118–122, 124–127). Writing nevertheless in the first half of 1458, he certainly did not approve Ladislas V' execution of Ladislas Hunyadi (in return, he largely supported the execution of Ulrich of Cilly) and blamed the Hungarian advisors of Ladislas V for the last year of his reign.

against the Ottomans in autumn 1463 and retook Jajce, the fallen capital of the Bosnian Kingdom on Christmas' day.<sup>51</sup>

At any rate, between 1455 and 1457 (chiefly after the deaths of both John Hunyadi and Ulrich von Cilly in the second half of 1456)<sup>52</sup>, Ladislás had resembled an ugly duckling about to turn. He was wise enough not to use ethnicity against the Hunyadis (when condemning their *crimes* in March 1457)<sup>53</sup> and to direct – through privileges<sup>54</sup> – the Wallachians against them (at the end of August that same year, which proved to be his last). Rescued by the *plague* into eternal glory, John Hunyadi, who had lost much Hungarian power to Ladislás V and Ulrich of Cilly<sup>55</sup>, had bequeathed a great name and a heavy political burden to Matthias. Matthias, John's "replacement heir"<sup>56</sup>, had not proven worthy of it since his enthronement in early 1458.

By 1462, Matthias' main crusader accomplishment was allowing his uncle, the king-maker Michael Szilágyi (deprived of royal support while in the midst of his foes)<sup>57</sup>, to lose his head at Mehmed II's feet, eager to avenge the debacle of

<sup>51</sup> I. Boronkai, Matthias im Bilde der Memoiren des Pius II, in *Matthias Corvinus and the Humanism in Central Europe*, edited by Tibor Klaniczay, József Jankovics (Budapest, 1994), 59–69 (paper submitted prior to the publication of the 1993 Bellus-Boronkai edition of the *Commentarii*), at 69 (based on Pius' story of the 1463 Christmas reception by Matthias, in Jajce, of the sword sent by the pope to the king of Hungary and now also of Bosnia).

<sup>52</sup> For a neutral overview of these events: Johannes Grabmayer, "Das Opfer war der Täter. Das Attentat von Belgrad 1456: über Sterben und Tod Ulrichs II. von Cilli," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, CXI (2003): 286–316.

<sup>53</sup> The royal charter, issued on March 21, 1457, five days after Ladislás Hunyadi's execution, was also translated in Hungarian on the occasion of the Millennium of 1896 (*A Magyar nemzet története*, editor-general Sándor Szilágyi, IV. Vilmos Fraknói, *A Hunyadiak és a Jagellók kora (1440–1526)* (Budapest, 1896), 163). The main charge against John (and his family) was that he (they) had violated the natural order of things. The charter thus also focused on the documented abuses of John against voivodes of Wallachia and Moldavia, but also against George Branković, despot of Serbia. These charges were quite justified.

<sup>54</sup> Adrian Magina, "Universitas valachorum: Privilege and Community in the Medieval Banat," in *Reform and Renewal in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary* (= *Minerva*, III, 15; *Studies in Russia and Eastern Europe*, XIII), edited by Éva B. Halasz, Suzana Miljan, Al. Simon (Cluj-Napoca-Zagreb-London, 2019), 493–502.

<sup>55</sup> In south-western comparison: Robert Kurelić, "The Status of the Counts of Cilli as Princes of the Holy Roman Empire," *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* (Budapest), XII (2006): 143–162, at 154–156, 160–162.

<sup>56</sup> A comparison between the few contemporary records on Matthias' early years (András Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex* (Budapest, 2008), 24) and the main lines in Enea's educational treatise for Ladislás V (*Humanist Educational Treatises*, 65–132) might be useful. Unlike his much older brother (by twelve), Ladislás, Matthias was raised while his father was at the height of power.

<sup>57</sup> For an overview: Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 199–202.

Belgrade.<sup>58</sup> Still, in spite of the calls of Frederick III or Stephen Tomašević, Pius II, well acquainted with Hunyadi matters, largely refrained from openly endorsing Matthias' numerous adversaries and remained benevolent towards him.<sup>59</sup>

By 1462, the monarhic record of Pius II, enthroned in September 1458, seven months after Matthias, was not superior to that of John Hunyadi's son.<sup>60</sup> John's successor as the *athlete* of Christendom and Pius' favourite, Skanderbeg kept extending his truces with Mehmed II and fighting in Italy for his suzerain, Ferdinand of Aragon, king of Naples (Pius' protégé).<sup>61</sup> The Turk thus added Trebizond (1461) to his conquests of Smederevo (1459) and Morea (1460), while Paris and Prague turned into centres of "anti-Papal resistance".<sup>62</sup> The situation began to rapidly change in 1462.<sup>63</sup> By fall 1463, Pius II had his Holy War and Matthias his Holy Crown.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> According to Kemal-Pasha Zade (Ibn Kemal), who spoke highly of Matthias' uncle, Michael Szilágyi, *ban Miloš* [standard Serbian for Michael was *Mihajlo*], son of Szilágyi (*Isviladj-oglu*), was left at Mehmed's mercy by the *aramini* of Severin, a Hungarian-Wallachian joint-venture alike Chilia at the other end of the Lower Danube (*Cronici turcești privind Țările Române*, I. Secolul XV-mijlocul secolului XVII, edited by M. Guboglu, Mustafa Ali Mehmet (Bucharest, 1966), no. XII, 198). The Wallachians Stephen and Michael of Mâtnic were the Hungarian bans of Severin between 1459 and 1467 (Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania. 1440–1514* (Bucharest, 2000), 422). Ali Mihaloglu, a Serbian convert, defeated and captured Michael. However, Ali's brother, Iskender, sent with news of the victory to Mehmed, was trapped by the garrison of Severin. Ali paid 10,000 florins for Iskender's release, and then only sent Michael to Mehmed.

<sup>59</sup> Valuable information can still be found in Augustin Theiner's *Vetera monumenta historica Hungarica sacrum illustrantia*, II. *Ab Innocentio PP. VI. usque ad Clementem PP. VII. 1352–1526* (Rome, 1859) (VMHH), for instance: no. 499, 326; no. 554, 371, as well as in Kenneth M. Setton's most comprehensive notes (*The Papacy and the Levant*, II, 204–205, note 18).

<sup>60</sup> Pius had reached none of his main cibles: Papal stability in the West and anti-Ottoman crusading, not to mention the Italian situation (e.g. Paul M. Dover, "Royal Diplomacy in Renaissance Italy: Ferrante d'Aragona (1458–1494) and his Ambassadors," *Mediterranean Studies*, XIV (2005): 57–94; Pius' support for Ferdinand brought him on the brink of war with France and almost made Milan reconsider its Roman alliance).

<sup>61</sup> Oliver-Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbeg. Der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan* (Regensburg, 2009), 307–309, 318–323. In addition to sending troops to Ferdinand's aid (since the summer of 1460), Skanderbeg personally came to Italy (September 1461–January 1462), after renewing his truce with Mehmed, who left for Trebizond (June 1461).

<sup>62</sup> Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, 204–205 (note 18), 219–220, 223–224, 237–238. For the impact of Louis XI of France and George Podiebrad of Bohemia on Pius II' crusader designs, see Housely, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat*, 55–56, 58–59, 211–212.

<sup>63</sup> Though it was not a a liniar change, by the end of March 1462, Pius had decided to push for war against both Podiebrad and Mehmed (on the old issue of Hussite-Ottoman relations, see also Robin Baker, "Constantine from England and the Bohemians: Hussitism, Orthodoxy and the End of Byzantium," *Central Europe* V, 1 (2007): 23–46).

<sup>64</sup> Additionally, Bosnia no longer hindered Piccolomini-Hunyadi arrangements (see Matthias'

### *Humanist Statesmanship and the Corrupt Nature of the Wallachians*

As so many passages in the letter sent to Mehmed by Vlad, with Matthias “at this side”<sup>65</sup> (the king spent three months in Transylvania in the autumn of 1462)<sup>66</sup>, a letter constructed on allusions and innuendos, Vlad’s message to Mehmed is comprehensible – in its entirety – only within the actual armed political framework of 1462. This framework was carefully “obliterated”, both by Vlad in his letter, and by the “editor” of the letter, Pius, aware of Matthias’<sup>67</sup> unprecedented, and unrepeated, stay in Transylvania.<sup>68</sup> The pope’s intentions were rather clear from the beginning of the chapter on Vlad’s ignominy, explicitly *added* to the description of the vile Austrian turmoil, stirred-up by Albert VI, Matthias’ ally and the *unworthy* brother of Frederick III of Habsburg, Pius’

brutal answer to Pius’ Bosnian letter from January 21, 1462, published by V. Fraknói, *Mathiae Corvini Hungariae Regis epistolae ad Romanos Pontifices datae et ab eis acceptae* (= *Monumenta Vaticana historiam Regni Hungariae illustrantia*, I, 6) (Budapest, 1891) (EMC), no. 13, 17–19).

<sup>65</sup> The sources were astonishingly quiet in this respect, except for Michael Beheim’s poem: “[...] He left the city of Buda// with his army, taking the shortest path// to Kronstadt in Siebenburgen.// He was accompanied by many counts,// barons, lords, knights, and squires.// Pageantry, abounding in sound,// was manifest in that place.// And Dracula, too, came, // bringing a large company with him.// [line missing from the text]// Five weeks or longer // they remained together.// During this time, the king had learned// of the underhanded crime// and murderous treason// that Dracula had put in readiness in Turkey// with the heathen.// The King of Hungary pretended// that he did not know// the extent of these things [...]” (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 345). Beheim’s text (written between mid-1463 and mid-1465) is also consistent with Matthias’ itinerary.

<sup>66</sup> Horváth, *Itineraria*, 71–72. Matthias returned to Transylvania in 1467, because the local rebellion and the ensuing Moldavian campaign (September 1467-January 1468) and, briefly in 1471 (May), on the eve of the new rebellion, in order to meet with the envoys of Stephen III of Moldavia (*Hurmuzaki*, XV/1, no. 133, 77).

<sup>67</sup> E.g. MDE, II, nos. 113–114, 181–182 (October 11–12); no. 116, 184–185 (January 31, 1463). The dated correspondence from 1462 between Matthias and Pius has not survived.

<sup>68</sup> Royal absences from Buda and Hungary proper, comparable to the Transylvanian stay of September–December 1462, were recorded (1) in cases of open warfare (with Mehmed, between October 1475 and February 1476, or with Frederick, between August 1477 and January 1478), or (2) when Matthias resided in his other realms, with their own pertinences (in the lands of Bohemia, starting in summer 1468 and especially afterwards, or in those of Slavonia, between fall 1480 and spring 1481), and in his still recent conquests (Austria after mid-1485). Suited matches from the early years of Matthias’ for the king’s Transylvanian expedition (in fact) of 1462 are: (1) the southern Ottoman threat to his rule (September 1458-January 1459), (2) the pro-Habsburg rebellion in Upper Hungary, largely modern day Slovakia (July–November 1461) and (3) the Bosnian campaign of 1463, with its build-up and aftermath (August 1463-January 1464) (see the *ad annum* entries in Horváth, *Itineraria*). A comparative quantitative analysis of the royal charters issued on each of the mentioned occasions would be most relevant for the nature of Matthias’ Transylvanian stay of 1462.

imperial benefactor.<sup>69</sup> The heir of Saint Peter wrote of the decayed descendants of Rome, the Wallachians, speakers of *imperfect, corrupted Italian*, who had been subjected to *John Dragula's* hideous nature and highly traumatic tyranny.<sup>70</sup>

“[...] We have described the Austrian ferocity and cruelty of Albert. To these we must add the atrocious infamy and monstrous nature of John Dragula, whose crimes are so notorious among the Wallachians, whom he commanded, that no tragedy could surpass them.<sup>71</sup> The Wallachians live beyond the Danube between the Euxine<sup>72</sup> and the parts called today Transylvania, where there are seven German-speaking cities.<sup>73</sup> The Wallachians use Italian in their language<sup>74</sup>, but an imperfect, corrupt <one>.<sup>75</sup> Some think that once Roman legions were sent there against the Dacians, who used to inhabit these lands, and that these legions were commanded by a certain Flaccus<sup>76</sup>, from whose name they were called first Flacci<sup>77</sup> and, then with a

<sup>69</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 11, 296; Langmaier, *Albrecht VI.*, 521, 561, 601.

<sup>70</sup> Pius did neither explicitly blame the Wallachians for his crimes, nor outright portray *Dragula* as a *Wallachian* (criminal). A comparative analysis of the German stories on the *voivode* might prove relevant. His subjects were certainly not depicted as cattle led to slaughter, to their natural fate (for the texts: *Cazacu*, *Dracula*, *Appendix*, 310–346, 364–369).

<sup>71</sup> Original: *adiicienda est Iohannis Dragule atrox nequitia et natura immanis, cuius inter Vala-chos, quibus prefuit, adeo nobilitata sunt scelera, ut nulla queant tragoedia superari*. An alternate translation could be: “to these we must add the atrocious infamy and the monstrous nature of John Dragula, whose crimes are so notoriously defining among the Wallachians, whom he commanded, that they are not able to overcome the tragedy”. The choice between variants depends of our understanding of Pius’ aims of 1462–1463 (until, in fact, he left in fact on his crusade) and consequently of the message the pope wanted to convey.

<sup>72</sup> *Euxinus* (as in the *Friendly Sea*) was the Latinized and abridged Greek designation of the Black Sea, to which the Wallachians were increasingly connected in Western sources following the Ottoman expansion in the region (see also Michael J. Mc Gann, “An Exile’s Hopes: The Search for a Liberator in Michael Marullus,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* XXXVII, 2 (2013): 226–244, at p. 230, note 14).

<sup>73</sup> The blunt mention of the *seven German-speaking cities* (*Siebenbürgen*) strengthened Pius’ already forthright tie between Albert’s Austrian action and *Dragula's* Wallachian deeds.

<sup>74</sup> Pius used *sermone* for German language and *lingua* for Wallachian speech, though he then employed *sermone* also for Wallachian (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, chap. 16, 325).

<sup>75</sup> Original: *Valachi lingua utuntur Italica, verum imperfecta et admodum corrupta*. Alternate translation: *the Wallachians use Italian in their language, but in an imperfect, corrupted form*.

<sup>76</sup> Pius’ Pontic connection of the Wallachians renders credibility to the hypothesis that general *Flaccus* in Ovid’s *Epistolae ex Ponto* stood behind the pope’s *Flaccus* (Adolf Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor. Istoria unei idei* (Bucharest, 1993<sup>2</sup>), 59, note 34, with the literature on this hypothesis voiced since 1916).

<sup>77</sup> It is plausible that Pius came into contact with the *Flacci* rendering of the designation of the Wallachians (who, otherwise, called themselves Rumanians/ Romanians), while serving in Frederick III’s chancery, because *Flacci* as a name for the Wallachians north (also) of the Lower Danube spread in the 1440s (e.g. Mark Whelan, “Pasquale de Sörgo and the Second Battle of



change of letters, Valachi.<sup>78</sup> Their descendants, as has been said above [in regard to John Dragula<sup>79</sup>], turned out more barbarous than the barbarians. [...]"<sup>80</sup>

For Pius II, who did not hesitate to call himself a *German cardinal* (a *cardinale tedesco*)<sup>81</sup>, prior to his rise from Bishop of Siena to pope (1457–1458), the whole *John Dragula* affair seemed to be an “explanatory note” for and in a broader Papal Wallachian topic<sup>82</sup>, which he had already addressed, whilst only a cardinal in spring 1458, in his *De Europa*, in a significantly more friendly manner, with no decay or corruption in sight (hence, the perverting effect of

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Belgrade: A Translation,” *Slavonic and East European Review* XCIV, 1 (2016): 126–145, at 138–140, for the Latin text, 142–144, English translation).

<sup>78</sup> This change (F to V and more often vice versa) was common for German (Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor*, 59; but without explicitly mentioning the German language). Its origins, related however to the Vlachs of Thessaly, can be traced back to the Third Crusade and to Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa’s chronicler Ansbert.

<sup>79</sup> As already noticed (Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor*, 59, note 36), in the news on his victory over Radu and the Ottomans that reached Rhodes in early September 1462, Vlad was named *dominus Flake* (Tappe, *Documents*, no. 2, 17–19). The apparently German question of the *Flacci* is worth a Turkish review. In Ottoman sources, the Wallachians were called *Eflaki/Iflaki*. In 1474, one of the capital sins of Mahmud Angelović, grand-vesir (who had saved Mehmed’s life during the sultan’s Wallachian campaign of 1462), was that he had [...] *set Eflaki free* [...] (Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453–1474)* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, 2001), 183, 342).

<sup>80</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 296–297 (translated by Gragg in *Commentaries*, V, 737). In order to avoid confusion, we have chosen *parts* over *districts* for the *regiones* of Transylvania, as *regio* was furthermore used for Transylvania in Vlad’s cited letter of Mehmed. Similarly, we have used *commanded*, instead of *governed* for Vlad’s rule over the Wallachians, because Pius resorted to the same verb (*praesum*, infinitive *praeesse*) for both the lead of *John Dragula* over the Wallachians and of *Flaccus*, over the Roman legionnaires (the ancestors of the Wallachians). Additionally, we have employed (1) *to this we must add*, instead of *we must now go on to describe*, (2) *the Wallachians use Italian in their language, but an imperfect, corrupt <one>*, instead of *the Wallachians speak Italian, but an imperfect, corrupted Italian*, (3) *their descendants, as has been said above, turned out more barbarous than the barbarians*, instead of *their descendants, as has been said above, became more barbarous than the barbarians* (the original Latin text: *quorum posterī, ut ante relatum est, barbariores barbaris evasere*).

<sup>81</sup> By assuming this title on the eve of Matthias’ royal election, in his *Germania* (cf. B. Baldi, “Un umanista alla corte di Federico III. Il *Pentalogus* di Enea Silvio Piccolomini,” *Cahiers d’Études Italiennes*, XIII (2011): 161–171, at pp. 161–162, note 1), the future pope not only expressed his gratitude towards his benefactors north of the Alps, but also defended himself against charges of stealing – as any avid *Roman – riches* (dioceses) from the *Theutones* (as part of the ongoing conflict between the Papacy and the *German nation*).

<sup>82</sup> Langmaier (*Albrecht VI.*, 601) noted Pius II’s intention of undermining Albert VI of Habsburg by comparing him to Vlad. The comparison however went both ways. As far-fetched as it may sound, Wallachia was an Eastern Austria at the borders of the empire(s).

