

EASTERN AFFAIRS IN ITALIAN POLITICS IN THE EARLY 1490S: RUMOURS, (DIS) INFORMATION AND INTERESTS

*Ioan-Aurel Pop**, *Alexandru Simon***

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In October and November 1492, a series of reports reached Milan. Sent from the “Bolognese station” of the Lombard state by Francesco Tranchedini, the *dispacci* dealt, often in great detail, with Italian, as well as European politics. That fall Venice was on the brink of a new war with the High Porte. Special attention was paid to her favourite of old, Stephen III the Great, voivode of Moldavia. Stephen had re-entered her well paid service as the *Serenissima*’s ‘captain’. He had also taken on the title of ‘King of Moldavia’ (*Re de Mundavia*).¹

Back in the East, Antonio Bonfini, the chronicler of Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary, Bohemia and Croatia, had found a new lord, Wladislaw II Jagiello. Bonfini recorded the events of September 1492 apparently as they unfolded. That autumn Stephen III blocked the Ottoman attack on Hungary. Earlier in

* Romanian Academy, Calea Victoriei, 125, Sector 5, București/ Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty of History and Philosophy Cluj-Napoca, str. Mihail Kogălniceanu 1, e-mail: i_a_pop@yahoo.com

** Romanian Academy, Center for Transylvanian Studies Cluj-Napoca, str. Mihail Kogălniceanu, nr. 12–14, email: alexandrusimon2003@gmail.com

¹ The reports were “eye-marked” by Italian archivists. Nevertheless, only the least relevant one was published by Vikentij Makušev (*Monumenta historica Slavorum meridionalium vicinorumque populorum e tabulariis et bibliothecis Italicis deprompta, collecta atque illustrata*, I–2. *Genua, Mantua, Mediolanum, Panormus et Taurinum*, (Belgrade, 1882) (MHS), no. 15c, p. 137). This recalls another Eastern collection of Western sources. “Everybody” featured in it, minus the *Wallachians/ Romanians* (Vladimir Lamansky, *Secrets d’État de Venise. Documents, extraits, notices et études servant à éclaircir les rapports de la Seigneurie avec les Grecs, les Slaves et la Porte Ottomane* (Sankt Petersburg, 1884), passim).

April, Władislaw had confirmed Stephen's possession over the Transylvanian estates granted to him by Matthias. Bound to Władislaw, the Hunyadi monarch's unwanted successor, Bonfini presented Stephen as the "successor" of Matthias' in the capacity of 'Wallachian kinglet' (i.e. *Valachorum regulus*). This had been at first a blunt Habsburg and Hungarian mockery of Matthias. Not in 1492, when Stephen, Pope Sixtus IV's 'athlete of the Christian Faith' in the mid-1470s, manifestly rose to an unprecedented level of power.²

The events and titles of 1492 were the result of Stephen's earlier deeds (victories, losses and recoveries). They were also the prelude to the ensuing conflicts in East-Central Europe, chiefly between the House of Jagiełło and Stephen of Moldavia. Maximilian I of Habsburg, king of the Romans, and Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II were to serve as "imperial referees" of the feud.³

Annus mirabilis 1492

In 1492 the Old World, the Byzantine one, was (supposed) to end and the New World to begin.⁴ For Gennadius (Georgios Kourtesios) Scholarios, the first Ottoman Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and a key opponent of the Union of Florence (1439)⁵, the year 7000 of the Byzantine Calendar (*Anno Domini* 1492) was the last year before unavoidable Judgement Day.⁶ Scholarios

² Alexandru Lapedatu was the first to draw attention of these Hungarian circumstances (*Vlad-Vodă Călugărul, 1482–1496* (offprint *Convorbiri Literare*, 38) (Bucharest, 1903), 43–45, 51–59. Yet his focus was not on Stephen III, but on his rival, Vlad IV *the Monk* of Wallachia.

³ We have last addressed this topic in "Ștefan cel Mare, căpitanul Veneției, regele Moldovei și crăișorul valahilor, în toamna anului 1492," *Revista Istorică*, NS 31, nos. 1–2 (2020): 61–85. The present paper is a revised version of the former. "Local matters" were hence omitted.

⁴ Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, "Byzance et la fin du monde. Courants de pensée apocalyptiques sous les Paléologues," in *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople*, eds. Benjamin Lellouche, Stéphane Yerasimos (Paris, 1999), 55–97; Wolfram Brandes, "Byzantine Predictions of the End of the World in 500, 1000, and 1492 AD," in *The End(s) of Time(s) Apocalypticism, Messianism, and Utopianism through the Ages (=Prognostication in History*, 6), ed. Hans-Christian Lehner (Leiden – Boston, 2021), 32–63, at 52–53. The *anno Hegirae* 900 (October 11, 1494–September 29, 1495) could also be worth a comparative analysis in this Christian medieval context.

⁵ Marie-Hélène Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400-vers 1472). Un intellectuel orthodoxe face à la disparition de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 2008), 233, 237–239, 243–246, 444–448.

⁶ Antonio Rigo, *L'anno 7000, la fine del mondo e l'Impero cristiano. Nota su alcuni passi di Giuseppe Briennio, Simeone di Tessalonica e Gennadio Scolario*, in *La cattura de la fine. Variazione dell'escatologia in regime di cristianità (=Studi e Ricerche di Scienze Religiose*, 7), ed. Giuseppe Ruggieri (Genoa, 1992), 151–185. *The Byzantine year ("since Adam") 7000 covered the interval September 1, 1491–August 31, 1492. It had already begun in 1491 AD.*

(† 1472/ 1473) was however no longer alive to witness the fiasco of his prophetic computations (they were recalibrated for 7021/ 1512–1513).⁷

That same year, 1492, as a follow-up to the Iberian *Reconquista*, recently completed at the start of that year through the conquest of Muslim Granada (January 2, 1492)⁸, Christopher Columbus set sail westwards, not eastwards for *India* (the Indies), and arrived in *America* (the Americas).⁹ Columbus, a Genoese otherwise¹⁰, was later deemed the son of Wladislaw I (III) Jagiello, king of Poland and Hungary¹¹, who had succumbed while crusading to the rescue of Byzantium (1444).¹² At any rate, the whole idea behind Columbus' journey was to circumvent the Ottoman Empire that had grown in the East between Christendom and *India*, consequently hindering lucrative trading.¹³

One of the first Europeans to learn of the endeavours of Columbus was Francesco Tranchedini (*Trincadini*).¹⁴ He was an official Milanese

⁷ E.g. David Khunchukashvili, *Die Anfänge des letzten Zarentums. Politische Eschatologie in der Moskauer Rus' zwischen Byzanz und dem Heiligen Römischen Reich (=Europa im Mittelalter, 44)* (Berlin – Boston, 2023), 144–145, 151–154. Scholarios himself had factored-in this second possibility: i.e. the world might in fact not come to an end in 7000 (1491–1492), but in 7021 (1512–1513), if the (in)famous Flavius Josephus was correct in his predictions (Alexander A. Vasiliev, “Medieval Ideas of the End of the World: West and East,” *Speculum*, 16, no. 2 (1942–1943): 462–502, at 499; by interpreting Scholarios' partially preserved text, which he ascribed to 1472, Vasiliev dated the first end of the world to AD 1493–1494, not 1491–1492).

⁸ John Edwards, “*Reconquista* and Crusade in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, ed. Norman Housley (New York, 2004), 163–181, at 170–172, Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Last Crusade in the West: Castile and the Conquest of Granada* (Philadelphia, PA, 2014), pp. 193–195, 248–249.

⁹ William D. Phillips Jr., Carla Rahn Phillips. *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (Cambridge, 1993), 133–134. The date of the discovery is October 12, AD 1492 (=7001 in the Byzantine calendar). Columbus had departed on his journey on August 3, 1492 (=7000 in the Byzantine calendar). He returned, yet to Lisbon, due to the storm, on March 4, 1493.

¹⁰ Thorough analysis of the topic: Jacques Héers, *Christophe Colomb* (Paris, 1981), pp. 21–23.

¹¹ Krystyna Łukasiewicz, “Deceptive Practices in Fifteenth Century Europe: The Case of Władysław III Jagiellon (*Varnensis*),” *The Polish Review*, 57, no. 2 (2012); 3–20; Manuel Rosa, *Colon. La historia nunca contada* (Madrid, 2010), 345–367. See also Leopold Kielanowski, *A Odissea de Ladislau o Varnense* (Funchal, 1996).

¹² See also John Jefferson, *The Holy Wars of King Wladislas and Sultan Murad: The Ottoman-Christian Conflict from 1438–1444 (=History of Warfare, 76)* (Leiden – Boston, 2012), 482–488.

¹³ Carol Delaney, “Columbus's Ultimate Goal: Jerusalem,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48, no. 2 (2006): 260–292, at 262–265. See also Abbas Hamdani, “Columbus and the Recovery of Jerusalem,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 99, no. 1 (1979): 39–48.

¹⁴ Francesco (1439–c. 1504) was also the first Italian to announce, on June 17, 1493, from Bologna, Columbus's second voyage that began on September 24 (Archivio di Stato di Milano, Milan (ASM), Archivio Ducale Sforzesco (A.D.S.), Potenze Estere, *Romagna*, cart. 1043. *Gennaio 1493–Giugno 1494*, fasc. 6. *Giugno*, nn; printed in *Fonti italiane per la storia della scoperta del Nuovo Mondo*, edited by Guglielmo Berchet, I (Venice, 1894), no. [V-] 2, p. 194).

diplomat¹⁵, the son of the famed Nicodemo,¹⁶ as well the pupil of the influential philo-Byzantine humanist, Francesco Filelfo.¹⁷ Still in autumn 1492, Tranchedini also took time to extensively report on Stephen, the voivode of Moldavia.¹⁸ At that time, the feared Byzantine year 7000 had already ended (on August 31, 1492) and “doubt free” 7001, had commenced (on September 1, 1492).¹⁹

In 1484, Stephen III had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Sultan Bayezid II.²⁰ With the blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (and of the Patriarchs of the East)²¹, Bayezid *Velî* (i.e. the Saintly), the son of Mehmed II *Faith*, the conqueror of Constantinople (1453), took Stephen’s vital Black Sea

¹⁵ In fact a spy (see his *Diplomatische Geheimschriften*, ed. Walter Höflechner (Graz, 1970)).

¹⁶ With focus on the Milanese “intelligence network”: Paolo Margaroli, *Diplomazia e stati rinascimentali. Le ambascerie sforzesche fino alla conclusione della Lega Italica (1450–1455)* (Florence, 1992), 48–49, 79–80; Paola Sverzellati, “Per la biografia di Nicodemo Tranchedini da Pontremoli, ambasciatore sforzesco”, *Aevum*, LXXII (1998), pp. 485–557.

¹⁷ P. Sverzellati, “Il carteggio di Nicodemo Tranchedini e le lettere di Francesco Filelfo”, *Aevum*, 71 (1997): 441–529; John Monfasani, “Filelfo and the Byzantines,” in *Francesco Filelfo: Man of Letter*, ed. Jeroen De Keyser (Leiden, 2019), 13–21.

¹⁸ For earlier Milanese reports on Stephen (authored mainly by the duchy’s secretary in Venice, Leonardo Botta): I.-A. Pop, “La Santa Sede, Venezia e la Valacchia nella crociata antiottomana di fine Quattrocento”, *Transylvanian Review*, 20, suppl. 1 (2011) [2012]: 7–22. It is perhaps noteworthy that Francesco Tranchedini was about the same age as Stephen.

¹⁹ Whether or not these chronological assessments are relevant for the topic is difficult to determine. Because of the attention given over the past two decades to Stephen’s “relation” with the end of the world (starting with Maria-Magdalena Székely, “Ștefan cel Mare și sfârșitul lumii,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 21 (2003): 271–278), the matter has to be taken into account. In relation to Scholarios’ calculations, we add that, before the end of the year 7000, the *Serenissima* placed, on August 28, 1492, John Plousiadenos as bishop of Modon, her prized harbour. John was a defender of the Union of Florence and thus the opponent of “Scholarios’ school” (Manosous Manoussakas, “Recherches sur la vie de Jean Plousiadéno (Joseph de Méthone)”, *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 17 (1959): 28–51, at 39, 47).

