

The Valachi in the Relations between the Hungarian Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire in the Early 1490s

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According to the data at hand, after the fall of Constantinople, the first attempt to include Walachia (i. e., usually named *Walachia Maior / Valachia Alta*) and Moldavia (i. e., often referred to as *Walachia Minor / Valachia Bassa*) in an Ottoman-Hungarian peace treaty was made only in late 1466. The formula was provided by Venice. Just three years after the start of the war between her and the Porte, she was eager to reach an arrangement with Mehmed II. In order to avoid further political and military problems, the settlement had to include her unstable ally, Matthias Corvinus.

[According to Venice's 'proposed draft'] *recomandati nominandi in sufferentiis nomine Serenissime Regis Hungarie sunt isti, videlicet: Dominus Scanderbegus, Ragusini, Filii Ducis Stefani* [Stephen Košarca]; *Uterque Vajvoda utriusque Valachie* [Walachia and Moldavia] *et alii siqui sunt qui nunc tam de iure quam de facto pertinent ad Coronam* [i. e., of Hungary] (Venice, October 25, 1466).

Venice's attempt failed. Matthias and Mehmed II had their own designs. Moreover, Walachia's and Moldavia's presence in the treaty was not so much the result of Venice's desire to convince Matthias to accept the settlement, but a consequence of the arrangements (broken in 1467) concluded by the king of Hungary with the rulers of the two Walachias in view of the regional anti-Ottoman expedition(s) prepared for the next year¹.

Until 1484, the idea to include both Walachias as Buda's protégés (*recomandati*) in an Ottoman-Hungarian treaty (that would have sealed the Ottoman-Hungarian *condominium* north of the Lower Danube) was apparently abandoned. The

¹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice [hereafter, ASVe], *Senato Secreti* [hereafter, S. S.], *Deliberazioni*, reg. 23, 1466-1468, c. 12' (25th of October, 1466; edited in *Magyar diplomaciai emlékek. Mátyás király korából 1458-1490* (ed. by Iván Nagy & Albert B. Nagy) (= *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, IV, 1-4), II, [1466-1480], Budapest, 1876, no. 23, p. 41). In spite of Francisc Pall's note on the importance of this source (in his *Les relations entre la Hongrie et Skanderbeg*, "Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen" 19 (1933), 4-6, p. 135-139), the matter has been neglected. For crusader and Walachian context in the late 1460s, see also Al. Simon, *Brancho's Son and the Walachians a Milanese Perspective on the Battle of Ba-ia' (I)*, "Historical Yearbook" 7 (2009), p. 187-200. For Ottoman-Walachian relations after 1453: Mihail Guboglu, *Le tribut payé par les Principautés Roumaines à la Porte jusqu'au début du XVII^e siècle d'après les sources turques*, "Revue des Études Islamiques" 37 (1969), 1, p. 41-80 (in this context, see, in particular, p. 68-79). The matter requires further documented analysis.

crusader consequences of the year 1467 (the Hungarian rebellion supported by the Porte and Moldavia, which virtually sealed Skanderbeg's Ottoman downfall), the events and the negotiations of the 1470s hardly favored such an idea. In (1483-)1484, the attempt to include the Walachias, namely Moldavia (and the harbors under her control), in an Ottoman-Hungarian truce led to one of the greatest anti-Ottoman disasters occurred after 1453 (the Moldavian triumph of Bayezid II that saved his throne). From the end of 1488 (after the Ottoman-Moldavian peace of 1486) until Matthias' death in spring 1490, however, the inclusion of the Walachias seems to have worked. In spite of later attempts, the potential inclusion re-became possible only in 1503 and only in the formula desired by Bayezid (nonetheless still hostile to this idea)².

I. Wladislaw II Jagiello's Peace Terms of 1492

One these attempts to include the Walachians (the probably most important attempt was made at the end of 1497, after the 'Polish crusade' in Moldavia), pertaining to the time span bordered by Matthias' death and the *General Peace* of Buda in 1503 (which conventionally marks the acceptance of the Ottoman Empire as Christendom's political partner), is particularly intriguing. The previously unknown attempt apparently did not even involve the two Walachias, but only certain Walachians. At least, this was the message sent from Venice to Milan in the autumn of 1492, after yet another series of months in which contradictory news on Ottoman-Hungarian arrangements and confrontations had repeatedly collided.