John Dragula's rule upon the Wallachians).<sup>83</sup> In his *Commentaries*, Pius built the narrative bridge between the nature of the Wallachians and Vlad's actions by recalling, in his own fashion, Vlad's old treachery against the Hunyadis and the Cross. In 1456, year recorded by Pius, on the eve of *the miracle of Belgrade* (omitted by him), Vlad, entrusted with Transylvania's defence by John Hunyadi, had attacked and deposed Vladislav II (John's – nevertheless rebellious – proxy), who opposed the advancing Ottoman host.<sup>84</sup> Vlad's deeds of 1462 were "in fact" a natural consequence of those of 1456, as Pius II also said nothing about the Hunyadi-Dragula entente in between them.<sup>85</sup>

Pius omitted at least two relevant pieces of information he had recorded earlier on in his *Commentaries*.<sup>86</sup> 1. About six weeks after Mehmed's retreat from Wallachia, Matthias' envoys arrived in Rome and stated that the sultan had offered Bosnia and Wallachia to their king in exchange for peace.<sup>87</sup> They returned home with some 50,000 ducats, in coin and promise, from the Papacy and Venice.<sup>88</sup> 2. Afterwards, in a sort of Ottoman summary of the year 1462 (inserted however prior to both the *Dragula* affair and the Bosnian embassy to Rome),<sup>89</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Europe (c. 1400–1458)*, edited by Robert Brown, N. Bisaha (Washington, DC, 2013), 9, 36–37, 67–68. He also named *Flaccus* as the Roman founding-father of the Wallachians.

<sup>84</sup> For the events: I.-A. Pop, Al. Simon, "Rapports italiens sur les affrontements de l'année 1456 en Europe centrale-orientale," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* LI, 1–2 (2012): 3–26, at 5–11.

<sup>85</sup> Pius II' story is worth summarizing. In 1456, Hunyadi defeated and executed *Dragula* [Vlad II], a man of fickle and inconstant character [Pius' opinion was consistent with that of Eberhard Windecke, the chronicler of Emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg (*Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigmunds/ Das Leben Königs Sigmunds*, edited by Wilhelm Altmann/ Theodor von Hagen (Berlin, 1893/ Leipzig, 1899), 294/ 316–317)]. Vlad II was put to death together with his son [Mircea], his second born according to Pius [this had occurred in fact in 1447 (Pall, "Intervenția lui Iancu de Hunedoara," *passim*)]. Hunyadi enthroned *Ladislav* [Vladislav II]. However, soon afterwards, *Dragula's other son, John* [Vlad III], escaped from Hunyadi's custody [in 1448, while Hunyadi, followed by Vladislav II, fought Mehmed's father, Murad II, at Kossovopolje, Vlad III apparently became ruler of Wallachia, for a short while (M. Cazacu, "La Valachie et la bataille de Kosovo (1448)," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* (Bucharest) IX, 1 (1971): 131–139)]. Vlad III *slew Ladislav and regained much of his paternal inheritance* [in 1456 (Pius II' nuance, *much of his paternal inheritance*, concerned under the circumstances the Duchies of Almaș and Făgăraș, seized by Hunyadi from Vladislav and never returned to the rulers of Wallachia, at least not in their integrity)].

<sup>86</sup> In their sequence: *Commentarii* (1614), bk. IX, chap. 6, 220; bk. X, chap. 7, 243–244.

<sup>87</sup> This offer might explain why Matthias did not leave Buda between mid-May and late July, when he moved south for the defence of Belgrade (Horváth, *Itineraria*, 70). The city on the Danube appeared to be Mehmed's logical target after his retreat from Wallachia.

<sup>88</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), bk. IX, chap. 6, 220. Pius was to pay for 1,000 horse (the monthly wage of a rider was 3 florins/ ducats in Hungary), while Venice sent 20,000 gold ducats.

<sup>89</sup> Seemingly, Pius voluntarily split the extant data between books and chapters so that he could not be accused of withholding information, while offering his desired picture(s).

Pius registered that the Turks had prevailed in Wallachia and thus plundered Transylvania<sup>90</sup>, as well as the sultan's conquest of Genoese Lesbos (Mytilene).<sup>91</sup> This did indeed take place in the immediate aftermath of the "overlooked" clash between Mehmed II and Vlad III.<sup>92</sup>

At least in written, Pius did not seem to care what had actually happened that year in Wallachia. The chapter's ending is eloquent in this respect.<sup>93</sup> After mentioning that *the Wallachian is still languishing in prison (or is being wasted in prison)*<sup>94</sup>, the pope wrote that "he is a tall, fine-looking man who appears fit to rule, so much do men's countenances differ from their hearts".<sup>95</sup> The *John Dragula* story was a moral.<sup>96</sup> It went much deeper than its main manifold

<sup>90</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), bk. IX, chap. 6, 220. The translation in *Commentaries*, V, 633, reads: "[...] In Hungary, that year there were frequent skirmishes with the Turks in which the Hungarians were seldom victorious. In Wallachia the Turks gained the advantage, entering the province of Transylvania and carrying off considerable plunder. In the region of the Save also they ravaged the fields and caused a great deal of annoyance to the Dalmatians. They never ventured to put all their strength to the test though Matthias, King of Hungary, took the field and was ready to give battle. [...]". In spite of all the inadvertencies in Pius' text, two perspectives are particularly interesting: (1) Transylvania (for which he used *provincia*, unlike in the chapter on *John Dragula* and the Wallachians) was viewed as an extension of Wallachia (substantiating in fact Vlad's offer to Mehmed); (2) the Sava area of the *Dalmatians* was therefore connected to the Adriatic (and not to the actual inland of the North-West Balkans claimed by Buda).

<sup>91</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), bk. X, chap. 7, 243–244 (Wallachia and Lesbos). Stefan Stanchev, "Devedo: The Venetian Response to Sultan Mehmed II in the Venetian-Ottoman Conflict of 1462–1479," *Mediterranean Studies* XIX (2010): 43–66, at 51–52 (the fall of Lesbos in early September marked the *de facto* start of the Venetian-Ottoman war, which *de iure* began a year later). With Matthias focused on Belgrade and Vlad battling Radu in Wallachia, Mehmed salvaged his record by taking Lesbos, while also outplaying Matthias and Vlad. In theory at least, an agreement with the sultan thus (re)became an attractive option for both of them

<sup>92</sup> In return, Pius great attention to Lesbos (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. X, chap. 8, 244–245).

<sup>93</sup> This ending was used to establish a direct connection between Pius' description and the Hungarian report of Nicholas, bishop of Modruš, Papal legate to Hungary, in 1463 (see most recently Cazacu, *Dracula*, 170).

<sup>94</sup> Obviously: (1) Matthias had not executed him, though *Dragula* was a murderer and a traitor; (2) some time had elapsed since *Dragula's* arrest (November 1462) and Pius' note.

<sup>95</sup> *Commentaries*, V, 740. The Latin original: *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 297. *Adhuc delitesci* (*delitisco*; infinitive *delitescere*) was translated by *still languishes* (alternative translations revolve around the adverb *adhuc*: also *hitherto* or *until now*). Because of *John Dragula's* physical appearance, one might presume that Pius II harboured the thought that *John* was being wasted in prison ([...] *Valachus adhuc in carcere delitescit, magno et honesto vir corpore, et cuius species imperio digna videatur; adeo sepe differt hominis ab animo facies* [...]) (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 297). Additionally, only on this occasion did the pope explicitly name *John Dragula* a Wallachian, disconnecting in fact *John's* ethnicity from his crimes.

<sup>96</sup> This should have been clear the latest since Pius stated that the Wallachians had *turned*

character. Fact and a fiction seemed to be kept in – a – balance by *John Dragula's* letter to Mehmed II.<sup>97</sup>

Writing in Julius Cesar's third persona style<sup>98</sup>, Pius took his distance from the provenance and from the wording of the translated copy of the letter (Slavonic was the main language of communication between Mehmed and the surviving powers at Christendom's southern borders).<sup>99</sup> He pointed at Matthias as the provider of "edited" information on *John Dragula's* case. Pius' main Hungarian contact at that time was nevertheless Cardinal Denis Szécsi, archbishop of Esztergom and Matthias' chief-chancellor, however increasingly at odds with the Hunyadi king, since spring 1462.<sup>100</sup> In spite of this growing conflict, in early autumn, Pius II had entrusted Szécsi with the payment of the wages (for 1,000 riders) promised by the pope to Matthias' envoys.<sup>101</sup>

Pius presented himself as merely the recipient of the Latin translation of the letter. The original, in *Bulgarian*, had been intercepted, presumably by Matthias' men (the pope was unexpectedly vague in this respect)<sup>102</sup>, because the king then

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out more barbarous than the barbarians, and nothing detrimental on them followed (except *Dragula's* personal deeds). The question was: were the Wallachians beyond redemption?

<sup>97</sup> Its absence from any other *Quattrocento* texts is once more virtually incomprehensible.

<sup>98</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, II (Chicago-London, 1985), 89–90. For Pius II and Julius Caesar: E. O'Brien, "Arms and Letters: Julius Caesar, the *Commentaries* of Pope Pius II, and the Politicization of Papal Imagery," *Renaissance Quarterly* LXII, 4 (2009): 1057–1097, at 1063–1065 (Caesar's art of distortion).

<sup>99</sup> See Bojko Bojović's most relevant collection *Raguse (Dubrovnik) et l'Empire Ottoman (1430–1520). Les actes impériaux ottomans en vieux serbe de Murad II à Selim I<sup>er</sup>* (Paris, 1998).

<sup>100</sup> On Piccolomini, Szécsi and Matthias: *Europe*, p. 59; B. Baldi, "La scoperta dell'Europa centro-orientale nella corrispondenza di Enea Silvio Piccolomini con Dionys von Szech," in *Pio II nell'epistolografia*, 33–42; Pajorin, "La pietà di Pio," 27–28 (Piccolomini, Szécsi and Ladislas V); Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, 70, 74. Szécsi had vacillated between Matthias and Frederick, before opting for the former. Immediately after his coronation with the Holy Crown, redeemed from Frederick, Matthias removed Szécsi from his secular office (April 1464). Already in autumn 1463, Szécsi had not accompanied Matthias on his Bosnian campaign, blessed by Pope Pius II, an absence duly noted (Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 211).

<sup>101</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), bk. IX, chap. 6, 220 ([...] *Legatus hac sponsione placatus in Hungari-am rediit. Cardinalis Strigoniensis pecuniam pro pontifice dissolvit [...]*). The wording indicates that Szécsi executed Pius' command and paid the money from his (Hungarian) treasury.

<sup>102</sup> The same applies for Ebendorfer (†January 1464). With little sympathy towards Matthias (*rex electus*), an indication that he quite certainly wrote prior to the treaty of Wiener-Neustadt (July 1463), the Viennese university professor alluded to a *trap* into which the cruel and ruthless Vlad fell, ending in Matthias' custody ([...] *Tandem vero fraude circumventus venit in captivitatem Mathie electi Ungarie, in qua usque deget [...]*; *Chronica regum Romanorum*, II, 924; the adjacent passages in the *Chronica* covered events from April-May 1463). Vlad's *treason* was omitted from the German stories, with one notable exception: Michael Beheim's poem, *Von anem wutrich der hies Trakle waida von der Walachei* (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 317–346),

ordered *Dragula's* arrest.<sup>103</sup> Similar letters to two high ranking figures, a Muslim and a Christian<sup>104</sup>, whom *Dragula* asked to intercede on his behalf with the sultan, were likewise intercepted<sup>105</sup>: 1. To the *bassa*. The *pasha* can be identified only with grand-vesir Mahmud Angelović of Serbian descent, instrumental in securing Mehmed's Wallachian survival in 1462.<sup>106</sup> 2. To the lord <of> *Thoenon* (*Thoenone dominus*).<sup>107</sup> He is a literally unknown figure<sup>108</sup>, unless we turn to Ancient Rome and to Diodorus of Sicily, one of Pius' main sources of inspiration at that time, chiefly for the pope's recently completed *De Asia*.<sup>109</sup> Diodorus mentioned *Thoenon* (*Thynion*)<sup>110</sup>, lord of

composed at Frederick's court (1463–1465), In Pius' *Commentaries*, John *Dragula's* arrest predated its justification. No royal trap was mentioned. Only Beheim, well-disposed towards Matthias, wrote of both Vlad's *treason* and Matthias' *trap*.

<sup>103</sup> *Commentari* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 297. We quote the Latin text: [...] *Cum tot flagitia perpetrasset, a Matthia rege Hungarie tandem captus est ea hyeme, qua Pius pontifex ex Tuderto [Todi (south of Perugia and Assisi)] Romam rediit. Capture causam prebuere litterae sue, que in hunc modum ad imperatorem Turchorum cum scripte mitterentur, intercepte sunt:* [...]. The translation of the letter ensued. Pius added: [...] *Fuerunt et alie bine litterae eiusdem fere sententie: une ad basam, altere ad Thoenone dominum, ut pro se intercederent apud magnum imperatorem; ee de lingua Bulgarica in Latinum conversae ad pontificem misse fuere* [...].

<sup>104</sup> This pairing, much in the spirit of Pius' famous *Epistle to Mehmed*, has drawn little or no attention at all, for the main historic focus was placed, since the 1890s, on the immediate political veracity of either Matthias' manifest forgery or Vlad's undeniable treason.

<sup>105</sup> Meaning that three different messengers had been caught without delay. Even if we presume that two letters, those for Mehmed and the *bassa* (on which see below), were entrusted to one envoy, the image of the *trap*, if real, (thus) laid for *Dragula* is quite amazing.

<sup>106</sup> On him: Șt. Andreescu, "Vlad Vodă Țepeș și Mahmud pașa Grecul," *Revista Istorică* (Bucharest), NS XV, 1–2 (2004): 81–88; Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs*, passim; Cazacu, *Dracula*, 164, 237.

<sup>107</sup> Apparently, this <of> passed unnoticed in historiography, though it should have been obvious to any scholar with some knowledge of Latin. As in a *ad Hungarie regem*, *Hungarie* is not the nominative form of the name.

<sup>108</sup> Without any explanation, Nicolae Iorga (*Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, III. *Fragmente de cronici și știri despre cronicari* (Bucharest, 1903), XXXI) equated *Thoenone dominus* with *Moldaviae dominus*, which is rather improbable in that context (see Ovidiu Cristea, "The Friend of My Friend and the Enemy of My Enemy: Romanian Participation in Ottoman Campaigns," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (= *The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage*, LIII), edited by Gábor Kármán, Lovro Kunčević (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, 2013), 253–274, at 262–263).

<sup>109</sup> When writing *De Asia* (1461–1462), the pope relied heavily on Diodorus' *Bibliotheca Historica* (M. Meserve, "From Samarkand to Scythia: Reinventions of Asia in Renaissance Geography and Political Thought", in *Pius II, el più expeditivo pontefice. Selected Studies on Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405–1464)*, edited by Zweder von Martels, Arjo Vanderjagt (Leiden-Boston-Cologne, 2003), 13–39, at 17, 23).

<sup>110</sup> *Diodori Siculi Bibliothecae historicae libri qui supersunt*, edited by Peter Wesseling, IX (Strasbourg, 1793), bk. XXII, chap. 7, 296–297 (Thoenon's case was known in the Renaissance because of the chapter on Pyrrhus in Plutarch's famous *Parallel Lives*, which Pius attempted to imitate). Earlier (bk. XXI, chap. 11, 269–270), Diodorus had spoken of the *Getes* (*Getae*) caught in the



Syracuse in Sicily, *tyrannus Siculorum*, famed Pyrrhus' ally, and victim.<sup>111</sup> In the 1400's, the Szeklers of Transylvania, of whom Pius did not think highly in the *Commentaries* (contrary to his earlier work, *De Europa*, from 1458),<sup>112</sup> were named *siculi*<sup>113</sup> and even deemed colonists from Sicily<sup>114</sup>, ruled by Naples, a trusted Papal fiefdom in 1462.<sup>115</sup>

conflict between Dromichaetes (their *Thracian* ruler) and Lysimachus of Macedonia in the 290s BC (Peter Delev, "Lysimachus, the Getae and Archaeology," *The Classical Quarterly*, NS L, 2 (2000): 384–401). In *De Europa* (1458), future Pope Pius II had written: "[...] Hungary [...] occupies the lands of the Gepids and Dacians [...], and the Getes, of whom some are called Wallachians and others Transylvanians, submitted to the rule of the Hungarians [...] the Getes who repulsed and shamefully routed Darius, the son of Hystaspes, captured King Lysimachus alive and inflicted many defeats upon Thrace. They were finally subjugated and destroyed by Roman arms [...]" (*Europe*, 51–52, 67).

<sup>111</sup> Pius' emphasis was placed in the *Commenatries* on lord of (*dominus Throenone* in the original), on the master of *Thoenon*. *Lord of Thoenon* apparently involved two man and not one man and a place. Thoenon's master had been Pyrrhus of Epirus. Thoenon opened Syracuse, and thus Sicily, to Pyrrhus (279–278 BC). Within a couple of years, Pyrrhus had Thoenon executed (P. R. Franke, "Pyrrhus," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, VII.2. *The Rise of Rome to 220 B.C.*, edited by F.W. Walbank, A.E. Astin, M.W. Frederiksen, R.M. Ogilvie, A. Drummond (Cambridge, 1989<sup>2</sup>), 456–485, at 474, 481). There was obviously a moral behind Pius II' choice of Thoenon and of his – logical – *dominus*, Pyrrhus. Thus, who was the master of Thoenon in the Papal edition of *John Dragula's* letter? Pius II clearly did not think highly of him, given the choice of name itself, as well as Diodorus' history. Pyrrhus had in fact betrayed Thoenon, a tyrant himself nonetheless. If, for once, Pius did not overstretch his innuendo and *Thoenon* stood only for the Szeklers, the *dominus of Thoenon* in November 1462 was whoever controlled the Szkelers, either (officially) the voivode of Transylvania or someone else (more dangerous in effect for John Hunyadi's son), who may have even informed Matthias of Vlad's plan (real or false). This possibility arises from the final words of Pius on the matter: "The Wallachian is still languishing in prison; he is a tall, fine-looking man who appears fit to rule, so much do men's countenances differ from their hearts" (*Commentaries*, V, 740); *Valachus adhuc in carcere delitescit; magno et honesto vir corpore, et cuius species imperio digna videatur. Adeo sepe differt hominis ab animo facies* (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 297). Vlad was still alive and quite fit.

<sup>112</sup> English translation: *Commentaries*, V, 796–797. Latint text: *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, ch. 16, 325.

<sup>113</sup> *Székelváltár*, I. 1211–1519, edited by Károly Szabó (Kolozsvár, 1872), no. 45, 83–84; no. 53, 93. The name was much older (*Acta Ioannis PP. XXII* (1317–1334) (= *Fontes*, III, 7–2), edited by Aloisie L. Tăutu (Rome, 1962), no. 92, 182–183). At that time (1327), the Szeklers were stationed both south and east of the Carpathians.

<sup>114</sup> On the basis of the work of Dominican Pietro Ransano, a native from Palermo, see for instance C.A. Macartney, *The Medieval Hungarian Historians: A Critical and Analytical Guide* (Cambridge, 1953), 46–47, 103. From the folios of Ransano, bishop of Lucera, Pius II' legate and Neapolitan ambassador to Matthias' court, we also recall the following notes on John Hunyadi: *Ioanne Huniate, Ianco vulgo cognominato*, as well as *Ioannes, qui Ianco apud Italos est cognomen* (*Epithoma rerum Hungaricarum id est annalium omnium temporum liber primus et sexagesimus*, edited by Péter Kulcsár (Budapest, 1977), 29, 34).