²⁰ On the Ottoman victory: Ovidiu Cristea, *Acest domn de la miazănoapte* (Târgoviște, 2018²).

²¹ Symeon Paschalidis, “Concilium Constantinopolitanum 1484,” in *The Great Councils of the Orthodox Churches (=Corpus Christianorum Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta*, 4), ed. Alberto Melloni, I. *From Constantinople 861 to Constantinople 1872* (Turnhout, 2016), 221–228. It was not the first time that an Ottoman campaign against Moldavia had the blessing of the Great Church. In late 1474, the attack against Stephen had patriarchal support (Jakob Unrest, *Österreichische Chronik (=Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, NS, XI), ed. Karl Grossmann (Weimar, 1957), 46; Vitalien Laurent, “Les premiers patriarches de Constantinople sous la domination turque (1454–1476)”, *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 26 (1968): 229–264, at 235, 259). Stephen prevailed, at least then. Mara Branković, Murad II’s widow and Mehmed II’s advisor, stated that the Turks had never suffered a greater defeat ([Domenico Malipiero,] *Annali veneti dall’ anno 1457 al 1500 del Senatore Domenico Malipiero ordinati e abbreviati dal senatore Francesco Longo (=Archivio Storico Italiano*, 7), ed. Agostino Sagredo (Florence, 1843), 112 (Malipiero)).

harbours.²² Some two centuries later, educated Turks claimed that, during this Moldavian campaign, Bayezid had been approached by the ‘Portugese’²³ Columbus.²⁴ Bayezid was not interested in the Indian plan of the traveller.²⁵ In return, the famous map of Ottoman admiral Piri Reis, dated to precisely 1513 (after Bayezid’s fall and death in 1512, caused by his son Selim I *Yavuz*/ the Grim)²⁶, indicates that the Porte soon developed an eye for the Atlantic.²⁷

Nevertheless in 1492, the Ottoman Empire, who had just exited a highly consuming war with Mamluk Egypt²⁸, had more pressing matters to deal with than the newfound shores in the West. Bayezid’s, rival brother, Djem, was in the custody of the newly elected business-minded Pope Alexander VI.²⁹ Venice, the ally of the Porte since 1479, remained an uneasy partner that had to be checked, aggressively at times.³⁰ Under additional pressure from Maximilian I, the son and heir of Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg, and since 1491 the *de iure* co-king of Hungary³¹, as well as from the new king of Poland, Jan Albert, the former competitor of his brother Wladislaw II³², the wavering Hungarian realm

²² Mihnea Berindei, “L’empire ottomane et la route moldave avant la conquête de Chilia et de Cetatea Albă (1484),” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986): 47–71 (not deprived of errors).

²³ Rebecca Catz, *Christopher Columbus and the Portuguese, 1476–1498* (Westport CT, 1995); Fred Bonner, “Portugal and Columbus: Old Drives in New Discoveries,” *Mediterranean Studies*, 6 (1996): 51–66. His Portuguese origins, claimed and rumoured on more than one occasion, connected Columbus to King Wladislaw. After his catastrophic defeat at Varna, the Jagiellonian would have chosen to live in penitence and anonymity on the Portuguese isle of Madeira. There however, the former crusader fathered a boy, named Christopher.

²⁴ Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (= *The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage*, 31) (Leiden – Boston, 2006), 62–63. The issue should however be reviewed.

²⁵ Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History* (Oxford, 2012), 23–24.

²⁶ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650: The Structure of Power* (New York, 2002), 43.

²⁷ Gregory C. McIntosh, *The Piri Reis Map of 1513* (Athens, GA, 2000). Allegedly based on Columbus’ “lost map” (1498), it bore the date 919 AH (= March 9, 1513–February 25, 1514).

²⁸ Shai Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East. The Ottoman-Mamluk War, 1485–1491* (Leiden – Boston, 1995). For the European context: *Ambasciata straordinaria al sultano d’Egitto (1489–1490)*, ed. Franco Rossi (Venice, 1988), no. 14, p. 84; no. 29, p. 99.

²⁹ Halil Inalcik, “A Case Study in Renaissance Diplomacy: The Agreement between Innocent VIII and Bayezid II on Djem Sultan,” *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 3 (1979): 209–223.

³⁰ *Codice Aragonese o sia lettere regie, ordinamenti ed altri atti governativi de’ sovrani aragonesi in Napoli riguardanti l’amministrazione interna del reame e le relazioni all’estero*, ed. Francesco Thrinchera, II–1. [1491–1493] (Naples, 1868), no. 147, p. 129; Lajos de Thallóczy, *Frammenti relativi alla storia dei paesi situati all’Adria* (offprint *Archeografo Triestino*, 3rd series, 7, no. 1), (Trieste, 1913) (*Frammenti*), 55–60; MHS, I–2, no. 1, p. 188; no. 5, p. 190 (spring–fall 1492).

³¹ Hermann Wiesflecker, “Maximilians I. Türkenzug 1493/4,” *Ostdeutsche Wissenschaft*, 5 (1958): 152–178. An updated analysis, based largely on Wiesflecker’s own work, is needed.

³² For a rather balanced account, see Natalia Nowakowska, “Poland and the Crusade in the Reign of King Jan Olbracht, 1492–1501,” in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, 128–147.

was still a problem that had to be dealt with, forcefully and peacefully.³³ “Lesser troubles” also surrounded Bayezid II.

The rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia, Stephen III and Vlad IV, a former monk, were mutual foes and the vassals of the sultan.³⁴ Yet, not so long ago, in 1490–1491, Bayezid II had to fortify Chilia and Cetatea Albă (the main harbours he had taken from Moldavia in 1484)³⁵, fearing that Stephen might use the planned crusade to re-conquer them.³⁶ As to Vlad IV, still in 1492, in November³⁷, he officially took on the Athonite succession of the late Mara Branković, Murad II’s widow and the trusted advisor of Mehmed II.³⁸ Plus, quite to the astonishment of the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople, Geronimo Marcello, in June that same year, after Stephen had blocked the Tartars and the Turks from attacking Hungary, via Moldavia, Vlad had politely refused the sultan’s request for passage through Wallachia against Wladislaw II.³⁹

Letters from Bologna

After nearly two decades spent in the chancery of the Lombard duchy and as her envoy in Florence, Savoy or Austria⁴⁰, Francesco Tranchedini became Milan’s representative (*oratore*) in Sforza loyal Bologna at the beginning of 1490.⁴¹

³³ We add that Jagiellonian Hungary was by no means a “compromised state” (Martyń Rady, “Rethinking Jagiello Hungary 1490–1526,” *Central Europe*, 3, no. 1 (2005): 3–18, at 9).

³⁴ Marian Coman, “The Reign of a Defrocked Monk: A Late Fifteenth Century Case Study in the Wallachian Political Language,” in *Religious Rhetoric of Power in Byzantium and South-Eastern Europe*, eds. Ivan Biliarsky, Mihail Mitrea, Andrei Timotin (Brăila, 2021), 189–221.

³⁵ Based on Ottoman administrative records: Nagy Pienaru, “Moldova și Hanatul din Crimeea. 1484–1492,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 22 (2004): 125–132, at 129–130 (and note 26); Machiel Kiel, “The Ottoman Castle of Ram (Haram) in Serbia and the Accounts of its Construction, 1491,” in *State and Society in the Balkans Before and After Establishment of Ottoman Rule*, eds. Srđan Rudić, Selim Aslantaş (Belgrade, 2017), 165–189, Appendix, 181.

³⁶ Based chiefly on Roman pontifical sources: Al. Simon, “Țările Române ca loc de pasaj cruciat în anii 1490,” *Anuarul Școlii Doctorale Istorie. Civilizație. Cultură*, 1 (2005): 101–116.

³⁷ *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, B. Țara Românească, I. 1247–1500, eds. P.P. Panaitescu, Damaschin Mioc (Bucharest, 1966), no. 235, pp. 377–380; Boško Bojović, Petre Ș. Năsturel, “Les fondations dynastiques du Mont-Athos: des dynasties serbes et de la sultane Mara aux princes roumains,” *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, 41, nos. 1–4 (2003): 149–176.

³⁸ E.g. Mihailo St. Popović, “The Holy Mountain of Athos as Contact Zone between Venice and the Ottoman Empire in the 15th Century,” in *Imperium Bulgariae. Studia in honorem annorum LX Georgii N. Nikolov*, ed. Angel N. Nikolov (Sofia, 2018), 774–783, esp. 777–778.

³⁹ Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, VIII.1376–1650 [ed. Ioan Slavici] (Bucharest, 1894) (*Hurmuzaki*), no. 32, p. 28. Wladislaw was Vlad’s other suzerain.

⁴⁰ P. Sverzellati, “Il carteggio di Nicodemo Tranchedini e le lettere di Francesco Filelfo,” *Aevum*, 71 (1997): 441–529, at 504–508, Eadem, “Per la biografia di Nicodemo,” 507–509.

⁴¹ See also Maria Nadia Covini, “Francesco Tranchedini,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 96 (2019): *sub voce*.

Francesco was one of the trustees of Ludovico *il Moro* Sforza⁴², whose interests he had to protect in that vital inner Italian “bridge” of Bologna.⁴³ To that end, Francesco Tranchedini, in his late fifties, could rely additionally on all the benefits of the impeccable humanist education he had received.⁴⁴

After the assassination of his brother Galeazzo Maria (1476)⁴⁵, Ludovico had gradually seized control over the duchy⁴⁶, acting officially as *tutore del legittimo duca*, Galeazzo Maria’s son, Gian Galeazzo (1469–1494), who even as legal adult was rather unfit to rule.⁴⁷ Still, at the end of January 1491, less than two weeks after Ludovico wed Beatrice, the daughter of Ercole d’Este of Modena and Ferrara, and Eleonora of Aragon⁴⁸, Gian Galeazzo had a son. Francesco Maria, from his marriage with Isabella, the daughter of Alfonso II of Aragon, duke of Calabria, and Ippolita Maria Sforza, Ludovico’s sister.⁴⁹ Like Ludovico’s Beatrice, Isabella was the grand-daughter of Ferrante of Aragon, king of Naples, and far more able and astute than her husband.⁵⁰

The old matrimonial policy of the Sforza was turning against Ludovico. He seemed now locked in the bridal spiderweb of the aging Ferrante of Aragon⁵¹. For this reason, *il Moro* also nourished the Angevine rooted claims to the royal throne of Naples laid by Charles VIII of Valois, king of France.⁵²

⁴² In particular: Franco Catalano, *Ludovico il Moro* (Milan, 1986); Gino Benzoni, “Ludovico Sforza, detto il Moro, duca di Milano,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 66 (2006): *sub voce*.

⁴³ For Bologna’s Milanese value from an Eastern perspective: I.-A. Pop, “The Romanians from Moldavia at the Jubilee in Rome (1475),” *Il Mar Nero*, 10 (2019–2020): 163–170, at 164.

⁴⁴ See also Virginia Cox, “Quintilian in the Italian Renaissance,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Quintilian*, eds. Marc van der Poel, Michael Edwards, James J. Murphy (Oxford, 2021), 359–379, at 364 (nevertheless, the young Francesco Tranchedini was apparently not highly inclined towards – very – rigid study); James Hankins, *Political Meritocracy in Renaissance Italy: The Virtuous Republic of Francesco Patrizi of Siena* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), XIII, 35–36.

⁴⁵ Vincente Ilardi, “The Assassination of Galeazzo Maria Sforza and the Reaction of Italian Diplomacy,” in *Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities, 1200–1500*, ed. Lauro Martines (Berkeley CA, 1972), 72–113. On the controversial duke: Francesca M. Vaglienti, “Galeazzo Maria Sforza,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 51 (1998): *sub voce*.

⁴⁶ E.g. M.N. Covini, “Cicco Simonetta,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 92 (2018), *sub voce*.

⁴⁷ On his ducal environment: Gregory Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court. Milan under Galeazzo Maria Sforza* (Berkeley – Los Angeles, CA – London 1994), 229–230, 237–238, 244–245.

⁴⁸ See foremost the studies in *Beatrice d’Este (1475–1497)*, ed. Luisa Giordano (Pisa, 2008).

⁴⁹ Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority, from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2005), 155–156. None of the ladies was a “bonified housewife”.