Se diche anchora chel debe essere seguita la pace o tregua per 4 anni tra el Serenissimo/ Re d'Ungaria [Wladislaw II Jagiello] et <el> Turco [Bayezid II], alcuni dicendo che questa cosa de differiva de firmarse/ tanto tempo perche el Re d'Ungaria voleva se li includesse entro el Serenissimo Re/ di Napoli [Ferdinand of Aragon] et Signori Ragusei, et certi Valachi. Et el Signor Turco non voleva quello sij/ seguito, et con quali capitoli. Per quanto posso intendere, questa Signoria non li ha/ anchora per chiaro (Venice, October 23, 1492; report sent by Taddeus, vicecamerarius).

Obviously (and rather naturally) the attempted Hungarian-Ottoman settlement failed. With or without the *Valachi*, its fate would have probably been the same. A more lasting arrangement was concluded only in mid 1495. As far as it is

² In general: Budapest. Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives], (Q section) *Diplomatikai Levéltár* [Diplomatic Archive], [no.] 39328 (4th of November 1503; the Ottoman confirmation of the peace treaty); Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, *Urkundenabteilung, Allgemeine Urkundenreihe. 1503* (20th of August 1503; the Hungarian version of the treaty; edited, for instance, in *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* (ed. by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki), II-1: 1451-1575 (ed. by Nicolae Densușianu), Bucharest, 1890, no. 24, p. 20-23); Mihai Maxim, *Stephen the Great and the Sublime Porte: New Turkish Documents*, "Transylvanian Review" 14 (2005), 1, p. 19-23; Al. Simon, *The Contested Sultan: The Backgrounds of Bayezid II's Moldavian Campaign of 1484*, "Eurasian Studies: Journal for Balkan, Eastern Mediterranean, Anatolian, Middle Eastern, Iranian and Central Asian Studies" 7 (2009), p. 119-142 (see also Idem, *The Costs and Benefits of Anti-Ottoman Warfare: The Case of Moldavia (1475-1477)*, "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire" 48 (2009), 1-2, p. 37-53).

known, the arrangement, viewed by the Hungarian elite, as a great relief, did not include any Walachians or the Walachias³.

At any rate, the recipient of the information from Venice, the ducal authorities of Milan, were familiar with Venice's 'Walachian (namely Moldavian) affairs', in particular since the 1470s. It is hard to believe that an experienced diplomatic system (probably the only one to match, as network and structure, the Venetian system) could have viewed/ labeled the rulers of Moldavia and Walachia as certain Walachians. Furthermore, only a week before the message in question was sent to Venice, Milan had been informed that Venice was about to finance Stephen III of Moldavia, once again her *captain*. Frightened by the expulsion of her bailo from Istanbul and the increasingly aggressive policy of the challenged Bayezid II, Venice was ready to react, not so much in view of a war, but in order to calm down the sultan. As for Vlad IV of Walachia, at least since 1489-1490, since Vlad had agreed to aid the Bosnian favorites of the republic and of Emperor Frederick III he was no stranger to the peninsula⁴.

In effect, it seems that King Wladislaw II Jagiello of Hungary deemed it necessary to include these Walachians, and not Stephen III or Vlad IV, in his projected treaty with Bayezid II. This would be the message contained by the news that reached Milan and that had left apparently even the Venetians wonders. Yet, because of the peculiar mention, certain Walachians, which could not have 'lasted' in this formula in a report written in an environment well informed on the political life north of the Danube, the message seems to be more the result of a real royal intention,

³ In these matters: Milan, Archivio di Stato di Milano [hereafter, ASM], Archivio Ducale Sforzesco/ Archivio Visconteo Sforzesco [hereafter, A.D.S.], *Potenze Estere, Venezia*, cart. 379, 1492, fasc. 10, *Ottobre*, nn (23rd of October 1492; the report containing the quoted fragment); Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Codici Italiani, classa VII, *Storia ecclesiastica e civile veneziana*, VII-999 [= 8002], f. 40 (59)^v-41 (60)^v (25th of July 1495; report on the recently concluded Ottoman-Hungarian truce); Budapest, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Könyvtár, *Codices, Kaprinai*, A, LI, no. 47, p. 108-120 [late 1497-early 1498; Wladislaw II's instructions for his envoys sent to Istanbul after his brother's, John Albert of Poland, failure to subdue Moldavia, was edited by I[ovan]. Šišić, *Rukovet spomenika o hercegu Ivanisu Korvinu i o borbama Hrvata s Turcima (1473-1496)*, "Starine" 38 (1937), no. 200, p. 102-109]; Lajos de Thallóczy, *Frammenti relativi alla storia dei paesi situati all'Adria* (offprint "Archeografo Triestino", 3rd series, 7 (1913), 1, p. 55; [Domenico Malipiero], *Annali veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500 del Senatore Domenico Malipiero ordinati e abbreviati dal senatore Francesco Longo* [= "Archivio Storico Italiano" 7 (1843), p. 142-145 (ed. by Agostino Sagredo), p. 142-145.