<sup>115</sup> In 1447 (when Enea was in Frederick's service), on the eve of his final campaign against *John*

Two issues were self-evident for anyone accustomed to Wallachian politics (obviously the case of Matthias' royal Hungarian chancery).<sup>116</sup> 1. Vlad <would have><sup>117</sup> never named himself only voivode *John* (if John at all) of Wallachia (in Slavonic charters, the usual style was *Iw*<sup>118</sup> *Dan/ Mircea/ Radu/ Vlad*<islav>

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*Dragula's* father, John Hunyadi sealed a treaty with Alfonso V of Aragon, king of Naples and Sicily. Against Habsburg interests, John was to enthrone Alfonso as the king of Hungary, with the support of 10,000 Wallachians (L. Thallóczy, Samu Barabás, *A Frangepan Család Oklévéltára. Codex diplomaticus comitum de Frangepanibus*, I. 1133–1453 (= *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, I, 35) (Budapest, 1910), no. 344, 350). Alfonso's illegitimate son, Ferdinand, succeeded his father in the *annus mirabilis* 1458, with the decisive aid of the new pope, Pius II (P.J. Jones, *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State: A Political History* (Cambridge, 1974), 219–221).

<sup>116</sup> In comparison, from a southern perspective: L. Thallóczy, *Studien zur Geschichte Bosniens und Serbiens im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1914), 426–428; Neven Isailović, Aleksandar Krstić, “Serbian Language and Cyrillic Script as Means of Diplomatic Literacy in South-Eastern Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie George Barițiu* (Cluj-Napoca), LIV, suppl. (2015): 185–195, at 190–193. Serbian seems to have been the *lingua franca* for Ottoman-Hungarian border communications and possibly also for monarchic correspondence, starting with the 1480s–1490s. The number of preserved sources restricts nevertheless the validity of the otherwise prudent general assessments.

<sup>117</sup> For an updated list of the documents issued in or ascribed to Vlad III's chancery, see *Corpus Draculianum*, general-editors Thomas M. Bohn, Adrian Gheorghe, Christof Paulus, Albert Weber, I. *Scrisori și documente de cancelarie*, 1. *Cancelarii valahe*, edited by A. Gheorghe, A. Weber, Alexandru Ștefan Anca, Ginel Lazăr (Bucharest-Brăila, 2019). Rather few documents from Vlad have survived. Most are rather naturally (given his career) in Latin. Less than twenty of the documents issued with certainty by Vlad (half are undated), and preserved in their original, are in Slavonic (see already Ioan Bogdan *Documente privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească în secolele XV și XVI*, I. 1413–1508 (Bucharest, 1905), nos. 67–77, 90–99; only two documents bear a date; *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, B. Țara Românească, I. 1247–1500, edited by P.P. Panaitescu, Damaschin Mioc (Bucharest, 1966) (DRH), nos. 117–118, 201–204; no. 120, 205–206; all these domestic charters, no more than three however, have an exact date, year, month, day, as feasts were seldom used in the Wallachian chancery for dating or additional dating, alike in the case of the documents with recipients outside Wallachia proper). With one apparent exception, *IwN* (!) (*Documente Brașov*, no. 78, 81; undated letter sent to the city of Brașov, ascribed to the interval 1456–1459), Vlad III always styled himself *Iw Vlad*.

<sup>118</sup> Marin Tadin, “L'origine et la signification de la particule *Iw* dans le titre honorifique des princes de Bulgarie, de Serbie (méridionale), de Valachie et de Moldavie,” *Cyrrilomethodianum*, IV (1977): 172–196. The topic was last discussed in relation to Moldavia (nevertheless) by Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Titlurile lui Ștefan cel Mare. Tradiție diplomatică și vocabular politic,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, XXIII (2005): 41–78, at 45–48. Gorovei noted that Stephen III made majestic use of John, in Latin as well, as in *God's anointed/ chosen one*, in relation to Poland, Moscow, Brașov or Wallachian boyars, that is: in relations with adversaries (the Jagiellonians and the boyars) or in the correspondence with adaptable allies (Muscovy or Saxon Brașov). *John* was intended to impose.

*Voivode and Lord of Wallachia*).<sup>119</sup> 2. The Roman papal dating, based on the ides of a month, was by no means employed in such Wallachian letters (or their transcripts)<sup>120</sup>, letters who were furthermore chiefly undated in the case of urgent missives (such as the one sent by *John Dragula* to Mehmed II).<sup>121</sup>

Both *Dragula's* imposed Christian name (*John*)<sup>122</sup> and the adapted Roman dating (*the Ides of November*)<sup>123</sup> of the ill-fated letter were in effect singled out by Pius II, at the beginning and at the end of an epistle centred around *John Dragula's* offer to hand over Transylvania to the sultan, with aid also from a

<sup>119</sup> See foremost the documents in DRH, B, I, passim, and *Corpus Draculianum*, I–I, passim.

<sup>120</sup> In addition to the editions cited below (to which one should in this case *Hurmuzaki*, XV/1, a volume consisting only of documents in Latin for the 1400s), see also DRH, D, I. *Relațiile între Țările Române, I. 1222–1456*, edited by Ștefan Pascu, Constantin Cihodaru, Konrad G. Gündisch, D. Mioc, Viorica Pervain (Bucharest, 1977), for the modern editions of some of the “foreign papers” of Vlad’s predecessors, including his father, executed by John Hunyadi (for instance: nos. 133–138, 217–224; nos. 141–145, 227–234; no. 154, 249–250; no. 166, 263–264; no. 168, 265–266; no. 173, 274–275; nos. 175–180, 276–282; nos. 182–195, 283–294; nos. 197–204, 295–300; no. 213, 311–312; no. 222, 321–322; no. 225, 324–325; nos. 229–236, 328–333; nos. 238–239, 334–335; nos. 243–244, 340–341; no. 250, 347; nos. 253–254, 350–351; nos. 260–265, 362–366; no. 277, 387; nos. 306–307, 421–423; no. 313, 430–431; no. 315, 431–432).

<sup>121</sup> Roughly 85% of the Slavonic documents issued by rulers of Wallachia prior to the rule of Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521) and preserved in Transylvanian archives (at least in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) are undated (in addition to Bogdan’s *Documente Brașov*, see Stoica Nicolaescu, *Documente slavo-române cu privire la relațiile Țării Românești și Moldovei cu Ardealul. în secolele XV și XVI. Privilegii comerciale, scrisori domnești și particulare din arhivele Sibiului, Brașovului și Bistriței din Transilvania* (Bucharest, 1905), Silviu Dragomir, *Documente nouă privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Sibiul în secolii XV și XVI* (offprint *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională*, IV) (Cluj, 1927), Grigore Tocilescu, *534 documente slavo-române din Țara Românească și Moldova privitoare la legăturile cu Ardealul. 1346–1603. Din arhivele orașelor Brașov și Bistrița* (Bucharest, 1931 [Vienna, 1905]), as well as the *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen* entries, available and updated online at <http://siebenbuergenurkundenbuch.uni-trier.de/>.

<sup>122</sup> Presuming that (1) Vlad did indeed send the letter, (2) Vlad did call himself *John Vlad*, Matthias’ chancery would not have omitted Vlad from its translated copy. Much rather it would have left out John. In fact, neither before, nor after his death, Hungarian sources never referred to Vlad as *John* or *John Vlad*. He was named either Ladislav/ Vladislav (and variants) or *Dragula* (and variants), and even *Ladislav Dragula* (e.g. Matthias’ charter of March 1479 in *Documenta ad historiam familiae Bátori de Ecsed spectantia*, I. 1393–1540, edited by R. Horváth, Tibor Neumann, Norbert C. Tóth (Nyíregyháza, 2011), no. 109, 139–140).

<sup>123</sup> Presuming again that (1) Vlad’s letter was not a forgery and that (2) the message did have a date, someone took the time and the patience to change what was a simple *November 7* (given the common practice in Wallachia) into *the seventh day before the Ides of November*. If this was truly the case in the second half of November 1462, then the author of the translation and of the change of the style of dating was a clergyman. In Hungary, *idus* and *calendae* were used foremost by the Church in her deeds and letters (a search under item *idus* in <http://siebenbuergenurkundenbuch.uni-trier.de/> is quite telling in these matters).

certain *lord* (even *master*) <of> *Thoenon*, whose only correspondent led to Ancient Rome and to the *siculi*, the Transylvanian Szeklers,<sup>124</sup> quite agitated throughout 1462.<sup>125</sup> A few points were most clear in Pius' writings, as ambitious *clerk*, as cardinal or as pope<sup>126</sup>, not to mention that, no later than 1468, Italian envoys placed the *siculi*, who had rebelled against Matthias, among the king's ancestors.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>124</sup> The recently appointed voivode of Transylvania, John Pongrácz of Dengeleg, was also count of the Szeklers (*Magyarország világi archontológiája. 1458–1526*, N.C. Tóth, R. Horváth, T. Neumann, T. Pálosfalvi, I. *Főpapok és bárók* (Budapest, 2016), 85, 122). The voivode and count was Matthias' favourite and relative. John Pongrácz's mother, Clara, had been John Hunyadi's sister (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, 12). In mid-August 1462, John Pongrácz's deputy, Albert Istenmezei, viscount of the Szeklers, had informed the Saxons of Braşov that they had done well to conclude an arrangement with the lord of Wallachia, Radu, as neither the king of Hungary, nor the voivode of Transylvania were to oppose it (*Hurmuzaki*, XV–1, no. 99, p. 58). The attitude in the province was certainly not hostile to the Turks before Matthias arrived in Transylvania, prior to September 11 (Horváth, *Itineraria*, 71).

<sup>125</sup> *Székely Oklevéltár*, I, nos. 55–58, 94–102 (May 3, November 21, December 15, 1462, and January 19, 1463). The matters were rather trivial (estates, possession and succession, but also murder). Yet Matthias did spend a week (or maybe more) in the Szekler Seats in mid-October 1462 (Horváth, *Itineraria*, 71; he issued charters from Gheorgheni between October 14 and 19). Additionally, he had to bring with him, and leave behind him, Albert Vetési, bishop of Cenad (*Székely Oklevéltár*, I, no. 57, 98–99; Odorhei<ul Secuiesc>, December 15, 1462). Vetési was the king's experienced diplomat, as well as former secret chancellor (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, 71). In order to clarify matters and calm tensions, he had been appointed royal judge for the Odorhei and Mureş Seats, together with the Hospitaller prior of Vrana, Thomas Székely of Szentgyörgyi, former ban of Slavonia (*Magyarország világi archontológiája*, I, 58). The latter's presence makes the Székler question of 1462 worth a closer look, whether or not the question was also connected to John Dragula. The prior of Vrana of 1462 and Matthias were first degree cousins. Thomas was the son of John Székely and of an unnamed sister of John Hunyadi (Kubinyi, *Matthias*, 29, 203).

<sup>126</sup> Under the circumstances, we quote once more from *De Europa*: "[...] This John [Hunyadi] was a Wallachian by birth, not highly born, but a man of supple intelligence who loved virtue [...]" (*Europe*, 59). Upon his ascension to the throne, the Venetian administration noted that Matthias was [...] *d'origine humile de progenie de Valacchia* (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cods. 6214–6217, Stefano Magno, *Annali veneti et del mondo*, I–IV [1433–1478], III [1457–1468 (= Cod. 6216)], *Ad annum 1457* [*More Veneto* 1458], f. 6<sup>r</sup>). Obviously, the Hunyadis ranked lower than the *Dragulas* in the Wallachian noble hierarchy. Yet, after sealing his arrangement with Alfonso V of Aragon, John Hunyadi claimed the Wallachian throne for himself at the end of 1447 (Pall, "Intervenția lui Iancu de Hunedoara", 1069–1070). According to Wallachian monarchic rules, John could have do son only if real or imagined princely Basarab blood ran through his veins, either via the Dan or the Dragul branch of the Basarab family (House), both recorded by Pius II.

<sup>127</sup> 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

1. John *Huniates* was the name of Matthias' father.<sup>128</sup> He had executed John *Dragula's* father, *Dragula*, and sided with the *Dans* against the rival clan of the *Draguls* in the conflict over Wallachia.<sup>129</sup> 2. The warring Wallachians were the descendents of Ancient Rome.<sup>130</sup> They inhabited the former imperial province of Dacia and their settlements spread as far south as *Thrace*.<sup>131</sup> 3. Transylvania had once been a part of this Dacia.<sup>132</sup> It had witnessed the rise of John Hunyadi, a Wallachian native, if not also his birth.<sup>133</sup> 4. The Wallachians

Iulian-Mihai Damian, I.-A. Pop, M. Popovic, Al. Simon (New York-Oxford-Basel-Frankfurt-am-Main-Vienna, 2012), 283–302.

<sup>128</sup> 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), 11–40. The rendering of the family name, by Pius as well (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 296), sounded Greek. Ransano however recorded it in similar manner (*Epithoma rerum Hungaricarum*, pp. 29, 34). Yet, by then (1488/ 1489), word of the illustrious origin of John Hunyadi's mother, of Greek imperial blood, had spread (*Bonfini*, III, p. 95), probably because of the alledged, and rather popular in the 1480s, family ties between the Hunyadis and the sultans (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, 9–10).

<sup>129</sup> See also A. Pippidi, "Despre Dan voievod: Rectificări cronologice și genealogice," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* XXXI (2013): 47–96 (originally written however in the mid-1980s).

<sup>130</sup> Apparently a constant of Humanist writings, present not only throughout the works of Enea Silvio Piccolomini/ Pius II (see Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor*, 70, note 73).

<sup>131</sup> "[...] The Wallachians also inhabit the islands of the Danube, including Peuce, which was known by some report to the ancients, and have settlements in Thrace as well [...]" (*Europe*, p. 68). In this matter, chiefly in relation to the southern banks of the Lower Danube, see also I.-A. Pop, "A 1499 Italian Source on the Ottoman-Polish-Moldavian Rapports," in *Laudator Temporis Acti. Studia in Memoriam Ioannis A. Božilov*, edited by Ivan Biliarsky, I. *Religio-Historia* (Sofia, 2018), 391–401. We therefore add that the royal crown of Bulgaria was promised by Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini to John Hunyadi in exchange for the eventually disastrous crusade of Varna (for the context, see P. Engel, "János Hunyadi and the Peace of Szeged," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* XLVII, 3 (1994): 241–257, at 253).

<sup>132</sup> We recall: "[...] Hungary [...] occupies the lands of the Gepids and Dacians [...], and the Getes, of whom some are called Wallachians and others Transylvanians, submitted to the rule of the Hungarians [...]. To this one must add: [...] Across the Danube, the Emperor Trajan conquered Dacia, which is now part of Hungary, and created a province on barbarian soil; it was lost under Gallienus and recovered by Aurelian [...]" (*Europe*, 51–52; we have altered Vlach to Wallachian in all translations in order to avoid confusions throughout the paper, as Vlach-Wallachian is largely a modern North-South distinction that, according to Pius II too (when he pushed the Wallachians into Thrace as well) did not function in the mid-1400s).

<sup>133</sup> *De Europa* (1458): "[...] John Hunyadi whose name overshadows the others, enhanced the glory not so much of the Hungarians, as the Wallachians from whom he was descended. Wallachia is a very broad region which extends from Transylvania to the Black Sea [...]" Earlier one, the future pope had written that Transylvania: "[...] is inhabited by three races: the Germans, Szeklers and Wallachians" (*Europe*, pp. 64, 67; for the sake of uniformity we have replaced Székelys with Szeklers). The quoted lines might support the idea that, contrary to his



spoke of *corrupt* version of *Italian*, in contrast to all their neighbours, including the *Transylvanians*.<sup>134</sup> The latter's tongue was *Teutonic*.<sup>135</sup> 5. Wallachians and *Transylvanians* (name used by Pius also for the Szeklers and the Wallachians in the province) shared the blood of the *Getes*<sup>136</sup>, turned *Goths* and spread both to the West and to the East, to the Adriatic and to the Black Sea, coveted by Rome's and Buda's Matthias<sup>137</sup> and to which Stephen Tomašević's Bosnia and John Dragula's Wallachia served as gateways.<sup>138</sup>

### *The Pontifical Hunyadi File*

The Roman roots and the conflictual nature of the Wallachians were primary *topoi* of Renaissance political views on the Eastern Christendom<sup>139</sup>, since before the Roman(izing) "media campaign" of Matthias *Corvinus* (1470s–1480s)<sup>140</sup>,

son's chroniclers, John Thuróczy and Antonio Bonfini, John *Huniates* was born in Transylvania, not in Wallachia.

<sup>134</sup> *Commentaries*, V, bk. XII, chap. 16, 796: "[...] Wallachians <speaking> a corrupt Italian; the Transylvanians German [...] (in Latin: [...] Valachi corrupto Italico; Transylvania Theutonico [...])". As seen above, in his *De Europa* (1458), Enea, not yet Pius, had a more inclusive perspective on Transylvania and its *races* (i.e. *nations*).

<sup>135</sup> We draw attention to the fact that this statement was inserted by Pius after the chapter on John Dragula. The *corrupt*<ed> *Italian* of the Wallachians unites however the passages.

<sup>136</sup> *Europe*, 51–52: "[...] the Dalmatians, whom they call Slavs, the Illyrians known as Bosnians, the Triballians or Mysians, who are called both Serbians and Rascians, and the Getes, of whom some are called Wallachians and others Transylvanians, submitted to the rule of the Hungarians [...]" For the popular theory that Transylvanian Saxons descended from *Getes*: Karl Kurt Klein, "Die Goten-Geten-Daken-Sachsengleichung in der Sprachentwicklung der Deutschen Siebenbürgens," *Süd-Ost-Forschungen* XI (1946–1952): 84–154.

<sup>137</sup> The old *Gothic* theory found its Quattrocento Wallachian echoes chiefly in the works of Nicholas, bishop of Modruš, Pius' legate to Stephen Tomašević and Matthias (Giovanni Mercati, "Notizie varie sopra Niccolò Modrussense", in *Opere minore*, IV (Vatican City, 1937), 205–267), and of Francesco Filelfo, the influential humanist, settled in Milan, who violently turned against Pius right after the pope's death (see the Piccolomini and the Wallachian entries in Filelfo, *Collected Letters*, edited by Jeroen De Keyser, I–IV (Alessandria, 2018<sup>2</sup>)). The connection between the Wallachians and the Black Sea, Crimea included, conventionally named *Gothia* (e.g. Aleksandr A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA, 1936)), consequently also grew stronger in humanist political thought.

<sup>138</sup> In this respect, we must emphasize that, in Pius II' reasoning as well, both Bosnia and Wallachia had a Hungarian royal "pair"/ "link": Croatia (-Slavonia) and Transylvania.

<sup>139</sup> Especially Falvio Biondo, *Ad Alphonsum Aragonensem serenissimum regem of expeditione in Turchos Blondus Flavius Forliviensis*, in *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*, edited by Bartholomeo Nogara (Rome, 1927), 25. On Biondo: Hankins, *Virtue Politics*, 289–304.