⁵⁰ Valentina Prisco, *Eleonora d’Aragona e la costruzione di un „corpo” politico al femminile (1450–1493)* [Phd Thesis (Universidad de Zaragoza) (Zaragoza, 2019), 354, 393.

⁵¹ Paul M. Dover, “Royal Diplomacy in Renaissance Italy: Ferrante d’Aragona (1458–1494) and his Ambassadors,” *Mediterranean Studies*, 14 (2005), pp. 57–94 (with additional data).

⁵² E.g. Margaret L. Kekewich, *The Good King: Rene of Anjou and Fifteenth Century Europe* (Basingstoke – New York, 2009), 222, 245. On France and Milan: V. Ilardi, “France and Milan:

A few years earlier (1487), *il Moro* had acted against the wishes of another daughter of King Ferrante, Beatrice, the wife of Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary and Bohemia.⁵³ Ludovico agreed to marry by proxy Bianca Maria, Galeazzo Maria's child, to John, Matthias' illegitimate son, as well as only offspring.⁵⁴ In 1490, Matthias died. John did not become king, with Bianca Maria as his queen. Beatrice of Aragon clinged on to power and married the unwanted successor of Matthias, Wladislaw II Jagiello, who soon afterwards wanted to be freed from his sterile wife.⁵⁵ The Eastern parts of the continent around Hungary were still relevant for Ludovico in the autumn of 1492.⁵⁶ Until October 1492,⁵⁷ Ludovico also allowed negotiations to be conducted for Wladislaw's divorce from Beatrice and his marriage to Bianca Maria.⁵⁸

The rumour

On October 17, 1492⁵⁹, Trachedini sent his regular report to Ludovico *il Moro Sforza*. Except for one "Eastern note", not much differed from his usual *dispacci*, sent that autumn from the city of Bologna, ruled by the Bentivoglio family⁶⁰ At that time, the fierce rivalry between Milan and Venice had again

The Uneasy Alliance (1452–1466)," in *Gli Sforza a Milano e in Lombardia e i loro rapporti con gli stati italiani ed europei (1450–1535)* (Milan, 1982), 415–447.

⁵³ On her Italian-Hungarian plans, see also Hajnalka Kuffart, "Il diario di Giovanni Maria Parenti sul viaggio verso il Regno d'Ungheria (1486)," *Verbum*, 23, no. 2 (2022): 289–327.

⁵⁴ Enikő Spekner, "To be judged worthy of your illustrious father and to rule over the Hungarians: Matthias' Struggle for John Corvinus' Succession," in *Matthias Corvinus, the King: Tradition and Renewal in the Hungarian Royal Court 1458–1490*, eds. Péter Farbaky, Enikő Spekner, Katalin Szende, András Végh (Budapest, 2008). 513–523, at 514–515.

⁵⁵ András Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex* (Budapest, 2008), 151–152, 164–166.

⁵⁶ Sabine Weiss, *Die vergessene Kaiserin: Bianca Maria Sforza, Kaiser Maximilians zweite Gemahlin* (Innsbruck, 2010), 52–56; Bálint Lakatos, "Relazioni diplomatiche tra l'Ungheria dei Jagelloni e gli stati italiani alla luce delle ambasciate inviate e ricevute (1490–1526). Uno schizzo," *Verbum. Analecta Neolatina*, 23, no. 2 (2022): 455–482, esp. 461–462, 474–475.

⁵⁷ See also Klaus Schelle, *Die Sforza. Bauern, Condottieri, Herzöge* (Stuttgart, 1980), 227–228;

⁵⁸ Daniela Unterholzner, *Bianca Maria Sforza (1472–1490): Herrschaftliche Handlungsspielräume einer Königin vor dem Hintergrund von Hof, Familie und Dynastie* [PhD thesis] (Universität Innsbruck) (Innsbruck, 2015), 36–39, 42–43.

⁵⁹ ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Romagna*, cart. 1042, fasc. 7. *Ottobre*, not numbered (nn.). Trachedini's report was partially published in MHS, I–2, no. 15c, p. 137 [...] *Un mio amico, quale ha hogi parlato con uno Paduano, quale de recenti vene da Venetia, mi ha facto intendere havere retracto da epso Paduano come la Illustrissima Signoria de Venetia ha conducto novamente per suo capitaneo, il Signore Stephano, Vaivoda de Mundavia, homo sagacissimo et callidissimo in lo mestere del arme, cum stipendio de LXX milla o vero LXXX milla ducati, et questo dice havere havuto da persona de grande auctorita in Venetia* [...] (for the full report, see Appendix, no. I).

⁶⁰ The preserved reports (~80) sent by Trachedini in 1492, are in ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Romagna*, cart. 1041. *Settembre 1491-Marzo 1492*; cart. 1042. *Aprile-Dicembre 1492*.

peaked⁶¹, following the double Este (Ferrara-Modena)-Sforza (Milan) Italian dynastic marriage (January 1491)⁶², the death of Florence's Lorenzo *il Magnifico* di Medici (April 1492)⁶³, and the Papal election of Milanese backed Rodrigo Borgia (Alexander VI) (August 1492).⁶⁴

Tranchedini had found out from a reliable, yet unnamed source that the margrave of Mantua, Francesco II Gonzaga, notorious for his excessive life style⁶⁵, had a night encounter in transvestite with an unnamed figure.⁶⁶ The meeting took place somewhere between Venetian loyal (and Bentivoglio indebted) Rimini⁶⁷ and Sforza held Pesaro.⁶⁸ Francesco had then returned to Cesena, ruled, alike Rimini, by the Malatesta.⁶⁹ From Cesena, the margrave went to Ferrara, the centre of power of Duke Ercole I of Este, the father-in-law of Ludovico *il Moro*.⁷⁰ This was confirmed by Giovanni II Bentivoglio, lord of

⁶¹ Two classic studies: Cecilia M. Ady, *A History of Milan under the Sforza* (London, 1907), 142–144; Giovanni Pillinini, *Il sistema degli stati italiani, 1454–1494* (Venice, 1970), 140–141.

⁶² Julia Cartwright, *Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Milan (1475–1497): A Study of the Renaissance* (London, 1910), 187–189. See also Jessica O'Leary, *Elite Women as Diplomatic Agents in Italy and Hungary, 1470–1510: Kinship and the Aragonese Dynastic Network* (York, 2022), 63–82.

⁶³ Lorenzo had in fact kept the Italian balance of power (Riccardo Fubini, "The Italian League and the Policy of the Balance of Power at the Accession of Lorenzo de' Medici," *The Journal of Modern History*, 67, suppl. (1995), 166–199, at 192–193; Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434–1494)* (Oxford, 1997²), 291–295, 328–332.

⁶⁴ E.g. Marco Pellegrini, *Ascanio Maria Sforza: la parabola politica di un cardinale-principe del rinascimento*, I (Rome, 2002), 273–274, 336. Cardinal Ascanio, Ludovico's brother, secured Borgia's election. In exchange, he was made vice-chancellor of the Holy Roman Church.

⁶⁵ Andrea Tonni, "The Renaissance Studs of the Gonzagas of Mantua," in *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*, eds. Peter Edwards, Karl A.E. Enekel, Elspeth Graham (Leiden, 2012), 261–277, at 268–269. Francesco II's numerous conquests included, after 1503, also Lucrezia Borgia, Alexander VI's daughter.

⁶⁶ Both Gonzaga and his "contact" came with riders to the meeting at a house/ at an inn. This suggests that the "clandestine contact" of Gonzaga was a person of comparable rank. The number of horses in the retinue signify an important figure. Because of the location of the meeting, at a house/an inn between Rimini and Pesaro, both Pandolfo IV Malatesta and Giovanni Sforza have to be considered as Francesco II Gonzaga's nocturnal company.

⁶⁷ The young Pandolfo IV Malatesta, soon to-be Venice's *condottiere* (1493), was Rimini's ruler by name. In March 1492, his life and his (future) rule were saved largely because of the help he received from Francesca Bentivoglio, the daughter of Giovanni II (Anna Falcioni, "Pandolfo Malatesta," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 68 (2007): *sub voce*).

⁶⁸ Alessandro Sforza's line ruled Pesaro. His grandson, Giovanni, was to marry Lucrezia Borgia within less than a year (see also Maria Bellonci, *Lucrezia Borgia* (Milan, 2011), 42–45).

⁶⁹ E.g. Pier Giovanni Fabbri, *La società cesenate nell'età di Malatesta Novello Malatesti* (Cesena, 2000). In relation to the itinerary of Francesco II through Cesena, see also Carlo Pedretti, *A Chronology of Leonardo da Vinci's Studies Architectural Studies after 1500* (Geneva, 1962), 31.

⁷⁰ Ludovico was married to Beatrice, the daughter of Ercole d'Este and of Eleonora, the daughter of Ferrante of Aragon. Beatrice was furthermore with child at the time, a male one as it turned

Bologna, *capitano generale* of the Milanese ducal army (since 1488), as well as a Venetian citizen and patrician (likewise since 1488).⁷¹ For Milan, these itineraries of the margrave of Mantua were important also because the Gonzaga served as the Italian *condottiere* captain of Venice since 1489.⁷²

Without further ado (it was self-evident both for him and for Ludovico Sforza what Cesena, Ferrara, Pesaro or Rimini meant in that very context)⁷³, Tranchedini moved to a piece of Venetian intelligence. He had acquired it, on the day of his report (October 17, 1492), from an unnamed friend.⁷⁴ This friend had gathered the data, still on that same day, from a citizen of Padua, unnamed as well.⁷⁵ The Paduan had recently collected the information, in Venice, from a person of great import in the city of Saint Mark.⁷⁶ According to the Paduan (via Tranchedini's said friend), the *Serenissima* had contracted Stephen, voivode of Moldavia, as her captain. Stephen was deemed highly intelligent and skilled in the art of war. This lord's Venetian stipend was valued at 70,000, even 80,000 ducats (comparable to the sums once agreed between the republic and Bartolomeo Colleoni, Milan's dreaded nemesis).⁷⁷

Francesco Tranchedini then concluded his report with the news on the birth of the son of Charles VIII of Valois, king of France, Charles Orlando (on October 11, 1492).⁷⁸ Word of it was carried to Florence and to Rome by a French knight that Tranchedini had encountered, still on the same day of his report to Ludovico *il Moro* Sforza (October 17, 1492).⁷⁹ Within two years, Charles VIII

out, much needed by *il Moro* (Alessandro Luzio, Rodolfo Renie, *Delle relazioni di Isabella d' Este Gonzaga con Ludovico e Beatrice Sforza* (Milan, 1890)).

⁷¹ C.M. Ady, *The Bentivoglio of Bologna: A Study in Despotism* (Oxford, 1937), 83; Gaspare de Caro, "Giovanni Bentivoglio," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 8 (1966): *sub voce*. He was Ginevra's husband, the illegitimate daughter of Alessandro, Ludovico's paternal uncle.

⁷² See also Michael Mallett, Christine Shaw, *The Italian Wars. 1494–1559* (Harlow, 2012), 31.

⁷³ Tranchedini consequently never returned to the story (in the preserved reports at least). Gongaza's "contact" may have been either young Pandolfo or far likelier Giovanni Sforza.

⁷⁴ Like in the case of Francesco II Gonzaga's travels, Francesco Tranchedini voluntarily did not name his source in the report sent to Ludovico *il Moro* Sforza. In the case of the margrave of Mantua, Tranchedini had however specified that the source was confirmed by Giovanni II Bentivoglio, possibly because of the major immediate Sforza implications.

⁷⁵ It is certain only that he (too) was a subject of Venice, who ruled over Padua since 1405.

⁷⁶ Tranchedini's otherwise very careful wording makes it uncertain whether or not that person of great authority in Venice differed from the mysterious Paduan (Appendix, no. I). Logic would however dictate that the Paduan was not the Venetian person of import.

⁷⁷ This comparison would have automatically come to the minds of both Ludovico *il Moro* and Francesco Tranchedini. They had witnessed the exploits of Bartolomeo Colleoni († 1475), lord of Venetian Bergamo, 50 km north-east of Milan (for a thorough overview: M.E. Mallett, "Bartolomeo Colleoni," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 27 (1982): *sub voce*).