⁴ For instance: *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. by Francesco Thrinchera), II-1: [1491-1493], Naples, 1868, no. 147, p. 129; *Monumenta Historica Slavorum Meridionalum vicinorumque populorum e tabularis et bibliothecis italicis derompta* (ed. by Viaceslav Makusev), 1-2: *Genua, Mantua, Mediolanum, Panormus et Taurinum*, Belgrade, 1882, no. 18, p. 50; no. 15, p. 137 (17th of October 1492; the original document on Stephen III as Venice's captain can be found in ASM, A.D.S., *Potenze Estere, Venezia*, cart. 379, fasc. 10, nn); Ștefan Ștefănescu, *Éléments nobiliaires balkaniques établis en Valachie à la fin du XV^e siècle*, "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire" 4 (1965), 5, p. 891-896 [894-895]; Al. Simon, *Anti-Ottoman Warfare and Crusader Propaganda in 1474: New Evidences from the Archives of Milan*, "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire" 46 (2007), 1-4, p. 25-39.

than the product of a confuse information. The absence of the Walachias and the presence of Ragusa, another traditional protégé of Buda (a status consequently contested by the Porte) on 'Wladislaw II's list' enables two (divergent) explanations; either the Walachians were viewed as ab ovo involved in an Ottoman-Hungarian treaty (less likely) or their inclusion in such a treaty was, from the very beginning, out of the question because of the categorical opposition of the High Porte (more probable)⁵.

II. Vlachs and Walachians along the Royal-Imperial Border

After Stephen III had recently prevented an Ottoman-Tartar attack on Hungary from the east and after Wladislaw II had confirmed Matthias Corvinus' donation by which Stephen III became one of Hungary's great landowners, the king had no reason to willingly leave the Moldavian ruler out of the treaty. On the other hand, by his demands to include Naples and Ragusa and the *Valachi* in treaty, the king obviously pushed the envelope in his relation to Bayezid II. The potential reasons for the king's 'excessive demands' were at least threefold. He needed Naples' good-will to be freed for good from his controversial marriage to Beatrice, Matthias' widow and the daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon. Mamluk Egypt once again pressured Bayezid. A war between the Porte and Venice was furthermore, by no means, out of the question. The threat posed by Djem, Bayezid's brother and rival, had not vanished. In the Balkans, in particular in the areas of Montenegro and Albania, the number of rebellious anti-Ottoman centers continued to rise (with Venice's growing support)⁶.

Under these circumstances, the *Valachi* have to be searched south of the Lower Danube. To what extent, Wladislaw II, far from being just a weak king,

⁵ E. g. Momčilo Spremić, *I tributivi veneziani nel Levante nel XV secolo*, "Studi Veneziani" 13 (1971), p. 221-252 (in this case p. 247-248); Ferenc Szakály, *Phases of Turko-Hungarian Warfare before the Battle of Mohács. 1365-1526*, "Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae" 33 (1979), p. 65-112 [97-99, 101-102]; Naghi Pienaru, *Confruntare și diplomație la Dunăre. Tratatatele de pace otomano-ungare încheiate de Bayezid II și Matia Corvin*, "Revista Istorică", new series, 14 (2003), 3-4, p. 175-194 [175-181]. For the eastern and south-eastern quality of Milanese information, see in this context: Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbegs letzte Jahre. West-östliches Wechselspiel von Diplomatie und Krieg im Zeitalter der osmanischen Eroberung Albanies (1464-1468)*, "Südost-Forschungen: internationale Zeitschrift für Geschichte, Kultur und Landeskunde Südost-europas" 64-65 (2004-2005), p. 56-123 (especially p. 60-62).

⁶ ASVe, S. S., *Deliberazioni*, reg. 34, 1489-1493, c. 118^v (4th of April 1492); 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, nos. VII [11-12], p. 246-249; Louis Thuasne, *Djem Sultan, fils de Mahommed II, frère de Bayezid II (1459-1495) d'après les documents originaux en grand partie inédites. Étude sur la question d'Orient à la fin du XVe siècle*, Paris, 1890, p. 219-224; Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)* [= *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society*, CXIV, CXXVII, CLXI, CLXII], II, *The Fifteenth Century*, Philadelphia, 1978, p. 422-425; Michael J. Mc Gann, *A Call to Arms: Michael Marullus to Charles VIII*, "Byzantinische Forschungen" 16 (1991), p. 351-360; Al. Simon, *Antonio Bonfini's Valachorum regulus: Matthias Corvinus, Transylvania and Stephen the Great*, in *Between Worlds*, I, *Stephen the Great, Matthias Corvinus and their Time* [= *Mélanges d'Histoire Générale*, new series, I, 1] (ed. by László Koszta, Ovidiu Mureșan & Al. Simon), Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 207-224 (in particular 208-211).