<sup>140</sup> Julia Dücker, "Konstruktion einer ruhmreichen Vergangenheit: die Abstammung des ungarischen Königs Matthias Corvinus," in *Integration und Desintegration der Kulturen im europäischen Mittelalter*, edited by Michael Borgolte, J. Dücker, Marcel Müllerburg, Bernd Schneidmüller (Berlin, 2011), 137–151. Given also Biondo's case, as well as the discussed

nothing but a *Valachorum regulus* for Habsburg followers.<sup>141</sup> From the onset of his own story of *Dragula*, Pius had detailed the Roman roots of the Wallachians, with all their *barbaric* shortcomings, and the Italian form of their language, with all its *imperfections*.<sup>142</sup> The pope then further inserted them into *Dragula's* alleged letter to Mehmed by means of *Dragula's* Christian name (*John*) and through the Roman dating of the letter (*the Ides of November*), intertwined by Transylvania (part of the Kingdom of Hungary), to which *Dragula* was most familiar, as rightfully asserted in the said letter (he had guarded Transylvania's borders, together with the Szeklers/ *siculi*).<sup>143</sup>

Albeit presenting *John Dragula's* case, in direct connection to Matthias' main royal concerns at the time, both readily outlined in the *Commentaries* (the Holy Crown of Hungary, held by Frederick III of Habsburg, and the Roman crown of Bosnia, received by Stephen Tomašević), Pope Pius II kept his silence in respect to three other equally delicate matters (of which he was fully aware).<sup>144</sup> The roots of the situation date back to March 1462.<sup>145</sup>

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matter of the Roman roots of the Wallachians in Pius' *Dragulian* chapter, it is plausible that John Hunyadi sponsored such a campaign, following Mehmed's conquest of Constantinople (1453), which also largely coincided with Hunyadi's loss of his power as regent of Hungary (see also Ubertino Posculo, *Constantinopolis* [1455-c. 1460], edited by Vincent Déroche, Thierry Ganchou, in *Constantinople 1453. Des Byzantins aux Ottomans*, general-editors V. Déroche, Nicolas Vatin (Toulouse, 2016), 359–395, at 366).

<sup>141</sup> Several Hungarian nobles thought the same of Matthias (if not worse). Frederick even viewed Matthias' origins as a "genetic deformity", *born from a Wallachian father* (Al. Simon, "Antonio Bonfini's *Valachorum regulus*," in *Between Worlds* (= *Mélanges d'Histoire Générale*, NS, I, 1–2), I, *Stephen the Great, Matthias Corvinus and their Time*, edited by László Koszta, Ovidiu Mureşan, Al. Simon (Cluj-Napoca, 2007), 207–226, at 209).

<sup>142</sup> Noteworthy enough, Pius II called neither Vlad, nor the Wallachians *schismatics* (see Georg Hofmann, "Pius II. und die Kircheneinheit des Ostens," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (Rome), XII (1946): 217–247).

<sup>143</sup> This was also the command entrusted to Vlad by John Hunyadi before the battle of Belgrade. On July 3, 1456, less than three weeks before the clash with Mehmed II, Hunyadi wrote from Cuvin, on the Danube, to the city of Bistrița to urgently send him soldiers, because the safety of the city was in the care of Vlad (DRH, D, I, no. 333, 455). Vlad however had other plans.

<sup>144</sup> Due to the histrionic nature of Pius II, of his ability to pose either in commander-in-chief or in the most humble of ignorants (see, in relation to the *Commentaries*, the analysis in O'Brien, "Arms and Letters," 1069–1071), the "secret reports" of the age (the *dispacci*) are of particular value, especially those sent by Milanese representatives in Rome (who were often most intimate with the pope) or by the frequently neglected young Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, Pius II' personal "creature", to native Mantua (e.g. David S. Chambers, "Giovanni Pietro Arrivabene (1439–1504): Humanistic Secretary and Bishop," *Aevum* LVIII, 3 (1984): 397–438; Marcello Simonetta, "Il duca alla Dieta: Francesco Sforza e Pio II," in *Il sogno di Pio e il viaggio da Roma a Mantova*, edited by Arturo Calzona, Francesco Paolo Fiore, Alberto Tenenti, Cesare Vasoli (Florence, 2003), 247–286).

<sup>145</sup> The date is of particular importance. On April 12, Pius held his grand reception of the head

1. Along with Vlad's report on his anti-Ottoman campaign, Rome was informed – via Venice in particular – that Matthias had just given in marriage to Vlad a *close relative*.<sup>146</sup> The German stories on Vlad depict his bride as the daughter of John Hunyadi; hence, if true, Matthias' <step-> sister.<sup>147</sup> Right after Vlad's downfall, this union was an embarrassment for Matthias, who did not want to dwell much on the issue.<sup>148</sup> The contested king had also been the one to actively promote *Dragula* as his efficient brutal "hand".<sup>149</sup>

2. By the Ides of March the latest, some two weeks before news of Vlad's Ottoman deeds and Matthias' monarchical decisions reached Rome, Pius II admitted acknowledging the son of John Hunyadi as *king of Hungary, Dacia etc.*<sup>150</sup> This was part of a lengthy Papal confession, witnessed by Otto de Carreto, the envoy of Pius II' most trusted Italian ally, Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan<sup>151</sup>, John's friend and former fellow mercenary in the early 1430s.<sup>152</sup> Transylvania, promised by *John Dragula* in November 1462 to Mehmed (according to Pius)

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of Saint Andrew, brought by the brother of the last Byzantine emperor, Thomas Paleologous. A Roman resident since spring 1461 (he had fled Morea in fall 1460), Thomas had retained the head (Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, 228–229).

<sup>146</sup> Ion Bianu, "Ștefan cel Mare. Câteva documente din arhivul de stat de la Milano," *Columna lui Traian* IV, 1–2 (1883): 30–47, at no. 1, 35.

<sup>147</sup> Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 316 (English translation of *Geschichte Dracole Waide*). According to the Russian story on Vlad's deeds (1486/1490), upon his release from captivity, Matthias gave his *sister* to Vlad in marriage. We now know that Vlad's second wife was the king's maternal cousin, Justine Szilágyi. She was barren (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, 17–18). The unknown author of the Russian story claims to have met the children of Vlad and of Matthias' *sister* (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 362–363). Vlad's first Hunyadi wife may have been indeed been Matthias' sister. Yet it is doubtful that she and the king had shared Elisabeth Szilágyi's womb, known mother of only boys (Ladislas and Matthias).

<sup>148</sup> See, in comparison to the quoted *Geschichte Dracole Waide* (1463), Matthias' positive depiction and the absence of any reference to the matrimony in Michael Beheim's later, poem (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 344–346). Seemingly, the Wiener-Neustadt treaty (July 1463) did help significantly better Matthias' German *Dragulian* image.

<sup>149</sup> Andrei Corbea, "În legătură cu scrisoarea datată 11 februarie 1462. Contribuții la cunoașterea izvoarelor relației lui Vlad Țepeș cu Matia Corvin," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie A.D. Xenopol* XVIII (1981): 151–166 (another copy of Vlad's report, found among documents issued by or related to Pius II).

<sup>150</sup> I.-A. Pop, "Matthias Corvinus, *Re de Ungaria, de Dacia etc.*, in 1462," *Transylvanian Review* XXIX, suppl. 1 (2020): 41–52. The report, preserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, Codices, Z 219 Sup., no. 9328, was first published by Ludwig von Pastor (*Acta inedita historiam pontificum romanorum praesertim saec. XV, XVI, XVII illustrantia*, I. 1376–1464 (Freiburg-in-Breisgau, 1904<sup>2</sup>), no. 125, 150–162 (March 12, 1462, according to Pastor).

<sup>151</sup> M. Simonetta, "Pius II and Francesco Sforza: The History of Two Allies," in *Pius II*, 147–150.

<sup>152</sup> See P. Engel, "Hunyadi pályakezdése," in *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania. Az erdélyi román nemesség*, edited by I. Drăgan, Marius Diaconescu (Satu-Mare, 1997), 91–109.

was the natural bond between realms (one in the ardently disputed present and one in the past turned foreseeable future). Transylvania had belonged to Roman Dacia and was now part of the Hungarian kingdom, coveted by the two emperors, Frederick and Mehmed (One faithfully served by Enea and one gallantly addressed by Pius, or in his name)

3. John Hunyadi had been a Wallachian offspring, recorded as such by Cardinal Enea Silvio Piccolomini.<sup>153</sup> In his *Commentaries* and most importantly in his chapter on *John Dragula* (written the soonest a year after the news of March 1462 on Vlad's deeds)<sup>154</sup>, Pope Pius II did not recall the Wallachian origins of the executioner of *John Dragula's* father, namely John Hunyadi, Matthias' father. The latter was mocked by Pius II's patron, Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg, because of his *low* Wallachian origins. Their importance had increased dramatically after Matthias' election as king of Hungary.<sup>155</sup> In his *Commentaries*, Pius II also said nothing of the common *Getic* roots of the Transylvanians and of the Wallachians<sup>156</sup>, mentioned earlier in his *De Europa*, completed in 1458, after Matthias' enthronement, but prior to that of Enea.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>153</sup> *Europe*, 59, 67 (1458): "[...] John was a Wallachian by birth, not highly born, but a man of supple intelligence who loved virtue. [...] John Hunyadi whose name overshadows the others, enhanced the glory not so much of the Hungarians, as the Wallachians from whom he was descended [...]"

<sup>154</sup> Vlad was arrested in the second half of November 1462 (towards the end of the month). News from Hungary usually reached Italy within a month, to be more precise: between three and six/ seven months depending on the event and on the part of Hungary from where the information was sent (e.g. MDE, I, nos. 107–108, 171–172; no. 113, 181; no. 115, 183). Confirmation of an important event (such as Vlad's arrest) was generally secured approximately three months after the event had occurred, i.e. in this case: late February 1462. Venice certainly did not officially launch her investigation into the *Dragula* matter before mid-April 1463, though, alike Pius, she had been conducting inquiries since January (MDE, I, no. 108, 172; no. 126, 202).

<sup>155</sup> We quote, without any changes, the translation of the final paragraph of Piccolomini's description of Hungarian politics (until spring 1458), in his *De Europa*: "[...] Whoever you are reading this, try now to predict the future! Here is a truly remarkable proof of the fickleness of human affairs. Of two young men almost identical in age and character, one was carried from the throne to his tomb [Ladislas V of Habsburg], while preparing a bedchamber for his new bride [Magdalena, the daughter of French king Charles VII of Valois]; the other [Matthias], while anxiously awaiting a death sentence, was summoned from prison to become king. His freedom is said to have been purchased from the governor of Bohemia [George Podierbad] by a betrothal [to George's daughter, Katarina] and other arrangements. It is amazing that his mother [Elisabeth Szilágyi] did not drop dead from joy, when, after suffering so many calamities, she heard that her son had been named king before she even learned of his release from captivity [...]" (*Europe*, 63).

<sup>156</sup> See *Europe*, 52: [...] *the Getes, of whom some are called Wallachians and others Transylvanians* [...]

<sup>157</sup> According to the dedication letter of the work to Cardinal Antonio Cerdà i Lloscos, *De*

Unless he averted a far greater danger for John Hunyadi's son through his depiction of the Roman Wallachians fallen under *Dragula's* mad yoke<sup>158</sup>, Pius II did not help Matthias by highlighting the *Dragula* affair that connected the monarchic ambitions and the family network of the Hunyadi offspring.<sup>159</sup> The pope himself did not feel very comfortable with the entire business for he had – reluctantly (more than apparent) – vouched for Matthias<sup>160</sup>, therefore, at least, adding pressure to Pius' already tested relation with Frederick.<sup>161</sup> By hanging

*Europa* was completed by Enea by March 29 (*Europe*, 50). Enea made some changes to it until his election as pope. The removal of the Wallachian roots of John and Matthias from the text was not among them.

<sup>158</sup> Of all the stories on Vlad, the one most detrimental to both Hunyadis, John and Matthias, is contained in *Geschichte Dracole Waide* (with its various versions), which is also the oldest of them all (for an overview, see the texts edited in parallel by Matei Cazacu in his *Geschichte Dracole Waide*. Un incunabile imprimé à Vienne en 1463, *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* CXXXIX, 2 (1981): 209–243, at 221–243; the texts of Pius II and Thomas Ebendorfer were however not included in the 2017 appendix of Cazacu, *Dracula*, which features, in return, the main versions of the German and Russian stories on *John Dragula*). *Die Geschichte Dracole Waide* lists in its final paragraph both Vlad's Hunyadi marriage and his Hunyadi arrest, voluntarily confusing Matthias with his father. This information is missing from the Latin texts of Pius II's *Commentaries* and Ebendorfer's *Chronica* and from Michael Beheim's German poem, the oldest accounts of Vlad III's deeds (1463–1465). The first two renderings were certainly bound to the Habsburg-Hunyadi peace, at long last concluded in July 1463, while the latter was written later at Frederick III's court. Papal influence may well have been behind the omissions in the work of Ebendorfer, professor at the University of Vienna (and its rector on several occasions). He had little love lost for Matthias and otherwise recorded every possible atrocity committed by Vlad.

<sup>159</sup> In May 1462, Matthias had coerced the Diet into accepting a new tax that was to cover the ransom of the Holy Crown from Frederick (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, 68). The decision had to be reconfirmed by the next Diet in March 1463 (in fact, Matthias had to pass the law for a second time). The main official reason for its levy became anti-Ottoman warfare. The tax also came at a Transylvanian cost, first military and then political. Matthias' coronation decree of spring 1464 granted autonomy to the Kingdom of Slavonia and to the Transylvanian Parts (*Decreta regni Hungariae: Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns 1458–1490*, edited by Ferenc Döry, György Bónis, Géza Érszegi, Zs. Teke (Budapest, 1989), 1464, April 6, art. XIII, 145; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 93–94). It is unclear how much Pius knew of these Hungarian affairs, when he wrote of *John Dragula*. Later in the text, in relation to the crusader preparations of September 1463 (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, chap. 16, 327; *Commentaries*, V, 801), Pius stressed out that Matthias: “[...] frequently asked the Emperor for the crown, but could not obtain it. Therefore he became every day on object of greater contempt to his people [...]”. In November 1462, the moreover Wallachian case of *John Dragula* hardly increased the Hungarian domestic reputation of Matthias or furthered his mastery of Transylvania.

<sup>160</sup> Still useful Antal Pór, “II. Pius Pápa és Hunyadi Mátyás Király,” *Budapesti Szemle* XL (1879), 225–278. Yet see chiefly Boronkai, “Matthias im Bilde der Memoiren,” 66–69.

<sup>161</sup> At the same time, their authorities (of Pius and Frederick) were challenged in pair in the Roman-German Empire (see the data in L. Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, III [1458–1464] (London, 1894<sup>1</sup>), 142–143, 205–207, 223–229, 298–300).



the “*Dragula* portrait” between the Habsburg conflict in Vienna and the dispute over Bosnia in Rome, Pius reminded Matthias of his place and of his limitations. According to Venice, immediately after Pius learnt of the Transylvanian events of November 1462, he – temporarily – placed Hungary (and Matthias) under the control of a committee of cardinals<sup>162</sup>, already one of Matthias’ worst fears.<sup>163</sup> By speaking politely, and as positively as possible of Matthias and his otherwise justifiable actions, while excepting other known problematic issues<sup>164</sup>, Pius placed the twenty year old monarch at his mercy.<sup>165</sup> Still, *Dacia* and *Dragula*

<sup>162</sup> MDE, II, no. 108, 173. The information was added, on January 15, 1463, as a sort of post-scriptum to the instructions of the republic for her representative in Hungary, Pietro de Tomasso. [...] *Preterea notum tibi facimus, quod per litteras oratoris nostri ad Romanum Pontificem facti sumus certiores Beatitudinem Suam elegeris nuper quator ex Reverendissimis Cardinalibus, videlicet Nicenum [Bessarion], Sancti Angeli [Juan Carvajal], Rothomagensis [Guillaume d’Estouteville] et Sancti Marci [Pietro Barbo (future Paul II)], qui providere habeant rebus Hungarie, et aliis negotiis contra Turcum [...]*. Her ambassador in Rome, Bernardo Giustiniani, had apparently informed her of Pius’ decision already at the end of December (27–28), according to the Venetian senate’s instructions for Giustiani, issued similarly on January 15, 1463 (Šime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između Južnoga Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike* (= *Monumenta spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium*, XXII), X 1453–1459, (Zagreb, 1891), no. 230, 231; the document was conspicuously omitted from MDE, I, although it featured in the Venetian register precisely between the republic’s letters to Matthias and to de Tomasso). Out of the four cardinals, Matthias could rely in fact only on Carvajal, John Hunyadi’s former associate (he was one of the three Johns from Enea’s story on the miracle of Belgrade), who had largely salvaged Matthias’ early reign (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, 31–32, 64–65). Carvajal and Bessarion were the cardinals most interested in Hungary and crusading, but, as Pius commented, both had failed to secure an arrangement between Matthias and Frederick (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, chap. 16, 328; *Commentaries*, V, 802). Unlike during the Papal elections of August 1458, Barbo was at odds with both Pius and native Venice, in spite of Pius’ attempts of reconciliation, whereas d’Estouteville had drawn closer to his former rival, *olim* Enea.

<sup>163</sup> As a direct consequence of Matthias’ contested rule and because of the imminent Ottoman threat, Hungary was viewed as a new *Holy Land* at the Papal curia, a crusader realm to be governed in fact by cardinals (Benjamin Weber, “La papauté en Hongrie (1453–1481): engagement financier ou militaire,” *Transylvanian Review* XIX, 3 (2009): 21–31). Unsurprisingly, Matthias resented the prospect, though it also secured Carvajal’s unwavering support. It would be tempting to state that the *Dragula* affair forced Matthias to temporarily concede defeat.

<sup>164</sup> A common Hungarian letter offers an insight into how widespread the word on Vlad’s deeds was. On March 21, 1462, from Nyárád (Veszprém County), Blasius (Balázs), who had just returned from Buda, informed his superior, John Szinyei, the collector of the *lucrum camerae* in the Sáros County, that *vaivoda Dragulia* (already Vlad’s common name) had slain 24,000 Turks (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár-Országos Levéltár, Budapest, Diplomatikai Levéltár, [no.] 70267; cf. Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 240, note 85).

<sup>165</sup> E.g. Giuseppe Valentini, “La Crociata di Pio II: dalla documentazione veneta d’archivio,” *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, XIII (1975): 249–282; N. Housley, “Pius II and Crusading,” *Crusades*, XI (2012): 209–247.

endured together under Matthias.<sup>166</sup> As time went by and Matthias kept Vlad alive and in his service<sup>167</sup>, Pius II' *Dragulian* entry in his *Commentaries* began to also resemble a controlled Papal detonation<sup>168</sup> of a subject very harmful for the Hunyadis (as well as for the *corrupt* and *imperfect* Wallachians, with whom Pius II' chapter on handsome *John Dragula* had begun).<sup>169</sup>

In the same "pattern" (*Dacia*-family ties), the two matters resurfaced in the following two decades<sup>170</sup>, when the *Wallachian blood* connection between the Hunyadis and Mehmed II (and his offspring) was revealed (following Matthias' lead)<sup>171</sup> and the great tide of printed stories in German on Dracula covered

<sup>166</sup> We cannot regard this as a complete surprise or novelty, considering that most of the discussed sources were known since before World War I, including the peculiar Pastor edition of Pius's "confession" of March 1462 (omitted by the pope himself from his *Commentaries*, where he otherwise included large portions of his political conversations, such as, in relation to Milanese Otto de Carretto, the one from September 1463, cited below).