⁷⁸ See in this respect Ivan Cloulas, *Charles VIII et le mirage italien* (Paris, 1986¹), 28–31, 40–42.

⁷⁹ The speed was impressive (Norbert Ohler, *Reisen im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 2004³) 111).

was to lead, under Ludovico's "spell"⁸⁰, the French descent into Italy.⁸¹ Charles's wife was Anne of Bretagne. Less than two years earlier (in December 1490), she had been married by proxy to the King of the Romans, Maximilian I of Habsburg.⁸² Because the Duchy of Milan was an imperial fiefdom⁸³, Maximilian was already considered⁸⁴ by Ludovico as a husband for his fraternal niece Bianca Maria⁸⁵, still married, again by proxy (in 1487), to John Corvinus, the defeated son of the late King Matthias of Hungary.⁸⁶

Many coincidences shaped the crossroad from where Tranchedini sent his report on October 17. At the end of the report, he wrote that Ludovico may have had learnt from elsewhere about the Venetian contract and about the birth the Dauphin.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, for Trancherdini, it was important to convey these two informations as well. One could (the French news) have been deemed redundant. The other (the Venetian news) judged spurious.⁸⁸

The follow-up

Within a day (on October 18), Tranchedini sent a new message to *il Moro*.⁸⁹

⁸⁰ Silvio Biancardi, *La chimera di Carlo VIII, 1492–1495* (Novara, 2009), 49, 134–138, 254–256.

⁸¹ E.g. *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy 1494–1495: Antecedents and Effects*, ed. David Abulafia (Aldershot, 1995), in particular the studies of Vincent Ilardi and Evelyn S. Welch.

⁸² Gregor M. Metzger, *Kommunikation und Konfrontation. Diplomatie und Gesandtschaftswesen Kaiser Maximilians I. (1486–1519)* (Berlin – Boston, 2016), 43–44, 153–155. In December 1490, Maximilian I, who was on campaign in Hungary for Matthias Corvinus' succession, was represented at his wedding with Anne by Wolfgang, from the loyal family of Polheim, employed by the king of the Romans also in his relations with Stephen of Moldavia (for instance: Ioan Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, II (Bucharest, 1913), no. 175, p. 408).

⁸³ The fundamental study on the issue belongs to Fabio Cusin, "Le aspirazioni straniere sul ducato di Milano e l'investitura imperiale," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, NS, I (1936): 277–354.

⁸⁴ The contacts, initiated on the eve of Maximilian's French and Hungarian defeats in late 1491, had just been resumed at the end of August (Unterholzner, *Bianca Maria Sforza*, 39).

⁸⁵ For an overview: Jane Black, *Absolutism in Renaissance Milan* (Oxford, 2009), 84–85; John Gagné, *Milan Undone. Contested Sovereignities in the Italian Wars* (Cambridge, 2021), 79, 89–90.

⁸⁶ Péter E. Kovács, "Corvin János házassága és a magyar diplomácia," *Századok*, 137, no. 4 (2003): 955–971. John and Bianca Maria remained officially married until October 1493.

⁸⁷ For instance, news on Stephen's "contract" could have reached Milan also from Venice. The preserved *dispacci* sent by the Milanese representative in Venice, Taddeo Vimercati, contain however no references to Stephen. In return, on October 23, 1492, six days after Tranchedini's cited report, Vimercati mentioned that Wladislaw II Jagiello of Hungary was engaged in very difficult peace negotiations with Sultan Bayezid II and that, in spite of these circumstances, King Wladislaw was still attempting to take *certain Vlachs* within the Ottoman Empire under his royal protection (A. Simon, "The Hungarian Crown and the *Vlachs* in the Ottoman Empire," *Macedonian Historical Review*, 2 (2011): 79–91, at 82–84).

⁸⁸ Makušev's selection of just one Moldavian excerpt from Tranchedini's reports (MHS, I–2, no. 15c, p. 137) substantiated the unreliable hearsay nature of the Venetian information.

⁸⁹ ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Romagna*, cart. 1042, fasc. 7, nn. (in Appendix, no. II).

This was uncustomary.⁹⁰ Moreover, the new *dispaccio* too was not redacted in cipher. Tranchedini was a master of the cipher.⁹¹

The report commenced with the latest developments in Bologna. Filippo de Bianchi⁹², member of the ruling Sixteen of the city⁹³, had died at roughly 70. Ludovico, the son of Filippo's brother, Burnino⁹⁴, had taken the seat of the deceased, for Filippo's own sons were deemed too young.⁹⁵

On the very day of this report of Tranchedini, the embassy sent by the Bolognese Commune to the newly elected Pope Alexander VI, an *alumnus* of the University of Bologna (1456)⁹⁶, had returned. The (Sforza-) Bentivoglios were challenged by "local democrats".⁹⁷ The *capitoli* between the Papacy and the city, a Papal fief, had to be confirmed by the new pope (which he did).⁹⁸ Tranchedini, sent, as his "father's heir", to Bologna by Ludovico *Il Moro* due to the failed anti-Bentivoglio conspiracy of 1488⁹⁹, did not give any specifics about the result of the mission, but seemed quite content with its outcome.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁰ "Daily reporting" occurred only in cases of major importance throughout Tranchedini's entire stay in Bologna (1490–1499) (ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Romagna*, cart. 1041–1050),

⁹¹ Francesco Tranchedini, *Diplomatische Geheimschriften. Codex Vindobonensis 2398 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, ed. Walter Höflechner (Graz, 1970); Lydia Cerioni, *La Diplomazia sforzesca nella seconda metà del Quattrocento e i suoi cifrari segreti*, I–II (Rome, 1970).

⁹² On the influential figure: Ian Robertson, *Tyranny under the Mantle of St. Peter: Pope Paul II and Bologna* (= *Latin Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 5) (Turnhout, 2002), 59–60, 80–82, 94.

⁹³ Established under Giovanni II in 1474 (e.g. Salvatore Muzzi, *Annali della Città di Bologna, dalla sua origine al 1796*, V. [1467–1508] (Bologna, 1843), 46; see Ady, *The Bentivoglio*, 68–69).

⁹⁴ Burnino de Bianchi, father of three sons (Annibale, Ludovico and Romeo), had served as *gonfaloniere di giustizia*, commander of the militia of the city, the supreme magistracy of the troubled Bolognese commune (Robertson, *Tyranny under the Mantle of St. Peter*, 59, 62).

⁹⁵ Possibly a direct consequence of the anti-Bentivoglio conspiracy of young men of 1488.

⁹⁶ Before graduation (August 1456), his uncle, Pope Callixtus III, made him a cardinal at the age of 25, in February 1456. He thus developed a special relation to Bologna (Giovanni Battista Piccotti, "Alessandro VI, papa", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 2 (1960): *sub voce*).

⁹⁷ For an overview, see Pio Berardo, "Aspetti politico-istituzionali di Bologna all'epoca di Alessandro VI," in *La fortuna dei Borgia, Atti del Convegno*, eds. Ovidio Capitani, Maria Chiabo, Maria Consiglia De Matteis, Anna Maria Oliva (Rome, 2005), 115–129, at 121–123.

⁹⁸ On the complex system: Tommaso Duranti, "*Libertas*, Oligarchy, Papacy: Government in the Quattrocento", in *A Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Bologna* (= *Brill's Companions to European History*, 14) ed. Sarah Rubin Blanshei (Leiden – Boston, 2018), 260–288, at 280.

⁹⁹ M.N. Covini, "Milano e Bologna dopo il 1455. Scambi militari, condotte, diplomazia," in *Condottieri e uomini d'arme nell'Italia del Rinascimento*, ed. Mario Del Treppo (Naples, 2001), 165–214, at 190; T. Duranti, "Un compromesso per il privilegio. Il rapporto tra Giovanni II Bentivoglio e i Sedici riformatori dello stato di libertà di Bologna," *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 92, no. 3 (2008): 713–742. Nicodemo Tranchedini had kept a/ the Sforza-Bentivoglio balance.

¹⁰⁰ Elven days later (on October 28), the Sixteen officially moved against Battista Malvezzi, the

Tranchedini then moved to Venetian business. His still unnamed friend, who had provided him a day earlier with the (Paduan) data on Venice and Stephen of Moldavia, had re-approached him. The friend (this time, not the Paduan) had learnt the same from monks (likely Franciscans).¹⁰¹ They had arrived recently from Venice (alike the Paduan, whom Tranchedini did not mention a day after the first report on the Moldavian *condotta*).¹⁰² One of the travelling monks had a relative in the Serenissima's ruling Council of Ten.¹⁰³

According to this chain of "intelligence gathering"¹⁰⁴, Stephen, together with one of his sons¹⁰⁵, would have been granted a contract of 80,000 ducats per year (a major *condotta* to which a Giovanni II Bentivoglio or a Ludovico III *il Turco* Gonzaga never came close).¹⁰⁶ Stephen had also allegedly taken on the title of 'king of Moldavia' (a royal title that was and had been the dream of many lords in the West)¹⁰⁷ He had already received stipends from Venice, together with the late King Matthias (Ludovico *il Moro's* late ally).¹⁰⁸ Venice had held Stephen in high esteem for many years¹⁰⁹ (in the 1470s, Galeazzo Maria Sforza

father of the main conspirators of 1488, who had appealed – unsuccessfully as it then turned out – Pope Alexander VI (Berardo, "Aspetti politico-istituzionali", p. 124, note 29).

¹⁰¹ *Frari* in the original. In Venice, *frari* stood chiefly for Franciscans, e.g. as in *Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari* (today the church of the Archivio di Stato di Venezia). That main church was consecrated in precisely 1492, on May 27 (Herbert Dellwing, *Studien zur Baukunst des Bettelorden im Veneto. Die Gothik der monumentalen Gewölbebasiliken* (Munich, 1970), 125–126).

¹⁰² A source from Padua, Venice's neighbouring fief, was not a source from Venice proper.

¹⁰³ E.g. Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1980), 72; Reihold C. Mueller, "Nel segreto dell'urna. La riforma della procedura elettorale adottata nel 1492 dal Consiglio dei dieci di Venezia," *Quaderni Veneti*, 2, no. 2 (2013); 219–228, at. 220.

¹⁰⁴ It is difficult to offer a different designation for the process described by Tranchedini.

¹⁰⁵ He certainly had two sons, Alexander and Bogdan, at home (A. Simon, "Fiii lui Ștefan cel Mare și soția la Pacea de la Hârlău (1499)," *Revista Arhivelor*, 95 (2018) [2022]: 65–81).

¹⁰⁶ Elisabeth Ward Swain, "The Wages of Peace: The *Condotte* of Ludovico Gonzaga, 1436–1478," *Renaissance Studies*, 3, no. 4 (1989): 442–452; Covini, "Milano e Bologna", 206, 208.

¹⁰⁷ This title could have been granted/ confirmed only by the pope (indebted to Milan) or by the Roman-German emperor (whose favour Ludovico needed, because the Duchy of Milan was an imperial fiefdom). This much was clear to both Tranchedini and Ludovico. In the West, Milan included (e.g. Robert Vaughan, *Charles the Bold: The Last Valois Duke of Burgundy* (Woodbridge, 2002²), 153–154), the most notorious royal failure was that of the Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy in the early 1470s (on the contextual framework, see Graeme Small, "Of Burgundian Dukes, Counts, Saints and Kings (14 C.E.-c. 1520)," in *The Ideology of Burgundy: The Promotion of National Consciousness. 1364–1565*, eds. D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, Jan R. Veenstra (Leiden – Boston, 2006), 151–194, esp. 174–175).

¹⁰⁸ For Venice's payments to Matthias, see for instance *I libri commemoriali della Repubblica di Venezia. Regesti (=Monumenti Storici Pubblicati dalla Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria*, I, 1–6), [ed. Riccardo Predelli], V. [Registri XIV–XVII] (Venice, 1901), no. XVI–65, p. 213 (1473).

