

## REVIEWS, BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

***Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia (1457-1504). Historical Bibliography* (edited by Ștefan Andreescu, Tatiana Cojocaru, Ovidiu Cristea, Mariana Mihăilescu, Anca Popescu, Adrian Tertecel; translated from Romanian by Ioana Voia), Bucharest, The Romanian Cultural Institute Publishing House, 2004, 220 p.**

With a most pardonable delay, I subject to your attention the publication three years ago of this working tool, essential for the reign and the context where the voivode lived and ruled Moldavia. Elaborated by a group made of the most prominent researchers of Nicolae Iorga Institute of History, the paper is structured on three specific chapters: "Sources" (p. 9-60), "Monographs" (p. 61-76), and "Special Studies" (p. 77-201), which, in their turn, are based on several sub-chapters, enabling an easier study. Therefore, due to the numerous issues taken into consideration, the chapter relating to "special studies" is based on the following sub-chapters: "Economic and Social History" (p. 77-89), "State Organization" (p. 90-94), "Political History" (p. 94-129), "Military Organization. Battles and Wars" (p. 129-144), "The Church" (p. 144-163), "Culture" (p. 163-188), "The Personality of Stephen the Great. The Family" (p. 188-195), and "Tradition and Folklore" (p. 195-201). The lack of balance in the page number covering these themes should not be considered as a negative aspect, it is basically due to the great number of studies published, for example, on the political or military matters as compared to those edited on the state organization or internal policy. Nevertheless, as shown in a recent study, "*în concluzie, confruntarea militară cu Imperiul Otoman a ocupat doar un segment din domnia lui Ștefan cel Mare. Cronologic, perioadele în care Ștefan a plătit tribut Imperiului Otoman [...] au depășit cu mult perioadele de confruntare directă* / as a conclusion, the military confrontation with the Ottoman Empire covered only one segment of the reign of Stephen the Great. Chronologically speaking, the periods when Stephen paid tribute to the Ottoman Empire [...] surpassed the times of direct combat"<sup>1</sup>. As a consequence, the ratio between the studies on armed conflicts and those on peace times should be reversed too. However, in the case of studying Stephen the Great, the conclusion is that history tends to register the war periods rather than peace periods. Hence, historiography itself seems to focus more on the history of military combats; peace is chiefly tedious for both the historians living in that epoch and us, the present historians.

At any rate, the publication of this volume gives us the hope that the reign of Stephen the Great is not a mere starting point for commemorative actions and what has been called as "*istorie de parastas / requiem history*"<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Bogdan Murgescu, *Dimensiunea europeană a domniei lui Ștefan cel Mare*, "Studii și articole de istorie", 69, 2004, p. 5-20 (10).

<sup>2</sup> See Florea Ioncioaia, *De la spiritul partinic la istoria de parastas*, "Xenopoliana", 1 (1993), 1-4.

The fact that this paper was edited in an international language, doubled by the English translation of the Romanian titles of studies published along the years, conveys a complementary advantage, by facilitating access to foreign researchers interested in what we may call the main bibliography on the reign of Stephen the Great.

Șerban V. Marin

**Ovidiu Cristea, *Acest domn de la miazănoapte. Ștefan cel Mare în documente inedite venețiene* [This prince from the North. Stephen the Great in unpublished Venetian documents], Bucharest, Corint, 2004, 183 p.**

In a year – 2004 – when the Romanian medieval history was almost monopolized by the figure of Ștefan cel Mare (Stephen the Great), commemorative events filled in agendas of alleged “cultural-scientific” activities all throughout a country that seemed to be lost in a “requiem” state where, after weeping on the Great Voivode’s shoulder, everything ended in a Dâmbovița binge style. With all due respect, we cannot expel the National Archives from this weepy-hilarious trend. What was it needed for? Perhaps simply to tick another successful activity on the annual work report.

Fortunately, in this festive-heroic-like ambiance managed to “sneak in” some papers on the ruler of Moldavia written from a scientific perspective, and resulted from diligent and responsible research studies. The paper by Ovidiu Cristea with a preface by Acad. Șerban Papacostea is included in this category. The book does not cover the entire reign of Ștefan cel Mare, as the author underlines from the beginning of the introduction (p. 7). It is focused on some reports dispatched from January 1484 to February 1485 by two Venetian emissaries in the Ottoman Empire, namely the *bail* Pietro Bembo and Giovanni Dario, secretary of the Venetian Senate. It relates to 42 such reports, left unedited and unknown. What makes this paper by Ovidiu Cristea unique is above all the revealing of these documents.

As for Giovanni Dario, we take the liberty of suggesting to the author to consult some studies and articles on the personality of the Venetian character, which are not included in the rich bibliography offered by Mr. Ovidiu Cristea<sup>1</sup>.

This priority granted to the Venetian reports does not preclude the presentation of the entire context of this matter, which is depicted by the author minutely and in a well-documented manner, with a highlight on the Venetian-Ottoman relations and the efforts made by the diplomacy of St. Mark city to establish an anti-Ottoman alliance on a

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<sup>1</sup> Franz Babinger, *Johannes Darius (1414-1494), Sachwalter Venedigs in Morgenland, und sein Griechischer Umkreis*, Munich, 1961; Maria Francesca Tiepolo, *Appunti su Giovanni Dario*, in *Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Cretan Studies*, 1971, Athens, 1981, p. 501-508; Vittorio Sgarbi, *Ca' Dario: mito e storia di Giovanni Dario e del suo palazzo tra Oriente e Venezia*, Milan, 1984; Maria Francesca Tiepolo, *I Greci nella Cancelleria veneziana: Giovanni Dario*, in *I Greci à Venezia: Atti del convegno internazionale di studio, Venezia, 5-7 novembre 1998*, Venice, 2002, p. 257-314.