<sup>167</sup> For the "good life", *magnifico* Vlad began to enjoy in Hungary, see the documents (July and October 1464) in *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, VI. 1458–1473, edited by Gustav Gündisch, Herta Gündisch, Gernot Nussbächer, K.G. Gündisch (Bucharest, 1981), no. 3389, 192; no. 3400, 200.

<sup>168</sup> Utterly hostile to the Hunyadis (he too blamed John for the crusader disaster at Varna, for which Wladislaw III of Poland and Hungary had paid with his life), the influential Polish clergyman and diplomat, Jan Długosz, was more than benevolent towards Matthias in regard to Vlad. Długosz recorded Vlad's arrest as prelude to the expulsion, in winter 1464–1465, of the Hungarian garrison from Chilia, at the Danube Mounds, by the populace eager to have peace with Mehmed, under Radu. Matthias' decision to arrest the traitorous *Moldaviae superioris Principe, Wlado nomine*, had been more than justified (*Annales seu cronici incliti Regni Poloniae* (= *Jan Długosii Senioris Canonici Cracoviensis Opera omnia*, XI–XIV), edited by Alexander Przezdziecki, IV (Krakow, 1887), 408). Długosz's stand on Vlad is worth a closer inspection. Długosz, who in 1472 ordered and received a copy of *De Europa* (Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, *Frühneuzeitliche Nationen im östlichen Europa. Das polnische Geschichtsdenken und die Reichweite einer humanistischen Nationalgeschichte (1500–1700)* (Wiesbaden, 2006), 47, note 31), was the advocat of the highly questionable – already in the 1470s and 1480s – theory of the *Italian* origins of the Lithuanians (an eastern idea that predated the 1460s and apparently was left unrecorded in Italy).

<sup>169</sup> Handsome Vlad could have thus fooled anyone, including Matthias, including the Wallachians. Pius was rather forthcoming in this respect. His final words on Vlad were (we recall): "so much do men's countenances differ from their hearts" (*Commentaries*, V, p. 740). From this perspective, Vlad was unquestionably a necessary scapegoat for the Cross.

<sup>170</sup> Decades that witnessed several major changes (largely induced by Venice, at war with the Porte), including the creation of the first and only *Greek rite athlete* of Christendom, Stephen III of Moldavia, less than fifteen years after he had attacked Chilia, together with Mehmed II's fleet, in the summer of 1462 (Al. Simon, "Pellegrini ed atleti del Signore ai confini della cristianità: Skanderbeg, Stefano III di Moldavia e le loro relazioni con Roma e Venezia," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome-Moyen Age* CXXV, 1 (2013): 71–92).

<sup>171</sup> E.g. Vilmos Fraknói, *Mátyás Király Levelei. Külügyi Osztály*, II. 1481–1490 (Budapest,

the unequal empire of Frederick.<sup>172</sup> If one follows through Pius' innuendo, in addition to his dynastic Hungarian claim, Frederick (who initially had not even considered competing for Hungary)<sup>173</sup> had a natural right upon both Hungary and *Dacia* (upon both Matthias and Vlad in effect<sup>174</sup>), because Transylvania(ns) spoke *Teutonic*.<sup>175</sup> Notwithstanding such speculation, Matthias definitely could not part ways with either Frederick or Vlad, well after the death of Pius, *olim* Siennese bishop Enea Silvio Piccolomini.

Upon Vlad's release from royal custody, Matthias gave him a new wife:

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1895), no. 140, 244 (and note 3); no. 247, 388; N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, V. 1476–1500 (Bucharest, 1915), no. 73, 55.

<sup>172</sup> See also Ursprung, "Propaganda și popularizarea," 51–55, 58–59 (maps 1 and 2).

<sup>173</sup> In November 1458, Frederick, recently reconciled with Podiebrad, seemed willing to grant the Holy Crown to Matthias in exchange for a substantial amount (Brigitte Haller, "Kaiser Friedrich III. und die Stephanskron," *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, XXVI (1973): 94–147, at 123–125). The domestic incapacity of Matthias' and of his remaining followers (less than ten months after the election) allowed his adversaries, led by Ladislás Garai and Nicholas Újlaki, to approach Frederick in winter 1458–1459 the latest (Podiebrad's double-dealings did not help Matthias). Frederick asked Pius II for advice. The answer was in German a *Jein* (so-to-say). In his *Commentaries*, Pius claimed that the emperor's message did not reach him in fact in time. In April 1459, he had officially admitted differently to Frederick, nonetheless already elected king of Hungary by Matthias' enemies on February 17. It remains however uncertain (to this day) whether Frederick was actually crowned with the Holy Crown on March 4, or merely accepted the royal title and crown. A fully legal Hungarian royal coronation had to be performed in Széksfehérvár, and Frederick was known to be very strict on protocol.

<sup>174</sup> Because of Vlad's betrayal in the summer of 1456, Ladislás Hunyadi sent Dan, from the rival branch of the House of Basarab, against the new voivode of Wallachia in December, after the elder brother of Matthias had family foe Ulrich von Cilly executed (DRH, D, I, no. 341, p. 461). Vlad kept his ground. Very soon after Matthias' enthronement in mid-February 1458, Vlad secured an agreement with him and his uncle and regent, Michael Szilágyi (*Hurmuzaki*, XV/1, nos. 84–85, 48–49). Dan's claim seemed to be lost, until Frederick's election of February 1459. Dan turned to him and foremost to his Hungarian followers. He seemed confident that the Saxons of Brașov would consequently aid him (*Documente Brașov*, no. 78, 100). The reconciliation between Matthias and Újlaki (July 1459) and chiefly the truce between the king and his uncle, reinstated, by April 1460, as *governor* of Transylvania (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, 62–63), turned Dan to the Hunyadis. Prior to April 5 <, 1460>, they welcomed him, as the conflicts between Vlad and the Saxons had escalated (*Documente Brașov*, nos. 79–80, 101–103). Vlad seemed lost. Still, he prevailed and had Dan executed, after first forcing him to dig his own grave. Dan's sole historic credit, in addition to his Habsburg ties, remains his account of Vlad's atrocities, very similar to the stories on the voivode's deeds (*Documente Brașov*, no. 79, 102).

<sup>175</sup> Unfortunately, the Romanian historiographic reach is limited in these medieval *Teutonic*-Wallachian matters to the valuable, yet obviously outdated and "politically correct" study of Ion Hurdubețiu, *Die Deutschen über die Herkunft der Rumänen. Von Johann Thunmann bis Ernst Gamillscheg* (Breslau, 1944; reprint Bucharest, 1977).

Justine Szilágyi, the king's first degree cousin on his mother's side.<sup>176</sup> In the aftermath of the final break between Frederick and Matthias and of the fall of Venetian Negroponte that same year 1470 (which extensively redrew crusading)<sup>177</sup>, Vlad had been named *Dracula of Moldavia and Wallachia* by Habsburg supporters.<sup>178</sup> After his death (1476) and indirectly (as the work was intended for Sixtus IV and Matthias<sup>179</sup>), Vlad was called *king of Dacia* by Martino Segono, Latin bishop of Novo Brdo (a Serbian hotbed of unrest for Mehmed)<sup>180</sup>, in the prelate's anti-Ottoman treatise (1480/1481).<sup>181</sup>

In between these dates, the bishop of Eger, Gabriele Rangoni (until recently bishop of Transylvania)<sup>182</sup>, presented Vlad as a mass-murderer, unleashed against the Turks by his and Rangoni's master, King Matthias, Vlad's most ardent supporter at the time.<sup>183</sup> With the exception of Vlad's anti-Ottoman report of

<sup>176</sup> Tamas Fedeles, "Drakwlyahza," in Fons, skepsis, lex. *Ünnepi tanulmányok a 70 esztendő Makk Ferenc tiszteletére*, edited by Tibor Almási, Éva Révész, György Szabados (Szeged, 2010), 107–114.

<sup>177</sup> E.g. M. Meserve, "News from Negroponte. Politics, Popular Opinion and Information Exchange in the First Decade of the Italian Press," *Renaissance Quarterly* LIX (2006): 440–480.

<sup>178</sup> Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Abendländische Handschriften, Cod. Lat. 14668, ff. 7<sup>r</sup>–43<sup>r</sup> (at ff. 23<sup>r</sup>, 24<sup>r</sup>). *Dracula de Molda et Walachia* had repelled Bayezid (I). Vlad III was confused, quite voluntarily, with his paternal grandfather, Mircea I, overlord of Moldavia as well (as Stephen III too had to concede). Largely favourable to the Wallachians, the work was completed prior to Mehmed II's Moldavian campaign of 1476. It only mentioned the successful resistance of Venetian Scutari and Moldavia (1474–1475). Because of its anti-Hunyadi tone and its high regard of Maximilian, Frederick III's son, as the hope of Christendom, it is tempting to identify Maximilian's educator and Frederick's secretary since 1471, Thomas Prelskar of Cilly, as the author of the treatise. A native of Celje (Luger, *Humanismus und humanistische Schrift*, 117–118), Thomas was however unrelated to the by then extinct Cillys.

<sup>179</sup> A natural precaution for a man whose area of "expertise" certainly exceeded humanist studies (Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (Oxford, 2015), 5; Segono's career was not unique).

<sup>180</sup> Antoine-Emile Tachiaos, "Nouvelles considerations sur l'œuvre littéraire de Démétrius Cantacuzène," *Cyrrilomethodianum*, I (1971): 131–182, at 139; Ivan Božić, "Kolebanja Mahmud Paše Anđelovića," *Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor* XLI, 3–4 (1975): 159–171, at 164; Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs*, 402–408.

<sup>181</sup> Agostino Pertusi, *Martino Segono di Novo Brdo, vescovo di Dulcigno. Un umanista serbo dal-mata del tardo Quattrocento. Vita e opere* (Rome, 1981), Appendix I, 78–146, at 137; Al. Simon, "Mehmed II's Return to Moldavia in 1476 and the Death of the King of Dacia," *Transylvanian Review* XXIX, suppl. 1 (2020): 53–64.

<sup>182</sup> He was still usually called *il Transilvano*, after having served as bishop of Transylvania since autumn 1472 (*Magyarország világi archontológiája*, I, 35, 37).

<sup>183</sup> The letter (Buda, March 7, 1476) survived in two copies: ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Ungheria*, cart. 650. 1452–1489, fasc. 22. 1476, nn (in *Codex diplomaticus Partium Regno Hungariae adnexarum* (= *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, I, 31, 33, 36, 40), II. *Magyarország és Szerbia közti összeköttetések oklevéltára. 1198–1526*, edited by L. Thallóczy, Antal Áldásy

February 1462, the prelate's letter of March 1476 to Pope Sixtus IV<sup>184</sup> is to this day the only extant direct documentary evidence – outside the vast realm of chronicles, poems and memoirs – for *Dragula's* insatiable cruelty. Against all Christian opposition (foreign and domestic)<sup>185</sup>, Matthias did not halt until his *captain* Vlad was again in power south of the Carpathians.<sup>186</sup> The king continued to speak highly of *Ladislas Dragula*<sup>187</sup> even after Vlad's mysterious death.<sup>188</sup>

To further increase tension, Mehmed II twice returned north of Lower Danube after a failed summer campaign: (1) in November 1462, when, in Pius II's words, Vlad III promised him Transylvania (and from there on *entire Hungary*) and was certainly arrested by Matthias<sup>189</sup>; (2) in October-November 1476, just before the mysterious death of Vlad, recently restored to at least

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(Budapest, 1907), no. 369, 265–268; ASMa, A.G., E. Affari esteri, V. *Ungheria*, busta 533. 1395–1692, nn (copy sent from Rome to Mantua by the same Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, and his entourage, who in March 1462 had announced the 21,660 fatalities of Vlad).

<sup>184</sup> Rangoni's report was sent at a most inauspicious time for Matthias, embroiled in a bitter struggle for crusader funds and merits with the rising *athlete* of Christendom, Stephen of Moldavia, supported by Venice (see Al. Simon, "The Walls of *Christendom's Gate*. Hungary's Mathias Corvinus and Moldavia's Stephen the Great Politics in the Late 1400s," *Quaderni della Casa Romena*, III (2004): 205–224, at 212).

<sup>185</sup> Both Saxon Braşov and Stephen of Moldavia (who later claimed otherwise) were extremely opposed to Vlad's return to power (e.g. *Hurmuzaki*, XV–1, nos. 146–148, 85–86).

<sup>186</sup> Though it seems not in the desired and claimed – by both Vlad and Matthias – capacity of voivode, but only in that of royal *captain* (governor?) (MDE, II. [1466–1480] (Budapest, 1876), no. 234, 339–340). Matthias' efforts to enthrone Vlad and to present him as the ruler of Wallachia redraw attention upon *Die Geschichte Dracole Waide* (printed since 1488). The concluded with the statement that, after his release from captivity by Matthias, Vlad had done *good things* (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 369): It is reasonable to presume that Matthias attempted to counteract Frederick's propaganda by spreading his own tale, task made easier by the emperor's German enemies.

<sup>187</sup> E.g. in the March 1479 royal charter for the Báthorys (*Documenta Batori*, no. 109, 140).

<sup>188</sup> According to Grigore Nandriş ("The Historical Dracula: The Theme of his Legend in the Western and in the Eastern Literatures of Europe," *Comperative Literature Studies* III, 4 (1966): 367–396, at p. 386), the epilogue of the 1490 copy of Russian story on Vlad (first recorded in 1486) read: "[...] And he [Dracula] married, he took a princely wife [in the original text: *vojevodskuju zheniu*], and after that he lived a short while and was murdered by Stephen of Wallachia". According to the known version of the story, Vlad fell fighting *his own* (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, p. 363). The discrepancy between versions calls for a review of the extant sources. With Ottoman support, Vlad had enthroned Stephen (1457), who then turned against him (1459). Relations between them never truly amicable afterwards. Nonetheless, Stephen too claimed that he had restored Vlad to power in 1476. Matthias in his turn stated that he had accomplished everything before Stephen's arrival.

<sup>189</sup> *Stare srpske povelje i pisma*, I–2. *Dubrovnik i susedi negovi*, edited by Ljubomir Stojanović, (Belgrade, 1934), no. 845, 263 (November 15, <1462>; translated by Bojović, *Raguse*, no. 29, 231–232). For the charter issued in Wallachia by Mehmed II for Ragusa, see Al. Simon, "Soţile



partial Wallachian power by Matthias.<sup>190</sup> John Hunyadi's son said nothing of Mehmed's returns, although: (1) in 1462, the return would have substantiated all charges against Vlad, and (2) quite the opposite in 1476, the return would have rendered much needed glory<sup>191</sup> to Matthias' restoration of Vlad to the Wallachian throne, as thus a personal victory over the insatiable sultan.<sup>192</sup>

Alike Pius II in 1462–1463, Sixtus IV looked the other way in 1476–1477.<sup>193</sup> Alike in autumn 1462, Mehmed II's return and Vlad III's disappearance (this time final) completed a Hungarian-Wallachian summer failure to halt the sultan (a failure even greater in 1476 than it had been in 1462).<sup>194</sup> A third debacle, this time a real disaster came in 1484, when Mehmed's son<sup>195</sup>, Bayezid II, took control over the Danube and Dniestr Mounds, cutting-off Matthias and the Wallachians from the Black Sea of Pius II's once great crusader plans.<sup>196</sup> On each occasion (1462, 1476 and 1484), Transylvania (as well as parts of Hungary proper) failed Matthias, either by not obeying his commands or by following them with great delay.<sup>197</sup> Pius II, above all of statesman (even-though not Caesar), in spite of his rhetoric reluctances<sup>198</sup>, had more than accurately placed – through the means

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ungare ale lui Vlad III Țepeș: rolul, impactul și receptarea unor alianțe și rivalități medieval,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol*, XLVIII (2011): 5–12, at p. 6

<sup>190</sup> Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku, Dubrovnik, *Acta Consiliorum, Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, [reg.] 23. 1476–1478, f. 61<sup>v</sup> (November 16, 1476). On Ragusa's embassy to Mehmed who was in *Moldavia* (in Wallachia in fact): Al. Simon, “A doua venire a lui Mehmed al II-lea în *Moldovia* în anul 1476,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A. D. Xenopol* LVI (2019): 23–32.

<sup>191</sup> For the challenges faced by Matthias at the time, see also I.-A. Pop, “Atletul Ștefan și românii ca protagoniști la Marea Neagră în epistole semnate de Papa Sixt al IV-lea și de umanistul Francesco Filelfo (1475–1476),” in *Spre pământul făgăduinței, între Balcani și Bugeac. Omagiu Doamnei Profesoare Elena Siupiur la împlinirea vârstei de 80 de ani*, edited by Daniel Cain, Aneta Mihaylova, Roumiana L. Stantcheva, Andrei Timotin (Brăila, 2020), 17–34.

<sup>192</sup> For Vlad's final years (1475–1476): Șt. Andreescu, “L'action de Vlad Țepeș dans le sud-est de l'Europe en 1476,” *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* XV, 2 (1977): 259–272.

<sup>193</sup> It was not until spring 1477, when Stephen III of Moldavia pressured Venice to follow his (Crimean), not her (Balkan) anti-Ottoman design, that part of the “crusader businesses” in those parts, that included trafficking Mehmed II's Christian booty, was exposed (Al. Simon, “The Costs and Benefits of Anti-Ottoman Warfare: Documents on the Case of Moldavia (1475–1477),” *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* XLVIII, 1–2 (2009): 37–53).

<sup>194</sup> For Mehmed II's campaign in Moldavia, see Liviu Pilat, O. Cristea, *The Ottoman Threat and Crusading on the Eastern Border of Christendom during the 15<sup>th</sup> Century* (= *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, XLVIII) (Leiden-Boston, 2017), 167–174.

<sup>195</sup> For the events of 1484, see O. Cristea, *Acest domn de la miazănoapte* (Târgoviște, 2018).

<sup>196</sup> Al. Simon, *Pământurile crucii: românii și cruciada târzie* (Cluj-Napoca, 2012), 129–175.

<sup>197</sup> See also Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 205 (1462), 257–258 (1476), 281–282 (1484). In fact, out of three summers, royal troops (brought from Hungary proper) crossed the Carpathians only in 1476, with nearly fatal delay (*Acta et epistolae*, I, nos. 26–27, 28–30).

<sup>198</sup> Claudia Märkl, “Italienische Berichte von der Kurie Pius II. (1458–1464),” in *Historiographie*,

of the *John Dragula*<sup>199</sup> – Transylvania at the crusader hear of the problems of Matthias, king of Hungary, Dacia etc.<sup>200</sup>

### *The Knowledgeable Pope*

Pius II certainly knew more than he recorded in his *Commentaries* and apparently implied in written more than he could control in politics (the overt break between Pius II' loyalists and the supporters of his successor, Paul II, very telling for the late pope's grip on Papal affairs, reduced the general circulation of the carefully reviewed *Commentaries*, prompting Pius' trustees to distribute selected parts of the twelve books).<sup>201</sup> Long before Luigi Pirandello, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who tried to imitate Ciceronian style in addition to Caesarian policies ("a match made in hell" even in the Renaissance)<sup>202</sup>, was a director in search of actors, of his own Papal cast.<sup>203</sup> Following the harsh *Western Schism* (1378–1449)<sup>204</sup>, Christendom's eastern and southern borders seemed better

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*Briefe und Korrespondenzen, editorische Methoden*, edited by Matthias Thumser (Toruń, 2005), 243–257, at 248–252; O'Brien, "Arms and Letters", 1066–1069, 1074–1077.