¹⁰⁹ Venice's official ties to Stephen had ended with the Venetian-Ottoman peace of 1479.

had distrusted both Stephen, due to his Venetian support¹¹⁰, and Matthias, for his fraudulent policies¹¹¹). Venice appreciated Stephen for the value proven in face of the Turks at the border towards Wallachia (in fall 1492 it was known that Venice was on the edge of war with the Porte).¹¹²

The final part of Tranchedini's new report ended naturally (we can add) with the events in Poland and Bohemia (to which, because of Bianca Maria's fate, *il Moro* paid much attention).¹¹³ Tranchedini had acquired the data on these events that same day (October 18) from a likewise unspecified source, yet deemed certain (and, quite noteworthy, different from that on Stephen, ruler of Moldavia).¹¹⁴ Bologna seemed flooded with Eastern information.¹¹⁵

John Albert, the younger brother of King Wladislaw Jagiello of Hungary, and of Bohemia, had obtained the crown of Poland (John Albert had indeed been crowned on September 23, three weeks before Tranchedini's report).¹¹⁶ A large part of Bohemia, also under Wladislaw's rule, was in uproar (there was certainly unrest in Bohemia at that time, also because a possible election of Wladislaw to the Polish throne was not viewed favourably).¹¹⁷ That part of Bohemia had sided

¹¹⁰ See also A. Simon, "Anti-Ottoman Warfare and Crusader Propaganda in 1474: New Evidences from the Archives of Milan," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 46, nos. 1–4 (2007): 25–39 (including the reports sent by Milan's representative in Venice, Leonardo Botta). This is why, at first, Galeazzo Maria profoundly doubted news of Stephen's victory at Vaslui.

¹¹¹ E.g. Emilio Motta, "Un ambasciatore tartaro a Venezia, 1476," *Ateneo Veneto*, 19 (1889): 145–153, esp. 148 (Galeazzo Maria's eloquent instructions for his trusted Leonardo Botta).

¹¹² *Frammenti*, 55; *Malipiero*, 141–145; Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and Levant (1204–1571)* (= *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society*, 114, 127, 161–162), II. *The Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia, PA, 1978), 422–425. Cf. also the official message sent by Venice to Milan on October 16, 1492 (in Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice (ASVe), Collegio, *Lettere secrete*, reg. 6. 1490–1493 [*More Veneto* = 1494], c. 118; we return to this message in the next part).

¹¹³ This Eastern feature of Milan outlived the fall of Ludovico *il Moro* (1499) because so did the rival branch of the Sforza family (Darius von Guttner-Sporzyński, "Contextualising the Marriage of Bona Sforza to Sigismund I of Poland: Maximilian I's Diplomacy in Italy and Central Europe," *Folia Historica Cracoviensia*, 27, no. 2 (2021): 63–90, esp. 66–70, 77–78).

¹¹⁴ The news on Stephen came from Venice. The information on Poland and Bohemia had not followed the same route, arriving "straight" in Bologna (or so Tranchedini believed).

¹¹⁵ This was apparently the case in Bologna only in the times of major crisis or of war with the High Porte (e.g. from 1472, 1475, 1478 or 1481: MHS, I–1. *Ancona-Bononia-Florentia* (Warsaw, 1874), nos. 4–5, pp. 310–312; 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)*, ed. Szovag Kornel (Budapest, 2004), nos. 103–104, pp. 115–121; Pop, "The Romanians", 168).

¹¹⁶ N. Nowakowska, *Church, State and Dynasty in Renaissance Poland: The Career of Cardinal Fryderyk Jagiellon (1468–1503)* (Aldershot, 2007), 42–44. *Tensions however did not diminish.*

¹¹⁷ See in this context also Antonín Kalous, "The Politics of Church Unification: Efforts to Reunify Utraquists and Rome in the 1520s," in *Friars, Nobles and Burghers: Sermons, Images and*

with John Albert (this was not a first).¹¹⁸ Because these Bohemians wanted to see the Hungarians put to the death (otherwise, a common Bohemian *topos* in those days)¹¹⁹, many of King Matthias Corvinus' former Bohemian and Polish mercenaries¹²⁰ thought that, once monarch of his paternal realm, John Albert, reputed and respected for his grit¹²¹, would surpass his brother in loyalty and power (several units in Matthias' feared *Black army* had risen to arms against Wladislaw by September 1492 because of their unpaid wages, but the renegades were crushed by January 1493).¹²²

An Addenda

On November 16, 1492¹²³, a month after his first two consecutive reports on the relations between Venice and Stephen, Francesco Tranchedini returned to the matter of the voivode (it is quite plausible that Milan had requested intelligence on Stephen after the duchy had been additionally informed, on October 16, by Venice herself that Bayezid II was to leave on campaign).¹²⁴ The additional information was inserted in Tranchedini's report sent to the chief ducal secretary, Bartolomeo C(h)alco.¹²⁵ For the first time, Tranchedini revealed the name

Prints: Studies of Culture and Society in Early-Modern Europe. In Memoriam István György Tóth, eds. Jaroslav Miller, László Kontler (Budapest–New York, 2010), 179–198, at 184–185.

¹¹⁸ Marian Biskup, "Czasy Jana Olbrachta i Aleksandra Jagiellończyka (1492–1506)," in *Historia dyplomacji Polskiej (Połowa X–XX w.)*, ed. Gerard Labudy, I. *Połowa X w.–1572*, ed. M. Biskup (Warsaw, 1982), 531–586, at 533–535. By early December 1492, Wladislaw II and Jan Albert came to terms. Outstanding matters were to be resolved at a family congress.

¹¹⁹ František Šmahel, "Matthias Corvinus: Der böhmische König (1469–1490)," in *Herrscher in der Doppelpflicht: Europäischen Fürsten und ihre beiden Throne*, eds. Heinz Duchhardt (Mainz, 1997), 29–49. In addition: M. Rady, "Jiskra, Hussitism and Slovakia," in *Confession and Nation in the Era of Reformations: Central Europe in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Eva Doležalova, Jaroslav Pánek (Prague, 2011), 59–72, here at 66–68, 71–72.

¹²⁰ A similar information on the survivors of the *Black army* was exchanged between the councils of the cities of Toruń and Danzig (Gdansk) on August 25, 1492 (*Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti* (= *Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica res gestas Poloniae illustrantia*, 2, 11–12, 14), III. 1392–1501, ed. Anatol Lewicki (Krakow, 1894), no. 389, 403 (*Codex*)).

¹²¹ E.g. [Johannes Tichtel,] *Tagebuch des Wiener Arztes Johannes Tichtel aus den Jahren 1477–1495*, in *Fontes rerum Austriacarum*, I–1, ed. Theodor von Karajan (Vienna, 1845), 3–64, at 54.

¹²² See in particular Tibor Neumann, "A kassai hadjárat. II. Ulászló zsoldosserege és a lengyelek elleni harc (1490–1491)," and Bence Péterfi, "A fekete sereg ausztriai végnapjai (1493)," in *Elfeledett haborúk: középkori csaták es varostromok (6–16. század)*, eds. László Pósan, László Veszprémy (Budapest, 2016), 363–397 (at 381–385, 394–396) and 398–425 (at 414–419).

¹²³ ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Romagna*, cart. 1042, fasc. 8. *Novembre*, nn. In comparison even to the previous ones, this report (in Appendix, no. III) is probably the most relevant.

¹²⁴ ASVe, Collegio, *Lettere secrete*, reg. 6, c. 118^v. Albania was Bayezid's alleged main target.

¹²⁵ E.g. Franca Petrucci, "Bartolomeo Calco," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 16 (1973): *sub voce*. Calco led the Milanese chancery for almost two decades, until Ludovico's fall (1499).

of a Venetian source on the Moldavian lord: the patrician Sebastiano Badoer (Baduario).¹²⁶ A seasoned humanist career diplomat and bureaucrat, Badoer, who was to the deliverer, in December that same year, the oration of obedience of the Serenissima in front of Pope Alexander VI¹²⁷, perfectly fitted the profile of the main Venetian source on the said voivode.

Sebastiano Badoer had been Venice's envoy to Matthias (1474–1476)¹²⁸, when Stephen had risen as the republic's favourite and as the 'athlete' of the Papacy.¹²⁹ He was favourably inclined towards Transylvanian Wallachians from among which Matthias had been born.¹³⁰ In 1492, he served as a *savio grande*¹³¹, capacity in which he had to seat on each meeting of the Council of Ten on foreign affairs.¹³² Badoer died as a Franciscan monk in June 1498.¹³³ Sebastiano Badoer, already twice sent by Venice to Milan (in 1486 and 1487), united all key-elements of the previous reports on Venice and Stephen: the high Venetian authority, knowledge of both Matthias and Stephen (Venice's "contractors"), Council of Ten and the travelling *frari* (Franciscan monks).¹³⁴

On November 16, 1492, in addition to naming Sebastiano Badoer, for the first time, Francesco Tranchedini's source on the relations between Venice and Stephen was no longer called just his (i.e. Tranchedini's) friend (*amico mio*), but

¹²⁶ Giorgio Cracco, "Sebastiano Badoer," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 5 (1963): *sub voce*.

¹²⁷ *Oratio in Alexandrum in praestanda Venetorum oboedientia* (Roma: Andreas Freitag, 1492).

¹²⁸ E.g. Patrik Paštrnák, "Letentur et exultetur universa Pannonia. An Unknown Gratulatory Oration for King Matthias's Betrothal to Beatrice of Aragon," *Verbum. Analecta Neolatina*, 23, no. 2 (2022): 329–348, esp. 333. On September 8, 1476, Giustiniano Cavitelli wrote from Buda to Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza that Badoer had delivered at the parade of Matthias' Turkish prisoners a speech that surpassed in fact that of Marc Anthony at Cesar's funeral.

¹²⁹ A. Simon, "The Pontic King of Bosnia in Anti-Ottoman Crusading in the Mid-1470s: Crusader Curiosities from Italian Archives," *History in Flux*, 4 (2022): 69–90, esp. 71–74, 80.

¹³⁰ E.g. Nicolae Iorga, *Studii și documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, XVI (Bucharest, 1909), no. 12, p. 119. Noteworthy enough, Badoer's presentation survived in a copy in Florence.

¹³¹ Giuseppe Maranini, *La Costituzione di Venezia dopo la serrata del Maggior Consiglio* (Florence, 1931¹), 147–148; Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, NJ, 2014²), 317–318.

¹³² Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore, MD, 1973), 254–256; Stanley Chojnacki, "Identity and Ideology in Renaissance Venice: The Third Serrata," in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797*, eds. John Martin, Denis Romano (Baltimore, MD – London, 2000), 263–294, esp. 263–264.

¹³³ [Marino Sanudo Il Giovane,] *I diarii di Marino Sanuto (MCCCCX CVI-MDXXXIII) dall' autografo Marciano ital. cl. VII cod. CDXIX-CDLXXVII*, eds. Guglielmo Berchet, Frederico Berchet, Nicolo Barozzi, Rinaldo Fulin, Marco Allegri, I. *1 gennaio 1496–30 settembre 1498* (Venice, 1879), cols. 277, 322, 1004 (*Sanudo*). In 1496, Badoer had twice refuse to serve as ambassador to Maximilian I, [...] *per esser consiér* [...]. He chose to focus on Italian affairs.

¹³⁴ This "perfect match" naturally calls for additional caution when assessing the sources.

was referred to as our friend (*amico nostro*).¹³⁵ Badoer would have undoubtedly qualified as a friend of Milan under Italian standards, but he was above a loyal servant of Venice.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, information, “eastern” ones in this case, circulated between Venice and Milan both when relations were conflictual¹³⁷ and when they were close.¹³⁸ Tranchedini’s message to Calco must therefore be analyzed according to its own conserved structure.

On November 16, 1492, Tranchedini commenced his dispatch to Calco by stating that he had nothing to add to the message sent by the secretary to him on the 22nd of the present month, except for a word on the son of Cosma Pallavicino.¹³⁹ There was a blunt error at the very beginning. The 22nd came after the 16th. Instead of *22 del <messe> presente*, the text should have read *22 del <mese> passato*.¹⁴⁰ This would have implied a great gap in communication between Tranchedini and Calco.¹⁴¹ This text too however was not encrypted. It is more likely thus that Tranchedini wanted to have Calco’s full attention.

Milan’s representative in Bologna informed the head of ducal chancery that he presented the son of the merchant Cosma Pallavicino, of the Gentili of Genoa¹⁴², with Calco’s order, that is – according to Trancherдини himself – the

¹³⁵ The least implication of these words was that Calco too knew the identity of the source.

¹³⁶ Made eloquently clear by the data in *Sanudo*, I, 1004; King, *Venetian Humanism*, 217–218.