actually planned to take them into his protection, or was only pressuring the Porte through them (thus risking to compromise the talks), is hard to determine. Maybe, the king wanted more in fact. Otherwise, his claim would have been ridiculous and futile from the start. Regardless of interpretation, his claim opens a largely neglected chapter: that of the Balkan Vlachs, related by language and (namely Byzantine, Bulgarian, Hungarian and then Ottoman) history to the Walachians north of the Danube. Several facts draw the borders of this chapter: the stand of these Vlachs during the (West) Balkan campaigns of the two Hunyadis, the Latin connection between the Danubian branches of these descendants of the Romans (as already noted by the Milanese apparatus in reference to the events of 1467), the massive colonization of the Vlachs by Mehmed II for the defense of Smederevo, in the vicinity of Belgrade (1475-1476)⁷.

We thus turn to the context of 1491-1492. Bayezid II (re-)attempted to win (by treason) the disputed city of Belgrade. After 1483 (yet apparently 'less' in 1491-1492), the Hungarian captains of Belgrade had generally been members of the Ciula family, Walachians from Transylvania. Hence, given also the Vlach militaries in the Ottoman vicinity of the city, one has to ask whether or not the *Valachi* protected by Wladislaw were to remain in the empire (where they still enjoyed a non-neglectable autonomy) or had to be settled within the realm's borders. It is a rather unpleasant question due to modern Romanian-Hungarian disputes over the 'northern route' of the Vlachs, after the (Walachian-) Bulgarian Tsarate rejected Rome for good in the 1230s. At any rate, Matthias (whose designated king of Bosnia, Nicholas Ujlaki, had also taken on the title of king of Vlachia) had been very concerned with the fate of Bosnian Vlachs, such as those abducted by *Turks* in 1487. His unwanted heir, Wladislaw, usually tried to live up to Matthias' standards, perhaps in Vlach matters too⁸.

⁷ In general: Silviu Dragomir, *Vlahii din nordul Peninsulei Balcanice în evul mediu*, Bucharest, 1959, p. 76-85; Nicoară Beldiceanu, *Les Valaques de Bosnie à la fin du XV^e siècle et leurs institutions*, "Turcica. Revue d'études turques: peuples, langues, culture, états" 7 (1975), p. 122-134; Olga Zirojević, *The Ottoman Military Organization in Yugoslav Countries in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, in *Ottoman Rule in Middle Europe and Balkan in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Papers presented at the 9th Joint Conference of the Czechoslovak-Yugoslav Historical Committee* (ed. by Jaroslav Cesar), Prague, 1978, p. 176-188; Ioan Drăgan, *Un căpitan român pe frontul antiotoman: Ladislau Ficior de Ciula (?-1492)*, "Acta Musei Napocensis" 22-23 (1985-1986), p. 261-266; Al. Simon, *Brancho's Son and the Walachians*, I-II [forthcoming] (with the edition of the source, yet another report from Venice, in ASM, A.D.S., *Potenze Estere, Venezia*, cart. 354, 1468, fasc. 2, *Febbraio*, nn, 18th of February 1468).

⁸ E. g., for the Vlachs and Matthias Borislav Grgin, *Der Kroatische Klein-und Mitlerer Adel während der Herrschaft des Königs Matthias I. Corvinus (1458-1490)*, "East Central Europe. Eine wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift" 29 (2002), 1-2, p. 223-234 (in particular p. 230-232). For Matthias in defense of the Vlachs, see also Bayezid's letter to him (January 1487), in Ivan Biliarsky, *Une page des relations magyaro-ottomanes vers la fin du XV^e siècle*, "Turcica" 32 (2000), p. 291-305 (299-301). See also *Actes du Congrès International des Études Balkaniques*, 1, 1966, 3, p. 559), Halil Inalcik's (unanswered) question in relation to the (unpublished) lecture of Nedim Filipović, *Au sujet des problèmes démographiques en Bosnie et Herzégovine pendant la seconde moitié du XV^e siècle* (in return, see his *A Contribution to the Problem of Islamization in the Balkan und ther Ottoman Rule*, in Idem, *Ottoman Rule in Middle Europe*, p. 305-358).