<sup>199</sup> Under the circumstances, one may even presume that Pius built the figure in contrast to that of the Wallachian, from Transylvania, *John Huniades* (*Europe*, 39, 51–52, 59, 64).

<sup>200</sup> *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chaps. 11–13, 296–298; Pop, "Matthias Corvinus", 43.

<sup>201</sup> O'Brien, *The Commentaries*, 15–17. Looking aside from the Sforzas (and their entourage) or from the Cardinals Iacopo Ammannati Piccolomini and Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini (the ephemeral Pius III), we redraw attention to Leodisio Crivelli (Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor*, 60, note 38). Chronicling Pius' crusade and its pre-history, Crivelli, who recorded Matthias' initial hostility towards Pius ("Frederick's creature"), listed *Flaccus* as *Wlaccchia's* founder in the depiction of the crusade of Varna (1444), and alluded to him, in his presentation of Hunyadi's defence of Belgrade (1456), where he mentioned the *Wlacos*, *recenti vocabulo, antea Getas, Romanos hactenus colonos*, living between the Bosna Mounds (into the Sava) and the city of Chilia, at the Danube Mounds (*De expeditione Pii Papae II ad-versus Turcos* (= *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, NS, XXIII, 5), edited by Giulio C. Zimolo (Bologna, 1948 [1950]), 39–40, 67; Armbruster omitted by the Wallachians of 1456 from his analysis).

<sup>202</sup> From his days with Frederick: Cary J. Nederman, "Humanism and Empire: Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, Cicero and the Imperial Idea," *The Historical Journal*, XXXVI (1993): 499–515, at 512, note 66; Nederman, "National Sovereignty and Ciceronian Political Thought: Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini and the Ideal of Universal Empire in Fifteenth-Century Europe," *History of European Ideas* XVI (1993): 537–544.

<sup>203</sup> His choice of both Cicero and Caesar explains why Pius was frequently adamant about letting others seek him and why he also posed as "reluctant pope". A comparison with the learned emperor and Athonite monk John VI Kantakuzenos might prove relevant (Donald M. Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor: A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk*, c. 1295–1383 (Cambridge, 1996)).

<sup>204</sup> Johannes Helmuth, "Die zweite Dekade des langen Basler Konzils (1440–1449): Perspektiven, Konversionen, Piccolominiana. Überlegungen am Ende einer Tagung," in *Das*

equipped than Christendom's centre to provide this cast for *pious Aeneas*<sup>205</sup>, initially a supporter of the conciliarist movement, turned Papalist by the crusader Cardinals Giuliano Cesarini and Juan Carvajal.<sup>206</sup> It was also easier both to voice domestic prejudices in reference to these *limitanei*<sup>207</sup> and to command inflated virtues for and among them (because of the time spent at the Council of Basel and in Frederick's service, Enea's knowledge of Bohemian and Hungarian affairs was rather fair; Hungarian unrests and Ottoman affairs increased his Wallachian knowledge, though not that of Poland).<sup>208</sup> The *melting-pot* ruled by the contested Matthias was ideally suited in this respect<sup>209</sup>, chiefly for a pope compelled<sup>210</sup> to adjust *Christendom* to *Europe* and viceversa<sup>211</sup> (it should not be

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*Ende des Konziliaren Zeitalters*, edited by Heribert Müller (München, 2012), 315–347, at 338–347).

<sup>205</sup> J. Helmuth, "Vestigia Aeneae imitari: Enea Silvio Piccolomini als Apostel des Humanismus, Formen und Wege seiner Diffusion," in *Diffusion des Humanismus, Studien zur nationalen Geschichtsschreibung europäischer Humanisten*, edited by J. Helmuth, Ulrich Muhlack, Gerrit Walther (Göttingen 2002), 99–141. *Pious Aeneas*, a line in fact, was taken from Vergil's *Aeneid*, another model followed by Enea. Pius (II) was in reality a "stage name".

<sup>206</sup> C. Märtl, "Pauca de origine Enee suaque vita. Ein unbekanntes Selbstzeugnis Piccolominis, das erste Buch der *Commentarii* und *Platinas Vita Pii II*," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, LXXI (2015): 149–174, at 151–152, note 7

<sup>207</sup> The original title of O'Brien's *The Commentaries* (PhD thesis initially) is quite eloquent: *The Anatomy of an Apology: The War against Conciliarism and the Politicization of Papal Authority in the Commentarii of Pope Pius II (1458–1464)* (Providence: Brown University, 2005).

<sup>208</sup> See also Francesco Guida, "Enea Silvio Piccolomini e l'Europa orientale: il *De Europa* (1458)," *Clio* (Rome) XV, 1 (1979): 35–75. Wladislaw III of Poland's Hungarian reign featured heavily in Enea's works and letters. Yet he wrote little and poorly about the Poles. A reasonable assumption would be that his depictions and assessments were chiefly a result of his interests and less the product of lack of data.

<sup>209</sup> See also Rosamond J. Mitchell, *The Laurel and the Tiara: Pope Pius II, 1458–1464*, 135–136, 231–232. For Hungary's earlier status of *melting-pot*: Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and "Pagans" in Medieval Hungary c. 1000–c. 1300* (Cambridge, 2001).

<sup>210</sup> E.g. John Gordon Rowe, "The Tragedy of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II): An Interpretation," *Church History* XXX, 3 (1961): 288–313. An "executive summary" would read: Pius II was morally hostile to Rodrigo Borgia, whom he had, in equally manifest manner, appointed "prime-minister" (vice-chancellor) of the Papacy.

<sup>211</sup> Dieter Mertens, "Europa, id est patria, domus propria, sedes nostra ...: zu Funktionen und Überlieferung lateinischer Türkenreden im 15. Jahrhundert," in *Europa und die osmanische Bedrohung im ausgehenden Mittelalter*, edited by Franz-Reiner Erkens (Berlin, 1997), 39–57. Hence also his hostility towards Podiebrad, who endorsed a counter-Papal conciliar Europe. The plan was advocated, in the same year 1462, by a strange and influential figure, Antoine Marin (*Antonio Marini*) from Grenoble (N. Iorga, "Un auteur de projets de croisades: Antonio Marini," in *Études d'histoire du Moyen Âge dédiées à Gabriel Monod*, edited by Edgar Lavis (Paris, 1896), 445–457). In 1462, Marini also acted as an intermediary between the courts of Paris and Buda (Pop, "Matthias Corvinus", 48).

forgotten that for Pope Pius II, *Europaei* stood for *those who are described as Christians*<sup>212</sup>).

In his *Pontifical Commentaries*, possibly on the eve of the Crusade of Ancona, Pius mocked the Szeklers<sup>213</sup>, already an object of his polite irony in his cardinal(esque) *De Europa* (1458).<sup>214</sup>

After mentioning that: “[...] Wallachians <speak> corrupt Italian; the Transylvanians German, Pius II moved on to the Szeklers. They say the true Hungarians are the Szeklers, whose ancestors came from ancient Hungary and they have changed none of the customs, except their re-ligious worship. They are a poor, decimated, defenceless nation proud and arrogant. They think they are the only noble ones among the Hungarians and they address each other with dominus. Very few till the land; their wealth is in herds, on which they live. They pay not tributes except on the occasion of a royal coronation. They present the king with an ox for every head of a family. It is said that once 60,000 cattle were brought to the king. They fight within the boundaries without pay and are not compelled to go outside.[...]”<sup>215</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Last cited by N. Malcom, *Useful Enemies: Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450–1750* (Oxford, 2019), 7–8, 13–14 (with references also to John Vitéz’s and Janus Pannonius’ stands).

<sup>213</sup> *Commentaries*, V, pp. 796–797. The English translation is more favourable than the Latin text, chiefly in the case of *genus hominum pauper, lacerum ac nudum, verum superbum et arrogans* (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, ch. 16, 325).

<sup>214</sup> *Europe*, 64. It was polite in comparison to what came after for the Szeklers in the *Commentaries* (see therefore also the Hungarian translation by Tamás Notári in *Szemelvények Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini Európa c. művéből* (= *Dokumenta Historica*, XLII) (Szeged, 1999), 21).

<sup>215</sup> *Commentaries*, V, 796–797. The 60,000 cattle (oxes) can be encountered also in a description of Matthias’ lands that reached Milan in early May 1476 (Ş. Papacostea, “Populație și fiscalitate în Țara Românească în secolul al XV-lea: un nou izvor,” *Revista de Istorie* XXXIII, 9 (1980): 1779–1786): [...] *De Valacchia, quando el Re se incorona* [in Matthias’ case: in March 1464], *ha uno cavallo per casa; el cavallo de li zentilhomini debbe essere de valuta de ducati XXV e quello de li popolari XV; et quando el piglia moglie* [in Matthias’ case: Katarina Podiebrad (May 1463), and Beatrice of Aragon (December 1476)] *gli danno uno bo’ per casa; et le casate sono XL<sup>m</sup>. Al tempo del re Ladislao ne cavava LX<sup>m</sup> bovi* [although Ladislav V’ French marriage was never celebrated, because of his death (November 1457)]; *de questo non ha altro, salvo che sono obligati ad levarsi tucti al defensione dello Stato* [of Hungary] [...] (*I diarii di Cicco Simonetta*, edited by Alfio Rosario Natale, I. 1473–1476 (Milan, 1962), 202). Even in terms of figures, the royal obligations of Wallachia, listed in the report brought to Milan by Matthias’ envoy and physician, Francesco Fontana (1476), and those of the Szeklers, recorded earlier by Pius II (1463/1464), were comparable, if not identical. Yet, the Szeklers totalled 80,000 souls at best in the mid-1470s (A. Kubinyi, “Die Bevölkerung des Königreichs Ungarn am Ende des 15. Jarhunderts,” in Kubinyi, *König und Volk im spätmittelalterlichen Ungarn* (Herne, 1998), 148–183, at 181). In spite of the conflicts that had plagued her between 1456 and 1476 in

Pius' view of the *Siculi* was part of a larger mockery of the superstitious Hungarians, addicted to the possession of the Holy Crown, an obsession for which the pope had nothing but contempt.<sup>216</sup>

After describing the Szeklers, Pius added: "[...] Among the Hungarian kings they say Béla was once famous and Andrew and Louis; but most of all they admire Stephen, both for his glorious exploits and his upright life. When Stephen threw off the yoke of the German emperor, the Pope sent him a precious crown of gold and jewels, which is preserved to this day as a holy thing and the Hungarians think no king legitimate unless he is crowned with it. Such is the force of superstition! [...]"<sup>217</sup>

The Szeklers were a *poor, mangled, bare nation proud and arrogant*,<sup>218</sup> but, allegedly, *the true Hungarians are the Szeklers, whose ancestors came from ancient Hungary*<sup>219</sup> (what better way to spite such men than to allude that the forefathers of the Szeklers were colonists from Sicily).<sup>220</sup> In all fairness, the Wallachians,

particular, the population of Wallachia was at least six times superior to that of the Szekler Seats in Transylvania. The 40,000 (in 1476)/ 60,000 (in 1456) Wallachian oxes/ houses stood for about a fifth of the population of the Hungarian realm (placed in the quoted report at 250,000 houses, Transylvania and Slavonia included). Pius II' Szekler figure of 60,000 was an exaggeration, possibly because he had confused, voluntarily or involuntarily, Wallachian figures with Szekler figures. The confusion was rather natural (until 1829, one of Wallachia's counties was *Săcueni/ Secuieni/ Saac*), for two administrative structures and two *nations* closely connected (on the very delicate matter: Hansgerd Glöckenjan, *Hilfsvölker und Grenzwächter in mittelalterlichen Ungarn* (Wiesbaden, 1972)).

<sup>216</sup> *Commentaries*, V, 597. The original text, apart from the last line, is in *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, ch. 16, 325. For the line in question (*tanta vis superstitionis est* in Latin), see for instance the Bellus-Boronkai edition of the *Commentarii* (1993), bk. XII, ch. 16, 581.

<sup>217</sup> *Commentaries*, V, 597.

<sup>218</sup> As mentioned above, the English translation is more favourable to the Szeklers than the original. In return, *defenceless* is hardly a word that fits the medieval Szeklers, no matter how negative Pius intended his picture to be. Therefore, omitting alike Gragg *ac* for reasons of fluency, we have translated *lacerum ac nudum* by *mangled <and> bare*. If sympathy on Pius' behalf existed (in a twisted manner), then the translation of the Szekler "label" could also read: *an impoverished, wounded and demoted nation, but proud and arrogant*. In this case, the modern Hungarians/ the Hungarian royal authorities were explicitly blamed by Pius for the thus unworthy condition of the Szeklers, the ancient Hungarians.

<sup>219</sup> Considering the general Humanist approach of Antiquity and notwithstanding the devastations caused by the Huns, by the *old Hungarians*, the reference to (the) *ancient(s)* might support the said possibility that Pius II harboured sympathy towards the *Siculi*, and that his contempt and his mockery were directed only against the (ruling) Hungarians.

<sup>220</sup> This negative image of the Szeklers redraws attention upon the identity of the *lord of Thoenon*. Out of a variety of ancient names of men and places connected to Sicily, furthermore



not to mention the Germans (Saxons), got – at least in Transylvania and in written – a better Papal treatment and deal (superior to that they would have deserved).<sup>221</sup> Consequently, the location in the *Commentaries* of these largely divergent depictions must be stressed out: the quoted Szekler-Hungarian lines were inserted by Pius II towards the end of his *Commentaries*, which he intended – in their twelve book shape – to be the story of his rise<sup>222</sup>, as his greatest accomplishment was yet to come: the (Papal) crusade.<sup>223</sup>

The negative image of the Szeklers, and of the Hungarians, added immediately after Pius II had stressed out that the Wallachians spoke *corrupt Italian* and the *Transylvanians* German<sup>224</sup>, was part of the Pontifical presentation of

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out of the multitude of personalities and settlements related and relatable to the past of the lands now held by Matthias, Pius II chose the *lord* <of> *Thoenon* with a reason as the name of the recipient of *John Dragula's* infamous letter.

<sup>221</sup> Pius' portrait of the Szeklers suits the traditional image of the Transylvanian Wallachians, who had either opted to forfeit the benefits of Western civilization (Paul Philippi, "Rückwirkungen der Adelsgesetzgebung unter Ludwig dem Großen (1351) auf die siebenbürgische Gruppenautonomie: eine Hypothese," in *Gruppenautonomie in Siebenbürgen: 500 Jahre siebenbürgisch-sächsische Nationsuniversität*, edited by Wolfgang Kessler (Cologne-Vienna-Weimar, 1990), 131–144) or had been forced into ignomy by an oppressive regime (M. Holban, *Din cronica relațiilor româno-ungare în secolele XIII–XIV* (Bucharest, 1982)). Yet Pius' Transylvanian picture resembled a peculiar – expanded (via the Saxons) – *universitas Hungarorum et Valachorum* (Tudor Sălăgean, "Universitas hungarorum et valachorum. North-Western Transylvania at the Time of the Bobalna Uprising (1437–1438)," *Transylvanian Review* XVIII (2009), suppl. 2, pp. 191–202). Aside from the questionable anti-Ottoman commitment of the Wallachians (recorded also by Pius), the image exceeded the limitations, natural and imposed upon, of the Wallachians (I.-A. Pop, *From the Hands of the Schismatic Wallachians: The Romanians and Power in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary (13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> Centuries)* (New York-Oxford-Frankfurt-am-Main-Basel-Vienna, 2013)), but it did so in a manner and in a context that prevents us from reducing it to mere wishful thinking. He wrote of the Wallachians, within and outside Transylvania, at a time when Matthias' Hungarian reign was strongly contested also because of his *low-born* Wallachian origins.

<sup>222</sup> E.g. Märkl, "Pauca de origine Enee," 150–153; O'Brien, *The Commentaries*, 15–18. It was a gamble. This would be the safest interpretation. Pius II had to cross the Adriatic.

<sup>223</sup> A list of the main limits of crusading would certainly include: 1. Christian domestic shortcomings. In addition to troubled Hungary, this was the case of the divided Roman-German Empire (Baldi, *Pio II*, 236). 2. The Ottoman arrangements of Christian powers. In Pope Pius II's days, this was foremost Florence's case (Franco Cardini, "La repubblica di Firenze e la crociata di Pio II," *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia*, XXXIII (1979): 455–482). 3. One realm alone could not defeat the Ottoman Empire (Housley, "Pius II and Crusading," 219–220). John Hunyadi's greatest misfortune was probably that in 1443, prior to Varna, he had given the impression that this could be accomplished.

<sup>224</sup> Already in <De> *Europa*, Enea's note on the Transylvanian Saxons had been brief: "[...] The Germans stem from Saxony. They are brave men, well versed in war, who are called Siebenbürger in their native language from the seven cities which they dwell [...]" (*Europe*, 64). Unlike in

the build-up of the great crusade.<sup>225</sup> A sizeable portion of the presentation was devoted to the futile, according to Pius<sup>226</sup>, conflict over the possession of the Holy Crown of Hungary, matter finally concluded through the Habsburg-Hunyadi treaty of Wiener Neustadt in July 1463.<sup>227</sup> Free of this burden that had weighted heavily upon his first years of rule<sup>228</sup>, and with the *John Dragula* business behind him, Matthias was now prepared to join the general offensive against the *Turk* and claim what was his<sup>229</sup>: not only *Moesia*, both *Upper (Rascia)* and *Lower (Bulgaria)*<sup>230</sup>, Serbia and Bosnia, but also “[...] beyond <them> the

the case of the Szeklers, he spoke even less of the Saxons in the *Commentarii*. Hostility against the Germans in Hungary had been growing since late 1456 (Pop-Simon, “Rapports italiens,” Appendix, no. 6, 25–26), and especially since winter 1457–1458 and Matthias’ election as king (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Manuscrits Italiens, 1588. 1458–1460, ff. 16<sup>r</sup>, 18<sup>r</sup>–19<sup>v</sup>, 25<sup>r</sup>, 39<sup>r-v</sup>; February 18, March 12, 1458). Because of this hostility that bordered hatred and due foremost to Pope Callixtus III’ resolute support of Matthias, Frederick was probably willing at first to compromise with Matthias, until he was approached by discontent Hungarian barons (Haller, “Kaiser Friedrich III,” 120–125).

<sup>225</sup> Hungary’s Piccolominian *bulwark* image (as well as its nuances): J. Marton, “Enea Silvio Piccolomini’s Contacts with Hungary,” and K. Pajorin, “The Crusades and Early Humanism in Hungary,” in *Infima aetas Pannonica. Studies in Late Medieval Hungarian History*, edited by P.E. Kovács, Kornél Szovák (Budapest, 2009): 194–225, 237–249.

<sup>226</sup> *Commentaries*, V, 801–802. In Latin: *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, ch. 16, 327–328.