¹³⁷ E.g. I.-A. Pop, A. 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*, eds. Iulian Mihai Damian, I.-A. Pop, M. St. Popović, A. Simon (New York – Frankfurt-am-Main – Vienna, 2012), 181–196.

¹³⁸ See also Al. Simon, “How to Finance a Greek Rite Athlete: Rome, Venice and Stephen III of Moldavia (1470s–1490s),” in *Partir en croisade à la fin du Moyen Âge. Financement et logistique*, eds. Daniel Baloup, Bernard Doumerc (Toulouse, 2015), 307–329, esp. 315–320.

¹³⁹ It would have been logical for Tranchedini to state that he had nothing to add to his earlier report and not to Calco’s previous message. Yet, this was apparently not the case.

¹⁴⁰ Because, Tranchedini employed, as he usually did, Arabic numbers, not Roman ones, it is more likely that a potential error concerned the month, *presente* vs *passato*, and not the day of the month, 22 instead of 12. If he had used Roman numbers in his reports, such an error would have quite plausible: XXII instead of XII, with just an additional slipped X.

¹⁴¹ We could not identify a message sent by Bartolomeo Calco to Francesco Tranchedini, either on October 22 or on November 12, 1492, in the *carteggio* containing the dispatches sent by Tranchedini and the instructions received from Milan by the representative (ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Romagna*, cart. 1042). This does, by no means, indicate that the said message did not exist at all. Rather frequently, instructions, as orders, were preserved only in the *missive* registers of the Milanese chancery, while reports, or their appendixes, were taken out from the “chain of” correspondence. Besides, various reports, copied from “foreign agents” as well, were even inserted in the *missive* registers (e.g. Armando Nuzzo, “Missive inedite sull’elezione di Mattia Corvino a re d’Ungheria conservate nell’Archivio di Stato di Milano,” *Rivista di Studi Ungheresi*, 14 (2015): 7–26). The case is worth studying.

¹⁴² Giovanna Petti Balbi, *Governare la città. Pratiche sociali e linguaggi politici a Genova*

letter of Cosma.¹⁴³ Tranchedini had the pleasure and the duty to inform Calco that the order/ the letter had been well received by young Pallavicino, (whose first name Tranchedini did not mention).¹⁴⁴ He was most probably Pietro Pallavicino de Gentili, who had settled in Bologna in the 1480s¹⁴⁵, in the service of the Sforza, like other members of the Pallavicino clan, making the most of the influence yielded by the Pallavicini (of Parma) in Milan.¹⁴⁶

On September 7, 1492, Cosma Pallavicino *de' Gentili*, who had also served as (French) vice-governor of Genoa Corsica in 1458¹⁴⁷, had complained to Ludovico *il Moro* about the abuses to which Cosma's daughters and their husbands were subjected by Caterina Sforza.¹⁴⁸ Cosma's complaint worked, possibly also due to Cardinal Antonio Pallavicini Gentili, who, in exchange for the Bishopric of Pamplona, had voted for Rodrigo Borgia at the recent Papal elections.¹⁴⁹ Caterina Sforza was the illegitimate daughter of Galeazzo Maria¹⁵⁰ and the widow of Girolamo Riario, the favourite nephew of Pope Sixtus IV.¹⁵¹ As regent of Forlì for her son Ottaviano, she had made a bold Renaissance name

medievale (Florence, 2007), 80. The Gentili were a "second rank" Genoese clan (*albergo*), well involved however in Mediterranean trade. Cosma Pallavicino of the Gentili thus had business in Mamluk Egypt (in Alexandria) and in *Barbaria* (in Tunis) (Gian Giacomo Musso, "Nuovi documenti dell'Archivio di Stato di Genova sui Genovesi e il Levante nel secondo Quattrocento," *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, 27, nos. 2–3 (1967): 443–496, at 490).

¹⁴³ In order to convince his son, Cosma Pallavicino de' Gentili probably used Bartolomeo Calco's authority to get the message through to his offspring. We can detect also a certain irony in Francesco Trancherдини's wording: Calco's order = Cosma's/ the father's letter.

¹⁴⁴ Judging by the tone of the sentence and of the letter in general, this was not relevant.

¹⁴⁵ E.g. Chiara Quaranta, "Giambattista Pallavicino," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 80 (2014): *sub voce*. Pietro's sons, Giambattista (a Carmelite) and Cosimo (who served English Cardinal Thomas Wolsey) had quite extraordinary, and most troubled, careers and lives.

¹⁴⁶ Pierre Savy, "Conseils et conseillers à Milan sous les Sforza (1450–1499)," in *Conseils et conseillers dans l'Europe de la Renaissance, v.1450-v.1550*, ed. Cédric Michon (Rennes – Tours, 2012), 175–209. Eager to maintain their power (since 1468 a Pallavicino constantly served in Milan's Secret Council), most Pallavicini sided with Ludovico *il Moro* during the Sforza Milanese succession crisis after 1476/ 1479 (Letizia Arcangeli, "Un lignaggio padano tra autonomia signorile e corte principesca i Pallavicini," in *Noblesse et États princiers en Italie et en France au XV^e siècle*, eds. Marco Gentile, P. Savy (Rome, 2009), 29–100, here at 94, 97).

¹⁴⁷ *Strumenti e documenti per la storia degli archivi genovesi nel secolo XIX* (= *Fonti per la Storia della Liguria*, 27), ed. Stefano Gardini (Genoa, 2016), 283, 287. We must recall that Cosma Pallavicino de' Gentili officially praised his predecessor as *vicario* of Corsica. Luchino di Negri. He was [...] *un singolare esempio d'uomo per essere uscito d'ufficio colle mani nette* [...].

¹⁴⁸ Pier Desiderio Pasolini, *Caterina Sforza*, III. *Documenti* (Florence, 1893), no. 1401, 568.

¹⁴⁹ On him, see the notes in Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II, 429–434, 474–475, 490–491.

¹⁵⁰ Natale Graziani, Gabriella Venturelli, *Caterina Sforza* (Milan, 2001), 10–11.

¹⁵¹ L. Martines, *April Blood: Florence and the Plot against the Medici* (Oxford, 2003), 105.

for herself that caused problems for *il Moro* on more than one occasion, the Pallavicini de' Gentili being among the smallest ones.¹⁵²

After the cryptical opening of the non-encrypted message (that probably meant: Cosma de Pallavicini de' Gentili's son listened – through the offices of Calco and Tranchedini¹⁵³ – to his father and refrained from action against Caterina Sforza who had offended his sisters and their husbands), Francesco Tranchedini moved to a significantly more delicate matter. Using yet again a negation ('I do not want not to inform you', in this case, 'I have nothing to add, except...'; in Pallavicino's case), he wrote about the issue of Galeazzo Maria's widow and Gian Galeazzo's mother, Bona of Savoy, *il Moro's* captive foe.¹⁵⁴ Bartolomeo Calco used to be the only channel of communication between her and Ludovico *il Moro*, to whom he eventually pledged his allegiance.¹⁵⁵

The 'magnificent' Giovanni II Bentivoglio and other Bolognese notabilities had been informed that the ambassador of the 'illustrious' king of France, Charles VIII of Valois, had demanded from the 'illustrious' Ludovico *il Moro* that he allows the 'illustrious' Bona, 'our duchess', to go to France.¹⁵⁶ Bona had been attempting to leave Milan for France for almost a decade.¹⁵⁷ The same ambassador (Jean Cloppet, already sent by Paris to Milan in 1484)¹⁵⁸ had demanded from Ludovico not to interfere in the affairs of Savoy (the duchy was an old item of dispute between Milan and Paris)¹⁵⁹, Monteferrato (from

¹⁵² Pasolini, *Caterina Sforza*, III, index, 847 (Ludovico), 850 (Cosma/ Cosimo).

¹⁵³ In this respect (chiefly in relation to Tranchedini), see the numerous entries in Pasolini, *Caterina Sforza*, III, index, 841–842 (Bartolomeo Calco/ Calchi) 855 (Francesco Tranchedini).

¹⁵⁴ Caterina Santoro, *Gli Sforza* (Milan, 1992), 231. See also Daniel M. Bueno de Mesquita, "Bona di Savoia, duchessa di Milano," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 11 (1969): *sub voce*.

¹⁵⁵ In August 1479, when Ludovico *il Moro* and condottiere Roberto Sanseverino brought Bona's sole regency to a fall, Calco, previously Bona's secretary, replaced Cicco Simonetta, who was executed, as the head of the secret chancery (Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court*, 243).

¹⁵⁶ In this matter, through these words, both Tranchedini and Calco "walked on thin ice". Nothing however was to befall any of them. The two retained their stations/ their offices.

¹⁵⁷ Ady, *A History of Milan*, 123–124; Santoro, *Gli Sforza*, 231–232. In 1482, Louis XI of France had protested against Bona's fate, but nothing more. *Il Moro* was too important for Louis.

¹⁵⁸ See in particular Henri-François Delaborde, *L'expédition de Charles VIII en Italie. Histoire militaire et diplomatique* (Paris, 1888), 173, 258; M. Mallett, „Personalities and Pressures: Italian Involvement in the French Invasion of 1494," in *The French Descent*, 151–163, at 155.

¹⁵⁹ Since 1490, the duchy was governed by the regency of Bianca, the daughter of William VIII Palaiologos and of Elisabetta, the illegitimate daughter of Francesco Sforza, *il Moro's* father (Axel Gorja, "Bianca di Monferrato, duchessa di Savoia," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 10 (1968): *sub voce*). This peculiar branch of the Palaiologoi was created in 1306 by Theodore, the son of Byzantine emperor Andronikos II and Violante of Monteferrato (see Walter Haberstumpf, *Dinastie europee nel Mediterraneo orientale: I Monferrato e i Savoia nei secoli XII–XV* (Turin, 1995), 19–29, as well as John W. Barker, "Crusading and Matrimony in the Dynastic Policies of Montferrat and Savoy," *Byzantion Nea Hellas*, 36 (2017): 157–183).

where Ludovico had had to retreat as pre-condition for the Milanese-French agreement of January 1492)¹⁶⁰ or Saluzzo (through marriages, the Sforza had “infiltrated” this margravate too, at the border between the Kingdom of France and the Duchy of Milan).¹⁶¹ Otherwise, the king of France would make *il Moro* regret any interference (on January 14, that same year, *il Moro* had concluded with great difficulty an arrangement with Charles VIII).¹⁶²

In respect to all of this news, Tranchedini had responded to Giovanni II Bentivoglio and to the Bolognese notabilities that had approached him that he did not believe the rumours, because not long ago a French ambassador had come to Milan and had departed well satisfied (this was apparently quite true, according to both *il Moro* and Cloppet).¹⁶³ Tranchedini added – “as a footnote” for Calco – that numerous opinions/ councils (*advisi*)¹⁶⁴ from there (that is from Milan) reach others (in Bologna) before they reach him, and that this happened many times and that the *advisi* came from people who understand them (the *advisi*) and are given much fate (in Bologna).¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ In early 1492, as requested by Charles VIII, Ludovico *il Moro* had returned Cassine, Felizzano and Refrancore to margrave Bonifacio III Palaiologos (A. Gorla, “Bonifacio III, marchese de Monferrato,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 12 (1971): *sub voce*). Since 1485, his wife was Mary, the daughter of the last despot of Serbia, Stephen Branković, and of Angelina Arianiti Comnena, settled in Hungary in 1486. In 1492, Mary’s brothers (pro-Habsburg), Jovan and George served Wladislaw II Jagiello (Aleksandar Krstić, “Which realm will you opt for? The Serbian Nobility between the Ottomans and the Hungarians in the 15th Century,” in *State and Society in the Balkans Before and After Establishment of Ottoman Rule*, eds. Srđan Rudić, Selim Aslantaş (Belgrade, 2017), 129–163, in particular at 139, 149).

¹⁶¹ After the death of Carlo I *il Guerriero* of Savoy (March 1490), pro-Valois Ludovico II *del Vasto* ruled Saluzzo, in the Piemonte (*Ludovico II marchese di Saluzzo*: condottiero, uomo di stato, mecenate (1475–1504), I–II, ed. Rinaldo Comba (Cuneo, 2005); R. Comba, “Ludovico II, marchese di Saluzzo,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 89 (2017), *sub voce*).