<sup>227</sup> *Commentaries*, V, 802: “[...] The news of it [of the treaty of Wiener-Neustadt] was brought to Pope Pius on the last day of his fifth year of his Pontificate [September 2, 1463 (the peace had been concluded on July 27; news from Vienna of such import reached Rome within less than two weeks)]. The anniversary next day was celebrated like his birthday and the sixth year of his elevation to the Papacy began [...]”. Pius may have discarded the Germans from the core of the crusade (Baldi, *Pio II*, 236, note 20), but the crusade could not begin without a Habsburg-Hunyadi peace. There was no crusader alternative (yet) to Buda and its lands.

<sup>228</sup> Ottoman-Hungarian truces for two years were reported in Italy both in 1458 and in 1460 (for a pro-Vlad overview of Matthias’ Ottoman stand: Ileana Căzan, Eugen Denize, *Marile puteri și spațiul românesc în secolele XV-XVI* (Bucharest, 2001), 67–68, 81). Additionally, at the end of 1460, Michael Szilágyi lost to Mahmud Angelović and was taken captive under very strange circumstances (Pálosfalvi, *Form Nicopolis to Mohács*, 201–202). Pius did not record the capture and subsequent execution, although he was fully aware of Szilágyi’s importance, both at Belgrade in 1456 and at Buda in 1458 (*Europe*, 61–62, 65).

<sup>229</sup> Which was in fact a lot, following not just Pius’ words, but the extended royal Hungarian title as well, used also by Matthias, that proudly included the royal Balkan exploits of Arpadians and Angevines (for this seemingly not so distant past: Florin Curta, *Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages (500–1300)* (Leiden-Boston, 2019), 363–388. 671–698).

<sup>230</sup> Because Bulgaria too was included in the extended royal title of the kings of Hungary, we recall that, according to Jan Długosz, John Hunyadi had secured in 1444 the written pledge of Wladislaw I (III) of Poland and Hungary that Bulgaria was to be his (*Długosz*, III (Krakow, 1877), 708). John had proceeded in similar fashion after Wladislaw’s enthronement in Buda (1440), when the Jagiellonian monarch had to promise that, for the duration of his rule, Moldavia was to be vassal not to Krakow, but to Buda alone (see also Simon, *Pământurile crucii*, 22–26).

Danube Wallachia, in Sarmatian<sup>231</sup>, or some say Scythian<sup>232</sup>, territory, called Dacia by the ancients, right up to the Euxine [...]. Matthias was to have it all, if he went south and drove away the Ottoman sultan<sup>233</sup>, deemed either the heir of the Trojans<sup>234</sup> or the master of the Turkish Scythes, or both.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>231</sup> The Poles considered themselves Sarmathians. This identity was first coined by Jan Długosz, together with the Roman roots of the Lithuanians, challenged however by 1480. Sarmatism endured in Poland (Martin Faber, *Sarmatismus. Die politische Ideologie des polnischen Adels im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 2018)) and so did, eventually, the Italian origins of the Lithuanians

<sup>232</sup> The origins of the Turks were either *Scythian* (foremost) or *Trojan* (quite popular also) chiefly because of the works of Piccolomini and, at his bequest, of Niccolò Sagundino. The Hungarians however hailed their *Scythian* roots (deemed *Hunic* in the case of the Szeklers). This brought them into collision after Matthias' death with both the Habsburgs and the Roman Wallachians. As a matter of fact, after Louis I of Anjou's Wallachian conflicts, both foreign and domestic (1350s–1370s), explicit anti-Wallachian stands (or paranoia) are documented in Hungary chiefly after Matthias' death in 1490 and after the extinction of the Hunyadi male line in 1505 (Al. Simon, "Valahii și Dieta de la Rákös (1505). Considerații asupra sfârșitului epocii huniade," *Apulum* XLIII (2006): 99–121). In this respect, we must note that a Hungarian battle-cry styled "it is better to have a German than a Wallachian as our king" failed, in case it was ever vigorously voiced, to rally massive support against Matthias. Szilágyi's speech, *per honor de la lengua hungara*, from February 23, 1458, is therefore worth a closer inspection (cf. the report of the same Venetian envoy in Buda, Pietro de Tomasso, in CDH, IV, *Szerbia*, no. 310, 228). Enea's version of the events (in *Europe*, 62), otherwise remarkably similar to the report of Tomasso, did not mention Szilágyi's "nationalistic" use of the Hungarian language. Such aspects must be addressed not only because Matthias' royal Wallachian problems resurfaced after 1458/1459–1463/1464, mainly after his break of 1470 with Frederick (N. Iorga, *Acte și fragmente privitoare la istoria românilor*, III. [1399–1499] (Bucharest, 1899), 37: [...]) *Un gran contrario di questo re e perche essendo lui disceso da Janus* [the rather common deified Italian rendering of Hungarian János], *il qual non era Ungaro nobile, ma Valacho, non di troppo gentil parentella* [...]), but because these matters were in line with reasonings of figures such as Pius II, who was at least indebted to Frederick III, as well as in need of Matthias, especially after the latter had kept his Hungarian ground.

<sup>233</sup> Two additional remarks are in order. On one hand, Ottoman was a much for inclusive designation, as proven also by the work of Francesco Filelfo's son, Giovanni Maria (*Amyris*), commissioned officially by an Italian admirer of Mehmed in the mid-1470s, prior to 1476 (Giovanni Mario Filelfo, *Amyris. De vita et gestis Mahometi Turcorum imperatoris*, edited by Aldo Manetti (Bologna, 1978); Franco Pignatti, "Giovanni Mario Filelfo," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XLVII (1997), *sub voce*). On the other, Matthias was not the one to have Mehmed's head or the throne of Constantine. This at least was clear in Pius' writing. Plus, defeating the Ottomans was a "team effort".

<sup>234</sup> *Teucris* was the name given to the Trojans in Virgil's *Aeneid*. It was quite frequently used in Latin Papal documents for the Turks, prior to Pius (Weber, *Lutter contre les Turcs*, 46).

<sup>235</sup> In his alleged letter to Mehmed II, Pius attempted to circumvent the problem posed by the Scythic roots of the Turks. He emphasized the bravery and the appetite for war of the ancient Scythians, completely different from the effeminate Egyptians and unwarlike Arabs (cf.

Enea Silvio Piccolomini had earlier blamed John Hunyadi for the crusader debacle of Varna (1444) and for the deaths of King Wladislaw III and especially Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, who had been an influence on Enea.<sup>236</sup> John atoned for his fault, his sin, at Belgrade (1456). This is what Piccolomini's positive image of John in <De> *Europa* (1458) might suggest.<sup>237</sup> However, neither as cardinal, nor as pope, Enea never forgot John's flight from Varna and his subsequent career (as in [...] "John Hunyadi was saved by a quick flight and was made regent <of Hungary> [...]").<sup>238</sup> Twenty years later, on the eve of his own crusade, Pius II apparently expected Matthias to fully redeem the failure of old, because, alike his father (to whom Cesarini had allegedly promised *Bulgaria*, a royal promise confirmed in written by Wladislaw III, according to Jan Długosz)<sup>239</sup>, Matthias had a substantial crusader monarchic gain in sight (as well as a personal monarchic debt behind him, for Pius regarded the recent Wiener-Neustadt treaty, also, as his accomplishment).<sup>240</sup>

Once again, all these Papal reasonings were recorded, in the *Commentaries* as well, by means of a conversation between Pope Pius II and the Milanese ambassador Otto de Carretto (September 22, 1463)<sup>241</sup>, written down by the heir of Saint Peter himself in his Caesarian third person style. The next day, after this Milanese rehearsal, actor and director Pius II addressed the cardinals in a secret consistory and secured their support of the crusade.<sup>242</sup> Amidst *errant* foes (such as Matthias' father-in-law, George Podiebrad of Bohemia) and hostile allies (in particular Venice), Pius II relied on three men: Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan, Ferdinand of Aragon, king of Naples, and Matthias, still Hunyadi, king of Hungary (and of whatever he chose to be, provided that John's son left on crusade).<sup>243</sup> In this crusader flow to Black Sea, along the Danube, from its German

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Meserve, *Empires of Islam*, 72–74; Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 20–21), that is unlike the mortal enemies and Muslim rivals of Mehmed (and of his heirs): Mamluk Egypt and the Persians in the remaking (not to mention Karaman or Usun Hassan in Asia Minor).

<sup>236</sup> *Reject Aeneas, Accept Pius*, no. 71, 289; Rowe, "The Tragedy of Aeneas", 307, note 29.

<sup>237</sup> *Europe*, 59, 67.

<sup>238</sup> *Europe*, 85–86; *Commentaries*, V, 798.

<sup>239</sup> Długosz, III, 708; Engel, "János Hunyadi," 253.

<sup>240</sup> *Commentaries*, V, 802.

<sup>241</sup> Date derived not explicitly noted down by Pius II. Otto de Carretto apparently had the idea of having Enea Silvio Piccolomini running for office in 1458 (Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, III, 7–8, and Appendix, no. 1, 378).

<sup>242</sup> *Commentaries*, V, 828.

<sup>243</sup> Pius' choice of allies may have also been a consequence of the fact that he largely ignored the capitulations agreed upon by the cardinals on the second day of the conclave of 1458 (Carol M. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden-Boston, 2009), 88).

springs to its Wallachian Mounds, the *barbarous*<sup>244</sup> story of John Dragula was a watershed for Pius II, the celebrated author of *De Europa* and *De Asia*, who thought big, but had an eye for detail.<sup>245</sup>

As early as 1453 (both prior and after news of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople reached him)<sup>246</sup>, the future pope had developed a personal interest in the borderlands confined by the Black Sea, the expanding Ottoman Empire and the troubled Hungarian realm.<sup>247</sup> Enea, bishop of Siena in those days, twice advocated in his letters to Pope Nicholas V<sup>248</sup> the restoration of Dacia in the East, its return to the lands around Transylvania, the *crown* of Dacia according to Enea (at that time Dacia was commonly used to designate the Kingdom of Denmark in Latin, as well as in Italian).<sup>249</sup> By the time of John Hunyadi's death (August 1456) and the ensuing Hungarian civil war (fuelled

<sup>244</sup> Weber's observation (*Lutter contre les Turcs*, pp. 463–464) that for most <Latin rite> Christians *barbarian* simply meant non-Christian may provide the grounds for further analysis, taking into account, this time, also the *Greek* rite perspective on the matter, because Cardinal Enea Piccolomini/ Pope Pius II manifestly avoided designating the *barbaric* Wallachians of Roman descent as either *Greek* rite Christians or worse as *schismatics*.

<sup>245</sup> One of Iorga's numerous hypothesis on Vlad III's arrest was that his letters of treason had been intercepted by Radu III, who sent them to Matthias Corvinus (*Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, II. *Bis 1538* (Gotha, 1909), 117).

<sup>246</sup> On these matters, see more in I.-A. Pop, Al. Simon, "The Hunyadis and Dacia: From the Fall of Constantinople to the Peace of Wiener-Neustadt," in the current issue of *Historical Yearbook*.

<sup>247</sup> Pius II devised his own geographies of royal power in relation to Habsburg (Ladislas V and Frederick III) and Hunyadis (John and Matthias) Hungary. The Kingdom of Cumania was still part of the extended Hungarian royal title under Matthias. It had covered up to half of the combined territories of future Wallachia and Moldavia (chiefly along the Carpathians) in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Șerban Turcuș, *Românii și Sfântul Scaun în secolul al XIII-lea* (Bucharest, 2001), 225–226, 310–311). Neither in <De> *Europa*, nor in his *Commentarii* did Enea Silvio/ Pius II mention the Cumans.

<sup>248</sup> *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*, III. *Briefe als Bischof von Siena*. 1. 23. September 1450–1. Juni 1454 (Vienna, 1918), no. 109, 190–191 (June 19 and July 12, 1453).

<sup>249</sup> Michael von Cotta-Schönberg, "De Daniae regno aliqua non indigna cognitu: Danmarksbilledet hos en italiensk renæssancehumanist Æneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pius II)," in *Renæssancen isvøb: dansk renæssance i europæisk belysning 1450–1550*, edited by Lars Bisgaard, Jacob Isager and Janus Møller Jensen (Odense: 2008), 83–110, available in English <https://hal-hprints.archives-ouvertes.fr>: "A Picture of Denmark as seen by an Italian Renaissance Humanist, Æneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pius II)," 1–26, here at 10: "[...] The humanist Piccolomini was, possibly, the first writer to establish that Dacia, the Latin name traditionally given to the Danish kingdom, was based on a misunderstanding, and that the name of the country should be Dania (Denmark) and its inhabitants the Dani (the Danes)": '...the people to whom we now refer as the "daci" ought rather to be called the "dani"...' [...]. Earlier on (1449–1450), Enea had included a less than flattering portrait of Erik VII of Denmark in his *De viribus illustris* (edited by A. van Heck (Vatican City, 1991), 96–97).



by the opposed executions of Ulrich von Cilly and Ladislas Hunyadi<sup>250</sup>, both *Dacia* and the *Dacians* seemed to have been well carved into the crusader border between Christendom and the Ottomans (early 1458)<sup>251</sup>, as well as inside royal Hungary proper (November 1456), the latter according to Niccolò Lisci, Enea's trustee and the protonotary of Ladislas V.<sup>252</sup> In 1462, the narratives of and on Matthias Corvinus, not yet legally king of Hungary (without the Holy Crown), and John *Dragula*, his relative, ally and foe, had rather solid foundations, Piccolominian at least.<sup>253</sup>

A neglected connection must be emphasized: according to his own folios, Pius II was pushing Matthias towards the Black Sea, while, both in 1462 (since before March, when news of Vlad III's campaign on the Danube reached the Italian Peninsula)<sup>254</sup> and in 1463 (in September as well, when Matthias prepared to retake Bosnian Jajce from the Ottomans)<sup>255</sup>, the envoys of Vlad III were in the Crimea, especially in Genoese Caffa<sup>256</sup>, unsuccessfully addressed earlier on by John Hunyadi in view of a joint anti-Ottoman war effort (1454–1456).<sup>257</sup> The Pontic drive of the Wallachians (of the *Wallachians of the Hellespontus* in the

<sup>250</sup> Al. Simon, "Milanese Perspectives on the Hungarian Events of 1456," in *Miscellanea historica et archaeologica in honorem professoris Ionel Căndea sexagenarii*, edited by Valeriu Sârbu, Cristian Luca (Brăila, 2009), 249–260.

<sup>251</sup> Mercedes López-Mayán, "Redditi Turchi et potentiarum nobis. Un nuevo testimonio sobre la Cruzada contra el Imperio Otomano a mediados del siglo XV," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* XLVII, 1 (2017): 129–157, at 155.

<sup>252</sup> Fabio Forner, "Enea Silvio Piccolomini e la congiura contro Ulrich von Cilli," in *Margarita amicorum. Studi di cultura europea per Agostino Sottili*, edited by F. Forner, Carla Maria Monti, Paul Gerhard Schmidt (Milan, 2005), 351–376, at 368.

<sup>253</sup> It might go without saying that Piccolomini's/ Pius II' actual medieval political impact on the Wallachians was significantly diminished in Romanian historiography because of the *John Dragula* affair and also because of the prevailing idea that Enea's writings, as secretary, bishop, cardinal or pope, were foremost learned Humanist digressions, useful nevertheless for furthering the Roman roots of the Wallachians, that is of the Romanians.

<sup>254</sup> Though the Crimean mission of Vlad III's men has attracted some attention over the years, this particular detail was not noticed.

<sup>255</sup> This chronological "coincidence" too has remained unnoticed, possibly because Vlad III's envoys were deemed "stranded" in the Crimea after their master's downfall at the end of 1462.

<sup>256</sup> Archivio di Stato di Genova, Genoa, Banco di San Giorgio, Sala 34, *Caffae-Massaria*, reg. 590/1242. 1463, cc. 71<sup>v</sup> 74<sup>r</sup> (March 19, August 30, 1462) reg. 590/1243, 1463, cc. 71<sup>r</sup>, 171<sup>r</sup> (March 1, September 20, 1463). The entries were poorly and even erroneously edited by Iorga (*Acte și fragmente*, III, 39–42).

<sup>257</sup> See also Ch. Gastgeber, "Jacobus Campora. Bischof von Kaffa. Rede an Kaiser Friedrich III. und an König Ladislaus Postumus nach der Eroberung Konstantinopels," in *The Age of the Jagiellonians. 1386–1526* (= *Eastern and Central European Studies*, III), edited by Florin Ardelean, Christopher Nicholson, J. Preiser-Kapeller (New York-Oxford-Basel-Frankfurt-am-Main-Vienna, 2013), 93–119.

words of Sixtus IV)<sup>258</sup>, became highly present in crusader actions and designs in the 1470s, when Matthias teamed-up with Stephen III of Moldavia<sup>259</sup>, who, in spite of his personal reluctance, had to clear the path of the Wallachian restoration of Vlad III<sup>260</sup>, apparently much desired by Matthias.<sup>261</sup> Possibly, Vlad, more than Stephen<sup>262</sup>, was Matthias' link of choice between the Wallachians of Transylvania and those of the Black Sea (to use geography of power of the late Pope Pius II).<sup>263</sup> At any rate, Vlad had returned to the power and status he had enjoyed through his Hunyadi wife in Transylvania (much to the dislike of the local Saxon authorities)<sup>264</sup>, until 1465–1466, when Stephen III of Moldavia<sup>265</sup>

<sup>258</sup> See for instance Edgar Artner, *Magyarország mint a nyugati keresztény művelődés védőbástyája. A Vatikáni Levéltárnak azok az okiratai, melyek őseinknek a Keletről Európát fenyegető veszedelmek ellen kifejtett erőfeszítéseire vonatkoznak (cca. 1214–1606)*, edited by Szovag Kornel (Budapest, 2004), no. 101, 111–112.

<sup>259</sup> E.g. Pop, "Atletul Ștefan și românii," Appendix, no. 1, 28–30 (July 1475); no. 3, 31–34 (February 1476).

<sup>260</sup> Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku, Dubrovnik, Lettere e Commissioni, *Lettere di Levante*, reg. 5. [1403–1576], f. 113<sup>v</sup> (January 31, 1474). The letter sent by Ragusa to the Venetian doge was published, with errors, by József Gelich, L. Thallóczy *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae* (Budapest, 1887), no. 385, 631. For a new edition: Pop, "Atletul Ștefan și românii," Appendix, no. 2, 30–31.

<sup>261</sup> See also the recent study of A. Weber, A. Gheorghe, "Noi descoperiri în arhivele Italiei și Austriei cu privire la ultimul an din viața lui Vlad Țepeș (1476)," *Muzeul Național XXXI* (2019): 27–46.