¹⁶² E.g. Delaborde, *L'expédition de Charles VIII*, 226–227; Ady, *A History of Milan*, 143–144.

¹⁶³ Delaborde, *L'expédition de Charles VIII*, 258. To what extent, by the end of September 1492, Ludovico *il Moro*, who, by marriage, was also the duke of Bari, and Cloppet really agreed on the terms of the French descent into Italy remains a lasting matter of debate.

¹⁶⁴ By this, he meant probably that other Milanese officials were meddling in his affairs.

¹⁶⁵ By this Tranchedini probably did not mean people in Milan (in Pavia to be exact) in the entourage of Gian Galeazzo Sforza, the *de iure* duke, and of his wife Isabella of Aragon, especially Isabella had helped her cousin, and *il Moro*’s wife, Beatrice d’Este, to remove Ludovico’s long time mistress, Cecilia Gallerani, from court (Daniella Pizzagalli, *La dama con l’ermellino: vita e passioni di Cecilia Gallerani nella Milano di Ludovico il Moro* (Milan, 1999), 119–120). The reasons for Francesco Tranchedini’s concern were in the entourage of Ludovico *il Moro* and in the chancery of Bartolomeo Calco. As far as we know, the story however had no explicit follow-up, but Tranchedini did not encounter other similar problems. Four days later, on November 20, he did not mention the matter in the report he sent to Ludovico *il Moro* (ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Romagna*, cart. 1042, fasc. 8, nn).

Francesco Tranchedini's next paragraph began with the information he had received from 'our friend' (his and Calco's, i.e. Milan's friend), who had it 'from the mouth' of Sebastiano Badoer.¹⁶⁶ According to Badoer, there had been (in Venice) a strict custom to contract Stephen, voivode of Moldavia, and that that custom had never been fully abandoned (by Venice).¹⁶⁷ Without opening a new paragraph, Tranchedini continued.¹⁶⁸ He knew from another credible source that the Serenissima had sent (men) to France to contract¹⁶⁹ the prince of Salerno, Antonello Sanseverino¹⁷⁰, and to bring Francesco, the son of Niccolò d'Este.¹⁷¹ Francesco Tranchedini wrote to Bartolomeo Calco that he had already informed Ludovico about these actions.¹⁷² With this, the laden message sent by Tranchedini to Calco came to an end.¹⁷³

After the failure of the *congiura dei baroni* against Ferrante of Aragon, the king of Naples (1485–1486), which Ludovico *il Moro* had, eventually, helped foil¹⁷⁴, prince Antonello Sanseverino had fled to France, where he constantly conjured King Charles VIII to conquer Naples.¹⁷⁵ Antonello simultaneously pressured his enemy of old, Ludovico, to support the plan against Ferrante, who had grown into a major problem for *il Moro* as well.¹⁷⁶ In autumn 1492, Francesco, an – otherwise – unknown son of the late Niccolò d'Este, was likewise

¹⁶⁶ In the original: [...] *de bocha de messer Sebastiano Baduero* [...]. The importance of the detail was strengthened by the fact that this information came from 'our friend' (not just 'my friend').

¹⁶⁷ Because the original words read: *per anchora non era in tutto trunchata tale praticia*, the words of Badoer via 'our friend' via Tranchedini meant that Stephen had constantly been on Venice's payroll for a couple of years at least before the rumours spread in autumn 1492.

¹⁶⁸ It was in keeping with the Venetian topic of the previous sentence devoted to Stephen.

¹⁶⁹ He used the same verb, *conduere*, in Venetian relation to both Stephen and Antonello.

¹⁷⁰ On this most interesting Renaissance figure. Alessio Russo, "Antonello Sanseverino," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 90 (2017): *sub voce*. See also Yvonne Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII et son milieu (1470–1498): la jeunesse au pouvoir* (Paris, 1975), 191–193, 211–214.

¹⁷¹ See M.N. Covini, "Niccolò d'Este," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 43 (1994), *sub voce*.

¹⁷² No such report from Tranchedini to *il Moro* sent prior to or on November 16, 1492, can be found in the ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Romagna*, cart. 1042, fasc. 8 (and elsewhere).

¹⁷³ A polite, commonly worded, farewell was added a line below the last sentence through which Tranchedini had informed Calco that he sent word also to *il Moro* on the Republic of Venice's French dealings with Antonello Sanseverino and with Niccolò d'Este's son.

¹⁷⁴ Elisabetta Scarton, "La congiura dei baroni del 1485–87 e la sorte dei ribelli," in *Poteri, relazioni, guerra nel regno di Ferrante d'Aragona. Studi sulle corrispondenze diplomatiche*, eds. Francesco Senatore, Francesco Storti (Naples, 2011), 213–290, esp. 215, 225–226, 285, 287.

¹⁷⁵ Raffaele Colapietra, *I Sanseverino di Salerno. Mito e realtà del barone ribelle* (Salerno, 1985), 102–105. Antonello Sanseverino was possibly also among the many at Charles' court that spoke ill of *il Moro*, according to the warning conveyed to the *de facto* duke of Milan by Cloppet during his stay in Lombardy in 1492 (Delaborde, *L'expédition de Charles VIII*, 258).

¹⁷⁶ For an overview, see Götz Rüdiger Tewes, *Kampf um Florenz: die Medici im Exil (1494–1512)* (Cologne – Weimar – Vienna, 2011), 279–281; Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII*, 213–214.

in France, according to Tranchedini's message to Calco (it is only certain that soon after, Ercole d'Este decided to send his son, Ferrante, as a sort of hostage to the court of King Charles VIII of Valois).¹⁷⁷ In late summer 1476, Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Giovanni II Bentivogli had aided Niccolò d'Este against his half-uncle Duke Ercole d'Este, the future father-in-law of Ludovico *il Moro*, but the latter prevailed and Niccolò was beheaded.¹⁷⁸ The "return to life" of Niccolò's son by Venice (who had earlier supported Ercole against Niccolò) was not the news that *il Moro* wanted to hear in fall 1492.¹⁷⁹

Tranchedini's message sent to Calco on November 16, 1492, began as a warning about the negative impact of various interferences, Milanese above all, in his business in Bologna, at a moment of substantial tensions, on lower (Cosma Pallavicino de' Gentili and Caterina Sforza) and greater levels (in Milan's relations to France).¹⁸⁰ Venice's French and Moldavian endeavours, subsequently (re-) sketched by him turned the message into the forecast of a storm.¹⁸¹ Voivode Stephen of Moldavia certainly had his Italian place in it.

Growing Crisis

In fall 1492, two threads above-all tied Ludovico *il Moro*'s Italian concerns to the Eastern parts of *la cristianità*: (1) the bridal fate of Bianca Maria Sforza, his niece and still the wife by proxy of the defeated duke John Corvinus¹⁸², and (2) the Venetian *condotta* of Stephen, the voivode styled 'king of Moldavia', former associate of Bianca Maria's late father-in-law, Matthias Corvinus.¹⁸³ For Bianca Maria, Ludovico had to choose between (1) Wladislaw II Jagiello, king of Hungary, Bohemia and Croatia, the Christian monarch in the East after King Matthias' death (1490), as well as the new husband of the latter's widow, Beatrice, the child of Ferrante of Aragon, king of Naples¹⁸⁴ and (2) Maximilian I of Habsburg, king of the Romans and soon head of the House of Habsburg (1493), on whom *il Moro*'s imperial investiture as duke of Milan depended,

¹⁷⁷ Paolo Portone, "Ferrante d'Este," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 43 (1993): *sub voce*.

¹⁷⁸ On the lasting conflict over Ferrara and Modena, see Guido Antonioli, "Bone parole, ma niuna provisione. Politica e diplomazia nelle vicende della successione di Ercole I d'Este a Borso (1471)," *I Quaderni della Mediae Aetatis Sodalitium*, 16 (2018): 247–279, esp. 269–274.

¹⁷⁹ Ercole, Ludovico's father-in-law, was married to Eleonora, Ferrante's daughter. Hence, the (Venetian-French) re-opening of the Este feud meant additional conflict with Naples.

¹⁸⁰ This was "thin ice" (Tewes, *Kampf um Florenz*, 279; Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII*, 213).

¹⁸¹ 1492 as starting point: Raffaele Ramat, *Il Guiccardini e la tragedia d'Italia* (Florence, 1953).

¹⁸² For an overview, see Schelle, *Die Sforza*, 227–228; Weiss, *Die vergessene Kaiserin*, 52–56.

¹⁸³ The Milanese reports can be found in MHS, I–2, no. 15c, p. 137; and Appendix, nos. I–III.

¹⁸⁴ A. Kubinyi, "Két sorsdöntő esztendő. 1490–1491," *Történelmi Szemle*, 33, nos. 1–2 (1991): 1–54, at 21–24, 32; T. Neumann, "Békekötés Pozsonyban-országgyűlés Budan. A Jagello-Habsburg kapcsolatok egy fejezete (1490–1492)," (I), *Századok*, 144, no. 3, (2010): 335–372.

and also the one who could counterbalance the French power of Charles VIII of Valois in Italian affairs.¹⁸⁵ Also under hostile pressure from Isabella, the grand-daughter of Ferrante and the wife of the rightful duke of Milan, *il Moro's* inapt nephew and Bianca Maria's brother, Gian Galeazzo¹⁸⁶, Ludovico, the *de facto* duke of Milan, chose Maximilian over Wladislaw.¹⁸⁷

His choice coincided with the checked and double-checked – by Milan's diplomats (foremost by Francesco Tranchedini) – Venetian rise of Stephen of Moldavia at the border between (1) the realms of the House of Jagiello, divided between rival brothers Wladislaw and John Albert (of Poland, since fall 1492)¹⁸⁸, and (2) the Ottoman Empire that, under Bayezid II, menaced both Wladislaw's kingdoms and the Serenissima's Mediterranean empire.¹⁸⁹ A question thus arises: were the matrimonial talks between Buda and Milan cancelled (also) because of the Venetian condotta of Stephen III?¹⁹⁰ After all, as Tranchedini was able to find out Stephen had been Venice's subsidized favourite for a long time.¹⁹¹ Besides, he had accepted Wladislaw as king of Hungary and his suzerain, who, in return, in April that same year 1492, had confirmed Matthias' donation of Transylvanian estates to Stephen.¹⁹² From the outside, Stephen of Moldavia looked more like an argument in favour of Wladislaw than in that of Maximilian.¹⁹³ Moreover, both Maximilian and John Corvinus, both supported by Stephen (in particular Matthias' son)¹⁹⁴, had competed against Wladislaw for the crown of Hungary and had lost.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁵ H. Wiesflecker, "Das erste Ungarnunternehmen Maximilians I. und der Pressburger Vertrag 1490/1491," *Süd-Ost Forschungen*, 18, no. 2 (1959): 26–75; Idem, *Kaiser Maximilian I. Das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der Wende zur Neuzeit*, I (Munich, 1971), 291–298, 305.

¹⁸⁶ In relation also to her aunt, Queen Beatrice, see Pizzagalli, *La dama con l'ermellino*, 72–73.

¹⁸⁷ See also Wiesflecker, *Maximilian I.*, I, 302–304; Unterholzner, *Bianca Maria Sforza*, 37–39.

¹⁸⁸ On John Albert: Tadeusz Wyrwa, *La pensée politique polonaise à l'époque de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance (un apport à la connaissance de l'Europe moderne)* (Paris, 1978), 203, 213–216.

¹⁸⁹ E.g. MHS, I, no. 5, p. 190; Hurmuzaki, VIII, no. 32, p. 28; *Frammenti*, 55; *Malipiero*, 41–45.

¹⁹⁰ We have avoided asking the question in "Ștefan cel Mare, *căpitanul* Veneției", *passim*.

¹⁹¹ Cf his reports to *il Moro* and Calco in Appendix, nos. II–III (October 18, November 16).

¹⁹² *Acta et epistolae relationum Transylvaniae Hungariaeque cum Moldavia et Valachia* (= *Fontes Rerum Transylvanicarum*, IV, VI), ed. Endre Veress, I. 1468–1540 (Budapest, 1914), no. 39, pp. 43–44 (April 18, 1492). The charter was unknown until the outbreak of World War I.