<sup>262</sup> Stephen was equally (if not chiefly) Venice's representative in the East (I.-A. Pop, Al. Simon, "Ungaria et Valachia: promisiunile valahe ale Republicii Sfântului Marcu din anii 1470," *Revista Istorică*, NS XXV, 3–4 (2015): 3–66). In this context, we draw attention to a passage in William de Wey's memoirs from the year 1462: [...] *Sed anno Domini CC cum Atela Rex Hungarie destruxerat istas civitates et plures civitates Hungarie, fideles et catholici viri istarum civitatum, et Regni Hungarie, ad locum maris, ubi edificatur Venecia, venerunt, et ibi edificabant civitatem. Sic quidem magna pars generosorum Venecie traxerunt originem ab Hungariis, ex quibus dominus Andreas Morason patronus meus duxit originem.* [...] (*The Itineraries of William de Wey, Fellow of Eton College, to Jerusalem A.D. 1458 and A.D. 1462, and to Saint James of Compostella A.D. 1456* [edited by Bulkeley Bandinel, George Williams] (London, 1857), 117). De Wey's protector was Andrea Morosini (Andrea Denke, *Konrad Grünembergs Pilgerreise ins Heilige Land 1486: Untersuchung, Edition und Kommentar*, (Cologne-Vienna-Graz, 2011, 140), the relative of Paolo and Pietro Morosini, who played an sensitive part in Venice's Moldavian policies (C. Luca, Al. Simon, "Documentary Perspectives on Matthias Corvinus and Stephen the Great," *Transylvanian Review* XVII, 3 (2008): 85–112, at 87–88).

<sup>263</sup> Al. Simon, "Valahii de la Marea Neagră și valahii din Ungaria în cruciada anului 1476," *Revista Istorică*, NS XXII, 5–6 (2012): 35–54.

<sup>264</sup> *Urkundenbuch*, VI, no. 3389, 192; no. 3400, 200.

<sup>265</sup> Moldavia and Wallachia were intertwined into one rule prior to the cited pro-Habsburg narrative on *Dracula* (in fact Mircea I), as the lord of both Moldavia and Wallachia (c. 1475). According to de Wey and his sources, encountered on Hospitaller Rhodes (after August 19-before

gained control over the Danube Mounds<sup>266</sup> and began expanding his influence also over – part of – the Szeklers.<sup>267</sup> Apparently, following Pius's advice (if indeed the pope meant at the end of his portrait of *John Dragula* that the Wallachian was *being wasted in prison*)<sup>268</sup>, Matthias still made good use of Vlad after the events of 1462, in Bosnia as well.<sup>269</sup> It is therefore not unsurprising that even after the so-called and much debated arrest of Vlad in the second half of November 1462, Matthias did not name him a traitor or worse, even when he recorded, on December 3, 1462, the devastations caused by Vlad in recent years in the vicinity of Saxon Braşov, in the Transylvanian Wallachian Land of Făgăraş.<sup>270</sup> Matters seemed much more complex than *John Dragula's* infamous treason.

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September 5, 1462): [...] *postquam Turcus occidisset Baronem de Muldan in Regno Hungarie, in Comitatu Walachie Majoris que est in confinibus Hungarie, accepit secum duos filios suos quos nutritivit usque ad annos discrecionis [...]* / [...] *after the Turk killed the Baron of Moldavia in the Kingdom of Hungary, in the Greater Wallachia County which is at Hungary's boundaries, he took with him his [i.e. the baron's] two sons, which he nourished until they became of age [...]* (*The Itineraries of William de Wey*, 99). The most obvious mistake was that John Hunyadi and not the Turk (Murad II at that time) had executed Vlad II Dracul, the father of Vlad III and Radu III (1447). In return, the two brothers had indeed grown-up as hostages at the Ottoman court (yet since 1442).

<sup>266</sup> A note on Stephen III's stand(s) in 1462 is needed in relation to both the Danube Mounds and to Matthias' Hungarian concerns. In 1462, together with Mehmed's naval forces, Stephen attacked Chilia, held jointly since the days of John Hunyadi by the king of Hungary and the voivode of Wallachia. The siege failed (late June/ early July). Stephen attempted a reconciliation with Matthias (M. Cazacu, "Du nouveau sur le rôle international de la Moldavie dans la seconde moitié du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue des Études Roumaines* XVI (1981): 31–44, at 43). The king apparently accepted Stephen's offer and announced it on August 10 to the cities of Bardejov and Kosice in Upper Hungary (the king's letters are in Al. Simon, *Ştefan cel Mare şi Matia Corvin. O coexistenţă medievală* (Cluj-Napoca, 2007), 484–485). Upper Hungary had been largely controlled by the pro-Habsburg forces led by Jan Jiskra. In May 1462, Jiskra had come to terms with Matthias and entered his royal service. Jiskra was then entrusted with the task of arresting Vlad.

<sup>267</sup> For power relations at the Szekler border between Hungary and Moldavia: Papacostea, "Politica externă," 20–21; Pop-Simon, "The Venetian and Walachian Roots," 285–287. These relations fuelled the conflict of 1467 between Matthias and Stephen, that led to the king's impromptu Moldavian campaign, but also eased their arrangement of 1471.

<sup>268</sup> We recall the original text: ([...] *Valachus adhuc in carcere delitescit, magno et honesto vir corpore, et cuius species imperio digna videatur; adeo sepe differt hominis ab animo facies [...]*) (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 297).

<sup>269</sup> [Ivan Gundulić], *Cronice ulteriore di Ragusa*, in *Chronica Ragusina Junii Resti (ab origine urbis usque ad annum 1451) item Joannis Gundulae 1451–1484* (= *Monumenta spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium*, XXV, Scriptores, II), edited by Speratus Nastilis (Zagreb, 1893), 371 (Vlad was erroneously named *voevoda da Moldavia* and therefore the voivode who accompanied Matthias to Bosnia was deemed Peter Aaron, former ruler of Moldavia).

<sup>270</sup> The deed issued by the king in Braşov was already published in *Hurmuzaki*, XV/1, no. 100, 58; *Urkundenbuch*, VI, no. 3304, 135–136. The passage in question read: [...] *Nos de*

The letter sent by John Dragula to Mehmed II prior to the *Ides of November* 1462<sup>271</sup> may have been an utter forgery (although something certainly did attract the sultan north of the Danube in November 1462)<sup>272</sup>, a forgery aimed by Pius, its sole potential author in the only preserved version of the letter<sup>273</sup>, to further Christendom's fundamental instability (which he so often lamented) and to promote his vital role in stewarding states in turmoil.<sup>274</sup> Still, aside from the strange personal relation between Matthias and Vlad, aka John Dragula<sup>275</sup>, Pius had more than enough pragmatic Wallachian grounds to web his own tales and designs.<sup>276</sup> In them, *Hungary, Dacia etc.*<sup>277</sup> could have featured prominently either as a/ the missing link<sup>278</sup> between cosmopolite Christendom and the vigorous rustic Ottoman Empire<sup>279</sup>, or as a/ the bridge into Mehmed's realms (if

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*fide et fidelitate fidelis nostri circumspecti Georgii Byro Civis et inhabitatoris Civitatis nostre Brassouiensis confisi, eidem facultatem dedimus ut ipse possessiones nostras, Sarkan [Șercaia] et Mykofalw [Părău] vocatas, in districtu de Fogaras existentes et habitas per devastacionem Wlad wayuode desolatas, quas nos ipsi Georgio Byro, simul cum omnibus utilitatibus et pertinentiis quibuslibet sub veris metis et antiquis earundem habitis, pro honore suo durante beneplacito nostro duximus dandas et deputandas [...].* That same day, Matthias apparently left Brașov (Horváth, *Itineraria*, p. 72) and returned to Hungary with Vlad.

<sup>271</sup> The growing information on Mehmed II's network of spies in the West (and especially in Italy) has not been the subject of an scholarly investigation for the past seventy years (Babinger, "Mehmed II. und Italien," 154, note 2).

<sup>272</sup> *Stare srpske povelje pisma*, I/2, no. 845, 263; Bojović, *Raguse*, no. 29, 231–232.

<sup>273</sup> A certain paranoia of behalf of Pius II must also be factored in for. Several contacts between Italian politicians and Mehmed had been established in 1460–1461 (Sean Roberts, "The Lost Map of Matteo de' Pasti: Cartography, Diplomacy and Espionage in the Renaissance Adriatic," *Journal of Early Modern History* XX (2016): 19–38; Antonia Gatward Cevizli, "Mehmed II, Malatesta and Matteo De' Pasti: A Match of Mutual Benefit between the *Terrible Turk* and a *Citizen of Hell*," *Renaissance Studies* XXXI, 1 (2017): 43–65).

<sup>274</sup> A selective, yet impressive, list of the instances in which Pius II claimed sole merit for the successes can be found in O'Brien, "Arms and Letters," 1066, note 36 (the list, based on the *Commentaries*, reveals an attitude directly shapen by Caesar's example).

<sup>275</sup> Which in fact brings us back to the question of the actual identity of Vlad's Hunyadi bride of February–March 1462.

<sup>276</sup> We recall only the divergent ways in which Enea/ Pius depicted John Hunyadis in his letters and in his writings.

<sup>277</sup> Normally, Croatia should have come after Hungary in Matthias' Papal title. Instead, Dacia stood aside Hungary.

<sup>278</sup> See also Hans Pfeffermann, *Die Zusammenarbeit der Renaissancepäpste mit den Türken* (Winterthur, 1946), 6–23. In 1462 (alike later in 1466, when Venice was officially at war with the Ottoman Empire), Florence intercepted Venetian correspondence and sent it to Mehmed II (Babinger, "Lorenzo de' Medici," 308–311).

<sup>279</sup> E.g. J. Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusader Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* XLIX (1995: 111–207; J. Helmuth, "Pius II. und die Türken," in *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, edited by Bodo Guthmüller (Tübingen

the crusade, promised and proclaimed in 1460 at the futile crusader congress of Mantua<sup>280</sup>, came to fruition).<sup>281</sup>

To little astonishment, about a decade after *Dragula's* nefarious deeds, Nicholas, bishop of Modruš, Pius II' legate to both Stephen Tomašević and Matthias<sup>282</sup>, used the *vile* Wallachians of Rome's once great empire and *their* tyrant, *Dracula*<sup>283</sup>, to undermine Hunyadi royal legitimacy at Christendom's south-eastern border, foremost in the West Balkans.<sup>284</sup> A grand *Illyrian* plan of a rebuilt *Gothia*, centred around Bosnia<sup>285</sup>, was pushed forward, as Matthias stood once more on the brink of losing all realms (real and imagined)<sup>286</sup>, with

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2000): 79–137; B. Weber, “Conversion, croisade et œcuménisme à la fin du Moyen-âge: encore sur la lettre de Pie II à Mehmed II,” *Crusades*, VII (2008): 181–199.

<sup>280</sup> Vlad's actions have long be placed in connection to this congress but without even indirect evidence. In return, it is rather certain that in 1460 Moldavia had to be freed from the Turk. According to a Venetian proposal: [...] *Dechiarando che dicto exercito como se move ala giornata vanno aquisitando l'Albania et la Walachia Bassa [Moldavia] sottoposte al Turco per modo che avanti che siano gionti al confino de Graecia sarrano multiplicati in triplo oltre li cruce signati che sarrano passati d'Italia et daltri paesi [...]* (Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Vatican City, Armaria, [reg.] XXXIX–10, ff. 256(276)<sup>r</sup>–257(277)<sup>v</sup>; from late 1459–early 1460; cf. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, 262, note 111).

<sup>281</sup> Yet Filelfo attacked Pius II, after his death, on precisely Hungarian grounds. The pope wanted to sail from Ancona to Ragusa in order to have a “better seat”, while he watched how Mehmed II crushed Hungary (*Notes et extraits*, IV. 1453–1475 (Bucharest, 1915), no. 146, 242). The attack, dated September 15, 1464, might be relevant also for earlier political plays at the curia. Filelfo was a close associate and friend of Bessarion. Together, they “vetted” the *Greeks*, in particular, but also the *Slavs*, who sought harbour in the Italian Peninsula following the Ottoman expansion.

<sup>282</sup> For bishop Nicholas and his quite fascinating career, see Luka Spoljarić, *Nicholas of Modruš, The Glory of Illyria: Humanist Patriotism and Self-Fashioning in Renaissance Rome* [PhD Thesis CEU] (Budapest, 2013).

<sup>283</sup> This image, convenient in the days of Modern nationalisms, entered Hungarian historiography at the time of the celebrations of the Magyar Millennium of 1896 (V. Fraknói, “Miklós modrusi püspök élete, munkája és könyvtára,” *Magyar Könyvszemle*, V (1897): 1–23, at 12–13).

<sup>284</sup> Most of the relevant information was known to Yugoslav historiographies (Veljan Atanasovski, *Pad Hercegovine* (Belgrade, 1979), 20–23, 100–101; Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povi-jesti*, 296–301), and possibly already to Austro-Hungarian historians, another over-arching and frequently confusing and distorting designation (chiefly Thallóczy, *Studien*, 110–120, 170–181).

<sup>285</sup> See L. Spoljarić, “Nicholas of Modruš and his *De Bellis Gothorum*: Politics and National History in the Fifteenth-Century Adriatic,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, XCII (2019): 457–491. Given also Długosz' Hunyadi stands, a legend popular at the time must be recalled. The Goths, led by Lech, had fled Illyria, and had founded Poland.

<sup>286</sup> Not to mention his alleged imperial quest, already noted (*Bonfini*, III, 243; IV, 72) in relation to the Viennese rebellion of 1462 and Matthias' march *adversus* Vlad III (the reference works remains V. Fraknói's *Mátyás törekvései a császári trónra* (= Értkezések a Történeti Tudományok Köréből, XXIII, 9) (Budapest, 1914). The sources on that matter, largely charges



the rival Jagiellonians of Krakow and Prague – wishfully– claiming that not only Szeklers, but entire Transylvania had renounced him.<sup>287</sup>

Pius II may not have been the greatest of politicians, as pope, as cardinal or just as Enea, but as a political thinker (say geo-politician) his educated instincts were remarkable. Sixtus IV was to join Bosnia and Wallachia in one fresco of vacant crowns in the *Corsia Sistina* (1479–1480).<sup>288</sup> The monarchic fate of Matthias' only son, John (1488–1490), was to depend on Bosnia (that had to be his royal crown) and on the partition of Hungary (the Holy Crown had to return into Habsburg hands).<sup>289</sup> With *Transilvania* of *Dacia* played between the Habsburgs and the Porte, as in 1462<sup>290</sup>, it was all together a long-shot. Pius II had already made it clear by telling the Wallachian *Dragula* story in his *Commentaries*, while omitting a couple of essential “details”. It was however a long-shot becoming for a “Kennedy family” whose fortune was to rest on an arrow, a ring and a raven.<sup>291</sup>

## PAPA, HUNIAZII ȘI VALAHII (ROMÂNII): CURIOSUL CAZ AL LUI PIUS AL II-LEA

### Rezumat

Una dintre scrisorile politice considerate demne de a fi citate și transcrise de către papa Pius al II-lea (*olim* Enea Silvio Piccolomini) în *Comentariile* sale a fost mesajul trimis (aparent) de către Vlad al III-lea Țepeș (*Dracula*) sultanului Mehmed al II-lea pe 7 noiembrie 1462. Misiva a reprezentat embrionul textual al capitoului al 12-lea din cartea a XI

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brought against the *usurper* Matthias, are however worth reviewing, for the story seemingly gained Roman humanist momentum around 1475 (Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex*, 188), after Matthias overcame the new tide of plots against him, including the *Gothic* plan, and actively (re)began to promote his own Roman (imperial) past.

<sup>287</sup> Aleksander Jabłonowski, *Sprawy wołoskie za Jagiellonów. Akta i listy* (= Źródła Dziejowe, X), (Warsaw, 1878), Appendix, no. 8, 30; Felix Priebatsch, *Politische Correspondenz des Kurfürsten Albrecht Achilles, 1470–1486* (= Publikationen aus den Königlichen Preussischen Staatsarchiven, LIX), I. 1470–1474, Leipzig, 1894, no. 660, 555–556; *Długosz*, IV, 603, 621.

<sup>288</sup> Al. Simon, “*Duca Stephano vaivoda intitulato re <de Bosna>dal Re de Hungaria și <Nicolaus>Bosniae et Valachiae Rex: despre identitatea regală a valahilor la mijlocul anilor 1470*,” *Revista Istorică*, NS XXXI, 1–2 (2020): in press.

<sup>289</sup> J[oseph].<von>Zahn, “Über ein Admonter Formelbuch des 15. Jahrhunderts,” *Beiträge zur Kunde Steiermärkischer Geschichtsquellen*, XVII (1880: 33–80, at no. 6, 73–74.

<sup>290</sup> For instance: *Acta vitam Beatricis reginae Hungariae illustrantia. Aragóniai Beatrix magyar királyné éltetőre vonatkozó okiratok* (= *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, I, 39), edited by Albert [von] Berzeviczy (Budapest, 1914), no. 101 148; *Acta et epistolae*, I, no. 39, 42–43.

<sup>291</sup> A story made famous by the Reformation. For further (journalistic) reading: Marcus Tanner, *The Raven King: Matthias Corvinus and the Fate of his Lost Library* (New Haven, CT, 2008).

(*Iohannis Dragule immanis atque nefanda crudelitas, eiusque in regem Hungarie deprehensa perfidia, et tandem captivitas*), acoperind aproximativ o cincime din capitol. Capitolul despre Dragula a fost așezat între descrirea (în capitolul al 11-lea) a conspirației vieneze împotriva lui Albert al VI-lea de Habsburg, fratele și rivalul împăratului Frederic al III-lea (aprilie 1462) și prezentarea emfatică (în capitolul al 13-lea) a cererii regale antiotomane trimise lui Pius al II-lea de către noul rege al Bosniei, Ștefan Tomašević, cu aproximativ un an mai devreme, la sfârșitul verii anului 1461 (o data pe care papa a omis să o pomenească, deși a citat pe larg din mesajul solilor lui Tomašević, precum și din răspunsul pontifical primit de aceștia). Cazul lui *Ioan Dragula* lega în mod explicit capitolele al 11-lea și al 13-lea.

Adesea neglijate, capitolele care mărgineau descrierea nelegiuitorilor fapte ale voievodului Țării Românești formau contextul politic logic al prezentării pontificale a lui Vlad Țepeș/*Ioan Dragula*, un context întemeiat pe Matia Corvin. Fiul lui Ioan (Iancu) de Hunedoara, care-l executase pe părinte lui *Ioan Dragula*, Vlad al II-lea *Dracul* (doar *Dragula* pentru Pius al II-lea), era, așa cum îl menționa și suveranul pontif, deopotrivă: (1.) stăpânul (suzeranul) lui *Ioan Dragula*, (2.) marele dușman al lui Frederic al III-lea și (3.) contestatul suzeran al lui Ștefan Tomašević. Înaintea “chestiunii *Dragula*” din 1462, Pius al II-lea îi servise cu credință lui Frederic al III-lea drept secretar și trimis (de la sfârșitul anului 1442 și până la alegerea sa drept papă în august 1458) și îi trimisese o coroană lui Ștefan Tomašević pentru încoronarea regală din ziua de Crăciun a anului 1462 (în pofida opoziției lui Matia, pe ale cărui drepturi bosniace Pius al II-lea pretindea în *Comentariile* sale că le apăraseră). Plecând de la cazul lui *Ioan Dragula*, cel mai faimos *valah* din scrierile lui Enea/ Pius, studiul se concentrează pe adevăratul caz din fața noastră, cel al umanistului/ papă, cu planurile sale pentru un continent și pentru o credință în criză.