¹⁹³ For contemporary political reasons, this perspective gained support over the past two decades in Hungary and Romania (Marius Diaconescu, "Mobilizarea oastei maghiare în 1497 în *subsidiu et tutelam wayvode Moldaviensis*," *Analele Putnei*, XII, no. 2 (2016); 35–52).

¹⁹⁴ A. Simon, "Domnul Moldovei și regii Ungariei la 1490. Un document de la Ștefan cel Mare," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol*, 43–44 (2006–2007) [2008]: 15–36, at 30–31.

¹⁹⁵ In spite of Moscow's anti-Jagiellonian efforts (e.g. Liviu Pilat, "Solia pârcaľabului Mușat la Moscova și implicarea Moldovei în lupta pentru coroana Ungariei," in *Clio în oglindiri de sine. Academicianului Alexandru Zub omagiu*, ed. Gheorghe Cliveti (Iași, 2014), 415–422).

But, (1) Maximilian, alongside with his dying father, Emperor Frederick III, had managed to secure the legal status of *co-king* of Hungary through the Peace of Bratislava (November 1491), ratified with great scandal by the Diet of Hungary (March 1492)¹⁹⁶; (2) John Corvinus, although seemingly loyal now towards Wladislaw II, and Beatrice, and certainly not a match anymore for Bianca Maria, was carving his own structure of power in the South (as his father had intended for him, but only as a “back-up”)¹⁹⁷; and (3) Stephen of Moldavia, albeit vassal to both Wladislaw and Bayezid, had a reputation for being an independent actor (none of the Milanese reports on Stephen’s Venetian arrangement of 1492 mentioned either of the ruler’s suzerains).¹⁹⁸ The odds were that Wladislaw’s position was not to significantly improve, quite the opposite¹⁹⁹, and that Stephen was to follow his own interests that had previously connected him mainly to Maximilian and John Corvinus.²⁰⁰ From this perspective too, 1492 was not a political *terminus* in the East.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ E.g. T. Neumann, “Békekötés Pozsonyban-országgyűlés Budan” (II), *Századok*, 145, no. 3 (2011): 293–347. King Wladislaw had ratified the peace more than three months earlier.

¹⁹⁷ J[oseph]. <von> Zahn, “Über ein Admonter Formelbuch des 15. Jahrhunderts,” *Beiträge zur Kunde Steiermärkischer Geschichtsquellen*, 17 (1880): 33–80, at no. 6, pp. 73–74 [1488/1489].

¹⁹⁸ See in this respect also the Roman oration of Filippo Bunoaccorsi Callimachus, King Casimir IV’s envoy and John Albert’s mentor (May 1490), in *Ad Innocentium VIII de bello Turcis inferendo oratio*, eds. Irmína Lichońska, Tadeusz Kowalewski (Warsaw, 1964), 33–34.

¹⁹⁹ On March 17, 1492, some ten days, after the Diet of Hungary had ratified the Peace of Bratislava, King Wladislaw had demanded 20,000 florins from the Transylvanian Saxons because of the Turkish peril, much to the disliking of the Saxons (*Urkunden-Regesten aus dem alten Bistrizer Archive von 1203 bis 1490*, ed. Albert Berger (Bistriz, 1893), no. 361, p. 61).

²⁰⁰ Manfred Hollegger, “Im Osten nichts Neues? Kernräume der Politik Maximilians I.,” in *Das Wiener Fürstentreffen von 1515. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Habsburgisch-Jagiellonischen Doppelvermählung*, eds. Bogusław Dybaś, István Tringli (Budapest, 2019), 125–148, at 143.

²⁰¹ This brings us back to the altogether artificial question of the much debated year 7000.

APPENDIX

I. Bologna, October 17, 1492

<modern (19th century) archival pencil note:> 1492, Ottobre 17

Illustrissimo Principe et Excellentissimo Signore mio, Ho havuto da bon locho come lo Illustrre S<egnor>Marchese/ de Manthua, con 4 cavalli solamente, prima che sia partito da porto cisenatico,/ stravestito, andò ad uno locho tra Arimino e pesaro, et in quello locho/ era venuto un altro pur stravestito, cum circa VIII cavalli, et stato li/ una nocte, l'altro giorno sequente retorno ad porto cisenatico, donde poy sè/ è levato et venuto alla volta de Ferrara, dove devè arrivare/ fin heri damatina, secondo che mi ha dicto anchora il Magnifico messer Joanne.

Un mio Amico, quale ha hogi parlato con uno paduano, quale de recenti/ vene da venetia, mi ha facto intendere havere retracto da epso paduano/ come la Illustrissima Segnoria de venetia ha conducto novamente/ per suo capitaneo, il/ Signore Stephano, vayuoda de Mundavia, homo sagacissimo et callidis/simo in lo mestere del arme, cum stipendio de LXX^m. o vero LXXX^m/ ducati, et questo dice havere havuto da persona de grande auctorità in Venetia.

De qui è passato hogi un cavalaro che vene de verso Franza, quale ha havuto/ ad dire come la Maiesta Re christianissimo, della moderna Regina, Madonna/ Anna de Brethagna, haviva havuto un bel Fiolo, et tale nova portava/ ad Fiorenza et a Roma. Del tutto mi è parso dare noticia a V<ostra> Excellentia,/ benche dele doe ultime parte quella ne possa havere havuta noticia da altra/ banda. Recommandandome indefinenter alla sua bona gratia. Ex/ Bononia, XVII Octobris 1492.

Fidelissimus Suus Francisco Tranchedinus.

<on the verso, by the same late medieval hand (that wrote the document):> *Principi et Excellentissimo Domino, Domino/ observandissimo, Domino Duci/ Mediolanij etc.*

II. Bologna, October 18, 1492

<modern (19th century) archival note by fountain pen:> P.E. Bologna, 1492, 18 Ottobre

Illustrissimo Principe et Excellentissimo Signore mio, Novamente qui è morto Messer Filippo de Bianchi,/ uno deli Magnifici XVJ^{ci} del Regimento, quale era vechio de circa LXX anni./ In suo scontro hanno deputato et posto un suo Nepote chiamato Ludovico, del/ quale alias il padre anchora pare fusse de XVJ^{ci} et per questa casone et per/ essere de matura etate, è stato preferito alli fioli d'epso messer Filippo, quali/ sonno molto gioveni.

Hoggi sonno arrivati qui li ambaxiatori de questa Magnifica Communita, retornati da/ Roma, expediti, secondo intendo, ad vota, de qualle cose che hanno recercate/ et sonno venuti per la via dela Marca et per desotto quà de Romagna.

Quello amico che mi dixè heri essere stato conducto dala Signoria de venetia/ il Signore Stephano, vayuoda de Mundavia, de novo hogi mi è venuto ad/ trovare et subgiontomi esserli affermato il medesimo da certi frati che/ de recenti veneno da venetia, havendolo havuto uno d'epsi da un suo/ compadre del numero deli X. de Consiglio, et dice essere conducto insieme/ con uno deli fioli cum stipendio de LXXX^m. ducati l'anno. Questo Signore/ Stephano pare²⁰² se Intituli Re de Mundavia et habi havuto altre volte soldo/ dalla Signoria de venetia, insieme cum la bona memoria del Serenissimo Re Mathia/ de Hungaria, et sia stato havuto in bona existimatione da venetiani longa/mente, per rispetto che ad qualle confine de Turchi verso la valacchia se è semper/ deportato vogorosamente.

Ho anche hogi havuto da bon locho ch'èl Duca Albertho, fratello de valadislao,/ Re de Hungaria, ha obtenuta la Corona de Polonia, et che la maggior parte/ dela Boemia è in tumultu et se adherisce a luy, per havere Hungari menati/ per li ferri molti Boemi et Polani di quelli furno soldati del Serenissimo Re Mathia,/ stimase che questo Re Albertho habi ad prevalere d'animo et potentia al Fratello/ stabilito che sia al quanto nel Regno paterno, quale pare sia de feroce animo et/ molto reverito. Reccommandome semper a Vostra Sublimitate, ex Bononia, 18/ Ottobre 1492.

Fidelissimus suus Francescus Tranchedinus

<on the verso, by the same late medieval hand (that wrote the document):> *Principi et Excellentissimo Domino, Domino/ Observandissimo, Domino Duci/ Mediolanij etc.*

III. Bologna, November 16, 1482

<modern (19th century) archival pencil note:> *1492, Novembre 16*

Magnifico messer Bartholomeo, Ad una de 22 del presente, de la Magnificentia v<ostra> non mi accade subgiongere/ altro se non che al Figliolo de Cosma Palavicino de Gentilj da Genoa, ho facto intendere/ l'ordine dato per la Magnificentia v<ostra> adcio le lettere del padre, et soe habino havere bono recapito de che monstro havere piacere et obligo alla Magnificentia v<ostra>.

Non voglio laxare de notificarli che qui è stato dato noticia al Magnifico Messer Joanne/ et ad altre persone de auctorità, come la Maestà del Re de Franza

²⁰² All letters of the word are clearly visible and legible. Nevertheless, an abbreviation sign supersedes the word, more precisely its final two letters (r and e). It is thus also possible that Trancherdini wrote in fact *pariter* in a peculiar manner.

per lo Am/baxadore che mando là ad li di passati haviva facto rechedere la Illustrissima Madona/ Bona, Duchessa nostra, perche l'andasse ad stare in Franza, et che haviva an/chora facto intimare allo Illustrissimo Segnor Ludovico che non se debia Impazare/ ne dele cose de Savoya, ne de Monferrato, ne de Saluzo, et che/ quando se gli Intrometta faria demonstazione che non gli piaceria, et di tale/ cosa son stato domandato se ne ho havuto Inditio, de che ho resposto/ che ne ni ho havuto, ne ne credo cosa alcuna, et che so bene essere/ stato pocho tempo fa li uno Ambaxadore et che era partito ben satisfacto. Il che/ mi fa credere non habia portate simile ambaxate rinrescevele, molti/ advisi veneno de li ad altre prima che à mi, et diversi spesse volte et da/ persone che comprendo gli è prestata spesso fede.

Lamico nostro mi ha facto intendere havere havuto de bocha de messer Sebastiano/ Baduero come è vero che è stata stricta praticcha de condure quello Segnore Stephano,/ vayuoda de Mundavia, et che per anchora non era in tutto trunchata tale/ praticcha. Ho da un altro bon locho che la Illustrissima Segnoria ha mandato in Franza/ per condure il principe de Salerno, et fare venire messer Francesco, fiolo che fu/ de messer Nicolo da Esti, de che ho dato adviso anchora allo Illustrissimo S<egnor> Ludovico./ Recommmandandome semper alla Magnificentia v<ostre>. Ex Bononia XVJ Novembre 1492.

Magnificentie V<ostre> Franciscus Tranchedinus.

<on the verso, by the same late medieval hand (that wrote the document):> *Prestantissimo equiti aurato/ Bartholomeo Chalco ducali/ primo secretario dignissimo.*

AFACERILE ORIENTALE ÎN POLITICA ITALIANĂ LA ÎNCEPUTUL ANILOR 1490: ZVONURI, (DEZ)INFORMAȚII ȘI INTERESE

Rezumat

În octombrie și noiembrie 1492, o serie de rapoarte au ajuns la Milano. Trimise de Francesco Tranchedini din “stația bologneză” a statului lombard, *dispacci*-urile tratau, adesea cu lux de amănunte, politica italiană, dar și cea europeană. În acea toamnă, Veneția era în pragul unui nou război cu Înalta Poartă. O atenție deosebită a fost acordată favoritului ei de odinioară, Ștefan al III-lea cel Mare, voievod al Moldovei. Ștefan reintrase în serviciul bine plătit al Serenisimei drept căpitan al acesteia. De asemenea, își luase titlul de “Re de Mundavia” (Rege al Moldovei). Evenimentele și titlurile din 1492 au fost rezultatul faptelor anterioare ale lui Ștefan (victorii, pierderi și recuperări). Acestea au fost, de asemenea, preludivul conflictelor care au urmat în Europa central-estică, în principal între Casa de Jagiello și Ștefan al Moldovei. Maximilian I de Habsburg, regele romanilor, și sultanul otoman Bayezid al II-lea urmau să servească drept “arbitri imperiali” ai feudei.